



# PCC and CC Force Inspection response record

Version Dec 2024

<b>Force</b>	Staffordshire				
<b>Police and Crime Commissioner</b>	Ben Adams				
<b>Chief Constable</b>	Acting CC Becky Riggs				
<b>Title of inspection</b>	<a href="#">National Child Protection Inspection Staffordshire 2025</a>				
<b>Published Date</b>	5 <sup>th</sup> December 2025				
<b>Inspectorate</b>	 <p>HMICFRS Making communities safer</p>				
<b>Summary of inspection</b>	<p>Staffordshire Police works well with safeguarding partners, but further progress is needed in how it investigates reports of abuse.</p> <p>His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire &amp; Rescue Services (HMICFRS) graded Staffordshire Police’s performance across five areas, assessing how well it safeguards children who are at risk. It found the force was ‘good’ in working with partners, ‘adequate’ in two areas and ‘requires improvement’ in how it investigates child abuse, neglect and exploitation and responds to children at risk of harm.</p>				
<b>Grade</b>	Outstanding	Good	Adequate	Requires improvement	Inadequate
		Working with safeguarding partners	Leadership of child protection arrangements	Responding to children at risk of harm	
			Risk assessment and referrals	Investigating child abuse, neglect and exploitation	
<b>Areas for Improvement</b>	<p>The force should improve the quality and management of its child protection performance data</p> <p>The force needs to record children’s demographic information more consistently</p> <p>The force must record missing children correctly to make sure it responds appropriately to keep them safe</p> <p>The force needs to respond more quickly to incidents where it may need to use police protection powers</p> <p>The force needs to make sure that it records risk to children when responding to domestic abuse incidents</p> <p>The force needs to use warning flags on records to improve its risk assessment of children</p> <p>The force should make sure investigations are allocated to the most appropriate officers and staff with the necessary skills and training</p> <p>The force should improve its arrangements for responding to sudden or unexpected child deaths at night</p> <p>The force should make sure that all officers and staff, and their supervisors, who investigate online child sexual exploitation have the right knowledge and skills</p>				



## Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's initial response

I welcome the publication of His Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services (HMICFRS) report into Staffordshire Police's child protection arrangements. Safeguarding children is one of the most critical responsibilities of policing, and I am reassured that the inspection recognises areas of good practice, particularly the force's strong partnership working and commitment to multi-agency safeguarding.

The report highlights that Staffordshire Police is graded 'good' for working with safeguarding partners and 'adequate' in leadership and risk assessment. However, it also identifies areas requiring improvement, notably in investigating reports of abuse, neglect and exploitation, and in responding to children at risk of harm. These findings are significant and require urgent attention.

### Key Areas for Improvement

The Inspectorate has set out clear areas for improvement, including:

- Improving the quality and management of child protection performance data.
- Consistent recording of children's demographic information.
- Correctly recording missing children and responding promptly to incidents requiring police protection powers.
- Better risk recording in domestic abuse cases and effective use of warning flags.
- Ensuring investigations are allocated to appropriately trained officers.
- Strengthening arrangements for responding to sudden or unexpected child deaths at night.
- Improving knowledge and skills for officers investigating online child sexual exploitation.

These recommendations align with my priorities for protecting vulnerable people and ensuring that children's voices are heard and acted upon. I will hold the Acting Chief Constable to account for delivering the necessary improvements at pace.

I commit to:

- Seeking assurance that an action plan is in place within eight weeks.
- Monitoring progress through regular performance boards and governance meetings.
- Supporting investment in specialist training and resources to address gaps identified in the report.
- Continuing to work with safeguarding partners to maintain strong multi-agency collaboration.

The safety and welfare of children must remain at the heart of policing in Staffordshire. I expect the force to demonstrate measurable progress and will report publicly on this through my statutory oversight role.



## Acting Chief Constable's response

Staffordshire Police was assessed on its ability to safeguard children at risk, following an inspection carried out between 12 and 25 May 2025. The inspection identified strengths, areas for improvement, and innovative safeguarding practice and forms part of HMICFRS's rolling programme introduced in February 2024, which evaluates every police force in England and Wales across five key areas. Rather than a single overall grade, forces receive individual judgments for each area. The force was graded as good in one area, adequate in two areas and requires improvement in two areas.

This reflects the significant progress since the last inspection, with the report highlighting several strengths, including:

- Strong partnership working with local and national safeguarding partners
- Prompt sharing of information with schools to support children at risk
- Investment in specialist training for sudden or unexpected child deaths, identified as innovative practice
- Effective collaboration with partners for risk assessments and proactive work with hotels to identify and report exploitation.

HMICFRS also identified nine areas where the force needs to improve, these include:

- Correctly recording missing children to ensure appropriate responses
- Reducing delays in responding to incidents requiring police protection powers
- Improving investigations into online child sexual exploitation by ensuring officers and staff have the right knowledge and skills
- Recording children's demographic information to better assess risks.

The force has responded promptly to feedback and has already completed / implemented significant improvement activity to address areas needing further focus. In January 2026, the force submitted a detailed account to HMICFRS of the progress made to date. This includes governance and performance data (through continued Power BI development) enhancements, including the commencement of a force wide data campaign; a sequence of policy, training and process improvements across the Force Contact Centre, Local Policing and Specialist Teams (including a revised crime allocation policy); a comprehensive training programme linked to responding to sudden and unexpected child deaths; and an enhanced communications campaign to reinforce a clear and consistent approach to recording risks to children.

In line with the Staffordshire's Policing Plan, Safeguarding children remains one of the forces highest priorities.



## Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's overall comments

I welcome the Acting Chief Constable's detailed response and the proactive steps already taken by Staffordshire Police to address the findings of the 2025 National Child Protection Inspection. It is positive to see that the force has responded promptly to the areas identified for improvement and has demonstrated early progress through strengthened governance, improvements to performance data, enhanced training programmes, and clearer policies across operational teams.

I am encouraged by the investment in specialist training, the focus on improving data quality through Power BI development, and the reinforcement of consistent risk-recording practices. These are critical foundations for delivering sustained improvement in child protection. I also recognise the strong partnership arrangements highlighted by HMICFRS and reflected in the Acting Chief Constable's response and these remain a core strength for Staffordshire.

However, I remain seriously concerned that several weaknesses identified by HMICFRS in earlier inspections continue to appear in the latest report. Issues such as inconsistent recording of children's demographic information, weaknesses in the quality and supervision of child protection investigations, and shortcomings in how missing children are recorded and responded to have all been highlighted in multiple inspections over several years. These were identified in 2021, again in the 2023 re-inspection, and remain areas for improvement in the 2025 report.

These issues sit at the heart of child protection practice, and improvement must be measurable, timely, and sustained.

I expect continued, evidence-based assurance that:

- Improvements outlined in the Acting Chief Constable's response are embedded into frontline practice and not limited to policy or process change.
- Supervisory oversight is strengthened to ensure high-quality investigations and consistent risk identification for every child.
- The force's data quality improvements result in better visibility of vulnerable children and more accurate performance reporting.
- Learning from the inspection, particularly regarding the voice and experience of the child, is translated into tangible improvements in decision-making.

Given the seriousness of the findings and the essential role of the police in protecting children, I will continue to hold the Acting Chief Constable to account through my statutory governance framework. This will include monitoring progress through attendance at performance boards, receiving updates on audit activity, and ensuring that improvements are delivered at pace. Safeguarding children is one of the highest priorities for policing in Staffordshire. I expect the force to demonstrate continued, transparent progress and to maintain a relentless focus on the safety and welfare of the most vulnerable.