

Operation Linden factsheet

June 2022

Operation Linden is the collective name given to our independent investigations into complaints and conduct matters relating to South Yorkshire Police's (SYP) handling of reports into non-recent child sexual abuse and exploitation (CSA/E) in Rotherham, South Yorkshire, between 1997 and 2013. Our role is explained below and <u>on our website</u>. You can read about Operation Linden, including our full report and accompanying executive summary on our website.

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To all those survivors who bravely came forward: I want to thank you for complaining to us and speaking about what happened.

I know that the scars of what happened to you continue to affect your daily lives and you have fought bravely for your voices to be heard in the face of considerable challenges.

Many of you will never meet, but you are not alone in what you experienced, and we know some of you may never feel able to share with anyone your experience of abuse and exploitation.

Director General Michael Lockwood, IOPC

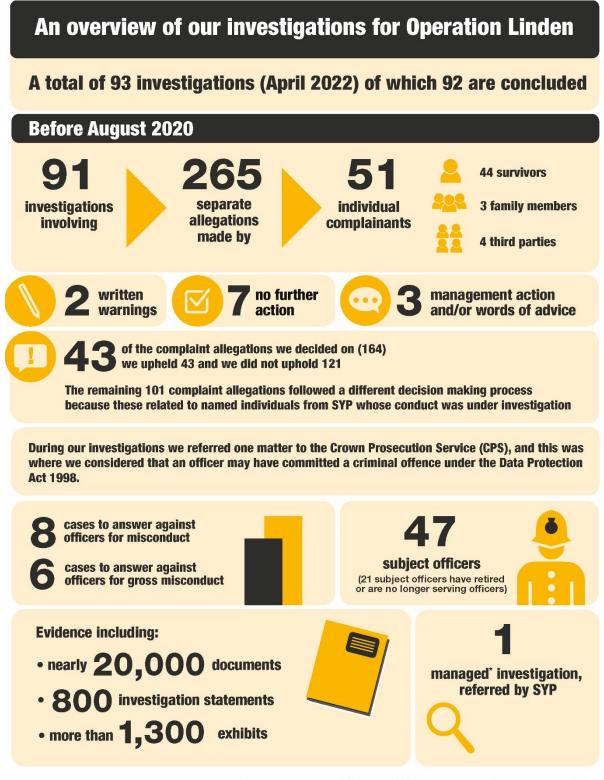


One survivor told us:

I was told repeatedly by the police that I was responsible for my own actions, for allowing myself to be a victim.

During our investigations we had contact with some 75 survivors up until August 2020 and more recently we received two new complaints in relation to CSA/E in Rotherham – one is concluded and the other investigation is ongoing. We investigated a total of 265 complaint allegations and we upheld 43 of the 164 we could make a decision about, up until August 2020. Throughout our investigations it has been important to put survivors' welfare first. Our dedicated Survivor Engagement Management (SEM) team continue to do this every day.

Key statistics and what they mean



* Managed investigation. We no longer conduct managed investigations but did so until 31 January 2020. For a managed investigation we could set the terms of reference, and we directed work for a police force's Professional Standards Department (PSD). Once the police force had finished the investigation it shared its evidence and analysis with us, and we would decide whether the initial terms of reference had been met.

You can <u>read more about our investigations process</u> on our website.

Understanding IOPC investigations

Decision maker:

All our investigations are undertaken on behalf of the IOPC Director General (DG). Staff taking decisions on behalf of the DG can be referred to as decision makers. Amongst other things, they provide strategic direction and scrutinise an investigation undertaken by an IOPC investigator. Prior to 2018, when we were the Independent Police Complaints Commission, investigators had different responsibilities.

Case to answer:

The decision maker will apply a test when reaching their case to answer for breaches of the Police Professional Standards of Behaviour determinations. They will decide whether there is sufficient evidence, upon which a reasonable misconduct meeting or a reasonable disciplinary hearing panel, could find misconduct or gross misconduct proven on the balance of probabilities.

Misconduct hearing:

This is held where someone's conduct would, if proven, amount to gross misconduct. This is a formal event that determines whether a person has committed gross misconduct and what, if any, sanction they should face.

In the case of a police force, the officer must attend the hearing. The qualified, independent, misconduct panel decides what action to take if the offence is admitted or proven. This could be a written warning (or final written warning if the officer has had one already), or dismissal with or without notice. We can direct a police force to hold a misconduct hearing.

No further action (NFA):

No further action is where there is not enough evidence for a police force to send a case to the CPS to prosecute. This results in a decision not to take the investigation further because of a lack of evidence to proceed with a charging decision.

Management action:

The purpose of management action is to deal with misconduct in a timely, proportionate and effective way. It should identify any underlying causes or welfare considerations and improve conduct and prevent a similar situation arising in the future.

South Yorkshire Police



Our investigations found systemic issues/failings in police practice in the following areas of South Yorkshire Police (Rotherham District): leadership, professional curiosity, skills and training, crime recording, multi-agency working, culture, working with victims and survivors.

South Yorkshire Police districts

Our recommendations and action

We made **13 separate recommendations** as a result of our investigations. These have been accepted by SYP and other organisations including the College of Policing. Their responses include actions that:

- directly tackle how survivors are treated when they come forward and report CSA/E
- ensure police officers are better equipped to investigate and deal with CSA/E related offences.

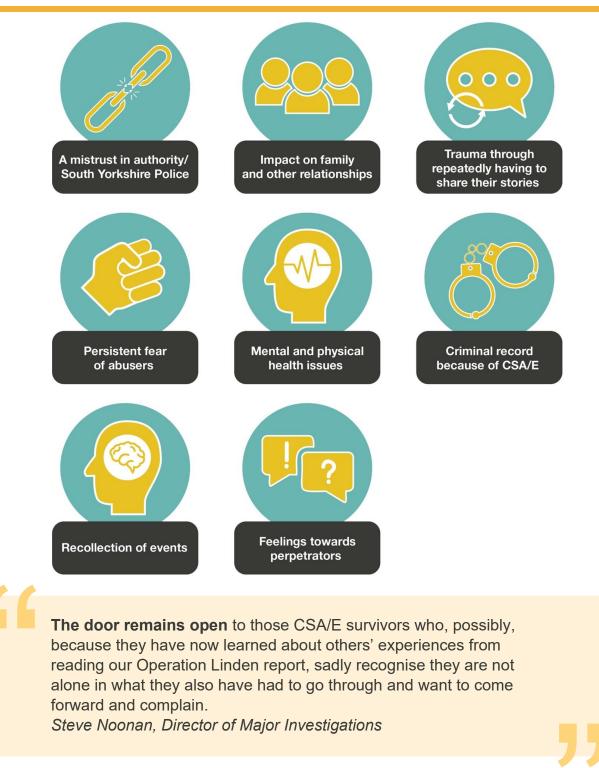
Our recommendations included subjects: training for officers, support provided to survivors, information sharing between forces and better collaboration with partners and the way CSA/E-offences are recorded.

Among the areas for learning we identified are:

- A national recommendation, to the College of Policing, that the voices of survivors should be included in training for officers
- That SYP takes steps to ensure its public protection units are complying with Home Office rules around crime recording
- A review of the laws surrounding offences committed by young people who are being groomed or exploited, which we have asked the Law Commission to carry out to reduce the impact of the abuse on their future life prospects.

We have been encouraged by SYP's response to our recommendations and believe this demonstrates its commitment to taking real action so that issues of the past are never repeated. <u>You can read our 13 recommendations on our website</u>, along with the <u>full responses from SYP</u> and the other agencies (Law Commission, Police Digital Service, College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council).

The effects of CSA/E on survivors



You can contact us in a number of ways:

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We welcome telephone calls in Welsh Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn y Gymraeg