



Violence Against Women and Girls Independent Advisory Group

Tuesday 22 July 2025 between 6:30pm to 8:30pm

Chair: Alison Ashton and Sarah Hicks

Humberside Police: Inspector Tim Hudson, Inspector Rebecca Holmes, Sgt Richard Kirk,
PC Carl Osler

15 members of public.

Minutes

- **Welcome, Introductions and check-in – Chair/Everyone**

Relevant Points Recorded:

- Chair states that she is involved in setting up a Humberside women's system change panel and encourages those interested in supporting this initiative to contact her.

- **Modern Day Slavery – Guest Speaker Sgt Richard Kirk**

Relevant Points Recorded:

- Guest Speaker Sgt Richard Kirk provides an introduction of his presentation explaining the work that he does in investigating incidents of Modern-Day Slavery and how his team supports those believed to be victims.
- Kirk outlines legislation under the Modern Slavery Act 2015.
- Kirk gives a brief explanation of the five Police Operations that are currently being run by Humberside Police.
- Kirk gives a summary of Operation Lewis which covers sexual exploitation, highlighting the following points:
 - 6 million people are believed to be victims of Sexual Exploitation worldwide adding that of these, 99% are believed to be women.
 - His team monitors Adult Services Websites which can be used to advertise victims of sexual exploitation.
 - His team identify high risk postings.
 - Conduct safeguarding checks at locations where possible victims are working.

- Kirk then shows those in attendance examples of posts found available on some Adult Services Websites highlighting that some of the information is false and that images used, in some cases, are not of the person in the post.
- Kirk then gives examples of visits made by his team to locations being used by women making posts on Adult Services Websites to conduct safeguarding checks.
- Kirk then explains how intelligence is shared so those vulnerable to sexual exploitation can be identified and safeguarded
- Kirk explains how a Modern-Day Slavery Business Model can be used for Sexual Exploitation.
- Kirk finished his presentation outlining some of the success stories his team have achieved arresting exploiters.

Observations:

- Humberside Police's Modern Slavery Team is now nationally recognised and has been mentioned in Parliament.
- There has been a shift from a police-led model to a problem-solving, partnership-based approach.
- The team is conscious not to criminalise victims of exploitation.
- Recognition that individuals involved in criminal activity may be victims of coercion, especially children and young women.
- Emphasis on the power imbalance in exploitative relationships.
- There is confusion and inconsistency around sentencing under the Modern Slavery Act.
- The Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) is struggling to understand and apply the Act.
- Charges often start as modern slavery or exploitation but are downgraded at court.

Actions:

- None
- **Buffet/Networking**
- **Domestic Abuse Related Death Reviews** - Guest Speaker Inspector Rebecca Holmes

Relevant Points Recorded:

- Holmes explains that DARDRs was formerly known as Domestic Homicide Reviews.
- Holmes explains the change of terminology which reflects the inclusion of domestic abuse-related deaths, not just homicides.
- Holmes explains that since 2011 local areas are responsible for commissioning reviews.
- Holmes explains that any agency aware of a domestic abuse related death must notify the local authority adding that upon being notified, the LA convenes a group to assess if the case meets criteria for a review.
- Holmes states that the purpose of this group is to identify missed opportunities and learning points.
- Holmes states that outcomes from such reviews can:
 - Recommend system-wide recommendations.
 - That agencies are held accountable for implementing change.

A lived experience is then shared to all in attendance.

Observations:

- An acknowledgment of the emotional difficulty of sharing personal stories and the value of healing and awareness it brings.
- It was noted that survivors being told their experience isn't abuse can be mentally devastating, especially to those already vulnerable.
- It was noted by an attendee that a firm advertised as supporting domestic abuse survivors, deny the abuse if it occurred more than ten days prior to the reported incident and as such refuse to handle such claims.
- It was noted that it is sometimes financially unviable for some solicitors to take on cases.
- It was noted that prior to specialising, police officers receive more training around road traffic accidents than they do about domestic abuse.
- It was noted that whilst the police service does make mistakes, they are not the only service that let down and fail victims of domestic abuse.
- It was acknowledged that whilst progress has been made over the past decades, there is still inertia in service provisions.
- The importance of media campaigns and TV programmes in highlighting domestic abuse.

Actions:

- None

Check-out and Next Meeting Date – Chair/Everyone

Actions:

- None

- **Close**