

**LORD LAMING'S REPORT – AN ANALYSIS OF THE
RECOMMENDATIONS FROM A MET PERSPECTIVE**

Recommendation 1

The Home Secretary and the Secretaries of State for Children, Schools and Families, Health, and Justice must collaborate in the setting of explicit strategic priorities for the protection of children and young people and reflect these in the priorities of frontline services.

Comment:

How precisely the government will react to this recommendation is difficult to predict with certainty. Five of the 30 current government's PSA targets already relate explicitly to children and young people. These are:

PSA1. Halve the number of children in poverty by 2010/11

PSA2. Raise the educational achievement of all children and young people

PSA3. Narrow the gap in educational achievement between children from low income and disadvantaged backgrounds and their peers.

PSA4. Improve the health and well-being of children and young people

PSA5. Improve children and young people's safety.

These reflect the five safeguarding outcomes in Every Child Matters: being healthy, staying safe, enjoying and achieving, making a positive contribution and economic well-being.

Lord Laming's recommendation is for the government to be even more explicit in setting priorities and by addressing this to three ministers he is asking for cross-cutting targets or measures.

Response:

In due course there will be a need to review the MPS/MPA Corporate Plan, the TP/SCD and the SCD5 business plans to ensure they take account of any new prioritisation by government. The current MPS/MPA Policing London 2008/11 plan has one of its strategic objectives "reduce serious violence and protect young people" and specifically makes reference to reducing victimisation of young people as well as working with partner agencies to achieve the five safeguarding outcomes.

Recommendation 2

A National Safeguarding Delivery Unit be established to report directly to the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People. It should have a remit that includes:

- < Working with the Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People to set and publish challenging timescales for the implementation of recommendations in this report;
- < Challenging and supporting every Children's Trust in the country to implement recommendations within the agreed timescales, ensuring improvements are made in leadership, staffing, training, supervision and practice across all services;
- < Raising the profile of safeguarding and child protection across children's services, health and police;

The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report, Lord Laming,
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- < Supporting the development of effective national priorities on safeguarding for all frontline services, and the development of local performance management to drive these priorities;
- < Leading a change in culture across frontline services that enables them to work more effectively to protect children;
- < Having regional representation with expertise on safeguarding and child protection that builds supportive advisory relationships with Children's Trusts to drive improved outcomes for children and young people;
- < Working with existing organisations to create a shared evidence base about effective practice including evidence-based programmes, early intervention and preventative services;
- < Supporting the implementation of the recommendations of Serious Case Reviews in partnership with Government Offices and Ofsted, and put in place systems to learn the lessons at local, regional and national level;
- < Gathering best practice on referral and assessment systems for children affected by domestic violence, adult mental health problems, and drugs and alcohol misuse, and provide advice to local authorities, health and police on implementing robust arrangements nationally; and
- < Commissioning training on child protection and safeguarding and on leading these services effectively for all senior political leaders and service managers across those frontline services responsible for safeguarding and child protection.

Comment:

The creation of the NSDU will drive the implementation of Laming's recommendations. It will champion safeguarding and seek to spotlight areas where progress is and is not being made. It is not immediately clear how it will work the relevant inspectorates but it can be assumed that they will seek to work cooperatively and enhance the capacity of the inspectorates to monitor and report on implementation.

Response:

It is clear that the MPS will need to keep a good audit trail of its response to this report and be able to demonstrate unequivocally the improvements it has made. This work will need to sit alongside the Action Plan put in place to respond to the Ofsted Joint Area Review.

Leadership and Accountability

Recommendation 3

The Cabinet Sub-Committee on Families, Children and Young People should ensure that all government departments that impact on the safety of children take action to create a comprehensive approach to children through national strategies, the organisation of their central services, and the models they promote for the delivery of local services. This work should focus initially on changes to improve the child-focus of services delivered by the Department of Health, Ministry of Justice and Home Office.

Comment:

The focus of this recommendation is on national strategies by governmental departments and central services and models of local service delivery. Any

impact on the MPS will be indirect and make take some time to come through. There may be an impact on the National Policing Plan which could filter down to affect the MPS/MPA Policing Plan in due course.

Response:

No immediate response required – monitor developments.

Recommendation 4

The Government should introduce new statutory targets for safeguarding and child protection alongside the existing statutory attainment and early year's targets as quickly as possible. The National Indicator Set should be revised with new national indicators for safeguarding and child protection developed for inclusion in Local Area Agreements for the next Comprehensive Spending Review.

Comment:

Laming identifies that there is "urgent need to develop effective indicators for safeguarding children and young people that will drive positive improvements and secure better outcomes for them". This is not a new conclusion. Under ACPO Child Abuse Investigation Committee work has been ongoing to develop better police activity indicators. DCI Terry Sharpe from SCD5 has been working on this project. Keeping children safe is only one of the five safeguarding outcomes and this recommendation appears to refer to all of them.

Response:

Ensure current work is taken forward and inputted into this new national project.

Recommendation 5

The Department of Health must clarify and strengthen the responsibilities of Strategic Health Authorities for the performance management of Primary Care Trusts on safeguarding and child protection. Formalised and explicit performance indicators should be introduced for Primary Care Trusts.

Comment:

This recommendation cites only the DOH as needing to take action but in the narrative of his report Laming says: "the DOH and the HO have more to do in ensuring that SHAs, PCTs and Police Authorities fully understand their responsibilities and statutory duties to provide appropriate and effective local services for children in need".

Response:

MPA should note the narrative.

Recommendation 6

Directors of Children's Services, Chief Executives of Primary Care Trusts, Police Area Commanders and other senior service managers must regularly review all points of referral where concerns about a child's safety are received to ensure they are sound in terms of the quality of risk assessments, decision

making, onward referrals and multi-agency working.

Comment:

The focus of this recommendation is the Local Safeguarding Children's Board and hence the reference to BCU Commanders (assuming that Area Commanders=BCU Commanders). The LSCB must take a view on the adequacy of local safeguarding provision in the key areas highlighted and take action to improve where necessary.

Response:

This could lead to locally generated lobbying for greater police resources for a borough CAIT. The MPS response to this will need to be open but we should point out the corporate steps being taken to address CAITs' capacity through the SCD5 business case for more resources.

Recommendation 7

All Directors of Children's Services who do not have direct experience or background in safeguarding and child protection must appoint a senior manager within their team with the necessary skills and experience.

Comment:

Not a recommendation with police applicability.

Response:

None needed.

Recommendation 8

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should organise regular training on safeguarding and child protection and on effective leadership for all senior political leaders and managers across frontline services.

Comment:

No parallel recommendation is made for senior police managers.

Response:

The Multi-Agency Critical Incident Exercise (MACIE) training devised by NCALT is available for this purpose and a new round of training is being offered to all boroughs in London over the coming months. This training should be built into MPS plans into the future.

Recommendation 9

Every Children's Trust should ensure that the needs assessment that informs their Children and Young People's Plan regularly reviews the needs of all children and young people in their area, paying particular attention to the general need of children and those in need of protection. The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit should support Children's Trusts with this work. Government Offices should specifically monitor and challenge Children's Trusts on the quality of this analysis.

Comment:

Laming also remarks that the needs analysis for the CYPP should draw on the data of all partner agencies and include information about the impact on children and young people of domestic violence, adult alcohol and drug dependency, and adult mental health difficulties.

Response:

Monitor how Children's Trusts in London respond to this and what information they will require.

Support for Children

Recommendation 10

Ofsted should revise the inspection and improvement regime for schools giving greater prominence to how well schools are fulfilling their responsibilities for child protection.

Comment:

No immediate applicability to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 11

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise *Working Together to Safeguard Children* to set out clear expectations at all points where concerns about a child's safety are received, ensuring intake/duty teams have sufficient training and expertise to take referrals and that staff have immediate, on-site support available from an experienced social worker. Local authorities should take appropriate action to implement these changes.

Comment:

In the narrative Laming makes clear that all service providers "must look critically at how they receive referrals, the point known as their 'front door'." The police 'front door' is the Referral Desk situated within CAITs across London.

Response:

Monitor responses to this recommendation and ensure practice on SCD5 Referral Desks keep up with improvements being made elsewhere. Improvements are already planned as part of the JAR Action Plan.

Recommendation 12

The Department of Health and the Department for Children, Schools and Families must strengthen current guidance and put in place the systems and training so that staff in Accident and Emergency departments are able to tell if a child has recently presented at any Accident and Emergency department and if a child is the subject of a Child Protection Plan. If there is any cause for concern, staff must act accordingly, contacting other professionals, conducting further medical examinations of the child as appropriate and necessary, and ensuring no child is discharged whilst concerns for their safety or well-being remain.

Comment:

Not focused on the role of police but the HMIC identified a need for a review of SCD5 SOPs in relation to attending medical examinations, some of which may be in A&E departments. This has been included within the JAR Action Plan.

Response:

Progress within JAR Action Plan.

Recommendation 13

Children's Trusts must ensure that all assessments of need for children and their families include evidence from all the professionals involved in their lives, take account of case histories and significant events (including previous assessments) and above all must include direct contact with the child.

Comment:

Laming states there must be a joint or parallel assessment with all professionals concerned for a child's safety involved. This will involve sharing information and single agency assessments and attending case conferences. The requirement is for direct contact with the child by one or more of the agencies. Laming acknowledges that these principles are well embedded in some services, but that there is work to be done to make improvements.

Response:

Consistency of initial assessments is an issue within the JAR Action Plan (AFI13) and is an element in others. Delivering the JAR Action Plan and coordinating with individual LSCB's plans will ensure this is taken forward.

Recommendation 14

Local authorities must ensure that 'Children in Need', as defined by Section 17 of the Children Act 1989, have early access to effective specialist services and support to meet their needs.

Comment:

In this part of his report Laming concentrates on one of the key issues from the Baby P case – the trigger point for care proceedings. He states: "There should be constant monitoring of the progress of children in need by all agencies involved with the family. Where children are supported at home, the child protection plan must clearly identify the objectives to be achieved, with timescales, that signal either the withdrawal of support to the family or, if the objectives are not achieved, indicate the point when further action must be taken. This is particularly important in cases of child neglect where often there is no single event that 'triggers' matters escalating to an application for a court order. In such cases parents may, or may not, be cooperating and the extent of the risk of harm to the child may increase over time. Realistic timescales need to be applied for these cases to ensure a child is not subjected to long-term neglect. Signs of non-compliance by parents, or indeed threat or manipulation, must form part of the decision to protect a child". 'Effective' specialist services needs to be properly understood in this

context.

Response:

Not directly related to police. Requires monitoring, but also interfaces with police the JAR Action Plan about staff being able to challenge professionals (AFI12).

Recommendation 15

The Social Work Task Force should establish guidelines on guaranteed supervision time for social workers that may vary depending on experience.

Comment:

Does not relate to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 16

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise *Working Together to Safeguard Children* to set out the elements of high quality supervision focused on case planning, constructive challenge and professional development.

Comment:

In the report this recommendation is linked only to social workers. However, the elements of high quality supervision, case planning, constructive challenge and professional development for staff are echoed in the JAR and are evident within several AFIs in the Action Plan.

Response:

Dealt with in the JAR Action Plan.

Recommendation 17

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should undertake a feasibility study with a view to rolling out a single national Integrated Children's System better able to address the concerns identified in this report, or find alternative ways to assert stronger leadership over the local systems and their providers. This study should be completed within six months of this report.

Comment:

Laming notes that there is no single national IT system that enables social services to manage safeguarding cases in an integrated and efficient way.

HMIC were also critical of MPS systems for managing child abuse investigations and concerns. They particularly criticise CRIS for making supervision difficult and MERLIN for its poor search and supervision facilities. An AFI has been created to address these criticisms.

Response:

Being progressed under AF14 of the JAR Action Plan.

Recommendation 18

Whether or not a national system is introduced, the Department for Children, Schools and Families should take steps to improve the utility of the Integrated Children's System, in consultation with social workers and their managers, to be effective in supporting them in their role and their contact with children and families, partners, services and courts, and to ensure appropriate transfer of essential information across organisational boundaries.

Comment:

Laming remarks: "Irrespective of the methods used for recording and managing casework, local leaders must ensure that children and young people's information is managed effectively to reduce their risk of harm". This comment has general applicability across all Safeguarding agencies.

Response:

The MPS JAR Action Plan has several AFIs concerned with the management of case files, supervision and information / intelligence management. These are all focused on responding to Laming's general point above. Improvements emerging from the DCSF's actions will be monitored and responded to as appropriate.

Interagency Working

Recommendation 19

The Department for Children, Schools and Families must strengthen *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, and Children's Trusts must take appropriate action to ensure:

- < All referrals to children's services from other professionals lead to an initial assessment, including direct involvement with the child or young person and their family, and the direct engagement with, and feedback to, the referring professional;
- < Core group meetings, reviews and casework decisions include all the professionals involved with the child, particularly police, health, youth services and education colleagues. Records must be kept which must include the written views of those who cannot make such meetings; and
- < Formal procedures are in place for managing a conflict of opinions between professionals from different services over the safety of a child.

Comment:

This recommendation will lead to changes to Working Together. Following the HMIC report, a number of the AFIs overlap this recommendation, viz. AF16 (supervisors to attend referral and strategy meetings), AF112 (willingness of, and ability of, staff to challenge other professionals), AF113 (consistency of initial assessments) and AF114 (training for Referral Desk sergeants), etc.

Response:

Delivery of the AFIs in the Action Plan will address this area from a MPS perspective.

Recommendation 20

All police, probation, adult mental health and adult drug and alcohol services should have well understood referral processes which prioritise the protection and well-being of children. These should include automatic referral where domestic violence or drug or alcohol abuse may put a child at risk of abuse or neglect.

Comment:

This is an area that was not highlighted in the HMIC report and consequently has not featured in the JAR Action Plan. The MPS SOP has a section on domestic violence (last reviewed May 2006) but does not appear to have separate sections covering drug or alcohol abuse by parents / carers (check this is correct).

Response:

Review the MPS SOP's coverage of these areas in the light of this recommendation.

Recommendation 21

The National Safeguarding Delivery Unit should urgently develop guidance on referral and assessment systems for children affected by domestic violence, adult mental health problems, and drugs and alcohol misuse using current best practice. This should be shared with local authorities, health and police with an expectation that the assessment of risk and level of support given to such children will improve quickly and significantly in every Children's Trust.

Comment:

This links into AFI13 of the JAR Action Plan relating to inconsistent initial management assessment of referrals. Work is in hand to develop a new risk assessment and supervision model, linked to a new CRIS report about repeat child victimisation.

Response:

Continue with the work to develop and pilot the new SCD5 case assessment matrix but review this when the NSDU guidance about domestic violence, adult mental health and drugs and alcohol abuse is published.

Recommendation 22

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should establish statutory representation on Local Safeguarding Children Boards from schools, adult mental health and adult drug and alcohol services.

Comment:

Does not relate directly to policing.

Response:

None required at this stage

Recommendation 23

Every Children's Trust should assure themselves that partners consistently

apply the Information Sharing Guidance published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families and Department for Communities and Local Government to protect children.

Comment:

This is not currently in the JAR Action Plan as an action. The recommendation is aimed at each and every Children's Trust and thus the response potentially will vary in each of the 32 boroughs.

Response:

To avoid this, two actions would seem to be appropriate. Firstly for SCD5 to review the guidance and identify whether our SOPs are in line. Secondly, for this to be raised at the London Safe Guarding Children's Board for discussion.

Children's Workforce
Recommendation 24

The Social Work Task Force should:

- < Develop the basis for a national children's social worker supply strategy that will address recruitment and retention difficulties, to be implemented by the Department for Children, Schools and Families. This should have a particular emphasis on child protection social workers;
- < Work with the Children's Workforce Development Council and other partners to implement, on a national basis, clear progression routes for children's social workers;
- < Develop national guidelines setting out maximum case-loads of children in need and child protection cases, supported by a weighting mechanism to reflect the complexity of cases, that will help plan the workloads of children's social workers; and
- < Develop a strategy for remodelling children's social work which delivers shared ownership of cases, administrative support and multi-disciplinary support to be delivered nationally.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 25

Children's Trusts should ensure a named, and preferably co-located, representative from the police service, community paediatric specialist and health visitor are active partners within each children's social work department.

Comment:

This is a new recommendation, particularly with respect to co-location of a police representative within each children's social work department. The wording of the recommendation allows some latitude in the local response to reflect local circumstances. Going down this road may create issues of resilience in some CAITs.

Response:

Undertake an impact / cost / benefit analysis for each of the 32 boroughs and all the CAITs. SCD5 OCU Commander to review policy and practice in light of this recommendation and the analysis. This determination will need to take into account the views of local Children's Trusts and partners. The aim should be to undertake this work within six months.

Recommendation 26

The General Social Care Council, together with relevant government departments, should:

- < Work with higher education institutions and employers to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees and strengthen their curriculums to provide high quality practical skills in children's social work;
- < Work with higher education institutions to reform the current degree programme towards a system which allows for specialism in children's social work, including statutory children's social work placements, after the first year; and
- < Put in place a comprehensive inspection regime to raise the quality and consistency of social work degrees across higher education institutions.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 27

The Department for Children, Schools and Families and the Department for Innovation, Universities and Skills should introduce a fully-funded, practice-focused children's social work postgraduate qualification for experienced children's social workers, with an expectation they will complete the programme as soon as is practicable.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 28

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, working with the Children's Workforce Development Council, General Social Care Council and partners should introduce a conversion qualification and English language test for internationally qualified children's social workers that ensures understanding of legislation, guidance and practice in England. Consideration should be given to the appropriate length of a compulsory induction period in a practice setting prior to formal registration as a social worker in England.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:
None required.

Recommendation 29

Children's Trusts should ensure that all staff who work with children receive initial training and continuing professional development which enables them to understand normal child development and recognise potential signs of abuse or neglect.

Comment:
This recommendation is not limited to specific agencies in its application.

Response:
Review (verify) SCAIDP and other training given to CAIT personnel to ensure that all staff receive adequate training to cover these points. Review (verify) IPLDP programme input on child abuse to ensure input is fit for purpose. The NPIA will need to be involved in this process.

Recommendation 30

All Children's Trusts should have sufficient multi-agency training in place to create a shared language and understanding of local referral procedures, assessment, information sharing and decision making across early years, schools, youth services, health, police and other services who work to protect children. A named child protection lead in each setting should receive this training.

Comment:
The vehicle for doing this is the MACIE course in the MPS. By agreement with NCALT, a new programme of training has been timetabled to cover all 32 boroughs over the next two years.

Response:
Deliver the MACIE programme in line with current plans.

Recommendation 31

The General Social Care Council should review the Code of Practice for Social Workers and the employers' code ensuring the needs of children are paramount in both and that the employers' code provides for clear lines of accountability, quality supervision and support, and time for reflective practice. The employers' code should then be made statutory for all employers of social workers.

Comment:
This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:
None required.

Recommendation 32

The Department of Health should prioritise its commitment to promote the recruitment and professional development of health visitors (made in *Healthy lives, brighter futures*) by publishing a national strategy to support and challenge Strategic Health Authorities to have a sufficient capacity of well trained health visitors in each area with a clear understanding of their role.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 33

The Department of Health should review the Healthy Child Programme for 0–5-year-olds to ensure that the role of health visitors in safeguarding and child protection is prioritised and has sufficient clarity, and ensure that similar clarity is provided in the Healthy Child Programme for 5–19-year-olds.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 34

The Department of Health should promote the statutory duty of all GP providers to comply with child protection legislation and to ensure that all individual GPs have the necessary skills and training to carry out their duties. They should also take further steps to raise the profile and level of expertise for child protection within GP practices, for example by working with the department for Children, Schools and Families to support joint training opportunities for GPs and children's social workers and through the new practice accreditation scheme being developed by the Royal College of General Practitioners.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 35

The Department of Health should work with partners to develop a national training programme to improve the understanding and skills of the children's health workforce (including paediatricians, midwives, health visitors, GPs and school nurses) to further support them in dealing with safeguarding and child protection issues.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing.

Response:
None required.

Recommendation 36

The Home Office should take national action to ensure that police child protection teams are well resourced and have specialist training to support them in their important responsibilities.

Comment:

Given the current economic climate and the pressure on the public finances, it is unlikely that this recommendation will lead to an increase in the total amount of funding made available through central government for policing in general, and child protection in particular. It is far more likely that scrutiny will be forthcoming, through the HMIC and Ofsted inspection regimes, into the comparative proportion of policing resources dedicated to child protection between forces. The MPS has already identified this as a critical issue and SCD5 have put together a business case for a significant increase in staffing.

Response:

This is being taken forward through the SCD5 business case for between 85 and 110 additional staff. If, and when, this is approved, the MPS will be in a strong position to say that it has implemented this recommendation.

Improvement and Challenge

Recommendation 37

The Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation should review the inspection frameworks of their frontline services to drive improvements in safeguarding and child protection in a similar way to the new Ofsted framework

Comment:

Changes to the inspecting regime for Children's Trusts and Safeguarding were announced by the Minister, Ed Balls, after the publication of the JAR in December. This recommendation takes this further and will be of significance to police. Exactly what further changes will take place remains to be seen but it is likely that this will involve 'operational reality testing' of frontline services, rather than strategies, policies and formal procedures.

Response:

Monitor developments within the inspection regime and ensure that our internal QA processes take account of these changes.

Recommendation 38

Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission, HMI Constabulary and HMI Probation should take immediate action to ensure their staff have the appropriate skills, expertise and capacity to inspect the safeguarding and child protection elements of frontline services. Those Ofsted Inspectors responsible for inspecting child protection should have direct experience of child protection

work.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate directly to policing.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 39

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise *Working Together to Safeguard Children* so that it is explicit that the formal purpose of Serious Case Reviews is to learn lessons for improving individual agencies, as well as for improving multi-agency working.

Comment:

This recommendation does not relate to policing. However, the reiteration of this important point by Lord Laming is welcomed and this continues to be the ethos followed within the MPS.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 40

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise the framework for Serious Case Reviews to ensure that the Serious Case Review panel chair has access to all of the relevant documents and staff they need to conduct a thorough and effective learning exercise.

Comment:

The MPS historically has had an open policy in relation to sharing information to assist the Serious Case Review process. Generally, it is not anticipated that this recommendation will create difficulties for the MPS. In individual cases there may be sensitive documents that will be need to be handled appropriately. However, we have a great deal of experience in managing such issues and we anticipate that workable solutions can be found.

Response:

SCD5 / SCD20(2) to review developments and ensure our processes and procedures comply.

Recommendation 41

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise *Working Together to Safeguard Children* to ensure Serious Case Reviews focus on the effective learning of lessons and implementation of recommendations and the timely introduction of changes to protect children.

Comment:

Laming's quotes the Metropolitan Police's Homicide Task Force as good practice in connection with learning from critical incidents. This is probably an error and should refer to the work of SCD20(2) in independently reviewing

murders / critical child abuse investigations and ensuring recommendations are formally recorded and monitored. This being the case, the MPS is already well positioned in relation to this recommendation. In London we also have the benefit of the work of the London Safeguarding Children's Board in analysing SCRs and disseminating learning across all 32 boroughs. Finally, ACPO Child Protection Committee has agreed with the HMIC that ACPO will create a system for disseminating the recommendations of police Internal Management Reports / Serious Case Reviews in child abuse cases across England and Wales.

Response:

SCD5 /20(2) to monitor developments and review MPS procedures against emerging standards and best practice.

Recommendation 42

Ofsted should focus its evaluation of Serious Case Reviews on the depth of the learning a review has provided and the quality of recommendations it has made to protect children.

Comment:

Criticism of the inconsistency in the way Ofsted grade IMRs and SCRs has been increasing amongst agencies, including SCD20(2). This recommendation is welcome.

Response:

SCD20(2) to monitor changes in Ofsted marking and respond accordingly.

Recommendation 43

The Department for Children, Schools and Families should revise *Working Together to Safeguard Children* to underline the importance of a high quality, publicly available executive summary which accurately represents the full report, contains the action plan in full, and includes the names of the Serious Case Review panel members.

Comment:

This recommendation will lead to changes in the way SCRs are written.

Response:

SCD20(2) to monitor changes in guidance and respond accordingly.

Recommendation 44

Local Safeguarding Children Boards should ensure all Serious Case Review panel chairs and Serious Case Review overview authors are independent of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and all services involved in the case and that arrangements for the Serious Case Review offer sufficient scrutiny and challenge.

Comment:

This will not greatly impact on the MPS. The writers of our IMRs and SCRs are already independent of the CAITs as they are part of SCD20 and report to

a different ACPO officer. Having independent chairs and overview writers may lead to greater scrutiny of police reports.

Response:

SCD5 and SCD20(2) to monitor how this recommendation is interpreted by LSCBs across London.

Recommendation 45

All Serious Case Review panel chairs and authors must complete a training programme provided by the Department for Children, Schools and Families that supports them in their role in undertaking Serious Case Reviews that have a real impact on learning and improvement.

Comment:

This will not impact on the MPS directly.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 46

Government Offices must ensure that there are enough trained 46. Serious Case Review panel chairs and authors available within their region.

Comment:

This recommendation is not for police.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 47

Ofsted should share full Serious Case Review reports with HMI Constabulary, the Care Quality Commission, and HMI Probation (as appropriate) to enable all four inspectorates to assess the implementation of action plans when conducting frontline inspections.

Comment:

This recommendation is not for police. The MPS sees no reason why the HMIC should not have access to SCRs involving MPS cases.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 48

Ofsted should share Serious Case Review executive summaries with the Association of Chief Police Officers, Primary Care Trusts and Strategic Health Authorities to promote learning.

Comment:

This recommendation is not for police. The MPS sees no reason why the ACPO Child Protection Committee should not have access to the executive

summaries of SCRs involving MPS cases.

Response:
None required.

Recommendation 49

Ofsted should produce more regular reports, at six-monthly intervals, which summarise the lessons from Serious Case Reviews.

Comment:

A means to take this forward in policing has been agreed in outline. ACPO Child Protection Committee has agreed with the HMIC that ACPO will create a system for disseminating the recommendations of police Internal Management Reports / Serious Case Reviews in child abuse cases across England and Wales.

Response:

The MPS will support the system being constructed by ACPO. It is likely that this mirror MPS procedures that have been identified by HMIC and Lord Laming as representing best practice. The London Safeguarding Children Board also already has a mechanism in place for achieving this across the capital.

Organisation and Finance

Recommendation 50

The Department for Children, Schools and Families must provide further guidance to Local Safeguarding Children Boards on how to operate as effectively as possible following the publication of the Loughborough University research on Local Safeguarding Children Boards later this year.

Comment:

This recommendation is not addressed at policing.

Response:
None required.

Recommendation 51

The Children's Trust and the Local Safeguarding Children Board should not be chaired by the same person. The Local Safeguarding Children Board chair should be selected with the agreement of a group of multi-agency partners and should have access to training to support them in their role.

Comment:

This recommendation is supported. Laming's vision is for the chairs of CTs to provide appropriate impartial challenge and scrutiny of LSCBs.

Response:
Monitor implementation across the 32 LSCBs in London.

Recommendation 52

Local Safeguarding Children Boards should include membership from the senior decision makers from all safeguarding partners, who should attend regularly and be fully involved as equal partners in Local Safeguarding Children Board decision making.

Comment:

Police are members of all LSCBs in London.

Response:

SCD5 to monitor implementation and identify LSCBs where this is not taking place and make representations as necessary as members.

Recommendation 53

Local Safeguarding Children Boards should report to the Children's Trust Board and publish an annual report on the effectiveness of safeguarding in the local area. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should provide robust challenge to the work of the Children's Trust and its partners in order to ensure that the right systems and quality of services and practice are in place so that children are properly safeguarded.

Comment:

The production of this report is likely to require inputs from each partner agency. This is likely to create additional work for the CAIT DIs.

Response:

OCU Commander SCD5 to assess the implications of this recommendation and explore a standard CAIT format to inform local reports.

Recommendation 54

The Department for Children, Schools and Families, the Department of Health, and the Home Office, together with HM Treasury, must ensure children's services; police and health services have protected budgets for the staffing and training for child protection services.

Comment:

Although this recommendation is not directed at individual police forces it is likely to have significant implications for every force individually. The concept of 'protected budgets' during times of recession and acute pressures on public finances is a very difficult one. Laming does not make it clear whether he is referring to budgets in monetary terms or 'real' terms (e.g. allowing for inflation). Equally, it is not clear whether this is intended to refer to expenditure on child protection as a proportion of a force's budget or in absolute terms.

It is likely that this recommendation will be implemented through the inspectorates for the different agencies reporting on child protection provision and performance.

Response:

The MPS is already taking steps to enhance the resources available to SCD5.

This recommendation creates a requirement for ongoing review of SCD5's budget and for 'special considerations' to be made when making budget decisions over coming years. It is likely that Children Trusts and LSCBs will report on resourcing in Safeguarding agencies annually. The OCU Commander SCD5 will have lead responsibility in respect of this recommendation.

Recommendation 55

The Department for Children, Schools and Families must sufficiently resource children's services to ensure that early intervention and preventative services have capacity to respond to all children and families identified as vulnerable or 'in need'.

Comment:

This recommendation is not focused on police.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 56

A national annual report should be published reviewing safeguarding and child protection spend against assessed needs of children across the partners in each Children's Trust.

Comment:

This is a national recommendation aimed at the DCSF. However, this report will need to be informed by data from each police force and each LSCB.

Response:

SCD5 to monitor the data requirement for this recommendation and ensure the MPS is in a position to deliver.

Legal

Recommendation 57

The Ministry of Justice should lead on the establishment of a system-wide target that lays responsibility on all participants in the care proceedings system to reduce damaging delays in the time it takes to progress care cases where these delays are not in the interests of the child.

Comment:

This is not a recommendation for police.

Response:

None required.

Recommendation 58

The Ministry of Justice should appoint an independent person to undertake a review of the impact of court fees in the coming months. In the absence of incontrovertible evidence that the fees had not acted as a deterrent, they should then be abolished from 2010/11 onwards.

The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report, Lord Laming,
March 2009

Comment:

This is not a recommendation for police.

Response:

None required.

The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report, Lord Laming,
March 2009