



SUSAN DUNGWORTH
NORTHUMBRIA
**POLICE & CRIME
COMMISSIONER**

Delivery of The Police & Crime Plan:

**Priority 4: Violence
Against Women and Girls**

February 2026

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Deep Dive Framework

As part of my scrutiny framework (holding the Chief Constable to account) I wanted to include the consideration of deep dives. These will be bespoke and in-depth reviews of a subject or issue of concern that has arisen and I will be incorporating this into the process from time to time. Following several national reports and inquiry publications into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), I felt it pertinent to explore these further and take this opportunity to use a deep dive in this area of work.

The recent national publications of the; Baroness Casey National Audit on Group Based Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), the Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) Strategy, the Angiolini Enquiry Part 2 and an HMICFRS Inspection of the effectiveness of police and law enforcement bodies' response to group-based child sexual exploitation in England and Wales, demonstrated a call for long-term, co-ordinated evidence-led action to prevent abuse, protect victims, and hold offenders to account. They converged on a shared direction, with a focus on the following key themes:

- **Primary prevention and behaviour change**
- **Data and intelligence-led policing approaches**
- **Victim-centred practices**

I wanted to ensure that Northumbria Police are taking a robust approach to this distressing crime and therefore utilised Priority 4, using the key themes listed (above), for a more focussed approach to CSE. I sought reassurance and further clarification from the Chief Constable on the proactive work Northumbria Police are doing in this area.

Primary Prevention and behaviour change

The reports highlight the need for prevention and behaviour change to improve by strengthening education and awareness within forces and across partnerships, businesses and the public, to help early identification, disruption and effective management of perpetrators.

I want to ensure Northumbria Police are effectively utilising their educational packages to ensure the greatest impact and awareness, and that the Chief Constable is confident to Northumbria Police's approach to early identification and intervention of CSE.

- Northumbria Police has strengthened its early identification and intervention approach to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) following the National Casey Audit. A multi-agency audit was commissioned through the Tyne, Wear and Northumberland Safeguarding Partnership (TWNISP), involving police, health, social care and education. The audit reviewed CSE related cases, identified good practice, such as strong multi agency collaboration, use of trauma informed language, effective risk identification, and good recording of victim demographics and confirmed sustained improvements since Operation Sanctuary (September 2017).
- Northumbria Police and partners are enhancing early identification through improved intelligence sharing, a proposed partnership analyst, and strengthened Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangements (MASA). Training and awareness remain a major focus, with strategic exploitation groups, CSE focused training for officers and partners, and the roll out of the AWARE model to improve information capture and safeguarding responses.
- Northumbria Police deliver a wide range of educational packages focused on Violence Against Women and Girls (VAWG) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), targeted at Key Stage 2-5 pupils. These sessions cover topics such as sexual offences, respectful relationships, bullying, grooming, internet safety and CSE, and are designed to support informed decision making through age-appropriate discussion.
- To maximise reach, the force uses a tiered approach, prioritising schools based on need, requests, and delivery capacity. Where direct delivery isn't possible, resources are shared with teaching staff for self-delivery, alongside fact sheets for young people and parents. Schools can also be proactively targeted following high-profile incidents.

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- Northumbria Police also coordinate Pol Ed, a free online resource platform offering lessons under themes of keeping safe, understanding the law, relationships and wellbeing, aligned to the PSHE and Citizenship curriculum. These materials can be delivered by teachers or by police officers and staff. A new local authority strand extends access to third sector organisations and community groups, ensuring wider reach and consistency of messaging across young people's services.
- Operational structures: including Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), CSE flags in NICHE (the new Northumbria Police record management system), tactical coordination groups, Partnership Reduction in Exploitation and Missing (PREM) meetings, and the Serious Organised Crime (SOC) Tasking Process support ongoing risk identification and oversight. Wider public facing initiatives such as Operation Makesafe and engagement with hospitality and night-time economy staff extend CSE awareness into the community.

I am assured that Northumbria Police is deploying its training, educational programmes, and operational structures effectively to maximise awareness, strengthen prevention, and ensure that victims and those at risk of CSE receive appropriate safeguarding and support. Continued focus on behaviour change, consistent partner engagement, and maintaining the reach of educational resources will further enhance the force's ability to prevent harm and protect the most vulnerable.

Data and intelligence-led policing approaches

The reports outlined in the introduction emphasise the need for improved use of intelligence frameworks to analyse patterns of behaviour, identify hotspots of risk and that prevention must be data driven.

I sought reassurance from the Chief Constable that Northumbria Police are effective in identifying, collating and connecting CSE cases and are utilising the problem profile to include perpetrator profiling.

- The Vulnerability Matters programme, introduced force-wide in 2023, embeds professional curiosity and vulnerability awareness across all officers, including within the initial new officer training.
- Given the strong link between missing episodes

and CSE, Northumbria Police have a dedicated Missing Unit that collates information from return-home interviews and child notifications. Staff are trained by Hydrant in CSE signs and indicators, and the unit works in a trauma-informed manner, creating opportunities for children to disclose harm upon return.

- Local Authorities conduct statutory return-home interviews, with findings shared with the Police through the Strategic Exploitation Group to identify CSE themes, patterns, and hotspots.
- Several Local Authority areas have established risk outside the home (ROTH) teams, which focus on the extra-familial harm being caused to children in communities. These teams collaborate closely with the Police, Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), Youth Justice Teams and Missing from Home Coordinators.
- The Strategy, Innovation and Partnership team has been redesigned around VAWG, adopting the MET VAWG 100 offender-focussed model (highlighted nationally as good practice). Northumbria Police analyse data to identify their top 25 highest-risk VAWG offenders. These individuals are monitored and managed through Managing Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders (MOSOVO) and Multi-agency Tasking and Coordination (MATAC) units, or local disruption tactics if not already under formal management.
- This programme strengthens focus on repeat suspects within investigations.
- Analysts producing the Problem Profile review intelligence from operations such as Op Salus, Project Vigilant and Op Soteria along with partner agency intelligence, lessons learned and attendance at multi-agency meetings, to make informed recommendations and a fully rounded assessment of the threat, harm and risk.
- Problem Profiles include both victim and offender analyses. Offender profiles help identify high-risk perpetrators, understand their behaviour, manage them more effectively, and enable better victim safeguarding.

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Overall, Northumbria Police's approach aligns with the Angiolini recommendations, with strong emphasis on perpetrator identification, monitoring, intelligence use and multi-agency processes and management.

Victim-centred practices

The reports advocate for policing to adopt a consistent, trauma-informed and victim centred approach, and emphasise the need for evidence-led, perpetrator focused investigations supported by strong multi-agency partnerships.

Established following concerns highlighted in the Angiolini Enquiry, Operation Beaconport is a national policing operation led by the National Crime Agency to review previously closed investigations into group-based child sexual and exploitation (GBCSE) across England and Wales.

I wanted to ensure that Northumbria Police has proactively reviewed its Operation Beaconport cases internally and continues to ensure strong victim-focused practice with embedded pathways and procedures to support victims and effective information sharing across partners.

- Northumbria Police continue to strengthen their approach to identifying, reviewing, and responding to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), ensuring that victims receive appropriate safeguarding, support, and opportunities for justice. The force's work aligns closely with national programmes while also taking proactive local action to ensure victims in Northumbria are protected and supported.
- In relation to Operation Beaconport, the force has completed its review of Phase 1 cases, noting that these were already part of major investigations led by experienced Senior Investigating Officers with Crown Prosecution Service oversight. Many of these investigations resulted in convictions for relevant offences, and those without convictions had already undergone internal review.
- For Phase 2, Northumbria Police are reviewing all relevant crimes recorded since 2010 within the Child Protection and Abuse Investigation dataset. This involves triaging cases that meet the definition of Group-Based CSE (GBCSE) and

completing a detailed RAG assessment focusing on repeat victims, repeat suspects, locations of concern, and links to larger investigations. The force is progressing this work at pace and has made clear that any cases presenting immediate investigative opportunities will be acted upon without waiting for national recommendations. This ensures responsiveness, maintains victim focus, and supports ongoing intelligence development for tackling exploitation.

- Robust multi-agency safeguarding arrangements remain central to victim protection across Northumbria. Each local authority area hosts a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) where police, social care, health, and education partners jointly review child concern notifications to identify risk and exploitation.
- Children identified as at risk of significant harm are escalated into statutory child protection processes in line with Working Together, while those below threshold are supported through Early Help. Adults at risk follow parallel pathways through adult concern notifications, joint triage, and referral into Adult Safeguarding where Care Act criteria are met.

Northumbria Police are actively contributing to Operation Beaconport while ensuring that opportunities for victim centred investigative action are not delayed. The force maintains strong multi agency safeguarding arrangements for both children and adults, supported by commissioned services and ongoing work to strengthen therapeutic and voluntary sector provision. Continued focus is required on aligning victim support pathways across agencies and addressing gaps in specialist therapeutic services.

In conclusion, I asked the Chief Constable to share five key pieces of information to provide reassurance to communities that Northumbria Police have a strong and well-structured approach to this distressing crime:

- Northumbria Police have strong safeguarding partnership arrangements at strategic and operational levels.
- CSE has been an area of focus for safeguarding partnerships since Operation Sanctuary

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(September 2017) and remains an area of focus for safeguarding practice today.

- The recent multi-agency regional audit provided assurance of Northumbria Police's strong multi-agency safeguarding practice.
- Northumbria Police have invested in the formation of the Serious Organised Crime Exploitation Team, which has been recognised nationally as good practice.
- Northumbria Police remain committed to raising awareness of CSE/GBCSE both internally and with the wider partnership. This includes running awareness sessions with multi agency partners on key subjects such as key signs of exploitation, Victim centred approach and the National Referral Mechanism. We are also keen to explore new opportunities for enhancing our awareness and capability through embracing technology.



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