



Partnerships

Safeguarding

Referrals Guidance

HYDRANT
PROGRAMME

Supporting child protection
and abuse investigation

The Hydrant Programme Referral Guidance

Offer

Acting as the conduit between referring partner organisations and national policing, the Hydrant Programme receives complex safeguarding referrals and disseminates them to the relevant police forces for action to be undertaken. It is recognised that the process of information-sharing and reporting concerns with local policing continues to be challenging for partner organisations, particularly where there are multiple offence locations and perpetrators.

The purpose of Hydrant Programme referrals process is to assist in making this process more accessible and to forge improved engagement between partner organisations and local police force safeguarding teams.

Criteria

If you believe that a child, young person, or adult is at immediate risk of harm, call the police on 999.

Referrals to the Hydrant Programme are no longer limited to non-recent child sexual abuse or exploitation by a public figure and we can accept referrals relating to all forms of child abuse and exploitation.

The Hydrant Programme accepts referrals which meet one or more of the following:

- + **Complex by way of number of victims;**
- + **Complex by way of number of suspects;**
- + **Complex by way of number of force areas impacted;**
- + **Complex by the nature of the investigation itself.**

Referring partners should not use the Hydrant Programme as a source of information and should instead consider self-disclosure or the use of the Disclosure and Barring Service. Further information can be found at www.gov.uk/government/organisations/disclosure-and-barring-service

Referrals which do not meet the above criteria should, in the first instance, be made in accordance with your own organisational safeguarding practice and procedure.

Where a referral relates to several forces, the Hydrant Programme will coordinate the referral across those forces to ensure a consistent response both with and from policing.

Referrals

Referrals meeting the above criteria should be made on the Hydrant Referral Form available from hydrantenquiries@southyorks.pnn.police.uk and submitted to hydrantenquiries@southyorks.pnn.police.uk.

Referring partners are requested to include an organisation reference number upon the referral to support record keeping, monitoring and evaluation.

When making the referral please:

- + **Make clear who you are, your role and relationship to the victim/survivor/perpetrator you are making the referral about.**
- + **Details of the victim/survivor wherever possible including date of birth and address.**
- + **Clarify the nature of the abuse or exploitation alleged/experience/at risk of.**
- + **Where possible identify geography, locations, or institutions where the abuse or exploitation took place.**
- + **Details of the alleged perpetrator(s) including date of birth if known, last known address and whether they pose a continuing safeguarding concern.**
- + **State the source of your concern and be clear as to what is fact and what is opinion.**
- + **Provide details of any immediate action taken, e.g., Local Authority Designated Officer referral, suspension from role, etc.**
- + **Provide details of any previous concerns and interventions.**
- + **Set out the reason for the referral.**
- + **Be respectful – would you be happy to share the referral with the victim/survivor concerned? Ensure that language reflects the seriousness of the situation to prompt appropriate policing response.**

Referral Process

The Partnership Hub looks after all complex safeguarding referrals. Referrals are processed as followed:

+ Step One

Assess the referral against the Hydrant Programme criteria.

+ Step Two

If the referral does not meet the criteria, it shall return the referral to the referring organisation for it be addressed using their own safeguarding practice and policy.

+ Step Three

If the referral meets the criteria, the Hydrant Programme will assess whether the referral is significant by way of risk, national footprint, or critical by way of investigation. Where this is the case, the Partnership and Safeguarding Manager will hold a case discussion with the Hydrant Programme Deputy Director. The referral will then addressed in accordance with agree outcomes and actions from the case discussion. The Hydrant Programme will advise relevant force (s)/law enforcement bodies.

+ Step Four

If the referral does not require a case discussion, then where information is provided, and if appropriate, the Hydrant Programme will conduct research across open source and/ or police systems. The referral will then be processed in accordance with Steps Five to Nine below.

+ Step Five

The relevant police force(s) and Hydrant Single Point of Contact (SPOC) will be identified by the Partnership and Safeguarding Manager.

+ Step Six

The full referral and details of the referrer will be emailed to the relevant police force(s) SPOC(s) asking for acknowledgement, a force reference number and request for action be taken. The force(s) SPOC(s) will be asked to keep the referrer, and the Hydrant Programme updated on progress, actions and outcomes. This includes confirming if any immediate safeguarding/welfare risks have been addressed. The referral and actions will be logged on the Hydrant Programme database.

+ Step Seven

The Hydrant Programme will diary tasks to ensure action is being taken and feedback to the referrer.

+ Step Eight

Following update from the police force(s) SPOC(s), the Hydrant Programme will update the referrer with details including force reference number/crime number and officer assigned.

Step Nine

+ The Hydrant Programme will maintain review and contact for follow-ups and updates/ feedback between the police force(s) SPOC(s) and referrer.



Investigation

The Hydrant Programme does not have an investigative remit. It is the responsibility of the local force to investigate any identified offences and address any safeguarding concerns.

On occasion it is necessary to make a direct approach to a victim where there is insufficient information within the referral to disseminate to the relevant police force(s) or to allow a full assessment of risk to be made. This direct intervention provides for concerns around the welfare of the victim to be allayed and appropriately addressed.

Chief Constables remain accountable for the progress, decision-making, outcomes, and learning relating to their child abuse investigations,

Professional Standards

The Partnership Hub assesses reports referred to the Hydrant Programme from a variety of partner organisations contact by victims of child abuse who have expressed dissatisfaction with the police, or alleged criminality or wrongdoing by a police employee.

Any reports assessed as meeting the above criteria are progressed to the relevant Professional Standards Department (PSD) of the force concerned. There is a requirement for PSD to assess the dissatisfaction/statement of wrongdoing and make an initial recording decision as to whether a complaint or conduct case is recorded in accordance with relevant national guidance.

Where deemed necessary the Hydrant Programme will report into the National Police Chief's Council (NPCC), Professional Standards Department (PSD) Lead and the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC).

Enquiries

Should you require any further detail then please contact
hydrantenquiries@southyorks.pnn.police.uk

