



Introduction to the Partnership Hub

How the Hydrant
Programme can support
your organisation

HYDRANT
PROGRAMME

Supporting child protection
and abuse investigation

About the Hydrant Programme

The Hydrant Programme is a national policing programme supporting the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC) Child Protection and Abuse Investigation Working Group. Originally established in 2014 to coordinate responses to non-recent child sexual abuse, it now supports police forces across all child protection and abuse investigation issues.

Hydrant develops policy and strategy on behalf of the NPCC, develops and delivers best practice advice including a learning, review, and improvement function, provides strategic analysis capability and partnership engagement with key stakeholders and partners.



Strategic objectives

The Hydrant Programme will:

- Improve the police service response to the safeguarding of children and investigation of child sexual abuse.
- Increase victim, survivor, and public confidence in the police approach.
- Develop best practice advice and be a hub for specialist knowledge and expertise.
- Provide a learning, review and support capability that meets the needs of senior police leaders and investigators.
- Collaborate with other policing programmes to enhance the support to forces, partners and stakeholders within the area of vulnerability.
- Maintain effective liaison with strategic partners and key stakeholders.
- Coordinate the receipt of safeguarding referrals and reports of crime on behalf of police forces in the UK where this adds value.
- Coordinate the police response to the Independent Inquiry Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) recommendations.
- Provide a national analysis capability for child sexual abuse and other areas of vulnerability. Collaborate with other policing programmes and partners to develop a wider understanding of scale and threat.

The Partnership Hub

Partnership engagement and joint working is key to ensuring that the policing response is as informed as it can be and that the victim is supported throughout the process. The Hydrant Programme champions this engagement and through it we ensure our national advice to policing partners is informed by knowledge and experience held within the third sector.

The Partnership Hub recognises that multi-agency working is the cornerstone of effective child safeguarding¹, and further acknowledges the role of the third sector in this multi-agency context, regarding its expertise, knowledge, services, and intervention in cases of child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

Third sector organisations consist of non-governmental and non-profit making organisations and associations and can include, but is not limited to, charities, voluntary and community groups, faith groups, sporting bodies, etc. At both a strategic and tactical level the Partnership Hub shall ensure that the relationships between the third sector and policing is robust and appropriate such that confidence in the national policing approach is enhanced.

¹ Dixon et al, 2022, 'Supporting the multi-in multi-agency working', British Journal of General Practice

What does the Partnership hub offer?

The Partnership Hub offers three core areas of partnership support, engagement, and collaboration:

1. Complex case referrals via a documented Memorandum of Understanding
2. Partnership Engagement for the third sector
3. Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce – partnership approaches.

Referrals

Acts as the conduit between referring partner organisations and national policing concerning complex safeguarding referrals and disseminates them to the relevant police forces for action to be undertaken.

Recognises that the process of information-sharing and reporting concerns with local policing continues to be challenging for organisations, particularly where there are multiple offence locations and perpetrators.

The purpose of Hydrant Programme referrals is to assist in making this process more accessible and to forge improved engagement between partner organisations and local police force safeguarding teams.

Accepts referrals for complex cases of non-recent or recent child abuse and exploitation where they are one or more of the following applies:

Complex by number of victims;

Complex by number of suspects;

Complex by number of force areas impacted;

Complex by nature of the investigation itself.

Such referrals will indicate that child abuse or exploitation has been alleged/committed or there is an identified child safeguarding risk.

To submit referrals partner organisations are required to sign up to a Memorandum of Understanding with the Hydrant Programme.

Partnership Engagement

Builds joint engagement plans to co-create strategic and operational opportunities for improvement to child protection investigations and abuse.

Facilitates regular participation and engagement forums with the third sector.

Provides value-added resources to national, strategic, and local child safeguarding practice to enhance the police service response to the safeguarding of children and investigation of child sexual abuse with a focus on complex and organised sexual abuse and exploitation.

Wherever possible, align Partnership activities and purpose with partners' mission and objectives.

Provide national analysis for complex and organised child sexual abuse and other vulnerabilities to develop a wider understanding of scale and threat.

CSE Taskforce

Works with partner organisations to enhance policing response to group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse to improve how we

- prepare our response to threat.
- protect children from exploitation and abuse.
- prevent group-based child sexual exploitation.
- pursue those that perpetrate crimes and bring more offenders to justice.

To increase confidence of both victims and survivors, and the wider public in the policing approach to tackling child exploitation and abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce



How can the Partnership Hub benefit our organisation?

It is recognised that there are number of relationship barriers between policing and third sector organisations. Information-sharing can be challenging to navigate due to conflicting aims, priorities, and goals. The Partnership Hub looks to proactively invest in and improve such relationships and provide structure, advice, and guidance on complex safeguarding referrals within national policing.

By becoming a Hydrant Partner your organisation can ensure that our national advice to policing partners is informed by your knowledge and expertise, and help inform national policy, activities and working to tackle complex and organised child sexual abuse.

By working in partnership with Hydrant you will be able to

- Share best practice, understand contemporary challenges, and be provided with opportunities to problem solve complex and organised child sexual abuse.
- Refer complex child abuse and exploitation cases that requires support and coordination due to their national footprint.
- Participate in and benefit from joint engagement plans to co-create strategic and operational opportunities for improvement to child protection investigations and abuse.
- Inform your organisation strategic priorities and operational practice from national analysis of complex and organised child sexual abuse and other vulnerabilities and understand prevalence of scale and threats.
- Participate and receive learning opportunities and resources, such as
 - Podcasts
 - Engagement and participation forums
 - Lunch and learn sessions
 - Newsletters
 - 7 Minute Briefings
 - Lessons Learnt Bulletins
 - Focus groups, surveys and consultations
 - Annual Reports.

How can I become part of the Partnership Hub?

Please contact hydrantenquiries@southyorks.pnn.police.uk and a member of our team will respond. For more information, please see Partnership hub | The Hydrant Programme

