



Peter McCall

Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner Report

Lessons Learned

Date: 15th October 2018

Agenda Item No: 7

Originating Officer: Stephanie Stables, Partnerships and Strategy Manager

Executive Summary:

The purpose of this report is to present to the Police and Crime Panel the actions taken by the Commissioner to gain assurance that Cumbria Constabulary has made sufficient progress in safeguarding vulnerable people, following the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC)¹ investigation into the death of Poppi Worthington in December 2012.

Recommendation:

That the Panel notes this report.

1. Introduction & Background

1.1 The Accountability Framework

1.1.1 The Commissioner and the Chief Constable have specific roles to fulfil and from a legal perspective, it is the Commissioner's role to hold the Chief Constable and the force to account for performance. To help facilitate this a structure of assurance and accountability has been agreed to hold the Constabulary to account for the delivery of an effective and efficient police service. This structure incorporates planned meetings, including:

- Fortnightly meetings between the Commissioner and Chief Constable to discuss current issues and demands on the Constabulary, and allow a more detailed scrutiny of areas for improvement.

- Monthly meetings between senior managers from both the OPCC and Constabulary to enable both organisations to work collaboratively, discuss and identify solutions to address performance challenges. In addition, review action plans for the delivery of the Police and Crime Plan and Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue (HMICFRS).

1.1.2 These are underpinned by a robust performance management framework and agreed reports which are scrutinised at the Commissioner's Public Accountability Conferences.

1.1.3 It is through this accountability framework that the former Commissioner Richard Rhodes and the current Commissioner, Peter McCall, have challenged the Constabulary and sought evidence so they can be assured that significant improvements have been made by the Constabulary in how it protects vulnerable people.

1.2 The IPCC Report and Independent Review

1.2.1 The IPCC report – Operation Lavender – enabled a comprehensive action plan to be fully implemented across the Constabulary to address inadequate operational procedures from 2012. This included bespoke training to frontline officers, additional training for officers investigating child death, peer reviews and much more defined working with the Local Safeguarding Children's Board.

1.2.2 In 2016, two HMICFRS inspections 'National Child Protection Inspection' and 'Police Effectiveness' highlighted areas where further improvements were required within the safeguarding and public protection command. A series of recommendations were made, with the over-arching advice being that the Constabulary immediately undertakes a review of its Safeguarding Hub. The Commissioner funded an independent organisation (Ad Esse) to conduct this review with the aim of identifying gaps within the Safeguarding Hub and providing solutions to address these.

1.2.3 The Constabulary established a Business Improvement Unit to support senior managers to deliver the HMICFRS recommendations and other business improvement actions (including Operation Lavender and Ad Esse) through internal inspection and/or audit. All actions were incorporated into a 'Big 6' Business Improvement Plan and regular updates were provided to the OPCC through its agreed accountability framework.

2. Actions Taken

2.1 Over the last six years, the Constabulary has undertaken an enormous amount of work and has made a number of improvements to ensure that mistakes in complex crime investigations, such as the death of a child, mitigate the risk of this happening again. The Commissioner has received regular updates which have provided reassurance that significant progress has been made. The actions taken focused on:

- The delivery of a comprehensive training programme to all officers.
- The supervision of complex investigations.
- A review of processes and procedures.
- Improved partnership working.

3. Further Assurance

- 3.1 The Commissioner is further assured that the significant work undertaken by the Constabulary has been implemented and embedded, following an independent review by HMICFRS. Following the National Child Protection Inspection 2016, HMICFRS conducted a National Child Protection Post Inspection Review of Cumbria Constabulary and published its report in September 2017. The report stated: “Cumbria Constabulary continues to demonstrate strong commitment to improving its services for the protection of vulnerable people. Inspectors found clear evidence of strong leadership and oversight by the chief officer team and the senior officers who manage the public protection command; they have acted decisively following the 2016 inspection, and have demonstrated a strong commitment to protecting children and improving practices. Since the 2016 inspection, the Constabulary has also reviewed its public protection structures, systems and processes, and invested extra **resources in child protection.**”
- 3.2 This is reinforced again, by HMICFRS in its recent PEEL: Police Effectiveness 2017 Inspection, published March 2018, which graded the Constabulary as GOOD. This inspection included an assessment of the Constabulary’s capability to undertake complex crime investigations effectively, stating “Cumbria Constabulary investigates crimes involving vulnerable victims to a good standard”. It also stated “Cumbria Constabulary is good at keeping people safe...HMICFRS is pleased to see improvements in how the Constabulary protects **vulnerable people.**”
- 3.3 The Commissioner continues to monitor progress against HMICFRS recommendations and other national reports through its accountability framework, including his Public Accountability Conferences. Cumbria Constabulary is a good force that is working hard to keep us all safe.