

Summary of Recommendations to police: Police Governance and Crime Recording

By Edward Gay

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1. Police review policy documents to ensure that a consistent definition of child abuse applies nationwide.
 2. Districts to ensure there is certainty about the work types their Child Abuse Teams are responsible for, consistent with the new Child Protection Protocol agreed between Police and Child Youth and Family.
- Police Strategic Plans and Priorities:
3. Consideration be given to the inclusion of the investigation of child abuse as a priority in the Police's National Business Plan.
 4. District Commanders give consideration to including the investigation of child abuse as an independent topic in their Business Plans.
 5. Police continue to review ways in which the timely and appropriate investigation of child abuse allegations form part of measurable performance objectives within all Police Districts.
- File Recording and Case Management:
6. A directive to staff be issued re-stating that all child abuse files must be entered and updated on NIA.
 7. A file to be created in NIA in respect of a notification of alleged child abuse even where the decision taken is that no action is required.
 8. Consideration be given to shifting as much file recording responsibility from child abuse investigators to dedicated file recording staff as possible.
 9. Training be given to child abuse investigators and supervisors on the use of NIA in respect of file recording and file management tasks that must remain the responsibility of investigators and supervisors.
 10. Consideration be given to ensuring all child abuse files are specifically identified in NIA as "child abuse files".
 11. A standard form coversheet for all physical investigation files be adopted as a checklist for key steps in the investigative process for child abuse files.
- Policies for Child Abuse Investigations:
12. The 1995 Policy and Guidelines for the Investigation of Child Sexual Abuse and Serious Physical Abuse be reviewed and updated.
 13. The review to ensure there is consistency of all definitions and terminology incorporated in updated or newly created documents.
 14. As part of the review, consideration be given to creating two separate policy documents addressing the following areas: (a) Overarching policies and principles for the investigation of child abuse in New Zealand; (b) Practical guidance for investigators of child abuse cases.
 15. Police National Headquarters to monitor the implementation of the new Child Protection Protocol by Districts.
 16. Local level interagency agreements only to address matters particular to the district/area that are not otherwise covered by the Child Protection Protocol.

17. Police policy on the investigation of child abuse to make clear that Child Youth and Family attendances do not negate the need for Police to conduct its own investigation of alleged child abuse.

Conduct and Management of Child Abuse Investigations: 18. A directive to staff be issued re-stating that the filing of child abuse files to code "LF9999" or other generic codes is unacceptable.

19. A review be carried out of the ways in which files are able to be closed in NIA, aimed at ensuring child abuse and other serious crime files are not able to be filed to lost file codes or otherwise inappropriately filed.

20. Consideration be given to ways in which supervision of child abuse investigators can be improved, including training for supervisors and review and restatement of relevant policy.

21. Consideration be given to the setting of a national standard on the number of child abuse investigation files to be held by an investigator at any one time.

22. Investigators on child abuse teams to be exclusively focused on child abuse investigations. Where exigent circumstances require it, investigators on child abuse teams to be required to work on non-child abuse matters for the shortest duration possible.

23. A review be carried out of the way in which staff are selected for child abuse teams to ensure that only staff with willingness and aptitude to investigate child abuse files are selected.

24. A review be carried out of the numbers of Police staff in all 12 Districts who are trained and available as specialist evidential interviewers, with particular attention to availability within areas of each district.

4 25. Consideration be given to means by which training can be made more readily available to child abuse investigators, including in-district training.

District Structures for Management of Child Abuse Investigations 26. Each district to review its structures for the investigation of child abuse.

27. As part of such a review, each district to assess the feasibility of: (a) a central child abuse team for the whole district; or (b) a child abuse team in each area of the district.

28. If, following its review, a district will continue to have an area not served by a child abuse team, consideration is to be given to a child abuse team in another area in the district: (a) operating as a central point of intake for all child abuse notifications; (b) ensuring that file recording on NIA is appropriate on all child abuse files; (c) fulfilling an oversight role in respect of all child abuse files.

29. Irrespective of the particular structure adopted, consideration be given to each district having a central point of command for all child abuse files in the district e.g. the Crime Services Manager.

30. Consideration be given to the National Coordinator for Adult Sexual Assault and Child Abuse being given resources and responsibility to ensure a nationally consistent approach to the investigation of child abuse, through engagement with child abuse teams, CIB and district audit teams.

31. Consideration be given to the National Coordinator for Adult Sexual Assault and Child Abuse reporting to a member of the Police Executive on the compliance of districts with Police policy, standards and guidelines designed to ensure a nationally consistent approach to the investigation of child abuse.

Audit 32. A process be established for the audit of child abuse investigations, which includes random sampling of investigation files.

33. Police policy documents to clearly express and define the audit functions carried out by business units based at Police National Headquarters.

34. A business unit within Police National Headquarters to have the responsibility, clearly expressed in Police policy documents, for ensuring districts are carrying out audits of child abuse investigations appropriately.

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