**West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel**

**Press Release**

**Panel seeks reassurance on Commissioner’s approach to tackling child sexual exploitation in West Yorkshire**

**15th September 2014**

The West Yorkshire Police and Crime Panel met with the Police and Crime Commissioner on Friday 12th September with much of the focus being on child sexual exploitation and what is being done in West Yorkshire to ensure children and vulnerable victims are kept safer and protected from those who seek to exploit them.

Members of the Panel were reassured by the Commissioner’s proactive approach in bringing together partner agencies.  The Commissioner has called together a meeting with members from safeguarding boards, Directors of Childrens’ Services and West Yorkshire Police to ensure that all is being done to protect children from sexual exploitation and grooming.  The Panel sought further assurances that there would be allowances made in the Commissioner’s future budget to take forward agreed work with partner agencies.

The Chair of the Police and Crime Panel, Councillor Alison Lowe said “*Following robust questioning, the Commissioner assured Panel that he is taking steps to ensure close working with partner agencies and to examine the recommendations from the Rotherham report on CSE and the lessons that can be learnt for West Yorkshire. We are pleased that this remains a key priority for the Commissioner and that he has given assurances that he will provide funding to help and support victims, both past and present as well as making sure that the perpetrators of this terrible crime are brought to justice.”*

*Mr Burns-Williamson, who said: “I welcome the interest of the Police and Crime Panel on such an important issue as Child Sexual Exploitation.*

*“I called Friday’s meeting of safeguarding boards and Children’s Services because it is crucial that all our thinking and work around CSE remains joined up with the victims at the heart of everything we do.*

*“Tackling CSE has always been one of my top priorities as well as other safeguarding issues, and the attendance on Friday* *demonstrates how seriously this issue is treated here in West Yorkshire and what we are doing to tackle it proactively.”*

Further discussion focused on HMIC’s recent Crime Data Integrity report.  The Panel heard from the Force Crime Registrar into the work being undertaken by the Force to improve their crime recording practises.  This has included the re-introduction of a central audit team to ensure the robust recording of crime at source and a roll-out of training and support to frontline officers.  The Panel requested a progress report on the recommendations of HMIC’s Crime Integrity report to be brought to a meeting within six months to reassure them that they can have confidence of a consistent approach to crime recording within West Yorkshire.

The Panel welcomed a Performance Report which sets out the performance of West Yorkshire Police in delivering the priorities within the Commissioner’s Police and Crime Plan. Panel welcomed the changes to the format of the reporting which makes it easier for the public to understand the information.

The Chair of the Panel commented “ *It is important for the public in West Yorkshire to be able to clearly understand how the Force is performing in meeting the Commissioners priorities and as a Panel we are pleased that the Commissioner has taken previous comments on board and worked with the Panel to produce information which is much more user friendly.”*

**Press Contacts**

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Police & Crime Panel

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