



# MEMORANDUM

**To:**  
Detective Chief Superintendent Mirfield  
Head of Crime Support

**Ref:**

**From:**  
Detective Inspector Grant. P.P.S.U.  
[REDACTED] Missing Persons Coordinator.

**Ext:**  
7800 2270

**Date:**  
13 October 2009

**SUBJECT:**  
**Briefing document related to the sexual exploitation of missing children  
Operation Protection**

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The purpose of this report is to:

1. Provide a Force perspective regarding the current standard of investigations carried out by West Midlands Police into missing children with a particular focus on 'Looked After Children' (LAC) who are repeatedly missing from care.
2. Highlight emerging threats presented to the Force in this area of business.
3. Scope out the profile of a potential investigation in respect of the issues identified.

## **Background**

There is no corporate approach regarding the investigation of missing children and adults. Vulnerable Persons Officers nominally have a role which was never determined during the establishment of Public Protection Unit and for which they have no capacity.

A number of COMPACT missing persons records reviewed show that investigations are rarely owned by a specific individual and are routinely passed from response team to response team under the changing supervision of the Duty Inspector. Pertinent enquiries are frequently not carried out due to the pressure of other competing duties and investigations, debriefing and intelligence gathering is sporadic and often postponed. This situation is exacerbated in relation to Looked After Children because the children do not trust police officers and some officers show little care or empathy towards the children.

## **Current situation**

For a number of years children in care or residing in childrens homes have repeatedly run away. Unfortunately they are often perceived to be streetwise and able to look after themselves whilst Police Officers consider them to be a nuisance and permanent drain on resources. The reality being that they are vulnerable children, often with troubled backgrounds associated to physical/sexual abuse or they are from dysfunctional family groups.

Children Services, Home Managers and Social Workers are frustrated by what they perceive to be a lack of interest and action from police officers. Officers are equally frustrated by their perception that the workers are not protecting the children and let them runaway, often within minutes of a return to their home. This relationship has resulted in a lack of trust and limited information exchange which has undermined opportunities to protect missing children and assess the extent of the sexual exploitation process. A summary of recent Birmingham cases is attached at Appendix A

A recent review indicates that LAC who are regularly missing receive very little police attention with limited activity to locate them or facilitate their return. Intelligence reveals that these female children are associating with older men who are often involved in drug trafficking and other serious criminality. The children are supplied with alcohol/drugs or are subject of threats/intimidation and engage in sexual activity, resulting in a significant potential that they will come to serious physical harm or even death as a result.

In April 2009, D3, E2 & E3 OCU's identified a series of sexual assaults on LAC who were persistently missing from Childrens Homes across Birmingham. The offenders were groups of older males predominantly of Pakistani origin. The offences were difficult to deal with for a number of reasons including:

- lack of intelligence
- lack of disclosure/co-operation from the victims often not seeing themselves as exploited or vulnerable individuals
- a single agency/single OCU approach
- lack of co ordination/co operation between agencies

As a result of these individual investigations Operation Pennywhistle was initiated to co-ordinate enquiries and intelligence gathering between West Midlands Police, B.C.C. Children's Services and The Childrens Society, who are engaged in working with missing children. 30 girls from Birmingham Childrens homes all aged 16 and under were identified as being involved in sexual exploitation by groups of Asian males. Details attached at Appendix B

For a number of reasons including historical/outdated intelligence Operation Pennywhistle did not develop a robust operational or intelligence gathering response. Operation Protection has now been instigated to address this.

Other OCU's have developed isolated investigations such as Operation Bevel (J OCU) which identified that [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]. In both investigations victims and offenders were identified however no prosecutions followed because of difficulties already described above.

Additional concerns have been highlighted by Sandwell Borough Council who employ health outreach workers to engage with local prostitutes, building contacts and information networks.

[REDACTED]

Barnados are commissioned by Birmingham City Council to work with missing children. Their experience in Birmingham identifies that sexual exploitation similar to that in Derbyshire (discussed later) is taking place in Birmingham. It is their experience that approximately only thirty percent of their known victims are LAC.

Gloucestershire Police are in the early stages of an investigation and have identified potentially 28 vulnerable children. West Mercia Constabulary (Operation Chalice) and Staffordshire Police (Operation Microphone) have similar offence profiles and have appointed Senior Investigating Officers and investigative teams to review their vulnerabilities. A meeting has been arranged to identify any cross border issues

There are also considerable resourcing implications for the police in attending Childrens' Homes in Birmingham, as highlighted in the table below.

OCU	Childrens Home	OASIS Logs	Total Children missing	Missing episodes	Total Females Missing	Females episodes
		144		52		52
		122		56		51
		81		52		43
		117		24		24
		93		22		19
<b>Totals</b>		<b>557</b>	<b>25</b>	<b>206</b>	<b>16</b>	<b>189</b>

An examination of COMPACT indicates that over a 5 month period from April to August 2009, five childrens homes reported 25 children missing 206 times between them. On each occasion a missing person COMPACT report was compiled, an investigation commenced and a further visit conducted upon return. It is worthy of note that girls account for 189 reports whilst boys only 17. Over the same period there were 557 OASIS logs created for these 5 homes, equating to approximately 3.3 calls each and every day. Research carried out by WMP missing persons coordinator suggests only 50% of LAC missing reports are recorded on COMPACT as often missing children return prior to completion of the documentation.

There are a further 18 childrens homes in Birmingham and there is a similar situation on Borough OCU's.

NPIA research shows that each missing person investigation recorded on COMPACT costs approximately £1000 to record and engage in an initial investigation process. If meaningful intervention is carried out at an early stage to prevent persistent runaway episodes there is potential for an increase in safeguarding and major resource savings

In summary there are significant vulnerabilities for West Midlands Police in the current approach to investigations related to missing children. The jeopardy of this situation is further highlighted by Operation Retriever which is described in the following summary.

**Derbyshire Enquiry (Operation Retriever)**

Early in 2009, Derbyshire Constabulary commenced an investigation focusing on the sexual exploitation of young females, the circumstances had been identified as the second primary threat to the Force. The Child Exploitation Team initiated enquires however the scale of the investigation required additional investigators from the Major Crime Team (Detective Inspector, 3 Detective Sergeants and 24 Investigators/support staff) supported by HOLMES. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

Trust issues between victims and the police initially undermined the investigation however an enhanced partnership approach, with identified networks and trusted individuals started to build trust and confidence [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

The investigation identified 50 girls under the age of 16 who had potentially been groomed and sexually exploited by a number of Asian males who were known associates. 14 defendants await trial and between them are charged with 80 serious sexual offences against 27 victims. A previously unrecognised threat is that only thirty percent of the children could be described as LAC, the remaining seventy percent were living within their home environment.

A number of defendants had previously been arrested and refused charge for 12 separate rapes. The cases were not pursued because of discrepancies/inadequacies with the victim/evidence. As a result of Operation Retriever these cases have been reviewed and several defendants have now been charged with a number of the original offences.

Appendix C provides a summary of the Derbyshire investigation and key findings.

The Derbyshire Strategic lead, Detective Superintendent Debbie Platt has prepared a ministerial briefing for the Home Secretary who is already aware of the impending issues. The Derbyshire investigation is listed for trial in Spring 2010 when it is anticipated that significant press interest will be generated. It is likely that local and national media will begin a comparison with other Local Authorities and police forces.

The same sexual exploitation modus operandi described in the Derbyshire investigation is currently active within WMP. The Force has very limited insight into the threat as related to LAC and the intelligence profile related to children who are not in care is none existent. The current situation poses significant challenges for WMP in protecting children and enhancing the trust and confidence agenda.

### **Consultation.**

Unlike the Derbyshire Investigation, which was co-terminus with Childrens Services, Health and Education Departments, WMP consists of 7 separate Local Authorities. It has not been practicable to canvas all partners so this report is primarily focused on Birmingham with a brief mention of other similar investigations.

In order to understand the scale of the problem contact has been made with a number of individuals and organisations seeking their views, experiences and advice. Details are attached at Appendix D

Having engaged with these organisations, I would draw your attention to the following comments.

***“There is not a childrens home in Birmingham where a twelve year old child who has been placed will not come out more sexualised and criminalised than when they went in.”***

Senior Stakeholder, Birmingham Childrens Services

***“I have no doubt that every girl living in a childrens home in Birmingham is being sexually exploited, has been a victim of sexual exploitation or is being groomed for sexual exploitation“.*** Childrens Society Safe in the City Outreach Worker.

### **Issues identified.**

- COMPACT is not a user friendly system as text is mainly input under a narrative rather than tasks. It is not searchable and is not linked to any other WMP systems. Significant intelligence in the form of names, telephone numbers, registration numbers exist but can be located with manual retrieval. There are thousands of relevant COMPACT records and for example a single individual has 52 reports.
- Officers are often unsympathetic to the situation the girls find themselves in. They are not seen as vulnerable victims of crime but as a drain on resources and streetwise women. The risk assessment regularly recorded them as low or medium.

- With the exception of some perceived problem homes, OCU systems have not identified the vulnerabilities subject of this report.
- Most OCU's/Clusters are unaware of the number of childrens homes or other premises (schools, shopping centre's, parks etc), from were girls are targeted and groomed.
- In Birmingham there appears to be some resentment between Childrens Services and the Police with lack of clarity on their responsibilities regarding the sharing of information and safeguarding.
- There is little evidence of partners working at a strategic level to identify those most at risk. A top 30 At Risk List was compiled in April as a joint endeavor between WMP, BCC and the Childrens Society to try and understand the current threats. However this arrangement is not in place elsewhere.
- Each area has a number of Non Government Organisations (Childrens Society, Barnardos etc) who employ outreach workers that have a considerable amount of intelligence and knowledge about these issues. There is some evidence of partnership working at a local level between individual officers (often VPO or CAIU) and outreach workers but this is sporadic. Information sharing processes require formalisation.
- With the exception of H1 (and M1 with a Youth Issues officer) there are no dedicated Missing Persons Co-coordinators. The investigation role falls predominantly to the Duty Inspector and response teams, often under considerable pressure with other responsibilities. Occasionally CAIU officers will take the lead on a persistent missing juvenile although this responsibility is not in the CAIU remit. On other occasions VPO's will assist, although their remit is for adults. This often means that a persistent missing child is not subject of a thorough investigation leading to repeat incidents.
- The use of harbouring notices and potential prosecutions under Section 2 Child Abduction Act is a useful tool to prevent runaways continually returning to undesirable locations/persons. The use however is sporadic across the Force, some OCU's consistently use them, others not at all. There is a knowledge gap which will be addressed by the circulation of guidance from PPSU.
- Safe in the City (Childrens Society) outreach workers will attempt to visit and debrief missing Birmingham children referred to them. They appear to have more success than Police Officers, however there is again disparity amongst OCU's, with only a small number being aware of the existence of this service. Local OCU's need to identify and circulate details of agencies operating in their Borough.
- No performance indicators exist however national direction is expected.

## **Intelligence**

- The extent of the problem is not clear with a significant intelligence gap. It has been identified as an issue by some OCU's but not others. Anecdotal information from Social Workers and Outreach workers suggest that there is an issue across every Borough.
- The identity of those currently involved in the exploitation is not known. Some intelligence was gained in April 2008/2009 however this is no longer current. It appears that the [REDACTED] There is no current intelligence on vehicles or telephone numbers.

- To identify current victims will require a joint investigation team as the available intelligence is out of date, presenting a significant intelligence gap
- There is a lack of intelligence/evidence from the potential victims. It is apparent that the majority of children are not being properly debriefed upon their return, either by Police or Care workers. The safe and well check is mostly carried out by uniformed response officers and is often in an atmosphere of conflict, the girl not wanting to speak and the officer under pressure to move onto next incident. There is a need for a more formalised corporate approach.
- There is also a lack of intelligence/evidence from staff and key workers. The intelligence is available but the current lack of trust and understanding undermines opportunities to improve an intelligence sharing process.
- There is no intelligence to suggest at this time this is organised trafficking for prostitution. However it is suggested that the males are taking money from their associates who are engaged in sexual activity with the girls.

### **Investigation.**

- Often there is no nominated owner of a missing person enquiry which is passed from shift to shift. Investigation not identified as priority, leading sometimes to days of inactivity.
- Offences are not identified as girls do not disclose. There is limited or no activity to gain intelligence either by observations or obtaining descriptions / nicknames of males / registration numbers etc. Derbyshire Police conducted a very proactive investigation utilizing [REDACTED] tactics, which were resource intensive but appear to have been very successful.
- On occasions when disclosures have been made the focus is on discrepancies in victim testimony or the fact that little corroboration is available. Cases have been dealt with in isolation by CPS without an understanding of some of the more significant issues, thereby affecting charging decisions.
- There is useful legislation under Section 58 Sexual offences Act 2003 (human trafficking within UK for purpose of sexual exploitation). This is a relatively simple piece of legislation, often easier to prove than a specific sexual offence and with a maximum sentence of 14 years imprisonment. This does not appear to be widely used across the Force.

### **Resourcing Implications**

- The Derbyshire enquiry was driven by the Child Exploitation Investigation Team, which consists of Detective Sergeant and 6 Constables (A business case for a growth bid of a further DS & 6 DC's has been submitted). WMP CEIT consists of a Detective Sergeant and 6 Constables. With their existing workload there is not the capacity within this team to commence or service an investigation of this magnitude. This type of sexual exploitation does not sit under existing CAIU terms of reference and PPU teams do not have the resources to take on an enquiry either.

## **Key findings.**

- There is a significant intelligence requirement that needs to be addressed as a priority.
- The quality of investigations into persistent child runaways is not consistent and is not seen as a priority. The risk assessments are wrongly categorised leading to an inappropriate level of response.
- There are no locally dedicated resources to investigate or develop relationships with persistent runaways or others at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Debriefs of returned missing children generally do not occur and are often conducted in a position of conflict.
- Basic enquiries are not made of staff and other children in homes to gain intelligence.
- Intelligence held on COMPACT system is not easily available and is difficult to search.
- There are an unknown number of groups of predominantly Asian males across the West Midlands who are targeting grooming and sexually exploiting young white females. This exploitation is rarely reported but appears to mirror the position in Derby and is occurring in other Force areas across the region.
- In Birmingham the [REDACTED], [REDACTED] (D1), [REDACTED] (D3 OCU) and [REDACTED] (E3 OCU) areas consistently feature, offenders often residing and offending in these areas. There are clearly groups operating in other districts and every OCU has potentially vulnerable persons and premises.
- There is a lack of awareness at all levels within WMP of the overall issues and limited recognition of the potential threat to the Force reputation and the Trust and Confidence agenda
- The issues are likely to be raised nationally following the commencement of the Derby trial with the potential for an increase in community tension.
- Organisations / political parties who seek to create racial tension may have an opportunity to utilise this criminality for their own purposes. See Appendix F in relation to the British National Party
- There are compelling grounds to initiate a coordinated multi agency cross OCU /region investigation
- There is a lack of interaction with other agencies at all levels in addressing the problem and exchanging intelligence.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the following actions are considered:-

1. A Force wide response is developed for this type of sexual exploitation with a marketing strategy to improve awareness of these issues under Operation Protection.
2. Each OCU (Birmingham) or Borough nominates an experienced investigator to be SPOC for all missing children and young persons believed to be involved, or at risk of exploitation. See Appendix E for a summary of responsibilities.

3. The SPOC should sit within Public Protection Unit and ideally have a CAIU background not only having investigative skills, but an understanding of safeguarding, a multi agency approach and interviewing children. Operation Paragon to review requirement for this role post April 2010
4. Develop a Force wide focus on intelligence gathering to identify victims/offenders and vulnerable locations. IMS to be identified with an operational header.
5. An Intelligence officer and analyst should be provided to collate new intelligence and review existing intelligence held on Force systems in addition to a review of all COMPACT and OASIS entries for missing children.
6. COMPACT record should not be concluded until the Public Protection Unit Inspector is satisfied that a meaningful debrief of missing children and young persons has been conducted and recorded on the COMPACT record.
7. Develop an awareness program with CPS and direct all cases through specific Public Protection and RASSO lawyers (Discussions have already been held with Hayley Firman, Birmingham Branch lead, who will act as a co coordinator).
8. Consideration to incorporating a short presentation into the 2 day training program in relation to PPU issues.
9. Develop a process for joint working practices between front line police officers and staff/care workers in childrens homes, to:
  - Remind all staff that these are vulnerable children potentially the victims of sexual exploitation.
  - Encourage information gathering and sharing on both sides. (This is already being undertaken in Birmingham).
10. Each PPU to consult with local childrens services, other organisations working with Children and Young Persons and PPSU Missing Persons Coordinator to identify 'list' of those believed to be involved or at risk of sexual exploitation. (This has already been undertaken in Birmingham).
11. All missing C&YP identified as potential victims under Operation Protection are subject of High Risk status whilst missing and thorough investigation, until the Operations Superintendent is sufficiently informed to reduce the risk level.
12. A Force wide investigation is considered with a Senior Investigating Officer to coordinate investigations within WMP and act as a SPOC on a regional basis. There are a number of options available which will be discussed in a separate document.
13. Operation Paragon team to review establishment, workload and remit of Child Exploitation Investigation Team to ensure long term resilience.

This report is submitted for your information and consideration.

Julian Grant  
Detective Inspector 9666  
Public Protection Support Unit

  
Missing Persons Coordinator  
Public Protection Support Unit

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Recent Birmingham cases

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

**Missing from home children identified at risk April 2009**

**Red denotes missing from home in past 6 weeks and may therefore still be vulnerable and at risk**

Name	Current Age	No. of times missing	Last time missing
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	17	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	54	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	19	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	13	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	16	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	5	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	6	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	15	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	9	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	15	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	29	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	27	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	52	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	29	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	17	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	14	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	8	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	8	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	6	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	27	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	31	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	36	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	40	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	14	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	46	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	34	[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]	[REDACTED] yrs	16	[REDACTED]

## Appendix C

### Derbyshire Police Operation Retriever – Summary as of 30/09/09

Timescale: Scoped throughout 2008  
Started Jan 2009

Strategic Lead: Det Supt Debbie Platt  
SIO: DI Sean Dawson

	Jan 2009	Jul 2009
Operation Retriever Team	2 x DS 8 x DC 2 x support staff 1 x Exhibits / Disclosure Officer 1 x Analyst ( [REDACTED] )	3 x DS 16 x DC 3 x support staff 1 x Disclosure Officer 1 x Exhibits Officer 1 x Intel Officer 2 x Analysts
No. of victims	6	27 victims of offences and an additional 16 child witnesses
% of victims from children's homes		30%
No. of suspects	5	14 charged in total, 5 on police bail
No. of offences charged / cleared		77 charged, all awaiting trial. None cleared as yet

Trial timescales: Pleas and directions late Oct 09, trials early Spring 2010

#### Method of Debrief of Girls

As initial batch of arrests were made, two video suites were set up to interview the girls and specialist interview teams were put together which included:

- Person from Op Retriever enquiry team
- [REDACTED]
- Person who the girl trusted – e.g. favourite care worker, someone from NGO etc.

In addition representatives from the following agencies were on hand at the video suite locations to offer advice / become involved as necessary:

- Social Care
- Health – including child psychologists and clinicians able to offer tests for STDs, pregnancy etc.
- Education
- Safe and Sound (local NGO)

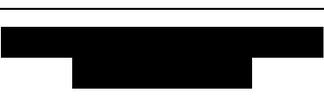
Prior to the arrests all of the above had been part of a multi-agency team which had been meeting to address this issue.

**Other Key Findings from Operation Retrieve**

- The situation requires a long term and permanent multi agency response
- Many different professionals were involved in the debrief process supporting the victims [REDACTED]
- The investigation was resource intensive and Derbyshire will ask for mutual aid if they faced a similar investigation.
- The offenders are from one community and primarily from a Pakistani
- They are opportunistic driving / walking around areas that are frequented by white girls and encourage the girls to socialise with them
- They target girls with chaotic lifestyles etc. Only one girl from a “middle class” background has been identified as a victim.
- [REDACTED]
- The girls were invited to go to a “party” where they were sometimes given gifts, alcohol and / [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- Some of the victims were used to groom other girls into the abusive cycle

**Breakdown of Suspects / Charges / Victims**

Offender 1	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]





	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 3</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 2</b>
<b>Offender 4</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 4</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 3</b>
<b>Offender 5</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 4</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 2</b>
<b>Offender 6</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 1</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 1</b>
<b>Offender 7</b>	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 3</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 2</b>
<b>Offender 8</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 1</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 1</b>
<b>Offender 9</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 1</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 1</b>

<b>Offender 10</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 1</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 1</b>
<b>Offender 11</b>	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 2</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 1</b>
<b>Offender 12</b>	[REDACTED]	
	[REDACTED]	[REDACTED]
	<b>CHARGES = 2</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 1</b>
<b>Offender 13</b>	[REDACTED]	
	<b>CHARGES = 1</b>	<b>VICTIMS = 1</b>
<b>TOTAL SUSPECTS = 13</b>	<b>TOTAL CHARGES = 76</b>	<b>TOTAL VICTIMS = 26</b>

**Please note:**

This table is now slightly out of date – there are now 14 suspects, 77 charges and 27 victims

**Initial research and corroborative sources of information.**

- All Crime Managers and Public Protection Managers across West Midlands Police.
- Vulnerable Persons Officers, Child Abuse Investigators and their first line supervisors (Representation from across WMP)
- Strategic leads and Managers Birmingham Childrens Services
- Social Workers and home managers engaged with children perceived to be at risk.
- Non Government Organisations working in partnership and providing outreach workers dealing with children. Childrens Society and Barnardos in Birmingham. Walsall Street Teams.
- Senior Investigating Officer and investigative team from Derbyshire Constabulary. Complex Case Worker East Midlands Crown Prosecution Service.
- [REDACTED]
- Members of Birmingham YSPE (Young Persons Sexual Exploitation) sub group of BSCB
- Crown Prosecution Service Public Protection and Sexual Offence Team.
- Senior Investigating Officer from West Mercia (Operation Chalice) and Staffordshire Police (operation issue)
- Missing Persons Co-coordinator North Wales Police. Their intelligence suggests that female looked after runaways are being trafficked [REDACTED]

### Potential role profile for a SPOC

Responsible for:

- Debriefing missing person upon their return.
- Directing investigations to find missing persons and facilitate their return.
- Longer term investigations including covert methods (Observations, telephone analysis etc).
- Identifying key workers for individual children to start building relationships based on trust and guide a joint approach for disclosure when appropriate.
- As a SPOC for external partners and NGO's feeding intelligence into police systems.
- Liaising with Local Authority and NGO to identify all childrens homes and other places (Schools parks, shopping Centres etc) where vulnerable C&YP may be targeted and groomed and ensure they are included in Neighbourhood profile with appropriate attention from NH team.
- Promoting the use of harbouring notices and enforcement under Section 2 Child Abduction Act.
- Raising awareness of local officers to recognise signs of sexual exploitation.

### Copy of a Guardian article - Monday 24 May 2004 09.12 BST

Nick Griffin, the chairman of the British National party, was accused of stirring up racial tension last night after spending the weekend in Bradford trying to find evidence of young white girls being groomed for sex by Asian men.

Last week Channel 4 postponed showing a documentary on the subject after it emerged that the far-right BNP was trying to exploit the issue in the run-up to next month's local and European elections. Program makers made their decision after West Yorkshire Police said the film risked triggering violence in a racially tense area.

Colin Cramphorn, the Chief Constable, said white and Asian men had been arrested following a two-year investigation and the matter was one of child protection which had nothing to do with race, despite the claims of the far right.

But last night Phil Edwards, the BNP's official spokesman, said Mr Griffin was making his own film which would be included in the party's election broadcast on Friday. "This will be in the party political broadcast, because it is true," he said.

"There is something about these Asian blokes that they like these young girls, something to do with their religion, they can not get it in their own communities. I'm not sure exactly what it is, I don't know that much about their religion and really I don't want to."

His comments and the BNP's attempt to stir up trouble in Bradford were condemned last night.

Eric Pickles, the Conservative spokesman on local government and former leader of Bradford council said: "This shows how wise Channel 4 were to call this program off. Griffin must be a very disappointed man because he thought he was going to be able to exploit a serious documentary for his own racist ends. A party political broadcast by the BNP does not carry the same weight as a Channel 4 documentary and hopefully everyone will realise exactly what it is and switch off."

In Bradford, community leaders said the BNP's presence in the town, and Mr Edwards' comments, revealed the true nature of the far-right organisation.

"This shows that they are only interested in stirring up hate in communities to promote racism ahead of the elections," said a youth worker, Altaf Arif.

"All communities and religions deplore the sexual exploitation of young people whether they are Asian or white, but the BNP want to turn it into a race issue so they can spread fear and mistrust ahead of the elections. Quite simply they are not welcome here and never will be."

The police investigation into grooming has resulted in one conviction and eight people, white and Asian, being charged with offences ranging from rape to indecent assault.

After Channel 4's decision to postpone the program the BNP's website carried an appeal for people to come forward if they knew of any instances of grooming by Asian men in the Bradford area or elsewhere.

Last night a spokesman for Searchlight, an anti-fascist organisation, said: "This shows the true nature of the BNP. They are searching for anything they can use to stir up racism and hate. They may have new suits and slogans but they are the same old racists underneath."

It is understood that Mr Griffin and his team spent the weekend trying to track down people who had appeared in the Channel 4 documentary.

Mr Edwards said any footage would be included in the party's election broadcast, which would be "extremely provocative, sending shock waves across the country".

But last night there were concerns that much of the BNP's evidence would not be legally safe to broadcast.