

## **APPENDIX C**

### **SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS FROM DREW REVIEW: AN INDEPENDENT REVIEW OF SOUTH YORKSHIRE POLICE'S HANDLING OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION 1997-2016**

The full document can be found here: <http://www.drewreview.uk/dr-drews-blog/>

#### **Chapter 1**

##### **Summary and recommendations**

**Addressed to the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire,**

**Dr. Alan Billings**

I have divided the work of my Review into three sections.

[1] Has the police response to safeguarding children and young people from child sexual exploitation been adequate in the past?

[2] Has South Yorkshire Police (SYP) understood and acted on the findings of and recommendations in previous reports and inspections, in the media and during parliamentary questioning?

[3] Is the police response to safeguarding children and young people from child sexual exploitation adequate now?

**[1] Has the police response to safeguarding children and young people from child sexual exploitation been adequate in the past?**

**My overall judgement is that the police response to safeguarding children and young people from child sexual exploitation in the past was inadequate, especially in Rotherham where I simply repeat the criticisms already made by Professor Jay and Louise Casey. Some, but only some, of this failure can be linked to the lack of awareness, nationwide, of child sexual exploitation in the early 2000s. Opportunities to explore the prevalence of sexual exploitation in more detail regularly presented themselves and were regularly missed. SYP did dedicate some resources from the earliest of days to combatting child sexual exploitation, most notably in Sheffield, where significant work was undertaken by a number of officers, both from SYP and their partners, particularly in the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service.**

Rotherham

The history of this issue in Rotherham is set out very clearly in the reports of Professor Alexis Jay O.B.E.<sup>1</sup> and Louise Casey C.B.<sup>2</sup> and you were clear from the outset that you wanted me to focus on that part of my review that was looking into the past on the other parts of South Yorkshire. In addition, as I explain in Chapter 2, the parallel processes of the Independent Police Complaints Commission's investigation, the work of the National Crime Agency, and the continuing South Yorkshire Police investigations have all meant that there was a strict limit to the amount of work I could do in Rotherham. Nevertheless a significant number of people spoke to me about Rotherham, and their testimony supported entirely Jay and Casey's interpretation of the evidence: that is that there were serious failings of policing in Rotherham in the early 2000s.

There is evidence of improvement from about 2007 onwards, the date Professor Jay chose to use, but there were still significant failures after 2007 that left children without the protection to which they were entitled. Intelligence was available from a range of sources that should have been acted upon with great vigour.

### The rest of South Yorkshire

In Sheffield the police were more actively engaged with the issue of sexual exploitation, starting with a joint operation, *Operation Insight*, in 2000. This greater engagement was because of the work done by the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service, a branch of Sheffield City Council's Social Services Department at that time, to get officers engaged in their work. In this regard I would like to pay tribute to a council employee, Ann Lucas<sup>3</sup>, who played a major role from 1997 onwards in patiently explaining to SYP officers the threat of exploitation and securing their engagement with the issue. I am left in no doubt that Ms. Lucas's personal drive and resilience, combined with that of the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service and a number of individual police officers who worked closely with the Service, made a significant impact even in these early days of combatting child sexual exploitation.

However, against today's standards, SYP's work was seriously under-resourced. The officers concerned described to me feeling that they were working in an "*under resourced vacuum*". Several attempts were made to explain the problem and the need for more resources to senior police officers, and these attempts appear to have fallen on deaf ears. Indeed the most senior officers from this time whom I have interviewed state that they were not aware of either the issue or the need for additional resources. A generous interpretation of this situation would be to say that the senior command lacked professional curiosity and were focused instead on other

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<sup>1</sup> Jay, A. (2014) Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham Rotherham: Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council

<sup>2</sup> Casey, L. (2015) Report on Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council London: Department for Communities and Local Government 5

<sup>3</sup> Ann Lucas had been appointed as a Child Protection Co-ordinator for Sheffield City Council Social Services Department in 1996. She led the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service from 2001 to 2012.

areas of police performance, partially because they were being directed so to do by government and Home Office direction<sup>4</sup>.

I received less evidence about Barnsley and Doncaster. My general conclusion is that in Barnsley both the Police and its partners were moving towards an understanding of the problems of child sexual exploitation during this time, while in Doncaster the policing response was slightly better developed, not least because of the trust that had been developed with the charity StreetReach during the 1990s.

**[2] Has South Yorkshire Police understood and acted on the findings of and recommendations in previous reports and inspections, in the media and during parliamentary questioning?**

**I am satisfied that SYP has understood and acted both on the general direction of previous criticism and also on most of the specific recommendations of previous scrutinies of its performance. This is reflected in the considerable progress that has been made. This is monitored by the force in an Action Plan, regularly updated, which sets out what needs to be done and charts progress.**

The most immediate problem presented in preparing the Action Plan has been the very large number of investigations into SYP's handling of child sexual exploitation and the fact that this has generated at least 220 separate recommendations. Against this background it is perhaps not surprising that the Action Plan is not as clear as it could be. The overarching strategy that sits above it could also be further improved.

I am satisfied, however, that SYP has responded well to the major challenge of raising the profile of child sexual exploitation. I also analysed the progress made in the areas of:

- Tasking and analysis
- Multi-agency safeguarding
- Training
- Resourcing (staff welfare)
- Raising awareness about child sexual exploitation
- Investigation
- Online child sexual exploitation
- Further development

Although good progress has been made in all of these areas more work needs to be done to ensure the force priority - to combat child sexual exploitation - is demonstrated by all officers and staff.

**[3] Is the police response to safeguarding children and young people from child sexual exploitation adequate now?**

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<sup>4</sup> I rehearse these arguments in more detail in Chapter 4.

**I believe that the police response to safeguarding children and young people from child sexual exploitation is now adequate. Indeed, some recent work undertaken by SYP appears to me to be of high quality. I describe these in the body of Chapter 7. There are also some areas that need further attention to improve the overall police response. I describe these and return to them when I make recommendations to you in Chapter 10.**

Generally I found a police force led by individuals who were determined to learn from the past; who had allocated significant additional resources to the tasks of catching up from a previously poor position; who were well thought of by their partners not only at a strategic level, but also amongst the staff at the grass roots; and who were beginning to see some of this change of direction reflected in a higher level of successful prosecutions of offenders, the previously low level of which had so concerned the Home Affairs Select Committee two years ago.

I found strengths, but also weaknesses, in their work with victims of child sexual exploitation, and in their engagement with victims, survivors and their families. I also share the frustrations of everyone I met at the slow pace of investigations into disciplinary and other matters. I cannot emphasise too strongly the harmful impact that this is having on victims and survivors, on police officers and staff, and on public confidence in policing. These are not being handled by SYP so this is not a criticism of the force.

Lastly, I concluded there is a need for further improvements to be made in the areas of intelligence gathering, management oversight of casework, and learning from their workforce, especially those officers and staff who have recently joined SYP from outside.

### **Assurance about the past**

You asked me whether you could draw assurance from this review that the scale of failure revealed in Rotherham did not take place in the rest of South Yorkshire.

This is a difficult question to answer but I shall try.

I did not receive any direct accounts from victims and survivors or from other people that would lead me to believe that the scale of failure in Rotherham was repeated elsewhere. I think you can draw some assurance from this, but perhaps only limited assurance. Although we sought to publicise my review, and our website allowed people relatively easy access to me, there are bound to be people who did not hear about the review. Furthermore many victims and survivors, including some that I met, did not really want to talk about the past for reasons I understand. There was a limit to how far I was prepared to push people. Lastly, there is scepticism about such reviews: positive examples like the Jay and Casey reports may not have shifted this significantly. One victim, explaining her decision not to meet me, wrote, *'I just give up on Police totally... just seems like it happens everywhere but nothing gets done.'*

Having written this, I should also record that survivors living far away from South Yorkshire, including as far away as the United States, made contact with me. So the review did have a 'reach' and there is some assurance to be drawn from the fact that their direct accounts, while mainly critical of SYP, nevertheless did not reveal the sort of systematic failure and denial found in Rotherham.

Beyond the accounts of victims and survivors I met a large number of people who were able to describe the history in Barnsley, Doncaster and Sheffield. In these discussions I was not given evidence of failures as extreme as those in Rotherham. I believe that most of the people I met would have told me if they knew different because the underlying tone of these interviews was critical of SYP. In most instances I asked very specific questions on this, as you would expect.

Proportionately my review could not cover as many people as the numbers who met Alexis Jay or Louise Casey's teams<sup>5</sup> in Rotherham alone, but the costs of trying to replicate the scale of their reviews of just one town across the whole of South Yorkshire would have been very high indeed.

My conclusion on this point of assurance is therefore: that you can draw some reassurance from this review that the rest of South Yorkshire did not encounter the extremes of failure and denial that it is now accepted took place in Rotherham, especially in the ten years from 1997. What you will find in the rest of this report, however, is not a happy story either. Some very good work was done by individuals and groups to try to keep children safe from sexual exploitation. While this became more comprehensive, and was adequate from about 2013, many mistakes were made along the way and SYP, in particular missed a number of opportunities before then taking stock and increasing the very low priority that it was giving to this issue for much of the period up to 2011.

## **Recommendations**

I make 11 recommendations to you arising from my investigations. These are listed with brief explanations in Chapter 10, and are also referred to in the main text of the report, but they are:

### **SYP's Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan**

[1] I recommend that you ask the Chief Constable to undertake a comprehensive stock take, of all reports and investigations to date, using gap-analysis methodology to review the findings. This would then form the basis for a new, thematic Action Plan, clear milestones and measurable, timed objectives, linking to the wider force

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<sup>5</sup> The Jay Inquiry interviewed over a 100 people either individually or in groups, while the Casey Inspection carried out over 200 meetings.

Child Sexual Exploitation plan, as well as the plans of each Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB)<sup>6</sup>.

and

[2] I recommend that you ask the Chief Constable to reconsider the resource allocation for the task of compiling and reviewing the Action Plan, and associated work.

#### Engagement with victims, survivors and their families

[3] I recommend that you review the existing arrangements for formal meetings between SYP and representatives of victims and survivors, including their families.

and

[4] I recommend that you research the operation of this scheme in Greater Manchester and consider, with the four LSCBs, whether this would also improve engagement with victims, survivors and their families.

#### Learning Lessons Reviews

[5] I recommend that you request the relevant LSCBs to commission 'Learning Lessons Reviews' after the conclusion of each major investigation, starting by making such a request to Rotherham LSCB now even though the conclusion of the recent trial in Sheffield Crown Court does not conclude *Operation Clover*. I also recommend that you press each LSCB to ensure that the views of victims, survivors and their families are central to each such review.

#### Intelligence gathering

[6] I recommend that you ask the Chief Constable to review these arrangements as a priority so that he can assure you that intelligence is handled promptly and appropriately. Such a review would seem to lend itself to being conducted by a neighbouring force or by the College of Policing.

#### Making full use of the knowledge and experience of recruits from other forces

[7] I recommend that you ask the Chief Constable to convene a standing 'New Voices' group, with revolving membership, both to capture first impressions and also to work as directed on specific short term projects. The Chief Constable should be asked to consider allocating the responsibility of meeting with this group to a member of the senior leadership team, thereby signifying the importance of such a group.

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<sup>6</sup> Local Safeguarding Children Boards were established in every local authority area in 2004 as a result of the enactment of the Children Act 2004. They bring together all the key agencies involved in safeguarding children and have a range of roles and functions, including scrutinising local arrangements for keeping children safe. The arrangements succeeded the previous Area Child Protection Committees.

### Information and Communications Technology (ICT)

[8] I recommend that you monitor progress with this as a standing item at your Governance and Assurance Board<sup>7</sup>.

### Investigation and supervision

[9] I recommend that you ask the Chief Constable to consider implementing a standard operating procedure for the investigation of child sexual exploitation and the management of intelligence related to it. A checklist for investigators and their supervisors could be developed to ensure a consistent approach is maintained across South Yorkshire.

### Governance

[10] I recommend that you ask the Chief Constable to produce a clearly documented command structure for you, supported by reference to the LSCBs and any other stakeholder arrangements (including those for victim, survivor and family engagement, see previous recommendation) focusing on the strategic rather than operational response to child sexual exploitation.

### The response to intelligence reports produced by Dr. Heal between 2003 and 2006

[11] I recommend that you keep under review the examination of the response to these reports so that you can be reassured that any further lessons from this are learnt.

John Drew

18th March 2016

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<sup>7</sup> The Governance and Assurance Board is the six-weekly meeting between Police and Crime Commissioner and key members of the Senior Leadership Group of SYP where he holds the Chief Constable to account for performance and delivery against the Police and Crime Plan.

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