

# Fighting child sexual exploitation, keeping vulnerable people safe, and caring for victims in Manchester

Newsletter

January 2024

## Preventing and reducing CSE, and keeping vulnerable young people safe

Greater Manchester Police (GMP) and Manchester City Council (MCC) are continuing to lead the way in fighting, preventing, and reducing child sexual exploitation across Greater Manchester. Having pioneered the establishment of the Complex Safeguarding Hub in 2018, which has now been replicated by all 10 districts in Greater Manchester, the partnership is now preparing to share learnings and best practice with colleagues across the region. The Complex Safeguarding Hub was opened in Greenheys Police Station in October 2018. Built on the firm foundations laid by Project Phoenix from 2012 onwards, it co-locates Greater Manchester Police, Manchester City Council, local health services, and other key partners to enable the agencies to work in an effective partnership and identify, engage with, and safeguard young people who are at risk of exploitation whilst stopping offenders in their tracks.

“We are proud of the progress the partnership has made in preventing and responding to child sexual exploitation since the formation of Project Phoenix in 2012. The assurance review, commissioned in 2017 and published in 2019, only reiterated the importance of the work we had already started and helped us make further improvements to ensure that we are keeping vulnerable young people safe and relentlessly pursuing those who intend to harm them. Leading the way is a great position to be in and it is a privilege to be able to help colleagues across Greater Manchester implement best practice to ensure the delivery of consistent, quality service.”

**Detective Chief Inspector Sarah Harris**  
City of Manchester

## CASE STUDY: Multi-agency assessments of potential victims and care homes

In March 2021, the Complex Safeguarding Hub was commissioned to assess potential victims and care homes within Manchester between 2002 and 2005 to identify any missed opportunities to investigate CSE. The assessment of hundreds of young people and five premises was completed in late 2023 and resulted in the quality assurance of Operation

Green Jacket. Learnings and best practice will now be shared with teams across Greater Manchester.

## Investigating and solving multi-victim, multi-offender CSE

The partnership is supported by the force's Child Sexual Exploitation Major Investigation Team (formerly the Force CSE Unit). Established in 2021 to investigate the most serious and complex cases, CSE MIT is made up of police officers and staff who are specially trained to work with partner agencies to conduct victim-centred, suspect-focussed, and evidence-based investigations.

## CASE STUDY: Operation Green Jacket

Operation Green Jacket was launched in 2019, ahead of the publication of 'An assurance review of Operation Augusta', to investigate the child sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people in the South Manchester area in the early 2000s. To date, 50 suspects have been arrested and one has been charged with offences which are unrelated to Operation Green Jacket but which came to light as a result of the investigation.



"Operation Green Jacket shows how the approach to tackling child sexual exploitation has been significantly strengthened, with Greater Manchester Police and the Council working together to protect children and pursue offenders. The Council has made staffing and resources available to the operation to help ensure no stone is left unturned in identifying potential victims and offenders, and ensuring that survivors are supported. Agencies have a responsibility not just to apologise for failings in the past - which we have done wholeheartedly - but also put things right so that victims can expect better and offenders can expect to be pursued. We can never be complacent and we will continue to improve to meet the threats that children face. But Operation Green Jacket shows how far we have come in transforming the approach to these challenges."

### **Councillor Garry Bridges**

Executive Member for Early Years, Children and Young People for Manchester City Council

### **Caring for victims and survivors**

GMP and MCC have promised victims and survivors of child sexual abuse 'we're ready when you are, and we'll walk alongside you'. Whilst criminal justice outcomes are one objective of investigations, the overarching aim of operations like Green Jacket is to ensure victims and survivors are offered the support they want or need; to help them make informed decisions about their next steps; and to take those steps when they feel they are ready to do so. The partnership also meets with the National Police Chief Council's Hydrant Programme (Operation Hydrant) and the National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC) to ensure that the service delivered to victims and survivors is reflective of nationally-recognised best practice

**HYDRANT  
PROGRAMME**

Supporting child protection  
and abuse investigation



**napac**

The National Association for  
People Abused in Childhood

"As a partnership, we have done a great deal of learning since the early 2000s and, in fact, since 2012. We committed to learning from the past and to putting victims and survivors at the centre of our investigations - so we developed comprehensive victim engagement strategies, which are considerate of the traumatic impact these crimes can have in both the short and long terms. Before contact is made with a survivor, a multi-agency team – including subject matter experts - carefully considers what each agency knows about the individual to ensure they are offered a relevant package of support from the outset. Some choose to engage with the investigation immediately, whilst others are unsure or feel unable to at that time – in these cases, we work with them to agree next steps but our message is always that we're ready when they are, that they'll be listened to, and that they'll be taken seriously."

**Detective Chief Inspector Zaheer Ali**  
CSE MIT

"It is truly gratifying to see how GMP's approach to victims and survivors and their joint work with Manchester City Council on this has evolved. A question often asked is what is the number one priority for survivors when they engage with the criminal justice system? NAPAC knows from years of operating and analysing our national support service that the answer for many survivors is appropriate support. Therefore, GMP's renewed focus on a holistic, collaborative way of working is laudable. It means that survivors who engage with GMP are properly supported at every step of their reporting journey, in a way that puts choice and empowerment first for them".

### **Gabrielle Shaw**

Chief Executive of NAPAC

### **Signs of Child Sexual Exploitation**

- Unhealthy or inappropriate sexual behaviour
- Being frightened of some people, places or situations.
- Being secretive
- Sharp changes in mood or character
- Having money or things they can't or won't explain
- Physical signs of abuse, like bruises or bleeding in their genital or anal area
- Alcohol or drug misuse
- Sexually transmitted infections.
- Pregnancy
- Having an older boyfriend or girlfriend
- Staying out late or overnight
- Having a new group of friends
- Missing from home or care, or stopping going to school or college
- Hanging out with older people, other vulnerable people or in antisocial groups
- Involved in a gang
- Involved in criminal activities like selling drugs or shoplifting.

Greater Manchester Police can be contacted via **[gmp.police.uk](http://gmp.police.uk)** or **101**. In an emergency, always dial 999.

Concerns can also be reported to Manchester City Council via **0161 234 5001/**  
**[mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk](mailto:mcsreply@manchester.gov.uk)**

Specialist support is available via:  
**St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre**  
0161 276 6515 / [stmaryscentre.org](http://stmaryscentre.org)  
**Manchester Rape Crisis**  
0161 273 4500 / [manchesterrapecrisis.co.uk](http://manchesterrapecrisis.co.uk)  
**We Are Survivors**  
0808 500 2222 / [wearesurvivors.org.uk](http://wearesurvivors.org.uk)