

Police launch National Child Abuse Investigation Unit



Police Scotland today (Monday 20 April) launched the National Child Abuse Investigation Unit (NCAIU), a specialist unit to support the investigation of complex child abuse and neglect across Scotland.

Chief Constable Sir Stephen House and Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Angela Constance, today met with police officers, police staff and partners at the national base of the unit in Livingston to discuss the work of the unit.

The NCAIU is a unit of specially trained officers located across the country. They provide local policing teams with consistent, high quality support for robust investigations into reports of complex child abuse and neglect, including child sexual exploitation and on-line child abuse.

Launching the unit, Chief Constable Sir Stephen House, said: “Child abuse, including child sexual exploitation, is a complex, challenging area of policing and we owe it to all those affected, whether now or in the past, to thoroughly investigate each and every report we receive.

“The NCAIU is about providing specialist investigative support. However, part of our success in delivering child protection is local officers working with their partners in communities throughout Scotland.

“To be clear, the abuse and neglect of children is an issue for all of our communities. This is unacceptable. Children and young people should be allowed to live their lives without the fear of abuse or exploitation. We will proactively target

those who pose a risk to children and work with our partners to ensure that support is available for victims.”

Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, Angela Constance, said:

“The safety and wellbeing of all children and young people is a key priority for the Government and an issue we take extremely seriously. It’s why we work continuously with Police Scotland, children’s charities, Parliament and others to protect children from abuse and keep them safe. The launch of this new police unit should enable more to be done to target, and bring to justice, those who seek to harm children and is a welcome development.

“We will continue to take measures to ensure the protection of our children and young people, including developing our wide ranging National Action Plan on Child Sexual Exploitation, refreshing our National Guidance to better support those who work with young people and working closely with key partners across children’s services. The Scottish Government is committed to doing all it can with partners to ensure we have appropriate people and procedures in place so more children get the best possible start in life and grow up free from the fear of abuse and violence in their lives.”

The NCAIU began a phased implementation in January this year with the creation of a national hub in Livingston and investigation teams in Aberdeen, Inverness and Dalmarnock. The unit now comprises more than 40 officers nationwide.

As well as assisting local policing teams, the unit has worked with other national specialist investigatory units such as the National Rape Task Force and Major Investigation Teams. Since January, NCAIU has provided more than 8700 hours of assistance to every division across Scotland, investigating incidents including infant deaths, recent and non-recent sexual abuse, physical abuse, neglect, institutional abuse, child sexual

exploitation and online child abuse and grooming.