

HYDRANT PROGRAMME

Supporting child protection
and abuse investigation

IICSA CSEON Report Recommendations
National Policing update – August 2022

The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published an Investigation Report on Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks on 1 February 2022.

A number of recommendations were made, with Recommendation 5 being specifically for policing. Here is an update on the action national policing has taken to date in response to the recommendation.

The recommendations, along with a number of other areas for development that are set out in the report have been fully accepted.

Recommendation 5: Child sexual exploitation data

Police forces and local authorities in England and Wales must collect data on all cases of known or suspected child sexual exploitation and child sexual exploitation by networks. These data should be separated from other data sets, including data on child sexual abuse, and be disaggregated by the sex, ethnicity, and disability of both the victim and perpetrator.

This disaggregated data should be used by police forces to inform problem profiling and activities to disrupt and investigate offenders. Local authorities should take account of the disaggregated data when commissioning services for children.

The UK Government and the Welsh Government should take steps to ensure that these data are being collected and disaggregated in a consistent and accurate way by police forces and local authorities.

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Following receipt of the report, National Police Chiefs Council lead for Child Protection and Abuse Investigation, Deputy Chief Constable Ian Critchley commissioned a team based within the Hydrant Programme to work with chief officer colleagues and their staff officers to undertake a gap analysis across ten thematic areas, covering eleven different NPCC portfolios or programmes. The ten areas are:

- Definitions
- Data quality
- Profiling
- The child criminal exploitation model
- Children going missing
- Risk assessment
- Disruption activity
- Victim blaming and sanctioning
- Partnership working
- Audit and performance management

This work includes 28 separate actions policing need to address - or be satisfied that work has been undertaken or is underway - to deal with an issue raised in the report. Across all 10 thematic areas, work is complete or ongoing and will continue to improve the policing response to the organised exploitation of children.

The update below relates to work around data quality and the ability to use data effectively to understand the nature and scale of the threat, which underpins our response to Recommendation Five

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The Operations Database

For a number of years, Regional Analysts (who work within the Regional Organised Crime Units) have been charged with collecting data from their respective forces and populating a national database, which is then used to develop a national profile. This has so far been published within the Totality of Police Recorded Crime report. We recognise that the approach taken to date is challenged by missing data and poor-quality data.

To that end, with effect from October 2022, responsibility for the administration and management of the Operations Database will move to the Hydrant Programme. This will allow dedicated staff to manage the collection of data and improve its quality. It will be underpinned by a performance framework for all forces. National analytical capability and capacity has been increased and work is ongoing to ensure a coordinated approach with associated NPCC Programmes and the National Crime Agency.

This will significantly improve policing's ability in the short term to understand and assess threat nationally, regionally and locally. The effect of these changes should be realised in early 2023.

Force Crime Data and the Home Office Annual Data Return

The Hydrant Programme will work closely with the National Crime Registrar and other NPCC colleagues to improve locally held crime data in relation to child sexual abuse and exploitation, so that we can enhance our ability to assess scale and risk across a number of areas. This will of course include existing and newly introduced Annual Data Returns to the Home Office. This element is currently being negotiated with colleagues and partners and will take longer to introduce and embed.

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Tackling Organised Exploitation Programmes (TOEX)

As part of the evidence that NPCC gave to this investigation, we outlined the [TOEX Programme](#) and its objectives. At the time TOEX had one year of funding to deliver a pilot and proof of concept. Following this successful first year, the Home Office has allocated granted funding over three years that will facilitate a national rollout. TOEX continues to welcome new members to the team across all regions of the UK, as the programme uplifts that national network to more than 150 officers and staff.

Single Data Solution

The current TOEX data solution has the unique ability to conflate local, regional and national data for nine force areas allowing valuable assets to focus on high-harm victims and offenders; filling gaps in tactical intelligence; supporting effective investigations and enriching strategic understanding.

Plans are advancing with national partners to expand elements of the TOEX platform and technical architecture to deliver a Single Data Solution (SDS) for policing. Whilst these plans are in the early stages, the programme is collaborating to deliver the best possible data, and analytical solutions.

Capabilities Environment

Several Intelligence, analytical and research tools have been developed by the TOEX data team using open-source technologies freely available on the policing network, and we are developing plans to share the tools at no cost to UK Law Enforcement.

Current local ICT arrangements have supported the creation of cloud-based sandpit environment, to be accessed by TOEX Data Insights Analysts in each region, for the secure development and test of new data tools. The programme are now working with national partners and industry on a secure an effective way to provide access to those tools across the wider policing network, with the confidence they meet full data

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protection requirements and their use if fully available. This will include ethical information management and data security considerations, as each tool is designed, tested, and approved for use.

In conclusion, there is significant work underway across a number of NPCC programmes and working groups that will help drive improvements in the way we respond to organised child sexual exploitation and abuse.