



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 [on our website](#). [You can read about Operation Linden, including our full report and accompanying executive summary](#) on our website.



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



Our role

We oversee the police complaints system in England and Wales.



We **investigate** the most serious matters, including deaths following police contact, and set the standards for how the police should handle complaints.



We use **learning** from our work to influence changes in policing.



We are **independent** and make our decisions entirely independently of the police and government.

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

An overview of our investigations for Operation Linden

A total of 93 investigations (April 2022) of which 92 are concluded

Before August 2020

91
investigations
involving



265
separate
allegations
made by



51
individual
complainants



44 survivors



3 family members



4 third parties



2 written
warnings



7 no further
action



3 management action
and/or words of advice



43 of the complaint allegations we decided on (164)
we upheld 43 and we did not uphold 121

The remaining 101 complaint allegations followed a different decision making process because these related to named individuals from SYP whose conduct was under investigation

During our investigations we referred one matter to the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS), and this was where we considered that an officer may have committed a criminal offence under the Data Protection Act 1998.

8 cases to answer against
officers for misconduct

6 cases to answer against
officers for gross misconduct



47

subject officers

(21 subject officers have retired
or are no longer serving officers)



Evidence including:

- nearly **20,000** documents
- **800** investigation statements
- more than **1,300** exhibits



1

managed* investigation,
referred by SYP



* 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 [read more about our investigations process](#) 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



South Yorkshire Police districts

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.

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. [You can read our 13 recommendations on our website, along with the full responses from SYP](#) and the other agencies (Law Commission, Police Digital Service, College of Policing and National Police Chiefs' Council).

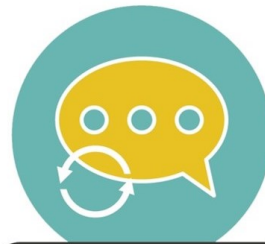
The effects of CSA/E on survivors



A mistrust in authority/
South Yorkshire Police



Impact on family
and other relationships



Trauma through
repeatedly having to
share their stories



Persistent fear
of abusers



Mental and physical
health issues



Criminal record
because of CSA/E



Recollection of events



Feelings towards
perpetrators



The door remains open to those CSA/E survivors who, possibly, because they have now learned about others' experiences from reading our Operation Linden report, sadly recognise they are not alone in what they also have had to go through and want to come forward and complain.

Steve Noonan, Director of Major Investigations



You can contact us in a number of ways:

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Email: enquiries@policeconduct.gov.uk Website: <https://www.policeconduct.gov.uk/>

We welcome telephone calls in Welsh

Rydym yn croesawu galwadau ffôn yn y Gymraeg