



**METROPOLITAN
POLICE**

TOTAL POLICING

Freedom of Information Act Publication Scheme	
Protective Marking	Not Protectively Marked
Publication Scheme Y/N	Yes
Title	Policy on the Investigation of Child Abuse and Serious Sexual Assault
Version	4.0
Summary	This policy outlines MPS standards and responsibilities for the investigation of child abuse
(B)OCU or Unit, Directorate	Sexual Offences, Exploitation & Child Abuse
Author	
Review Date	March 2021
Date Issued	1 March 2017

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Branch / OCU:	Sexual Offences, Exploitation & Child Abuse				
Date created:	1 March 2017	Review date:	March 2021	Version:	4.0
Author:	DC Julie-Ann Paddock				

Application

When? This Policy applies with immediate effect.

Who? All police officers and police staff, including the extended police family and those working voluntarily or under contract to the Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC) or the Commissioner must be aware of, and are required to comply with, all relevant Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) policy and associated procedures.

This Policy applies in particular to officers and staff in the following roles: (This list is not intended to be exhaustive.)

- Operational Command Unit (OCU) Commanders
- Child Abuse, Sexual Offences and Sexual Exploitation Investigation
- Homicide and Serious Crime
- Trafficking and Kidnap
- Borough Uniform Response Officers & Reactive Investigation Teams
- Community Safety
- Multi Agency Safeguarding
- Offender Management
- Neighbourhood Policing
- Crime Management Services
- Forensic practitioners
- Met Training
- Communications Staff
- Met Intelligence Services

What? This policy is intended to apply to the investigation of child abuse. For the purposes of the policy, child abuse covers offences relating to children under the age of 18 years and offences reported by adults that occurred when they were under the age of 18 years.

It also applies to the application of the legislative requirements and expectations of the police to safeguard and promote the welfare of children that are set out Home Office guidance.

Policy Principles

Police responsibility is underpinned by two key principles as specified in 'Working Together to Safeguard Children':

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

Specific police roles as set out in the guidance are:

- Identifying children who might be at risk from abuse and neglect;
- Investigation of alleged offences against children;
- Inter-agency working and information-sharing to protect children; and
- The use of emergency powers to protect children.

The police have a duty to safeguard children. When an allegation of child abuse comes to police attention, the presumption should always be to investigate.

All MPS personnel will work together with colleagues, children's social care, education authorities, the Crown and any other relevant person or agency to ensure the safeguarding of children against all forms of abuse taking:

- Effective action against offenders so they can be held accountable through the justice system
- Effective safeguarding measures to keep the public safe
- Effective measures to share and identify information within the MPS and with partner agencies to reduce the risk of child abuse

Purpose and Benefits

The purpose of this policy is to provide clear, comprehensive and easily accessible guidance for all MPS personnel in relation to the investigation of child abuse. This is to ensure that offences are recorded and investigated in accordance with the principal that the welfare of the child is paramount. This reflects statutory and national guidance and ensures a consistent approach.

This enables:

- Clear guidance for investigation
- Consistent standards
- Effective professional partnership working and information sharing
- Prevention and detection of crime
- Achievement of MPS vision, values, standards and behaviours

Health and Safety Impact Statement

This policy is to be accompanied by the current Health and Safety Policy in ensuring all employees comply with health and safety policies and procedures, engaging with the Safety and Health Risk Management Team (SHRMT) at an early stage where necessary to comply with the requirements of relevant statutory requirements and codes of practice.

Associated Documents and Policies

All associated Child Abuse Toolkits:

- Abandonment of Babies
- Abuse linked to Faith and Belief
- Child Abduction
- Child Abuse Investigation Team (CAIT)
- Child Rescue Alert (CRA)
- Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)
- Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- Indecent Images of Children
- Police Protection of Children at Risk of Significant Harm - S46 Children Act 1989
- Safeguarding Children Toolkit for frontline officers
- Sudden Unexpected Death in Infancy (SUDI)

Other relevant Toolkits:

- Critical Incidents
- Family Liaison
- Rape and serious Sexual Assault
- Domestic Abuse
- Forced Marriage
- Honour Based Violence
- Information Sharing
- General Investigation
- Investigative Interviewing
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)
- Records Management
- Victims Code of Practice
- Vulnerability and Protection of adults at Risk

Other relevant documents:

- MPS Exhibits and Property Manual
- HM Government Working Together To Safeguard Children
- London Child Protection Procedures
- Achieving Best Evidence in Criminal Proceedings
- College Of Policing Authorised Professional Practice
- National Crime Recording Standards

Notices to be Cancelled / Amended

Item 2 Notices 37/08, 10 September 2008 and Item 1, Notices 23/12, 6 June 2012 are now cancelled.