

South Yorkshire
Mayoral Combined Authority
11 Broad Street West
Sheffield, S1 2BQ

04 June 2026

To: His Majesty's Inspectorate of Probation and His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services

Dear Chief Inspectors

Response from Kilvinder Vigurs, South Yorkshire's Deputy Mayor, to the HMICFRS inspection report – The policing response to the investigation of online child sexual abuse and the management of registered sex offenders

The findings of this report are gratefully received, particularly given that South Yorkshire Police was selected as a participating force within this spotlight inspection. Demand and complexity in this area of policing continue to grow, and it is an area where the public rightly expects a high level of assurance that robust processes are in place to ensure an effective policing response.

Nine recommendations were made for Chief Constables to address. I am assured through my existing governance mechanisms that each recommendation is being actively progressed. I will continue to monitor to ensure sustained delivery and effective implementation.

(Recommendation 1) By 31 October 2026, forces should:

- **review existing practices to make sure they use the Kent internet risk assessment tool and the prioritisation tool 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.**

I agree with this recommendation. Accurate and dynamic risk assessments are essential to effective risk management. The Kent internet risk assessment and prioritisation tool are utilised as standard practice within South Yorkshire, and this helps support a consistent approach and strong oversight across all teams. I will track progress through existing governance mechanisms.

(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.

Whilst I fully agree in principle with the recommendation regarding ensuring effective resourcing is in place to manage the risks associated with serious sexual and violent offenders, this is challenging in practice.

We have seen demand increase year on year, with a sustained rise in the number of registered sexual and violent offenders and significant growth in online offending, particularly offences involving children. This is a highly specialist area, and it is important to recognise that capability cannot be addressed through simple redistribution of resources. South Yorkshire Police has responded by strengthening specialist capability through targeted investment, enhanced digital and investigative skills, and improved approaches to managing online offending, all of which are critical to effective safeguarding and risk management. This is supporting more effective safeguarding and risk management, but the growing demand requires continued investment and recognition at a national level that policing must be adequately resourced to effectively safeguard victims and pursue perpetrators.

This focused response in South Yorkshire is being delivered within a wider financial context of constrained resources and competing operational demands. While protecting the public from sexual and violent harm is a clear priority, resourcing decisions require continual prioritisation to balance demand, risk and affordability. Maintaining sufficient capacity and capability will therefore remain an ongoing challenge, requiring regular review through established governance and resource allocation processes.

(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.**

Whilst I agree with this recommendation the resourcing required to maintain compliance for high volume crime types should not be underestimated. Embedding a proactive approach to bail management is critical to safeguarding victims and ensuring emerging risks are identified and effectively managed. Progress will be tracked through existing governance mechanisms.

(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.

While I support the principle and intent of this recommendation, I would emphasise that the direct commissioning and provision of third-party support services sits outside the operational control of the police. Consequently, local forces are limited in their ability to fully deliver against this recommendation.

I will ensure South Yorkshire Police focuses on elements within its control: providing accurate and accessible information, strengthening partnership engagement, and ensuring clear signposting to available support services.

For services commissioned through my office, it is helpful that we retain direct oversight for all crime victim support services. Provision is constrained by limited availability of specialist support, increasing demand, and insecure funding. This challenge is not exclusive to South Yorkshire. We have recently extended our Independent Sexual Violence Advisor Service and

commissioned a revised, multi-crime victim support contract to help maintain/strengthen local provisions.

(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.**

I support this recommendation. Strong data management and governance are essential for effectively managing registered sex offenders. South Yorkshire Police already make good use of data dashboards to forecast demand and inform decision-making. The force also proactively complete national benchmarking exercises.

These insights are invaluable for frontline supervisors, helping to drive performance, tasking and coordination through governance processes. Continued alignment with ViSOR standards and improvements in data quality will further strengthen risk assessment and management.

(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.**

I agree with this recommendation. Effective systems and data analysis are a key in forecasting demand and managing risk within sexual and violent offender teams. While such insights cannot remove the impact of increasing demand, they allow supervisors to better understand pressures and proactively manage workloads, including outstanding assessments, plans and visits.

It should be recognised that forecasts are not entirely future-proof, and must be balanced with the flexibility to respond to changes in legislation or offending patterns. In South Yorkshire, I am assured that existing performance frameworks help set and monitor staffing ratios and highlight outstanding activity. Maintaining this balance will continue to present challenges and will require ongoing oversight and review.

(Recommendation 10) By 31 October 2026, forces should make sure that:

- **home visits are unannounced and carried out in pairs to comply with the College of Policing 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 Police National Database checks on registered sex offenders.**

I agree with this recommendation. The College of Policing's Authorised Professional Practice ensures both the safety of offender managers and strengthens safeguards within risk assessment processes. It is important that deviations from guidance are appropriately authorised, clearly recorded, and subject to oversight. We fully recognise, however, that this sits within a broader context of increasing and changing demand against finite resources, which presents an ongoing challenge. The continued growth in the number and complexity of sexual and violent offenders, particularly in relation to online offending, means that maintaining compliance with guidance, timeliness of activity, and quality of risk management requires sustained focus and careful prioritisation. Progress will be monitored through existing governance arrangements.

(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.**

I agree with this recommendation. Investment in the wellbeing of officers and staff working in these roles is essential particularly given the risks associated with repeated exposure to sexual and violent offending and indecent images, which can have a significant cumulative impact on their psychological health and resilience. Welfare provision must be accessible, and supervisors must be equipped to recognise signs of trauma and burnout.

Psychological health screening is in place for all ViSOR teams and those within the Internet Sexual Offences team. South Yorkshire Police has also recently completed a review for those in Protecting Vulnerable People roles, including analysis of engagement levels and alignment with findings from a recent wellbeing survey. This has provided a strong baseline to inform future improvements and I will continue to track delivery through established governance mechanisms.

(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.

I agree with this recommendation. The report highlights that high-performing forces demonstrate strong partnership working with the National Probation Service and I am

assured that in South Yorkshire there are service level agreements in place to help maintain working relationships and an escalation process which strengthens accountability both ways. Through my role as Chair of the Local Criminal Justice Board, I have convened a number of stakeholder events to strengthen collaboration with statutory partners and will continue to build on this work. These forums provide opportunities to enhance existing relationships and support the delivery of this recommendation, ensuring safeguarding opportunities are maximised. To strengthen oversight further, as Deputy Mayor for Policing and Crime, I will be looking to submit a request for membership at the South Yorkshire MAPPA Management Board.

Commenting more broadly

I was pleased to see a number of areas in South Yorkshire highlighted as positive case studies, notably the effective use of data dashboards to manage demand and the proactive use of polygraph testing for intelligence gathering. While this is encouraging, it is important to note that the report also highlights financial challenges that limit wider use of this tool across other forces, despite its potential for increased application as the nature of sexual offending evolves. The report concludes that the Home Office, the College of Policing and the NPCC should consider how national access can be achieved in an inclusive and cost-effective way. Until the cost-gap analysis is completed and the funding gap is addressed, this resource will remain vulnerable to being discontinued.

Yours sincerely,
Kilvinder Vigurs



Deputy Mayor for Policing & Crime