



METROPOLITAN POLICE SERVICE
Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse Command

Briefing note re Operation Daybreak

Introduction

This note is to brief the SIO regarding identified best practice in relation to historic child abuse investigations and may be shared with the Gold Group for Operation Daybreak.

Background

I am currently the SIO for Op.Yewtree, the national investigation into offending by the late Jimmy Savile, which was instigated on 4/10/12. I have been asked to peer review this Nottinghamshire investigation and my comments and suggestions should be read in conjunction with the development plan written by DCI Rob Griffin. This is a live investigation and as such I am minded that this report may become subject to disclosure, I have therefore restricted the contents to strategic advice.

Synopsis of Investigations

The current operation commenced in July 2011, but was preceded by an operation in 2010 and also by Operation Harpoon in 1988/9. The offences centre around allegations of physical and sexual abuse, perpetrated by staff at residential children's homes against the residents.

Terms of Reference

I suggest that the following generic ToR could be adapted to suit the current investigation.

1. To provide a proportional and consistent policing response, putting the victims or potential victims at the heart of our work. To enable victims to find assistance and possible closure through the appropriate referral or partner agencies and third sector support networks
2. To ensure the ethical recording of criminal offences emanating from victim accounts or third parties
3. To secure and preserve evidence in relation to criminal offences involving persons who can be subject of further investigation.
4. To reassure the wider community that the police are achieving its objective of proportionality and consistency, whilst bringing to justice those suspected of committing offences
5. To enable other organisations to learn lessons and draw conclusions from the facts established within this assessment.

Management of Risk

This matter is already subject of reports within the media and civil litigation; there appear therefore to be potential vulnerabilities for the police and other partners and stakeholders. These relate to public confidence, transparency and reputation. There is also an ongoing duty to safeguard potential future victims from those persons of interest known to the investigation but still employed in positions of trust.

The level of resourcing, cost and outcomes will inevitably become the subject of scrutiny and speculation, the operation has been running for over two years and that in itself may now become a matter of conjecture.

To give some context, the MPS has seen a 70% increase in both historic rape and in Serious Sexual Offences since the start of Op.Yewtree. This is starting to be replicated

across the UK and within Nottinghamshire. At the same time public and victim expectations have risen considerably and crimes relating to current and historic child abuse are now exposed to greater media awareness and profile.

Resourcing

It is clear that the investigation has grown in size and complexity, but that the original 'proportionate' staffing levels do not appear to have been revised upwards accordingly. There is some evidence that the HOLMES account is becoming difficult to service with over 56 victims and numerous persons of interest. To focus energies as per the development document provided by DCI Rob Griffin would appear to be a positive step.

Best practise would have been to use staff trained in Child Protection eg SCAIDP or at least to have a dedicated team that have experience of investigating historic child abuse. Which I understand was not initially possible.

I would expect on such an investigation to have an SIO at DCI level and ideally PIP3 trained. I have been advised that due to the retirement of a number of key senior investigators this was not possible, but should be reflected upon. In my opinion the level of detail now known to the SIO probably precludes a handover, but whether she should retain responsibility for the Force's child abuse teams at the same time as running this enquiry may be worthy of review.

Outcomes

A number of actions have already been taken which should improve the current situation, these include greater liaison with the NSPCC, clarity around the remit for the operation to avoid 'mission creep' and prioritisation of the persons of interest into phases. The level of resourcing will have a direct impact on the rate at which these phases can proceed.

Conclusion

Drawing upon the MPS/NSPCC joint report 'Giving Victims a Voice' and a debrief held of Op.Yewtree I would make the following observations.

1. There is an opportunity to review resourcing including suitability of staff to deal with multi-agency working

2. There needs to be clear victim management strategy, this can best be progressed jointly with the NSPCC. This applies to those where the suspect is deceased or unidentified as well as those still in research.
3. Early Investigative Assessments need to be held with the CPS so that all parties understand the complexity of prosecuting historic abuse and articulate why victims have delayed disclosing.
4. A structure and process to disseminate enquiries and intelligence held within HOLMES to other forces.
5. Co-ordination of media strategy between partners to speak with clarity and uniformity,
6. Use of terminology, there are difficulties when determining what words and phrases to use, both with victims and the public at large. It is important to determine, for example, whether there can be one word for 'victims' used by all relevant agencies. There have been problems associated with using the term 'survivor', but equally, some people dislike being labelled as a 'victim'. However, 'victim' is a neutral, largely inoffensive term to adopt. Another example is clarity on the use of terms such as 'historic' or 'non-recent' abuse.
7. Force solicitors to take responsibility for and the lead in Freedom of Information Act requests and proposed civil actions, to avoid the SIO being drawn away from operational imperatives.

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