



## FREEDOM OF INFORMATION REQUEST



**Request Number:** FOI-2023-00483

**Keyword:** Crime/Incident Statistics Other and Multiple Crime/Incident types

**Subject:** Child Criminal Exploitation

### Request and Answer:

#### Request

I am emailing to request published or unpublished literature from your Police force that focuses on identification and response to child criminal exploitation.

For example;

- Practices for managing child criminal exploitation inquiries, reports, or cases.
- Strategies used by police forces (or partner agencies) to identify potential child criminal exploitation victims and methods to record these (including any flags which are commonly highlighted in CCE cases).
- Strategies used by police forces (or partner agencies) to respond to evidence of child criminal exploitation.
- Multi-agency (local authority, social services, care homes, accommodation, charities) identification, reporting, and response to child criminal exploitation.

#### Answer

Your request for information has now been considered. In respect of Section 1(1)(a) of the Act we can confirm that the Police Service of Northern Ireland (PSNI) does not hold information in relation to your requests. Enquiries made in relation to your request failed to locate any records or documents relevant to your request based on the information you have provided.

However to assist you we can advise; All safeguarding matters regarding Children referred to the Police come through our Central Referral Unit (CRU) and are assessed jointly with Social Services. These will then be referred to the appropriate department within the Police Service for action. The Police Service of Northern Ireland has a dedicated Child Sexual Exploitation Team with officers based in each Trust area, with a single supervision model. All cases are assessed with social services with the safeguarding of the child at the centre, looking at all forms of sexual exploitation. The PSNI reviews all data relating to crime involving children and ensures that an appropriate multi-agency response is provided. The Multi-Agency Support Hubs in Northern Ireland do however share a similar ethos in terms of information sharing to protect the vulnerable.

The operational function of the Multi-Agency Support Hubs is to facilitate bringing key professionals together to allow better quality information sharing and decision making to work together to reduce vulnerability, with all partner agencies working together to ensure the best outcome for the individual.

Since 2021, Multi-Agency Support Hubs are located in all eleven District Council Areas within Northern Ireland, with the most recent one in Belfast. Since October 2020 there has been a Support Hub Steering Group in operation, which is a non-statutory body. It was established to provide a strategic forum for all partners engaged in delivering Support Hubs. The Safeguarding Board for Northern Ireland are represented on the Support Hub Steering Group. Internally the PSNI hold and interoperability meeting for all areas of PSNI dealing with children to ensure an informed and joint up approach. Any reports / concerns or evidence of CCE is managed within these arrangements with partners, but we have not created any literature on the topic yet.

Accordingly, I have determined that the Police Service of Northern Ireland does not hold the information to which you seek access.

You may find the below links to publications from our partners useful:

- Co-operating to safeguard Children and Young People in Northern Ireland

<https://www.health-ni.gov.uk/publications/co-operating-safeguard-children-and-young-people-northern-ireland>

- Protocol for Joint Investigation into Child Abuse NI (2021) Regional Child protection Policy and Procedures

[https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/files/joint\\_invest\\_protocol.pdf](https://www.proceduresonline.com/sbni/files/joint_invest_protocol.pdf)

- SBNI Regional Core Child Protection Policies and Procedures

<https://www.safeguardingni.org/about-sbni/committees-and-panels/committees/policy-and-procedures-committee>

- CHILD EXPLOITATION DISRUPTION TOOLKIT Disruption Tactics – Home office

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit>

If you have any queries regarding your request or the decision please do not hesitate to contact me on 028 9070 0164. When contacting the Corporate Information Branch, please quote the reference number listed at the beginning of this letter.

If you are dissatisfied in any way with the handling of your request, you have the right to request a review. You should do this as soon as possible or in any case within two months of the date of issue of this letter. In the event that you require a review to be undertaken, you can do so by writing to the Corporate Information Manager, Corporate Information Branch, PSNI Headquarters, 65 Knock Road, Belfast, BT5 6LE or by emailing [foi@psni.police.uk](mailto:foi@psni.police.uk).

If, following an Internal Review carried out by an independent decision maker, you remain unhappy about how your request has been handled you have the right to apply in writing to the Information Commissioner, under Section 50 of the Freedom of Information Act, at 'Information Commissioner's Office, Wycliffe House, Water Lane, Wilmslow, Cheshire, SK9 5AF. There are a number of other platforms you can use to contact the ICO and these can be found on the ICO's website at the following link: [Make a complaint | ICO \(https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/\)](https://ico.org.uk/make-a-complaint/).

In most circumstances, the Information Commissioner will not investigate a complaint unless an internal review procedure has been carried out however, the Commissioner has the option to investigate the matter at their discretion.

Please be advised that PSNI replies under Freedom of Information may be released into the public domain via our website @ [www.psni.police.uk](http://www.psni.police.uk)

Personal details in respect of your request have, where applicable, been removed to protect confidentiality.