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Police & Crime Commissioner
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Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) Response to HMICFRS Report: “Effectiveness of Police and Law Enforcement Response to Group-Based Child Sexual Exploitation – Progress”

<https://hmicfrs.justiceinspectorates.gov.uk/publication-html/effectiveness-of-police-and-law-enforcement-response-to-group-based-child-sexual-exploitation-progress/>

HMICFRS Report Published: 24.10.25

PCC Response: December 2025

Introduction

I welcome the publication of HMICFRS’s thematic inspection into the effectiveness of the police and law enforcement response to group-based child sexual exploitation (GB CSE). This report provides important national insight into how forces are tackling one of the most harmful crimes affecting vulnerable children and young people.

Although Thames Valley Police (TVP) was not part of the inspection fieldwork, the recommendations are highly relevant to our local approach. Safeguarding children from abuse and exploitation is a core priority within my Police & Crime Plan, under the theme Protecting People. This response sets out my strategic oversight and assurance to TVP’s response that it has acted appropriately and continues to demonstrate best practice in this critical area.

Overview of HMICFRS Findings

The report identifies the need for:

- Consistent adoption of national definitions for GB CSE.
- Standardised problem profiles using the Hydrant Programme template.
- Improved identification of GB CSE within record management systems.
- Consistent implementation of Operation Makesafe across all forces and partnerships.

These recommendations aim to strengthen prevention, improve intelligence sharing, and ensure victims receive the protection they need.

PCC Response - Assurance Against HMICFRS Recommendations

TVP has confirmed that all four recommendations relevant to policing have been **completed**, and the Force has provided detailed evidence of its approach:

Recommendation 1: TVP adopted the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) definition of an ‘organised network’ in its 2024 and 2025 problem profiles. This definition is embedded in relevant policies and guidance, ensuring clarity and consistency in identifying GB CSE. The definition used is comprehensive, covering



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scenarios such as trafficking, introducing victims to others for exploitation, and allowing property to be used for abuse.

Recommendation 2: TVP has fully implemented the Hydrant Programme problem profile template in its 2024 and 2025 profiles. This ensures alignment with national standards and consistency in data collection and analysis. From 2026, TVP will transition to producing quarterly reports, enabling more timely identification of emerging trends and hotspots. This proactive move goes beyond the recommendation and demonstrates a commitment to continuous improvement.

Recommendation 4: TVP has embedded specialist teams, including MASH Exploitation and Harm Reduction Units (HRUs), across the Force. Their effectiveness was confirmed by the Sensitive Intelligence Unit (SIU) Targeted Review in 2025, which assessed intelligence capability and safeguarding processes. All recommendations from that review have been implemented, giving confidence that TVP consistently identifies GB CSE when present. Since these teams were established, the Force has launched several major operations - Rookery, Recharge, Comet, Detort, and Ampersand - targeting organised exploitation networks. Governance is provided through the Pursue Board, which applies Serious Organised Crime management principles to complex cases. In addition, TVP has implemented a dedicated CSE Force Intelligence Bureau desk to analyse intelligence, identify hotspots, and conduct network analysis. Work with Minerva is underway to develop a consistent method for flagging GB CSE within Niche Record Management System, addressing the challenge of recognising cases where suspects are unknown.

Recommendation 6: Operation Makesafe is now embedded as business-as-usual, coordinated centrally by MASH Exploitation. TVP has delivered extensive engagement and training, including 32 partnership visits and 21 test purchase operations. The Force has worked closely with local authorities and licensing bodies, including joint planning with Wokingham, West Berkshire, and Reading councils, and is piloting taxi licensing engagement. TVP's involvement in the regional Hotelier Pilot and its recognition by Hydrant as a leading force in Makesafe implementation highlight its strong national standing in this area.

These actions demonstrate TVP's commitment to safeguarding and align with the priorities set out in my Police & Crime Plan, including Abuse & Exploitation, Protecting Communities, and Building Confidence.

Conclusion

I am reassured that Thames Valley Police has taken clear steps to meet the HMICFRS recommendations and continues to demonstrate best practice in tackling child sexual exploitation.

Safeguarding vulnerable children and preventing exploitation remain central to my vision for a safer Thames Valley.



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I will maintain oversight through Performance and Accountability Meetings, thematic scrutiny, and engagement with the Chief Constable to ensure these measures remain effective and responsive to emerging threats.

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