

Rt Hon Shabana Mahmood MP
Home Secretary
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

27 May 2026

Dear Home Secretary

[HMICFRS report on policing response to the investigation of online child sexual abuse and the management of registered sex offenders](#)

In line with my statutory responsibilities as Police and Crime Commissioner, I am pleased to provide the following response to the HMICFRS and the Secretary of State for the Home Office to the above report which was published on 15 April 2026.

I have liaised closely with the Chief Constable in submitting this response.

It is pleasing to note that the report includes references in the case studies to good practice by Dorset Police.

Please see the response below from Dorset Police to the recommendations for forces. These are in respect of the recommendations numbered 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, 10, 15 and 16.

The Chief Constable and I note the remaining recommendations are subject to progress by the CoP, NPCC and the Home Office.

Recommendation 1

By 31 October 2026, forces should:

- **review existing practices to make sure they use the Kent Internet Risk Assessment Tool (KIRAT) used to risk assess suspects who possess / distribute indecent images of children progressing to contact sexual offences) the prioritisation tool (recommended timescales/action plans following a KIRAT assessment, which determine how quickly police must respond based on the risk level) to prioritise referrals for all children and adult suspects;**
- **review their procedures to make sure there is regular assessment of intelligence and risk for online child sexual abuse and exploitation suspects both prior to enforcement**

and throughout the lifecycle of the investigation; and

- **make sure investigations allocated outside online child sexual abuse and exploitation teams remain under the team's management oversight, including a central escalation policy.**

Dorset Police use the Kent Internet Risk Assessment Tool (KIRAT) alongside the prioritisation tool to assess and prioritise all cases referred to the Force for investigation relating to children and adult suspects. Any police contact involving named suspects is monitored and is used to inform the ongoing risk assessment.

To ensure continuous risk management, all investigations awaiting allocation are subject to scheduled review and tasked to the Force Intelligence Bureau for updated intelligence assessments. This ensures regular reassessment, effective prioritisation, and timely identification of any escalation in risk.

Monthly performance reports identify all relevant cases outside of the Paedophile Online Investigation Team (POLIT), which are reviewed by a Detective Inspector. Actions are assigned, and progress is tracked with clear supervisory oversight recorded by POLIT. Investigations managed outside of specialist teams remain subject to central oversight, with structured review processes and escalation in place to maintain governance and safeguarding focus throughout the investigation lifecycle.

Recommendation 2

By 30 April 2027, forces should review existing staffing levels in online child sexual abuse and exploitation teams to make sure that they have enough officers and staff to manage demand effectively and that workloads are manageable.

The Force have undertaken analysis as part of their Process Evolution (Productivity and Efficiency Reviews) to assess required staffing levels within the online child sexual abuse and exploitation teams. This identified a need for one additional Detective Sergeant and 10 officers/staff to effectively manage demand and ensure manageable workloads.

The Force has agreed an uplift of one Detective Sergeant and 5 officers/staff. In addition to this increase in capacity, the Head of Public Protection is actively implementing further measures to manage risk and demand. This includes the use of Children's Social Care to support safeguarding visits, which is anticipated to reduce demand on POLIT resources by approximately 20%.

These combined approaches - targeted workforce uplift and the introduction of risk mitigation and safeguarding arrangements - are intended to improve workload management, maintain effective oversight, and ensure the Force can respond proportionately to demand.

Staff recruitment by Dorset Police aimed at increasing headcount remains a challenge due to the current funding formula. As I have previously stated, the funding formula needs a fundamental change to incorporate seasonality and rurality, both of which are significant factors for Dorset Police.

There is a need to look again at the way the Force is funded to arrive at a more equitable methodology which reflects the seasonal influx of visitors to the county in the summer and at other times of the year.

Recommendation 3 - we note recommendation 3 is for the CoP.

Recommendation 4

By 31 October 2026, forces should:

- **review their online child sexual abuse procedures and make sure that arrest and bail is considered and recorded for all suspects; and**
- **make sure that when online child sexual abuse suspects are on bail, conditions are proactively checked at least once per applicable bail period.**

The Force has a clear presumption in favour of arrest and bail in all online child sexual abuse cases to support effective offender management and the safeguarding of victims. Bail conditions are used as part of a risk-focused safeguarding strategy.

Dorset Police operate an integrated MOSOVO Team (Management of Sexual Offenders and Violent Offenders) that manages suspects, bail conditions, and Post Arrest Management. The Force's Post Arrest Management (PAM) is chaired by Public Protection Unit (PPU) Supt and provides governance and oversight of bail across the Force. It is through the PAM that the Force can consider how best to support bail checks, to include a RAG-rated approach to bail management. This ensures bail checks are prioritised based on risk rather than demand, enabling resources to be focused on those individuals who present the highest risk and require the most robust oversight.

These arrangements ensure that bail is used consistently, effectively, and proportionately to manage risk and protect vulnerable victims.

Recommendation 5

By 30 April 2027, forces should make sure that third-party provision is in place to support families of online child sexual abuse suspects and that leaflets with contact details of support organisations are available.

The Force has appropriate third-party provision in place to support families of online child sexual abuse suspects. This includes established links with the Acts Fast (Abused Children's Trauma Support Family Advice Strategy Team) charity, which supports non-offending family members impacted by child sexual abuse and online sexual offences, with whom POLIT maintains regular engagement to support affected families.

Families are routinely signposted to this service and provided with a safeguarding pack, which includes information and contact details for relevant support organisations, giving families access to advice, guidance, and ongoing support where required.

Recommendation 6

By 30 October 2026, forces should:

- **review their operating models and governance frameworks to make sure they have a consistent approach to managing registered sex offenders across all teams, including use of the Violent and Sex Offender Register in line with Home Office standards; and**
- **review the data they collect, how they collect it and how it is presented and make sure that it represents what is on the Violent and Sex Offender Register to accurately assess and manage the risk of registered sex offenders.**

It is the role of the Violent and Sex Offender Register (ViSOR) supervisor to produce monthly performance data for performance meetings with senior leadership teams. This provides clear visibility of demand and risk, including the total number of registered sex offenders (RSO), allocation across offender managers, and breakdown by risk category (reactive, low, medium, high, and very high). It also includes offender-to-offender manager ratios and the proportion of high-risk offenders being actively managed, supporting equitable workload distribution and effective risk management.

Compliance and quality assurance are further maintained through monitoring of the Active Risk Management System (ARMS) (the risk assessment tool used within ViSOR to determine the likelihood of an offender re-offending and to plan their management) and plan completion rates, alongside supervisory oversight. Sergeants review and sign off all ViSOR records and visit logs to ensure accuracy and consistency.

These arrangements support improved data integrity, consistency in offender management, and ensure that information held locally aligns with ViSOR to accurately assess and manage risk.

Recommendation 7 - we note recommendation 7 is for the Home Office.

Recommendation 8

By 31 October 2026, forces should:

- **use previous demand trends and review predicted demand for management of sexual offenders and violent offenders teams for five years to make sure that they have enough offender managers and supervisors to manage this;**
- **make sure that management of sexual offenders and violent offenders team abstractions are recorded, reviewed, don't happen on a regular basis and don't have a negative effect on workload completion;**
- **make sure that management of sexual offenders and violent offenders teams have manageable numbers of outstanding active risk management systems assessments, risk management plans and visits and that these are assessed by both risk level and how overdue they are; and**
- **make sure that supervisors are completing reviews of active risk management systems assessments, risk management plans and visits promptly and within one month.**

The Force uses its Force Management Statement process to assess future demand over a five-year period and ensure that sufficient resources are in place to manage sexual and violent offenders effectively. Current establishment levels are assessed as appropriate to meet existing demand with anticipated growth of one offender manager a year to combat future demand, with offender manager to offender ratios reviewed on a monthly basis to maintain balance and effectiveness. MOSOVO is currently undergoing Process Evolution mapping to further refine operating models, demand management, and supervisory oversight.

Abstractions within MOSOVO teams are monitored and reviewed to ensure they are not routine and do not negatively impact workload completion or risk management activity.

Outstanding demand, which includes ARMS assessments, risk management plans and visits, is actively managed. Overdue visits are reviewed on a weekly basis, with a RAG rating and escalation process in place to prioritise activity and draw on wider support where required. This ensures that both risk and timeliness are considered in managing workload.

Supervisory oversight is being strengthened through the development of a bespoke MOSOVO '1 to 1' supervisor template, aligned to APP and recommendations within this Spotlight Review. This is designed to ensure timely and consistent supervisory review of ARMS assessments, risk management plans, and visits, with a clear expectation that supervisors reviews are completed within one month.

These measures collectively ensure that demand is understood and planned for, workloads remain manageable, and risk is effectively prioritised and overseen.

Recommendation 9 - we note recommendation 9 is for the Home Office in conjunction with the CoP and NPCC.

Recommendation 10

By 31 October 2026, forces should make sure that:

- **home visits are unannounced and carried out in pairs to comply with the CoP authorised professional practice for the management of sexual offenders and violent offenders;**
- **visits that don't comply with the authorised professional practice for the management of sexual offenders and violent offenders are authorised, the rationale is recorded on the Violent and Sex Offender Register and that a system is in place to allow assessment of the decision;**
- **any reactively-managed registered sex offenders meet the conditions set out in the authorised professional practice for the management of sexual offenders and violent offenders; and**
- **they carry out and assess PND checks on registered sex offenders.**

The Force has clear local policy in place, aligned to College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice (APP), which sets out expectations that home visits to registered sex offenders are unannounced and conducted in pairs.

Any deviation from this standard is subject to appropriate authorisation, with the rationale recorded on the Violent and Sex Offender Register (VISOR) to ensure transparency and auditability of decision-making. Compliance with this policy is monitored through supervisory oversight.

Arrangements are in place to ensure that reactively managed registered sex offenders are managed in line with APP requirements, with risk regularly assessed and management approaches reviewed to ensure they remain appropriate.

Police National Database (PND) checks are routinely completed and are embedded within standard processes. These checks inform risk management plans (RMPs) and ARMS assessments, ensuring that all available intelligence is considered in the ongoing assessment and management of risk.

Recommendations 11, 12, 13 and 14 - we note recommendation 11 is for the CoP in conjunction with the NPCC, recommendation 12 is for the CoP, recommendation 13 is for the Home Office and NPCC and recommendation 14 is for the NPCC and CoP.

Recommendation 15

By 31 October 2026, forces should:

- **make sure psychological health screening is mandatory and provided at least annually (as per guidance from the National Police Wellbeing Service) for management of sexual offenders and violent offenders and online child sexual abuse and exploitation team members and supervisors with access to follow-on well-being services; and**
- **make sure that management of sexual offenders and violent offenders and online child sexual abuse and exploitation team supervisors have regular trauma-informed training and knowledge sharing to identify signs of trauma, burnout and other well-being issues and that they can refer to and access timely support and treatment where needed.**

All personnel within these teams are subject to mandatory and regular psychological health monitoring, in line with national guidance, ensuring early identification of wellbeing concerns and access to appropriate follow-on support where required.

This is supported by a wider Public Protection Unit (PPU) welfare strategy, including oversight through a dedicated health and wellbeing group. Officers and staff have access to welfare days and structured wellbeing support.

Supervisors are offered a Mental Health Awareness for Managers course, supporting a trauma-informed approach. This enables them to identify signs of trauma, stress, or burnout and ensure timely referral to appropriate support services.

These arrangements ensure that wellbeing is proactively managed, with both organisational structures and trained supervisors in place to support staff in these high-risk roles.

Additionally, Dorset POLIT uses a structured screening and selection process for officers and staff applying to the POLIT function. This process is designed to ensure individuals are psychologically suitable for exposure to distressing online child abuse material and are both resilient and

appropriately skilled for the specialist safeguarding work involved. The screening includes assessment of personal suitability and welfare considerations, not just technical competence.

Recommendation 16

By 31 October 2026, forces should make sure that they have a strong service level agreement in place with the Probation Service and that they have a two-way process for review, feedback and escalation to make sure safeguarding opportunities aren't being missed.

The suitability of the service level agreement with the Probation Service is being explored. The Force will report conclusions to HMICFRS in due course.

I hope this provides appropriate reassurance in response to the recommendations in the report.

For completeness I have copied this letter to both Mr Evans and CI Tamblyn.

This response will be published on the OPCC website [HMIC Inspection Reports · Dorset Police & Crime Commissioner](#).

Yours sincerely

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'D. Sidwick', with a stylized flourish at the end.

David Sidwick
Police and Crime Commissioner

cc: CI Danny Tamblyn, Dorset Police
Mark Evans, Force Liaison Lead, HMICFRS