



Annual Report 2022

HYDRANT
PROGRAMME
Supporting child protection
and abuse investigation

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HYDRANT PROGRAMME

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Foreword



Welcome to the first Hydrant Programme Annual Report.

As you may be aware, 2022 saw significant change for the team and the work Hydrant is involved in. At the end of July 2022 Operation Hydrant was retired and replaced with the Hydrant Programme. This important shift was instigated for several reasons, amongst them being the conclusion of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) in October 2022 and the response this requires from policing. There was also a need to recognise the way the work Hydrant carries out has shifted since its' inception in 2014. There is more detail on the changes made, and the implications for policing, stakeholders and partners across the vulnerability sector in the Hydrant Programme overview on page 7.

There is no doubt that policing is facing a period of intense scrutiny. Public trust and confidence has been damaged following various distressing incidents, and colleagues within the police family have been presented with many difficult issues to digest and respond to - both personally and professionally. From a Hydrant perspective the issue of victim trust and confidence has always been at the heart of what we do. In 2023 this will be a key area of focus for us as we launch the Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce along with a new website, social media channels and a campaign to promote the Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP). More about all of these plans later in the report.

I hope you find this Annual Report interesting and informative. The success of much of Hydrant's work comes from the support provided by working with many partners and stakeholders both within policing but also more widely across the vulnerability sector. Thank you for your continued support, it is very much valued and appreciated.

Richard Fewkes
Director - Hydrant Programme

A message from Ian Critchley

National Police Chiefs Council -
Child Protection and Abuse Investigation Lead



We know the harm caused when a child suffers sexual abuse and exploitation can last a lifetime. While physical injuries may heal, the mental scars remain. We recognise that victims have been failed in the past, as highlighted by the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, however policing has worked hard to learn from its mistakes, and the approach today to tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse has evolved, with many examples of innovative police work, positive outcomes for victims, and perpetrators brought to justice. However, we are not complacent, more must be done. The fight against this most abhorrent of crimes will never stop, with our ultimate aims being:

- To prevent any act of child abuse and the lifelong harm that results
- Give confidence to victims to come forward, knowing they will receive a caring, compassionate, professional service throughout
- To work with police forces to bring more offenders of group based sexual abuse to justice

These aims are shared by the Government, and the Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce (CSE), funded by the Home Office will target offenders wherever and whoever they are. A key aim of the CSE Taskforce will be to ensure victims and survivors are heard, and that their voice informs the work we do. We have seen the incredible impact this can have via the Truth Project which ran alongside the IICSA, and highlighted how important it is that we listen to what is being said by those who are at the heart of all we do.

The work the Hydrant Programme carries out on behalf of national policing, in partnership with the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme, and the Tackling Organised Exploitation Programme is part of a changing approach to policy, strategy and practice being applied to child protection and abuse investigation. We are working towards a 'single version of the truth' so that forces across the country are equipped with the right data, at the right time to enable evidence-based decision making which will ultimately lead to better outcomes for victims. You can find out more about this ground-breaking piece of work later in the report.

As you read on, I hope you are encouraged by the progress being made. Every day I see best practice being shared, and forces investing in their officers and staff by engaging with the programme's training offer. This is essential in our fight against offenders. I also see significant progress in terms of the data available to forces as the Complex and Organised Child Abuse Database is developed and rolled out, this will develop further over the next 12 months and indicates real change and innovation.

My role as a serving officer has now come to an end as I retired at the end of March. This is an area of work I am passionate about, and so, I have now resumed the role as National Police Chiefs' Council (NPCC) Lead for Child Protection and Abuse Investigation as police staff. I am pleased to be able to provide policing with continuity as we work through some significant reports and reforms. Later in the year I will support the transition to a new NPCC lead, who will be determined in due course.

I must end by acknowledging the significant contribution of partners and stakeholders across the vulnerability sector, who work with police officers and staff to protect and safeguard children and bring offenders of these appalling crimes to justice. Thank you for all you do and will continue to do. I look forward to working together in 2023.

Ian Critchley
Child Protection and Abuse Investigation Lead

Executive Summary

HYDRANT PROGRAMME

Supporting child protection
and abuse investigation



How the Hydrant
Programme can
support your force

Free of charge services for all officers and staff
working in child protection and abuse investigation

**HYDRANT
PROGRAMME**
Supporting child protection
and abuse investigation

The Hydrant Programme has seen a shift in strategic focus, along with a restructure of the team to reflect this. In October 2022, after seven years of work, 325 days of public hearings, live evidence from 725 witnesses and 107 recommendations the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) published its' final report. Work is in progress to ensure there is no hiding place for the issues the Inquiry shone a spotlight upon. One of the key projects for the Hydrant Programme, which feeds into recommendations made for policing by the IICSA, is the development of a new Complex and Organised Child Abuse Database. This is ground-breaking work which is hugely exciting for policing and the sector more widely. Read more in the Analysis and Research section on page 8.

With the new structure came an expanded Peer Review and Peer Support function. This team has been exceptionally busy over the last 12 months, evidence that the appetite for learning and sharing of promising practice across policing is strong and growing. In 2023 this team will expand again to incorporate a Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Development Officer who will be tasked with coordinating several projects dedicated to the sharing of knowledge and expertise around CSE investigation.

During 2023 the Hydrant Programme will coordinate a campaign to raise the profile of the Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP). You can learn more about this essential service on page 18. The campaign, which will be launched with the backing of the Crown Prosecution Service and sector partners has one clear aim - to reach victims of non-recent child sexual abuse whose case was marked as no further action before 5 June 2013 (the period preceding the introduction of the Victims Right to Review Scheme). Those who don't necessarily qualify for the panel will be signposted to alternative support and given the chance to understand why decisions were made, and what they mean.

The Hydrant Programme's commitment to working with partners and stakeholders across the sector has been reinforced by the introduction of a new role which will be recruited very soon. The Partnership Manager will design and implement an engagement strategy which will bring together learning, best practice, advice and more from a range of policing, government, third sector and institutional settings. The aim is to coordinate activity to ensure maximum effect for all involved.

Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce

The Child Sexual Exploitation Taskforce will enhance the policing response to group-based child sexual exploitation and abuse, and with partners will improve:

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

In doing so we will increase the confidence of both victims and survivors, and the wider public in the policing approach to tackling child sexual exploitation and abuse.

Three national policing programmes will contribute to the CSE Taskforce. The Hydrant Programme, the Tackling Organised Exploitation (TOEX) Programme and the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme (VKPP) are uniquely placed to offer support, advice and guidance to police forces, partners and stakeholders working in Child Protection and Abuse investigation.

Finally, the communications team will take the Hydrant Programme into the digital space, another first. The launch of a dedicated website will enable teams from the programme to showcase their outstanding work and act as a hub for all of the knowledge and learning gathered via support sessions, engagement with sector specialists and working with partners across government. To compliment this, there will be a LinkedIn page taking Hydrant into a public facing space, and further facilitating professional networking.



Hydrant Programme Overview

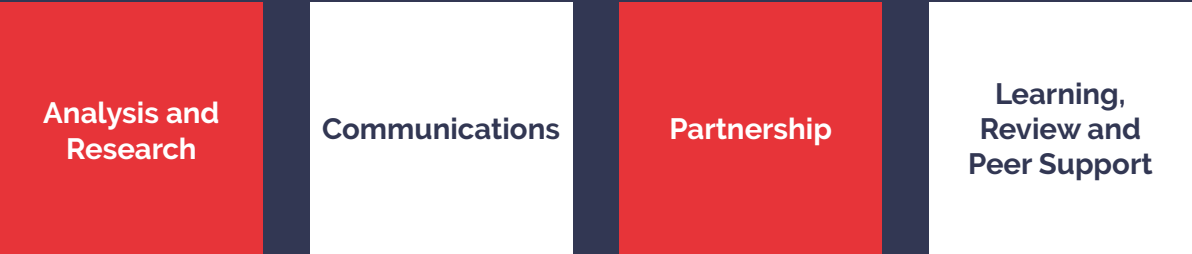
At the end of July 2022, Operation Hydrant, and the criteria previously worked to, concluded. The Hydrant Programme now works to a new set of strategic objectives which cover the whole of the child protection and abuse investigation portfolio.

They are:

- + **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 programs 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 service response to 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 objectives cover four strategic pillars, each of which will be explained and explored in the relevant section of the report.

Figure 1 - Hydrant Programme work areas



This annual report will review key activity for the financial year 2022/23 and focus on the Hydrant Programme's planned work streams to meet its strategic objectives.

We do hope you read, enjoy and learn more about how the Hydrant Programme continues to inform and support the policing response to child sexual abuse and exploitation, engage and work with key partners and stakeholders, and ensure that victims and survivors are supported.



Analysis and Research

Summary

This is the eighth year of data collection against a set of criteria which were in place from September 2015 to 31 July 2022 when the work of Operation Hydrant was concluded (see Appendix B for criteria). During this period, the volume of statistics gathered was vast, and gave government and national policing an indication of the patterns of offending and trends in relation to non-recent child sexual abuse within the criteria.

The first half of 2022 saw data collection for Operation Hydrant come to an end. Between January and June 2022, the team continued to update and finalise various analytical products before producing a final set of statistics reporting on the scale and nature of non-recent child sexual abuse.

Quarterly Products

Since the inception of Operation Hydrant, one of the products routinely produced by the Analysis and Research team was an internal management information report.

Over the years, this document included various statistics relating to the data held on suspects, victims, institutions and outcomes as well as information from other work streams such as the IICSA referral numbers, types of referrals, force contact in terms of reporting non-recent Child Sexual Abuse (CSA), deconfliction, and media related analysis. Its purpose was to monitor trends and highlight ways in which the reporting of non-recent CSA could be enhanced and improved, together with presenting the scale of offending and its prevalence over decades. Elements of this document also informed the NPCC statistics publication. The final versions of both of these products covered up to the end of June 2022, and reflected the new cases submitted by forces up until the end of this time period.

The Analysis and Research team then continued statistical data mining and analysis throughout July 2022, as Operation Hydrant continued to collate updates on existing cases which were held on the system.

This next section provides a position of the final statistics at the point of full closure of the database when all updates ceased.





Force Reports

Operation Hydrant provided every force with a national picture of the scale and nature of reporting of non-recent child sexual abuse which could then be compared to their own local data, including crime levels and trends. To mark the end of Operation Hydrant data being produced, 52 bespoke reports covering the 43 forces in England and Wales as well as nine other forces/devolved authorities¹ were produced. At the end of July 2022, the national findings were that:

- + **5754 institutions were recorded and identified in the dataset, 42% of which were educational establishments.**
- + **12,698 victims/survivors were recorded and identified in the dataset (66% male 34% female)²**
- + **9,359 suspects were recorded and identified in the dataset. Of these 91% were male, 7% female, and in 2% of cases gender could not be identified. The percentage of male perpetrators has remained statistically unchanged in the last five years of data gathering. This is consistent with other datasets. In their Review of Evidence report published in 2021, the Centre of Expertise on child sexual abuse stated that: "Among respondents to the Crime Survey for England and Wales child abuse module who described being sexually abused in childhood, 92% said it had been perpetrated by males only"³**
- + **39% of overall suspects held roles within the education sector and within this sector alone 66% were teachers. It is important to note that this is not exclusive to teachers within classrooms. In some instances, perpetrators have roles outside educational environments such as private music teachers or tutors with offending taking place in the home of the victim/survivor**
- + **The investigation of non-recent abuse has obvious complexities, and national figures identify that 50% of overall outcomes recorded by Operation Hydrant are subject to no further action (NFA) by police forces (30% of these are due to suspects being deceased)**
- + **34% of recorded outcomes are convictions. While forensic opportunities may not be present in non-recent cases, offenders can still - and are - brought to justice. This, can be a hugely significant outcome for the victim/survivor and also contributes to the safeguarding of others**

¹Police Service Northern Ireland, Police Scotland, Isle of Man, Guernsey, Jersey, RAF Police, Royal Navy, Royal Military Police, British Transport Police

²Research has shown that whilst males are more likely to be abused in an institutional setting by someone in a position of trust, females are more likely to be abused by a family member

³The scale and nature of child sexual abuse: Review of evidence (csacentre.org.uk)

Operation Hydrant was informed by police forces of investigations meeting the Hydrant criteria and then co-ordinated the information to prevent duplication.

This is called 'deconfliction'.

As forces started to capture the surge in adults reporting being sexually abused as a child, it quickly became apparent that there was a real potential for duplication for forces as victims were reporting multiple offenders across different geographical areas. Hydrant removed this duplication by cross-referencing accounts from victims and witnesses, identifying where forces had different allegations against one offender. It also brought those forces together to agree primacy and collaborative working going forward, allowing for the sharing of intelligence and information.

Deconfliction

The deconfliction process involved a daily check of new information coming into Operation Hydrant against the HOLMES database. Any matches were cross referenced and where necessary the policing response was coordinated to prevent duplication, particularly where more than one force was involved. This ensured an efficient and effective response. Forces were also able to ask for locally held information to be checked against the database for the same purpose. At the end of July 2022, the team had completed 83 deconfliction requests from forces. This led to 294 individual entities being checked, 14% of these checks resulted in a match. A negative check means there was no deconfliction for the asking agency/force to be aware of - it was a standalone piece of information. A positive check meant that there was more than one agency/force involved and therefore a need for coordination.

Police National Database

During 2022, the research team continued work to improve the quality of data on the Police National Database (PND). All suspects received into Operation Hydrant via the monthly return from forces and Law Enforcement Agencies (LEA) were checked against the PND. This was to confirm their presence and take appropriate action if they were not. The team also checked the quality of data held on the PND in relation to CSA offenders.

The process of PND checking was completed by August 2022. A final data package was sent to the Home Office PND Landscape Assurance Team (LAT). This was instrumental in assisting in the improvement of the quality of data held on PND.

Regional Reports

The team continued to support forces and regions through the provision of a statistical profile which allowed the comparison of data at a local, regional and national level. This was disseminated to all Protecting Vulnerable People leads in all forces and LEA's.

New direction from July 2022

In the second half of 2022, under the new Hydrant structure, the Analysis and Research team continued to provide a national analysis and research capability with a wider remit, encompassing child sexual abuse and exploitation in addition to non-recent CSA. The team is now working collaboratively with other policing programmes and partners to develop a rich picture of the scale, prevalence and risk.

The key aim of this piece of work is to assess the scale, prevalence and risk of child sexual abuse and exploitation by using analytic resource provided by the Hydrant Programme, the VKPP, the National Crime Agency (NCA) and the National Assessment Centre (NAC).

Criteria for entry on the complex and organised child abuse database



Group of network based contact CSE

This includes any contact CSE investigation involving one or more victims and two or more suspects where there exists in evidence or intelligence an identifiable network between those suspects. Suspects will include those who are now deceased, and those who are, or have become a facilitator.



Complex or organised - Familial Child Sexual Abuse

This includes any familial CSAE investigation involving one or more victims and two or more suspects where there exists in evidence or intelligence an identifiable network between those suspects. Suspects will include those who are now deceased, and those who are, or have become a facilitator.



Complex or organised - Ritualised Sexual Abuse

This includes any ritualised CSAE investigation involving one or more victims and two or more suspects where there exists in evidence or intelligence an identifiable network between those suspects. Suspects will include those who are now deceased, and those who are, or have become a facilitator.



Complex or organised - Institutional Abuse

This includes any institutional CSAE investigation involving one or more victims survivors and two or more suspects where there exists in evidence or intelligence an identifiable network between those suspects. Suspects will include those who are now deceased, and those who are, or have become a facilitator.

A major part of the last five months of 2022 was dedicated to the scoping and planning of the above deliverables, with a particular focus on developing the Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE) Operations Database which was previously used to hold data in relation to police force operations that had been launched to investigate organised CSAE.

For several years, forces have been providing a crime data set to inform the Assessing the Totality of Police Recorded Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation Crime Report (analysis of offences reported to police across England and Wales) which is published on a quarterly basis. The Operations Database feeds into this report.

In April 2023, this process will be replaced with a single data request to forces that will service the needs of the VKPP (and thereby the production of the Totality Report), the regional CSE analyst network, and be used to populate a new dataset - the Complex and Organised Child Abuse Database (COCAD). The COCAD will replace the Operations Database, and the Hydrant Programme will manage this process. Its design, scope, trial data assessment and data analysis is undertaken by the Analysis and Research Team.

Forces will provide a data return, to include metrics that can be extracted from force crime systems using a standard, query export. The long-term plan is for Hydrant to carry out this function in-house saving time and resource for forces and offering bespoke national, regional and force data sets on complex and organised CSA.

This will be an efficient approach to the collection of a single and consistent dataset. From this, analysis and research can be undertaken to ensure the data's quality and accuracy. This data capture will assist policing to respond to requirements of the IICSA CSE by Organised Networks report, published in February 2022, and the IICSA Final Report published in October 2022 in relation to data and problem profiling. In addition, the learning and direction taken from analysis and research allows for a more evidence-based approach in which decision making and strategic planning can take place within policing and government. It will contribute at all levels to enhancing the strategic and tactical response to Child Sexual Abuse and Exploitation (CSAE).

Regional reports and other bespoke analytical products will be produced from this dataset. The research capability will create a richer picture from the COCAD data set. Direct access to force crime systems will facilitate the research of crime records to develop a richer picture in order to ensure the suspect and victim data is accurate and outcomes recorded. Running through this methodology will be the use Police National Computer (PNC) and Police National Database (PND) enriching the intelligence picture for use across all policing collaborations and more accurately being able to report on national policing's response to CSA/E.





Learning, Review and Peer Support

Summary

The Learning, Review and Support team continued to see a marked increase in requests for support from forces throughout 2022.

As part of the Hydrant Programme restructure, a review of services the team provides took place which identified that additional resilience was required to ensure the team were able to deliver their functions to as wide an audience as possible. This has seen the recruitment of a manager and two additional review officers, bringing the total to three review officers, who, along with the team manager are all nationally accredited. The team also benefits from a dedicated administrative support assistant. The result is a stronger offer which reflects the needs of forces across the country.

Peer Review and Peer Support (PRPS)

The Hydrant Programme has continued to draw on a cadre of Senior Investigating Officers (SIOs) from around the UK who all have recent, relevant experience of investigating major crime falling within the child protection and abuse investigation (CPAI) remit - this includes (but is not always limited to) all aspects of child abuse including physical, sexual, neglect, emotional and any other child safeguarding risk matters that may be raised.

Support for this work is provided by subject matter experts in their field, all of whom have lived experience relevant to the matter in hand - including victim and survivor advocates, psychologists specialising in the trauma of violence or abuse, police personnel specialising in communications and media handling, disclosure, and HOLMES, for example.

The cadre, and Hydrant Programme's own experts support investigations around the UK upon request at no cost to the commissioning force. Through this process, and by capturing learning which has gone before, current practice is informed, and promising practice is shared to enrich the opportunities and options available to the force.



Peer Review is a formal process working to a set Terms of Reference, agreed with the commissioning force. Peer Reviews will vary in time taken dependent on the requirements of the force, and typically take between two - three days. Forces often request benchmarking and review of the investigative strategy, partnership arrangements, victim engagement strategy, communications and media handling, and disclosure strategies or processes. At the conclusion of the Peer Review, a report is submitted to the force with findings and recommendations.

Peer Support is a more informal process, not necessarily requiring agreed Terms of Reference when the force seeks a dialogue to benchmark and discuss various elements of the investigation or an issue in hand. Peer Support sessions can take over two hours or up to two days, depending on the scope of the issues the force wants to deal with.

Findings and recommendations are designed to inform the commissioning force's decision making, signpost to other resources and advice, and develop other investigative options for the SIO may wish to consider. They are not designed to direct decision making, and the commissioning force remains accountable for decision making, outcomes, and progression.

During 2022, 43 PRPS sessions; including physical deployment to force on 14 occasions, six formal reports were produced with a total of 133 recommendations and more than 100 investigative actions following an evidential review.

This number also includes supporting the VKPP with a thematic review of CSE.

Since the commencement of the review and support service, Hydrant have made more than 800 recommendations to national investigations.

Feedback from forces is consistently positive, evidenced by the continual rise in demand support at key investigative points such as suspect arrest phases management or trial management.

This process is designed to share what works well, highlight what has worked less well previously, and inform decision making at local level. It brings the national knowledge landscape to inform local practice and ensures that the policing response to child sexual abuse and exploitation continues to evolve.



“ ”

“The Hydrant Programme cadre of experts have carried out both an initial and follow-up peer support session for Operation Lydstep. The sessions, final report and recommendations have proved to be invaluable with regards to progressing elements of the investigation in areas not otherwise considered.”
(West Mercia Police)

“A quick call was all it took to access informal support from the Hydrant team. It didn’t matter that I’m not a senior officer, we talked about my investigation, and it really helped.”

Continued Professional Development (CPD) and Knowledge Assets

The learning and best practice captured via the PRPS process is gathered, captured and tested before being shared via CPD days and force deployments. Support is also provided during regular, more informal communication with SIOs and investigators. This process is further enhanced by the provision of a library of advice documents.

New processes and tactics also inform a suite of documents the team produce for national policing on behalf of the NPCC. The Hydrant Programme library of documents continues to increase, and in addition to the general CSE SIO advice first published in 2016, it now includes resources focussing on key strategies and topical issues of national interest. In 2022 a separate SIO advice document aimed at for the investigation of CSE was published with the support of the NPCC. Everything is made available to national policing on the police online information-sharing platform Knowledge Hub, or via by a direct request to the Hydrant Programme. All the documents are revised annually. Should any significant issues or developments be identified these are included within a newsletter to forces jointly with the College of policing and the VKPP.

The free to force CPD events highlight the current national position within the CPAI portfolio and current policing issues along with an interactive CSAE case study. They are designed to generate discussion, highlight good practice and address those repeated areas of weakness identified through PRPS. repeated issues and share best practice.

In partnership with the National Association of People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC), three two days sessions were provided which also included the impact of trauma on victims and barriers to reporting their abuse, and a focus on staff wellbeing understanding vicarious trauma and coping mechanisms.

During 2022, the Hydrant Programme delivered 22 days of events to 325 delegates from 13 force areas. Feedback from the events remains positive, with 87% of delegates rating the input as useful or very useful.

“Very informative course. I have a better idea of national working practices which will assist in my day-to-day investigations.”

“Very useful to know of all the support and advice that Hydrant Programme can provide.”

“Insightful and thought-provoking input. Useful information regarding Hydrant resources/support available.”



National Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel

The National Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel (CSARP) reviews allegations of child sexual abuse finalised as no further action (NFA) by either the police or the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) before 5 June 2013, this date being the beginning of the Victim's Right to Review scheme (VRR).

The panel is a joint CPS and NPCC project providing a route for review for victims of child sexual abuse who cannot use the VRR process due to the age of the investigation

The panel comprises of a Deputy Chief Constable, two Chief Crown Prosecutors, senior Rape and Serious Sexual Offence (RASSO) lawyers, experienced Senior Investigative Officers (SIO) and an independent member from the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC).

The panel will consider any child sexual abuse case referred to them by, or on behalf of the victim. In each case, the original decision maker, (police or CPS) are offered an opportunity to review their decision, which in many cases leads to a voluntary decision to charge or re-investigate, meaning no further action is required by the panel. Where the police or CPS remain convinced the NFA decision was correct, the panel secretariat recovers the file and case materials to present the case to the next panel meeting.

Any case considered by the panel results in one of three outcomes:

- +** Investigation referred to the police for further investigation and submission to CPS for a charging decision upon completion
- +** Referred to the CPS to reconsider their original decision
- +** The panel agrees with the original NFA decision
- +** **Since 2013, 38% of all referred cases have led to a charge, and where victims did not see a decision to charge, their cases were reviewed or reinvestigated to present day standards. They received a full explanation of the decision as to why there was no opportunity to take further action**

In 2022, 28 new cases were referred to the Panel, bringing the total to 336. Of that number, four cases meeting criteria are currently under review, and those falling outside the Panel criteria have been referred to other routes of appeal, where this is available, and signposted to support. The figures have previously been inflated by a successful media campaign to raise the public awareness of the Panel's work and further media work is planned for 2023.



75%
reinvestigated or reconsidered
(with or without Panel direction)

38%
charged

14%
Panel NFA's

3%
ongoing live cases

Of the 38%
charged →

15%
convicted

10%
acquitted or discharged

2%
suspect deceased awaiting trial

1%
charged and awaiting trial



Referrals Team

Summary

The Hydrant Programme Referrals team continued to receive safeguarding referrals from the following:

- +

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) final referrals November 2022
- +

NSPCC
- +

Home Office
- +

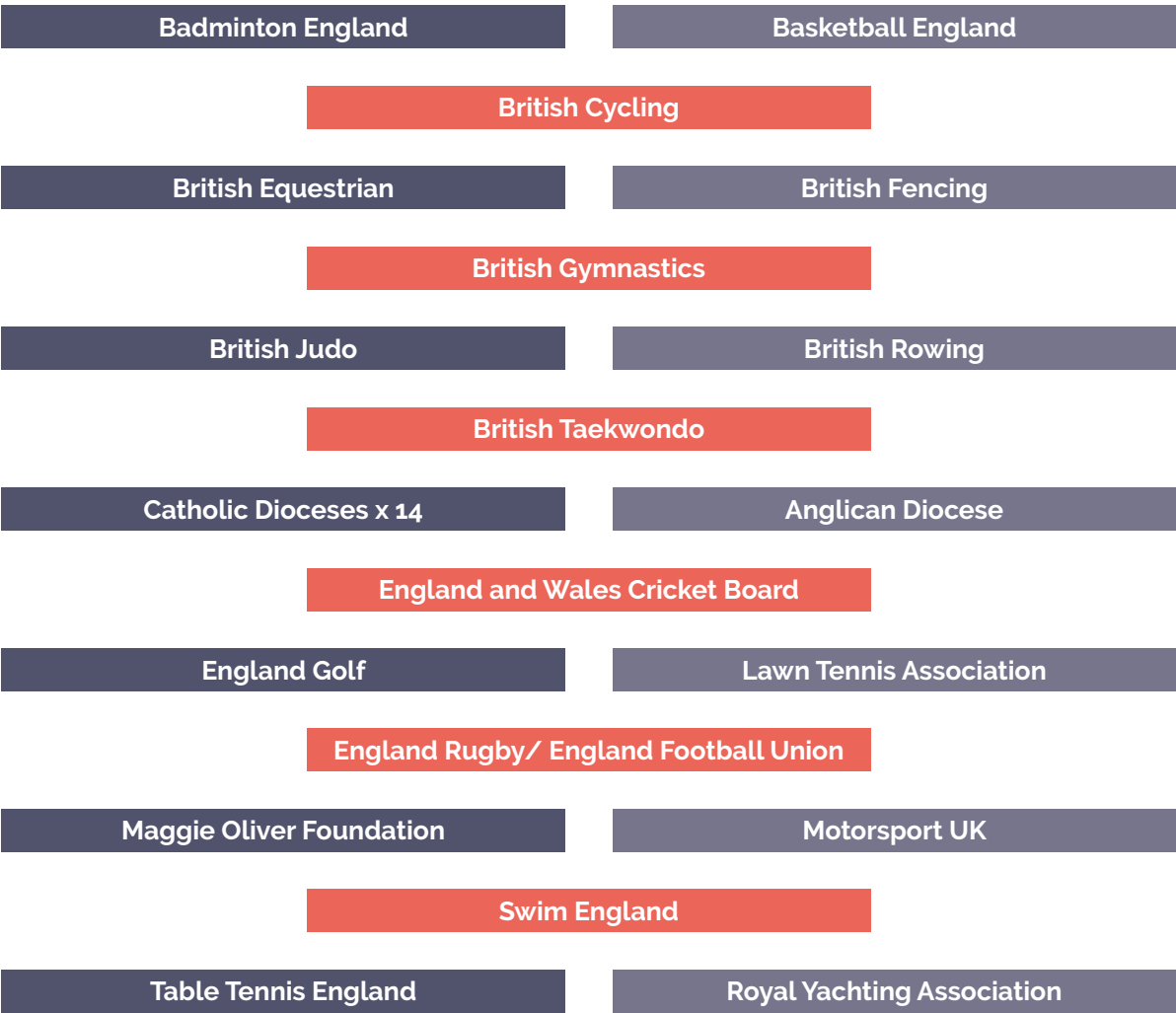
Sea Cadets
- +

Catholic Dioceses
- +

Anglican Dioceses
- +

Sporting bodies

In addition to the above, 33 new safeguarding referral pathways were opened with organisations throughout 2022:



Throughout 2022 numerous organisations were approached and showed an interest in signing a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU), which sets out how information held by partner organisations relating to allegations of child sexual abuse will be shared with Hydrant, as a conduit into national policing. Many organisations whilst not formally signing an MOU have worked with Hydrant to access support and coordination.

Most referrals received into the Hydrant Programme originate from the IICSA, despite the Truth Project closing on 31 October 2021. These include allegations of sexual, physical, emotional abuse and neglect, many of which relate to familial abuse.

Many of the IICSA referrals contain limited information, and in order to assist forces, research is conducted before dissemination. This process continues to be beneficial in reducing the workload placed on forces.

The Hydrant Programme, acting as the interface between the Inquiry and national policing, receives safeguarding referrals and disseminates them to the relevant police forces for action to be taken. The process of information sharing and reporting concerns with local policing continues to be challenging for those organisations, particularly where there are multiple offence locations and perpetrators. However, the programme supports in making this process more accessible and to forge a much-improved engagement with local police force safeguarding teams.

The Hydrant Programme acts as the conduit between the relevant referring organisation and national policing and doesn't have an investigative remit. It is the responsibility of the force local to the incident to investigate any identified offences and address safeguarding concerns. Despite this, on occasion it is necessary to make a direct approach to a victim. In these cases, the victim has provided consent for police contact, but there is insufficient information within the referral to enable dissemination to the relevant police force(s) or a full assessment of risk to be made. This direct intervention provides for concerns around the welfare of the victim to be allayed and appropriately addressed.



A photograph of a woman with glasses and a patterned top smiling and talking to a man in a white shirt. The background is a blurred office environment. The text "Partnership Working" is overlaid in white.

Partnership Working

The team continues to develop and build positive relationships with key organisations. Some examples of these are detailed below:

Anglican Church

In 2022, liaison with the Church of England's National Safeguarding Team continued to be developed to ensure that an appropriate pathway was created to bring safeguarding referrals from the Anglican Church into policing.

The Hydrant Programme and the NPCC assisted the Church to develop a national information sharing agreement (ISA) to be used by the Church and police forces in response to a recommendation made by IICSA. It is hoped the ISA will be signed and shared with policing in early 2023.

Catholic Church

An effective working relationship was established with the Catholic Standards Safeguarding Agency (CSSA), a new professional standards body with regulatory powers. CSSA advises on and audits the work of the Catholic Church in England and Wales. It replaces the Catholic Safeguarding Advisory Service (CSAS) following recommendations of the independent review of the safeguarding structures and arrangements within the Catholic Church in England and Wales, along with those made by the IICSA.

CSSA assisted the Hydrant Programme in reaching out to all Catholic dioceses, resulting in a total of 23 dioceses signing up to the referrals pathway and 26 referrals made in 2022 into national policing.

Home Office

The Hydrant Programme continues to liaise with the Home Office and support their referrals into policing where necessary. In 2022, 14 referrals were made into national policing via this route.

LimeCulture

The Hydrant Programme worked in partnership with LimeCulture Community Interest Company (LimeCulture). The National Independent Sexual Violence Adviser Coordinator (NISVAC) initiative provided victims and survivors of sexual abuse from specific 'seldom heard' client groups with a pathway into ISVA support and/or the criminal justice system. The project was established in recognition of the barriers certain client groups may face in engaging with support services and/or reporting to the police.



Working in partnership with community advocates, organisations, experts and ISVA services, the initiative sought to:

- + Raise awareness of ISVA Services among professionals and advocates**
- + Up-skill ISVA Services to support victims/survivors from seldom heard groups**
- + Enable victims/survivors from seldom heard groups to seek ISVA support.**



The work undertaken by LimeCulture was independent of policing and helped to achieve objectives within the Hydrant Programme's inclusion strategy.

To date the NISVAC has provided resources to support ISVAs to better understand the unique barriers a number of "seldom heard" groups experience, Jehovah's witnesses, [learning disabilities](#), Gypsy, Roma and travelling communities and people who are homeless.

Throughout 2022 work to prepare new resources was ongoing and in 2023 further resources will be delivered in support of victims and survivors of sexual violence in prisons and the armed forces.

National Association for People Abused in Childhood (NAPAC)

Engagement with NAPAC continued and although we do not have an agreed safeguarding referral pathway, advice has been given on several cases where concerns existed.

NAPAC offers support to adult survivors of all types of childhood abuse, including physical, sexual, emotional abuse or neglect.



Sea Cadets

Engagement with the Sea Cadets continued throughout 2022, despite referrals diminishing due to their past case review closing in 2020. In total, 16 referrals were received via this pathway in 2022.

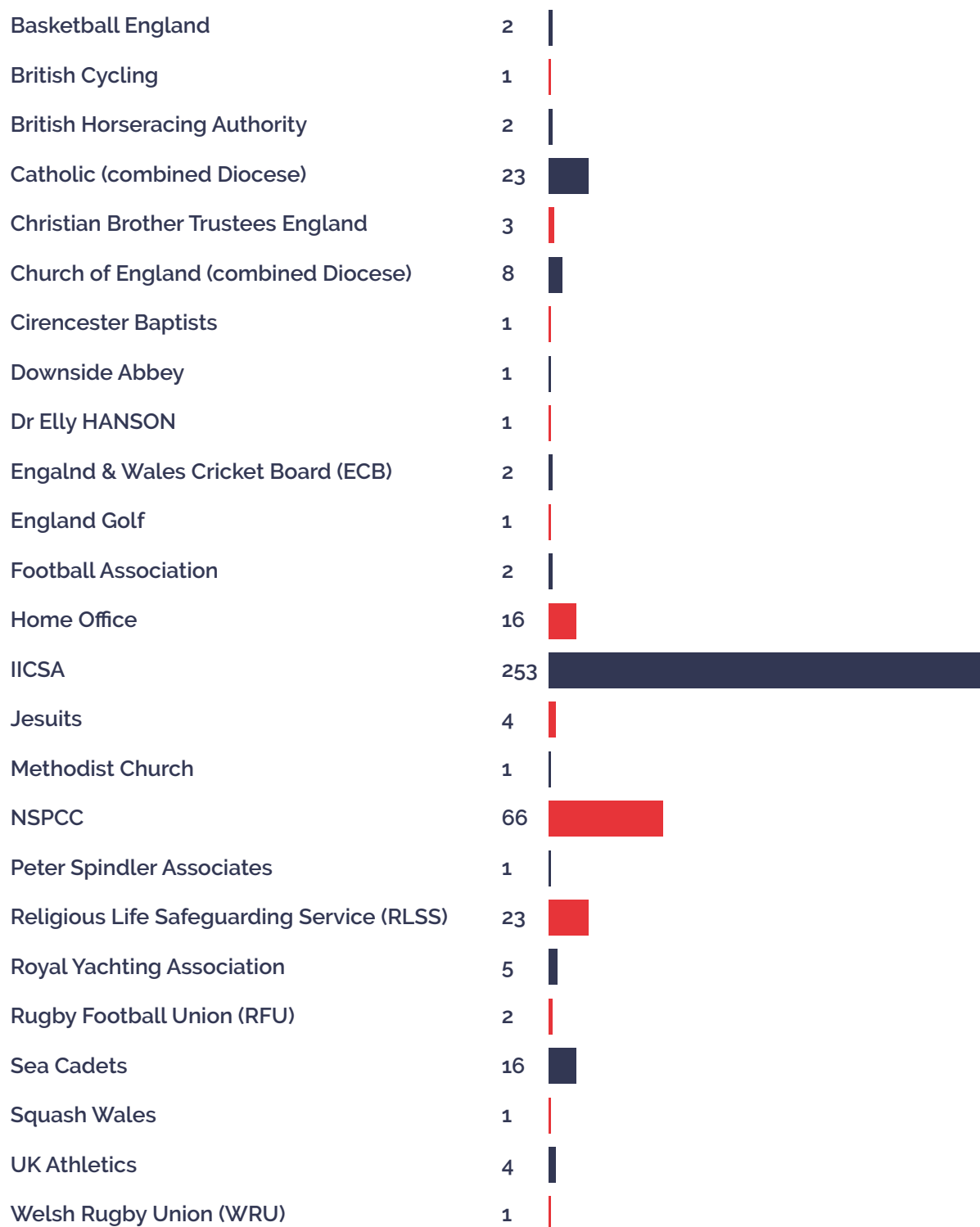
Sports

The Hydrant Programme continues to engage with national sporting bodies to support them with improved information processes and a referral pathway into policing. In 2022, 22 sports bodies signed up to the pathway, with 20 referrals received.

Whilst referral numbers were moderate the programme assisted all these bodies throughout 2022 with support and advice as well as coordination of safeguarding matters with national policing.

Referral Trends

In 2022, Operation Hydrant received 441 new referrals. The below chart shows the numbers of referrals by source for 2022:



Professional Standards

The Hydrant Programme's integrity strategy applies to professional standards reports which meet the previous Operation Hydrant criteria (see Appendix B) The team assesses reports referred to the Hydrant Programme from a variety of agencies who have been contacted by victims of child sexual abuse, and who have expressed dissatisfaction with the police, or alleged criminality or wrongdoing by a police employee.

The Integrity Strategy sets out the criteria that expressions of dissatisfaction must meet for consideration by the Referrals Team. Specifically, the victim of child sexual abuse must allege either:

- +** **The police failed to carry out an adequate investigation of the reported child sexual abuse**
- +** **The police deliberately refused to investigate the child sexual abuse, e.g., a 'cover-up'**
- +** **The alleged perpetrator of the child sexual abuse was a police officer or police employee**

Any reports assessed as meeting the Integrity Strategy criteria are progressed to the relevant Professional Standards Department (PSD) of the force concerned. There is a requirement for the PSD to assess the dissatisfaction/statement of wrongdoing and decide whether a complaint or conduct case is recorded in accordance with relevant national guidance.

In 2022, 22 PSD referrals were received into the Hydrant Programme.

There has been a steady and continuous decline in the number of PSD referrals being received. This is linked to the steady but continuous decline in IICSA referrals. They were the largest referring agency and with their reduction and ultimate cessation of referrals it is inevitable that PSD referrals would also reduce.



The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)

The Hydrant Programme continued to act as the interface between the IICSA and policing in England and Wales. Requests from the Inquiry were relayed to the relevant police forces and responses from those forces to inform the IICSA's work strands were supported by the Programme. Whilst the Inquiry continued its work throughout 2022 up until the release of the final report in October the impact on the Programme and national policing was reduced as no investigation hearings took place.

During 2022 the Hydrant Programme continued to review and research documents to support the inquiry with ongoing requests in preparation for the final report.

The Programme continued to review and catalogue evidence and material provided to the Inquiry in order to:

- + **Ensure all emerging issues or themes for policing were accurately captured**
- + **Continue to identify where there was potential for criticism of national policing**
- + **Identify recommendations likely to impact upon policing**

The Inquiry's published reports continued to attract national news media coverage and generate significant public interest.

Investigation reports published in 2022

1 February 2022 - 'Child sexual exploitation by organised networks'



INDEPENDENT INQUIRY CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE

The Inquiry's public hearing was held over 11 days, between 21 September 2020 and 29 October 2020. This was a virtual hearing, given the restrictions resulting from the COVID-19 pandemic. The Inquiry heard from complainants, victims and survivors who described their experiences between 2003-2011. Academics, local authorities, police officers, voluntary sector representatives, government officials, and representatives from victim support and campaigning groups all gave evidence.

The Inquiry also undertook a detailed analysis of material held by the relevant local authority and police forces in relation to 33 children from six case study areas, in order to better understand the experiences of children who were currently being (or very recently had been) sexually exploited by networks. While the Inquiry did not hear directly from the 33 case study children, the local authority and police evidence relating to them provided an insight into their experiences, which were more recent, dating from around April 2018.

The report made six recommendations in total, for the UK Government, the Welsh Government, Department of Education, Policing and Local Authorities.

1 March 2022 - The residential schools investigation report

This investigation examined the nature and extent of incidents of child sexual abuse in residential schools, and the responses to those allegations by the schools and other organisations. The themes considered included governance and management of schools, inspection and monitoring, training and recruitment of staff, whistleblowing and reporting, school culture, and good safeguarding practice.

The Inquiry heard evidence in two phases, about incidents of child sexual abuse, harmful sexual behaviour between children and other safeguarding concerns which arose at 12 schools in England, in order to understand the effectiveness of the framework for safeguarding children within schools. Institutional responses to safeguarding issues which arose at a boarding school in North Wales were also examined, as well as information about eight schools which are no longer operating

The Inquiry made seven recommendations in total, in relation to: -

Residential schools, responding to allegations and concerns, governance, training and awareness-raising, inspection and monitoring, vetting, barring and teacher misconduct and schools in Wales.

20 October 2022 - Final Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse

After seven years of work, 325 days of public hearings, live evidence from 725 witnesses and £186m spent; 107 recommendations have been made; including 20 in the final report.

The final report draws on all of the Inquiry's work from 2015 until 2022. It undertook three main strands of activity - investigations and public hearings, the Truth Project and Research.

The final report sets out the main findings about the extent to which state and non-state institutions failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation and makes recommendations for reform. It draws on the Inquiry's 15 investigations and 19 related investigation reports, the Interim Report of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, 41 other Inquiry reports and publications and over 6,200 victims and survivors who participated in the Truth Project.

The Inquiry has made 20 recommendations in the final report. These recommendations are all designed to tackle systemic weaknesses in organisations and practices, which have left children vulnerable to abuse, exposed them to harm or denied them access to justice.

Nearly every one of the Inquiry's investigation reports concluded that the true scale of sexual abuse of children is likely to have been much higher than the actual numbers recorded, and this continues to be the case with current methods of data gathering.

IICSA Criminal Proceedings and Investigation Act (CPIA) Protocol

Many of the victims who contacted the IICSA Truth Project choose to share their experience for the first time.

The Hydrant Programme had a Criminal Procedures and Investigations Act disclosure protocol in place with the IICSA. The protocol stated that disclosure should only be made through the Hydrant Programme, and only at the stage when an investigator believed they would be approaching the CPS for a charging decision.

Early in 2022, the guidance was changed to allow requests to be made during the course of a substantive criminal investigation in which the victim provided a statement of evidence or video recorded interview and made allegations against a living suspect who is known or identifiable.

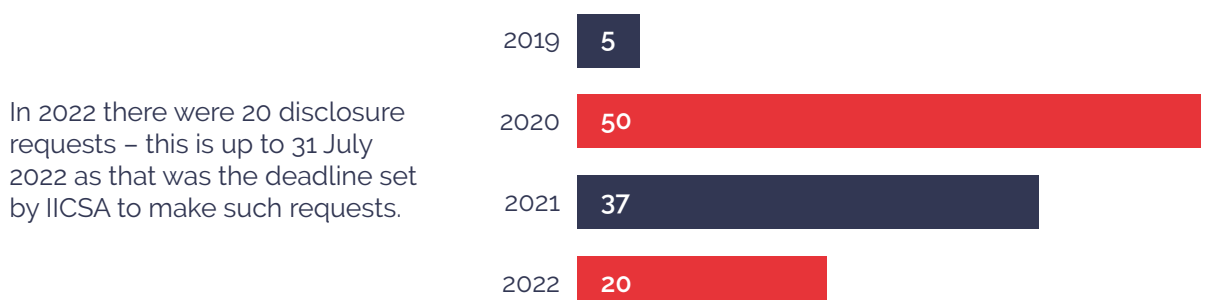
The deadline for making the disclosure request was 31 July 2022.

IICSA Referral Outcomes Overview

The Hydrant Programme continued to obtain, record and review outcomes from the IICSA referrals. These were prioritised during 2022 to ensure as many as possible were captured for inclusion in the Inquiry's final report published in Autumn 2022. Throughout 2022 the IICSA was provided with monthly updates of outcomes relating to referrals up to and including until the end of April 2022. At the end of 2022, a total of 9838 outcomes had been recorded. The chart shows the cumulative outcomes of referrals originating from IICSA.

Outcome	England	Wales
No further action	885	445
Ongoing	270	4
Convicted	107	5
Not convicted	45	2
Charged and awaiting trial	38	0
Offence occurred outside the UK	37	0

CPIA IICSA's Disclosure Requests



The IICSA's Final Report

In October 2022, the IICSA's final report was published. As part of a Rule 9 request (see Appendix C for definition) from the Inquiry, the Analysis and Research team supported and provided final responses to a number of statistical requests (referring specifically to England and Wales) from the IICSA Analysis Team. The key points of which are summarised below:

- + **Between 12 March 2015⁴ and 31 March 31 2022⁵ Operation Hydrant received 10,431 Inquiry referrals from the IICSA.**
- + **The table summarises the institution types identified within the IICSA referrals sent to Operation Hydrant. It includes those that were believed to be situated within a police force area in England or Wales.⁶**

Institution Type	England	Wales
Schools	1704	72
Children's Homes	858	63
Religious Institutions	431	26
Professional Establishments	313	15
Health Establishments	233	9
Children & Young Persons Associations	166	2
Prison/Young Offenders	132	3
Sports Venues	71	3
Law Enforcement	61	1
Military Locations	51	4
Places Of Entertainment	31	2
Hotels/Guest Houses	14	0

⁴ <https://www.iicsa.org.uk/sites/default/files/opening-statement-key-announcements.pdf>

⁵ a cut-off date of 31st March 2022 was agreed for the receipt of referrals from the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA). Any new referrals received after this date are not captured in this analysis.

⁶ The data within this table used the location of the force that is, or is believed to be, the lead investigating force. Due to the nature of the information provided this may simply be the force area in which the victim or survivor lived at the time of reporting. If, upon receipt of an outcome this changed then a corresponding adjustment has been made to the data.



The table below shows the type and number of outcomes relating to IICSA referrals where the lead investigating force is situated in England or Wales.

Outcome	England	Wales
No further action	8830	444
Ongoing	336	5
Convicted	96	5
Not Convicted ⁷	43	2
Charged and awaiting trial	40	0
Offence occurred outside the UK	37	0

The outcome, "Ongoing" refers to:



Where an investigation is still in progress and enquiries are ongoing.

On report publication day the Hydrant Programme managed communications coordination activity to ensure a consistent voice for policing at national, regional, and local level, ensuring that key audiences comprising partners and stakeholders were informed of policing's response to the report. The result was a unified approach to publication day.

Partners and stakeholders, along with the Hydrant Programme have continued to ensure the recommendations made by the IICSA remain part of the public narrative.

In December 2022 the NSPCC published a letter on behalf of 30 leaders from agencies and organisations calling on the Prime Minister and the Home Secretary to turn the findings and recommendations of the IICSA into a national mission to prevent child sexual abuse. Whilst we await a formal response from Government, work continues at pace to progress recommendations made.

⁷ This includes not guilty, unfit to stand trial and cases with a hung jury



Communications

Summary

The second half of 2022 saw the Communications Team focus heavily on plans for the closing of Operation Hydrant and introduction of the Hydrant Programme. This involved significant engagement with forces, partners and stakeholders and progressing a re-brand project to support the restructure. Towards the end of the year the publication of the final report from the IICSA required substantial co-ordination between forces in England and Wales, the NPCC communications team, the NPCC Lead for Child Protection and of course interested parties across the vulnerability sector. Although political events on the day overshadowed much of the promising media coverage, focus on recommendations have continued to be part of the public narrative and more activity is planned in 2023.

Restructure work

Following extensive consultation across policing, government, partners, and stakeholders, at the end of 2021 the decision was made that Operation Hydrant would move from an operating model with narrow criteria relating to non-recent CSA committed by persons of public prominence or who operated in an institutional setting to delivering against a wider set of strategic objectives which encompass the whole of the child protection and abuse investigation portfolio.

The Communications Team developed a change communications strategy, with supporting tactical plans to initially consult with key audiences on the transition, and then deliver effective communications supporting the change project. The Operation Hydrant logo was updated with the look and feel retained to ensure the brand recognition and trust built up in the years since Hydrant was commissioned could endure.

The Hydrant Programme launched on 1 August 2022 with a raft of communications to policing, partners and stakeholders. A huge amount of work took place 'behind the scenes' to ensure teams within the Programme were provided with the correct products and templates enabling them to continue their business without the re-structure impacting. All forces were provided with a comms pack which contained everything they needed to update officers and staff on the new Hydrant Programme remit, and the senior management team capitalised on their engagement with contacts to ensure agreed key messages were shared at every opportunity.

Force support

Earlier in this report we shared an update on the support the Hydrant Programme provides for all forces free of charge. As part of this, the Communications Team delivers a Communications and Media input during the CPD training to forces designed to enable SIOs to build in communications planning to their investigations. The Communications Team also deploy as subject matter experts on peer reviews to advise on stakeholder and media strategy as part of complex investigations - recognising the importance of effective communications in providing visibility to communities and victims of police action and the outcomes resulting from that action.



A first in 2022 was the production of a Tri-Service Lessons Learnt Bulletin which captures learning from the peer review and peer support process to inform frontline policing practice. The Hydrant Programme, Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme and the College of Policing all offer a peer-to-peer review and support service which benchmarks force activity against College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice, advice and good practice from across the sphere of vulnerability. The thematic learning derived from these sessions will now be pulled together in a bi-annual Lessons Learnt Bulletin which is then disseminated across policing for practical application in all forces.

Communications Products

In addition to the focused strategic work described above, daily business continues. The team produces a Daily News Summary, an environmental scanning resource which summarises media coverage relevant to the Hydrant Programme's work, regular updates pulling together useful learning, events, media coverage and more which is circulated to our force representatives for onward dissemination. The team also produces a regular stakeholder bulletin for partners from across the sector.

Collaboration

The communications function sits within a hub supporting three national programmes focused on vulnerability. In 2022 Directors of the Hydrant Programme, the Vulnerability Knowledge and Practice Programme and the Tackling Organised Exploitation programme committed to further collaboration and to create more opportunity for holistic working. This seeks to avoid duplication, ensures cohesive strategic planning and allows for opportunities which will benefit national, regional and local policing to be identified and progressed.



Conclusion

The closing of Operation Hydrant was a watershed moment for all who are, or who have been part of Hydrant. What started as a temporary policing operation to address emerging criticality following Jimmy Saville and other high-profile cases has become the anchor for policing's response to child sexual abuse and exploitation.

With the introduction of the Hydrant Programme comes an acknowledgement that the approach to Child Protection and Abuse Investigation must be more strategic, with accurate and quality data playing a central role. Whilst significant progress has been made, there is much still to do.



Appendix

A - Hydrant Programme strategic objectives

- + 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 programs 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 service response to 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.

B - Operation Hydrant criteria

A live investigation for Operation Hydrant criteria can be:

- + A live investigation of a non-recent child sexual abuse allegation in which the abuse was reported at least one year after the offence took place whether reported by the victim or by a third party, and that investigation is ongoing. OR:
 - + An investigation that was live at any time in August 2014 onwards (regardless of when reported) but is now finalised due to the completion of that investigation through a police, CPS or court outcome and was not reported to Operation Hydrant at the time.
- There must be active lines of investigation being conducted such as:
- + A statement (either in written form/video evidence etc.) obtained from the victim .
 - + Attempts made to recover records (held by institutions etc.) to corroborate the account.
 - + Attempts to identify and locate the suspect.
- + Intelligence / Information being developed around a crime with a named victim including where the offence meets National Crime Recording Standards but the victim does not wish to support an investigation from the outset or the suspect is already believed / suspected to have died. This will ensure safeguarding and de-confliction processes can be completed.

C- Rule 9 definition

A Rule 9 Request is a request submitted in accordance with Rule 9 of the Inquiry Rules 2006. Rule 9 sets out what the inquiry must do in order to require a party to provide either disclosure of documents or a written statement. The relevant provision states:

- +** The inquiry panel must send a written request for a written statement to any person from whom the inquiry panel proposes to take evidence.
- +** The inquiry panel must send a written request to any person that it wishes to produce any document or any other thing.
- +** The inquiry panel may make a written request for further evidence, being either a written statement or oral evidence.
- +** Any request for a written statement must include a description of the matters or issues to be covered in the statement.

A Rule 9 Request is considered to be a less formal request as it does not have the power to compel the provision of documents.



Contact the team

Email: HydrantEnquiries@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

**HYDRANT
PROGRAMME**

Supporting child protection
and abuse investigation