

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

2 May 2017

SUBJECT: SEXUAL ABUSE

Report of the Chief Constable

<p><b>PURPOSE OF THE REPORT</b></p> <p>1. This report outlines the Force's current position in relation to the policing of Sexual Abuse in West Yorkshire.</p>
<p><b>RECOMMENDATION</b></p> <p>2. That the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) uses this report to scrutinise Force performance in respect of Sexual Abuse.</p>
<p><b>POLICE AND CRIME PLAN</b></p> <p>3. Sexual violence and abuse is any harmful sexual behaviour which is unwanted and takes place without consent or understanding. This type of crime can have a devastating effect on the person's health and wellbeing. The PCC works with the police and partners to target offenders, give victims the confidence to come forward and report these crimes, and make all forms of sexual abuse and violence unacceptable. He makes sure that the services that victims of sexual abuse need to cope and recover are provided.</p>
<p><b>KEY INFORMATION</b></p> <p>4. The PCC has:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Following his election in November 2012, made sexual abuse a priority in the Police and Crime Plan, and since then delivered a step change improvement in the services available to all victims and survivors of both recent and historic abuse, outlined below.</li><li>• Commissioned the first West Yorkshire wide Independent Sexual Violence Adviser service, which started operating from July 2015</li><li>• In collaboration with NHS England and the three other PCCs in Yorkshire and the Humber, commissioned a fully functioning adult (16+) Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC), which started operating from 1 April 2016, with an independent provider, Mountain Healthcare.</li><li>• Worked with NHS England to provide a consistent West Yorkshire wide SARC service available to those under 16, replacing an inconsistent offer prior to then by 5 NHS trusts; this new service also became operational from 1 April 2016</li><li>• Provided grants to a range of relevant third sector organisations providing services to this group of victims and survivors, including rape crisis centres and others.</li><li>• Encouraged the development of the services available to male victims, including a dedicated ISVA for male victims and funded other initiatives such as Survivors West Yorkshire's new facility, Ben's Place, and Survivors UK's on line services.</li></ul>

- Ensured that more generic victim services are aware of the specialist services available to survivors of sexual abuse, and how to refer victims to them
- Publicised the available services more effectively, through the Help for Victims website and in other ways
- Significant challenges remain to be overcome, in particular to ensure that ALL victims are aware of the services available, and that they can be supported regardless of whether they wish to report the crime to the police. Further service improvements are in development.
- 14 projects have been funded through the Safer Communities Fund to tackle Sexual Abuse totalling £76,056.

#### **PARTNERSHIP CONTRIBUTION**

5. The PCC has extended the remit of the earlier Domestic Abuse Board to cover both domestic and sexual abuse. He has organised a Planning Workshop for Wednesday 7 June 2017 to bring together a wide range of stakeholders. The new Board will have 3 members from the third sector as well as the Police, Community Safety Partnerships, the CPS, the Fire Service and other parts of the criminal justice system. Meetings of the new partnership board have been arranged to the end of 2017.

In developing the services for under 16s, the PCC has engaged directly with Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.



**Chief Officer Team  
Briefing for PCC**

**Title: Sexual Abuse**

**CoT Sponsor: ACC Foster**

**Report Author: D/Supt Minton**

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**Summary**

There is a significant overlap between this report on sexual abuse and the report relating to child sexual abuse. The issue of sexual abuse is identified and has a significant position in the existing Police and Crime Plan.

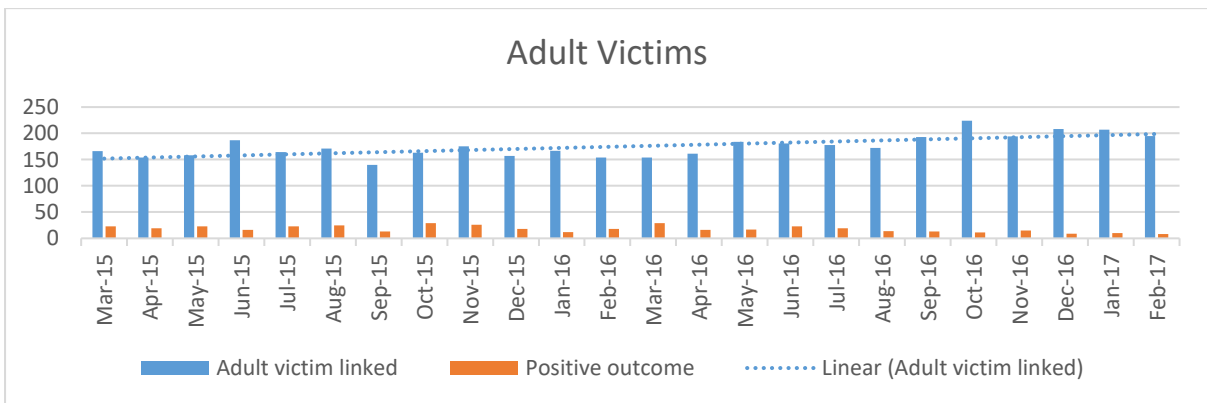
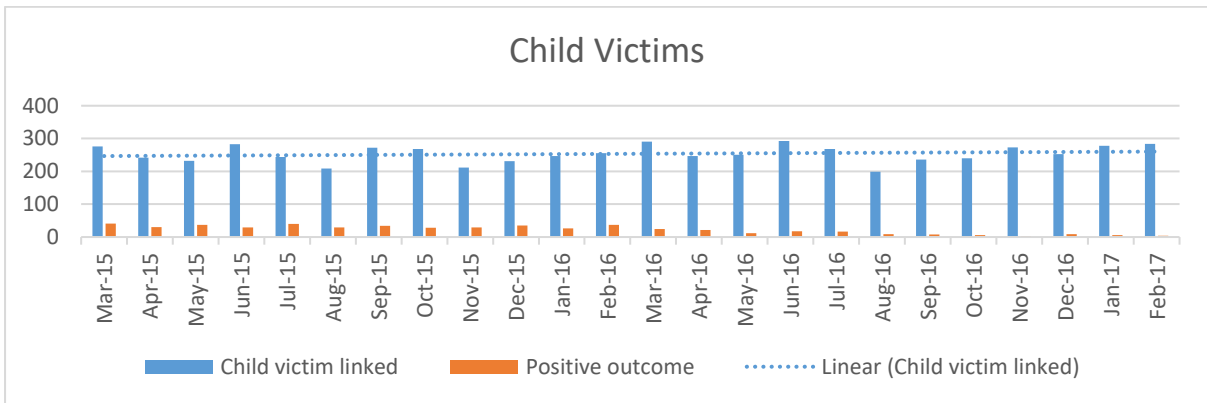
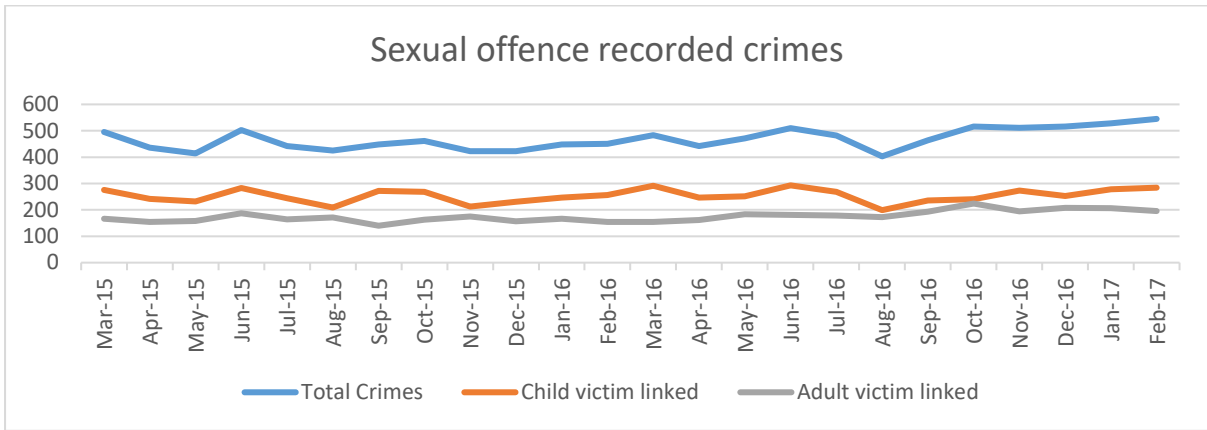
Non-recent abuse continues to form a significant proportion of reported offences and therefore any increases in sexual crime recording do not necessarily indicate an increase in current offending. This increase in reporting of non-recent offences is believed to signify continuing increased confidence in West Yorkshire Police from survivors and more efficient and effective multi-agency working in our safeguarding teams.

Reports of concerns can come into the police from a variety of sources including from the public, external partners or into a specialist District Safeguarding team from another West Yorkshire Police staff member.

Each case will be carefully reviewed across the agencies and consultation with the Crown Prosecution Service will be via their dedicated Rape and Serious Sexual Offences (RASSO) team.

**REPORT DETAILS**

Figures provided by Performance Review for the purposes of this report indicate a 9% increase in recorded sexual crime between the periods 1<sup>st</sup> March 2015 – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2016 and 1<sup>st</sup> March 2016 – 28<sup>th</sup> February 2017. This does not necessarily mean an increase in sexual offending as previous mentioned.



N.B the volume of positive outcomes shown appears to decrease in the latter months data, although this will be due to investigations ongoing.

## ONGOING WORK AND DEVELOPMENTS

- The Force Serious Sexual Offences (SSO) policy is being reviewed following Benchmarking across England and Wales to ensure best practice. The cases which the Force will operationally deem to be an SSO will be amended and investigative responsibility clearly defined. Again considerable consultation with Districts has occurred in pulling this together.
- The welfare provision for suspects in all sexual cases (involving both child and adult victims) has been reviewed following the introduction of the Form 330 provision a year ago (attached in the supporting documents.) This ensures our duty of care to

individuals arrested for sexual offending or attending at police stations as suspects voluntarily.

- The SCGU has, in consultation with Districts, revisited and revamped the Force Standard Operating Procedures regarding a number of safeguarding responsibilities including Sexual Offending and Serious Sexual Offending.
- SCGU conduct 6 monthly audits in relation to serious sexual offences. This area of Safeguarding was audited in February 2017 and reports highlighting key findings and recommendations have been provided to districts. A previous audit was carried out in July 2016 and the recent audit included a reality check to monitor the implementation of previous recommendations for each district. Key recommendations related to the correct coding of Storm Logs in the force, deployment of appropriately trained staff as first response and crime recording. Albeit there was a marked improvement since the previous audit in 2016.
- Specially Trained Officer (STO) training has been re-invigorated following a review of district STO resources. STO officers receive a week's training course in responding to sexual offences and courses have been run in January 17 and February 17 with further courses scheduled for April 17 and later in the year. This will ensure that districts are more able to respond to victims needs with specialist staff.
- Mountain Healthcare Ltd are the providers of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) service in YaTH. Both the Adult and Child services are run from the Hazlehurst Centre. Operationally the SARC is running smoothly and the Force is happy with the service Mountain Healthcare are providing to victims of sexual offences. There are currently discussions with commissioners to find a larger building for the SARC in West Yorkshire due to the number of cases and the limited space in the current building.
- An evaluation feedback process on the police engagement with survivors of abuse was introduced by the Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVA) across the Force area in January 2017. This covers areas including initial police response to any complaint, the investigation stage and post investigation issues, for example Court Cases. The amount of feedback being returned by ISVA's to the police has been very low and ongoing work is underway by the Safeguarding Central Governance Unit as to how this may be improved upon so that future engagement with survivors of abuse can be more effective.

## **STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS**

The Force failing to properly acknowledge and address a victim's complaint correctly would be extremely damaging to public confidence as it would if a suspect was not correctly identified.

It is important that advice and guidance is easily available to frontline staff in order to ensure an effective response to victim complaints.

Districts report that work levels within safeguarding teams show no sign of abating with welfare issues regarding staff being of constant concern.

Staffing District Safeguarding Units to reflect increase in demand may be a necessary option in the future, however in doing so this may have a direct effect on other policing areas of business.

## EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

There are currently no issues associated with this section as our response to Sexual Abuse is not determined by issues such as gender, age or sexual orientation.

Force policy dictates that victims of sexual abuse are able to request the gender of any attending officer, whether they are a STO, RVLO or Safeguarding officer. It is therefore important that the force monitor the gender balance of specially trained officers attending future training courses so this allows districts to maintain their flexibility regarding deployment.

## SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

None