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To: Heather White  
PS/PS(C)

From: Carolyn Hey  
Deputy Chief Inspector  
Date: 28 March 1994  
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**JOINT HMIC/SSI INSPECTION OF JOINT POLICE AND SOCIAL SERVICES  
INVESTIGATION OF CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE ALLEGATIONS IN  
NOTTINGHAMSHIRE: THE JOINT REPORT**

**Problem**

HMIC and SSI are ready to publish their joint inspection report on police and social services investigations of alleged child sexual abuse in Nottinghamshire. The inspection was undertaken in July 1993. It was a further inspection of the arrangements for investigating child sexual abuse allegations in Nottinghamshire, following an earlier inspection that was undertaken in July 1991. A further inspection was required because, at the time of the earlier inspection, Nottinghamshire ACPC did not have in place the procedures required under 'Working Together', and the inspection was not able to judge the quality of their services under those new requirements. The further inspection concentrated on the 48 recommendations which were made following the earlier inspection and did so by examining the actual work in a sample of cases and interviewing social workers and police officers and members of the ACPC.

Nottinghamshire Child Protection Services are under the spotlight at present because of their failings in relation to the Leanne White case. The present report is generally positive about the quality of working relationships between the police and social services. This was adversely commented on in the Leanne White case, and care has been taken to

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disassociate the findings from this present inspection, focussed on child sexual abuse, from the arrangements which were in place to investigate the allegation of physical abuse in the case of Leanne White. PS(C) may wish to reinforce this in a press statement, so that the public is in no doubt that the report does not excuse Nottinghamshire from the work it is currently undertaking to put matters right arising from the Section 8 review into the death of Leanne White.

### **Recommendation**

That PS(C) notes the report and considers issuing a press statement to make it clear that this report is not directly relevant to the circumstances under which Leanne White died, and that he has requested a further inspection of Nottinghamshire's Child Protection Services in the summer 1994, related to physical abuse and neglect, with a report to be made to him by the end of September.

### **Background**

The origins of this present inspection stemmed from the controversy between police and social services in Nottinghamshire arising from allegations of 'satanic abuse', which arose from the Broxtowe case. Working relationships between police and social services were alleged to be in complete disarray, with children at risk as a result. In September 1990, in his report to the Social Services Committee David White, Director of Social Services, asked for the help of the department in resolving the conflicts and putting working relationships on a more orderly basis. As a result, Nottinghamshire agreed to undertake a joint police and social services review of the cases allegedly at risk and to implement the lessons arising from them. As a result it was established that there were no children currently at risk. In conjunction with the review, the ACPC were to introduce by April 1991 new procedures required under 'Working Together'.

A joint HMIC/SSI inspection was to follow in July 1991, based on the new procedures, with the task of checking whether the lessons learned from the joint review had been implemented. The inspection did establish that, on the whole, working relationships

between police officers and social workers were on a much better basis, and senior officers in the two services had set up a review panel to manage potentially controversial cases of alleged 'organised abuse'. However, the inspection team made a very large number of recommendations for improvement and the new procedures were not implemented until April 1992. For those reasons Minister felt that a further inspection should be undertaken, in two years, to ensure that the better working relationships were being maintained, and were doing so under the new procedures when they were introduced.

This most recent inspection, undertaken in July 1993, has found further improvement on broadly satisfactory working relationships between police and social services in investigating child sexual abuse. There were no cases in which there were any significant deficits in the joint work between the two services. Both services, especially the police, had reorganised themselves to ensure a greater degree of specialisation in this work which, together with joint training, had achieved a very satisfactory quality of joint investigation. While the joint arrangements between the two services were not without failings, they were neither serious nor numerous, and would be well within the expectations of joint arrangements elsewhere. The inspectors had more reservations about the quality of collaboration and co-operation within the ACPC, but even this had improved since the last inspection. Further improvements are being sought, with urgency, prompted by the findings and recommendations arising from the death of Leanne White and the deaths of other children.

## **Conclusion**

This present inspection report provides a broadly satisfactory picture of the way in which police and social services were investigating child sexual abuse in July 1993. The great majority of the recommendations made, separately and jointly to the police and social services, have either been fully or mainly acted upon, with only a small minority which have received no attention. There was still a lack of sufficient cohesion in the ACPC but there was improvement and further is expected, prompted by the Leanne White case.

While the report gives credit where it is due, it distances itself from the failings in the investigative arrangements for child physical abuse and the current requirement on

Nottinghamshire to put its house in order. Police and social services should not be able to use this report to obviate the need for a change in their approaches to investigating physical abuse and neglect of children. PS(C) may wish to strengthen this distinction through a press statement which reminds them that a further inspection of Nottinghamshire's Child Protection Services will take place in the Summer, followed by a report to him by September.

Arrangements are in hand to co-ordinate the press statements made by DH and a joint statement by Nottinghamshire SSD and Police.

**DPA**

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