

BEV HUGHES
DEPUTY MAYOR
OF GREATER
MANCHESTER

Rt Hon Priti Patel,
Secretary of State for the Home Department
2 Marsham Street
London
SW1P 4DF

9th April 2020

Dear Home Secretary

SUBJECT: The multi-agency response to child sexual abuse in the family environment

I write in response to the recent multi-agency inspection to child sexual abuse in the family environment. Although Greater Manchester was not one of the six areas in focus as part of the inspection, I wanted to provide an overview of the work we are undertaking to safeguard our children and young people.

All children and young people have the right to a loving, supportive and safe home environment. Their protection of is a key priority in Greater Manchester and our partners continue to adapt to new challenges to ensure effective safeguarding continues.

The ongoing Covid-19 pandemic clearly demonstrates the challenges faced as families are asked to break established routines and remain at home for what is proving to be significant lengths of time. We are acutely alive to the potential risk factors that this isolation presents and are working with our strategic partners and front line practitioners to respond accordingly.

We are in the process of disseminating information across relevant partnerships to ensure school staff and practitioners are aware of the key messages and escalation procedures to raise any concerns regarding child welfare and safeguarding.

Work is also under way to review the risk of children and young people who display harmful sexual behaviour towards other children. Partners are being asked to monitor this across Greater Manchester and to collate and share information and details of good practice in relation to meaningful data collation and practical interventions. We are also proposing to undertake some academic research into this area in the near future to inform better our understanding and decision making.

The support offered to children and young people was something that was commented upon in the report. In Greater Manchester the support offer through the Sexual Assault Referral Centre includes a dedicated paediatrician to provide a bespoke response to children. This is a model that works well at

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present and I would be happy to offer further information on this practice if that would be beneficial to you.

In addition, through the delivery of our new Health and Justice Strategy, we will be placing an emphasis on trauma-informed approaches that involve moving to a position where public services in Greater Manchester regularly and consistently use more therapeutic practices, which recognise the impact of previous trauma or difficult life experiences. The use of such practices will improve our understanding of the health, care and wider social needs of people in contact with the criminal justice system.

The inspection report provides brief details of the effective work undertaken in those areas visited. If possible, it would be of benefit to all Police and Crime Commissioners and Chief Constables to share further details of the interventions and support mechanisms to facilitate local discussion and consideration.

Finally, there remains a challenge nationally to progress investigations where the victim and offender reside in different police areas. I would like to see a national programme of work undertaken to review this to ensure partners are provided with a consistent mechanism to effectively progress investigations whilst ensuring the victim remains supported throughout.

Yours sincerely



Baroness Beverley Hughes
Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester
Policing, Crime and Criminal Justice