NCA National Crime Agency

NCA Response to His Majesty's Inspectorate of Policing and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) Inspections

The DG NCA must respond to reports published by His Majesty's Inspectors of Constabulary and Fire and Rescue Services (HMICFRS) relating to their organisation. This instruction is set out in Section 55 of the 1996 Police Act.

NCA Response

On the 23rd June 2022 HMICFRS published a report on 'Safeguarding: How effective is the National Crime Agency at protection vulnerable people?'

This report focuses on how the NCA safeguards children and vulnerable people.

The inspection reviewed the following areas:

- how well the agency's policies, structures and processes made sure vulnerable people were correctly identified and protected;
- how well the NCA's leadership and culture promoted the safeguarding of vulnerable people;
- how well the training provided to safe promoted effective safeguarding of vulnerable people;
- how well the NCA supported national and international organisations work to keep vulnerable people safe; and
- how effective the NCA was at bridging the gap between its national activity and local safeguarding processes.

HMICFRS recognised the importance placed on safeguarding by the NCA and the aim for safeguarding to be central to everything it does. This is evidenced by the increased number of staff investigating child sexual abuse and creation of high-harm distribution teams. HMICFRS were particularly encouraged by the work of the child protection and safeguarding team and the role of child protection advisors. They also found the restructuring raised the profile of vulnerability and safeguarding throughout the organisation ensuring that vulnerability is considered more widely during investigations. However, teams are heavily focused on protecting children and with the NCA's aim on improving safeguards for adults, given its central role in dealing with crimes such as modern slavery, inclusion of vulnerable adults in the profile must also be adopted. We welcome the scrutiny and assessment of our performance as it allows us to focus on areas of improvement to realise this aim. The NCA accepts the single recommendation set out in this report:

- Recommendation 1: By 30 September 2022, the NCA should develop a safeguarding plan, which makes clear how it intends to put safeguarding at the heart of its work.

  The plan should make sure:

  ▪ the role of the child protection and safeguarding team is clear and that the team is sufficiently resourced to support the plan;

- the intelligence, investigations and threat leadership directorates are subject to safeguarding governance and oversight; and

- there is clear policy and guidance for safeguarding children and adults, which is communicated and understood by all staff.

NCA Director General Response:

In response NCA Director General, Graeme Biggar said:

"Protecting the Public from Serious and Organised Crime is at the core of the work the NCA undertake. The activity of these gangs leads to vulnerable people being put at risk and safeguarding forms an integral element of each investigation we undertake.

I welcome the findings contained in this report, including the acknowledgement of the progress made at the time of the inspection. We support the recommendation made and have already taken action.

In the time since this inspection took place we have developed a safeguarding change plan which included the mandate an Internal NCA wide Safeguarding Board. This Safeguarding Board is underpinned by a strategic action plan which covers themes, such as, Culture and Leadership, Training and Standards, QA/Audit/Lessons learnt, Performance and Communications. Supporting the Strategic action plan is a set of delivery plans for each theme. This improved approach to safeguarding within the NCA will allow the NCA to adopt the recommendation made by HMICFRS and ensure it is incorporated as part of its daily business.

I look forward to continuing to engage closely with HMICFRS as we develop our collective response to effectively protecting vulnerable people.