

**THE VICTORIA CLIMBIE INQUIRY****Report and Presentation of the Chief Constable**

---

**1 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT**

The purpose of this report is to provide members with a further update in relation to the progress of Northumbria Police in implementing the recommendations from Lord Laming's inquiry into the death of Victoria Climbie.

**2 BACKGROUND**

At the Police Authority meeting held on 26 March 2003, members received a report on the 108 recommendations from Lord Laming's Inquiry and agreed to receive a further report detailing the force response to it (minute number 266 - 2002/3 refers).

Victoria was murdered on 25 February 2000 by her great aunt and partner, and the post mortem examination revealed 128 separate injuries.

As a result an Inquiry Team headed by Lord Laming was established and was asked to keep a clear focus on the facts in order to find out what happened to Victoria, why things happened the way they did, and how such terrible events could be prevented in the future.

Of the 108 resulting recommendations, 18 had direct implications for the Police Service (Appendix A) and 4 had multi agency working implications (Appendix B). In the previous report to the Authority members were told only 3 recommendations had multi agency working implications. Following advice from the Chief Constable, Dyfed Powys Police, who is leading on this matter for the Association of Chief Police Officers, recommendation 21 has also been allocated to this section.

Each recommendation has been given a timescale for implementation, and the force progress to date in implementing them is shown.

This work compliments the 24 month development programme undertaken by Child Protection, building upon the Northumbria Police Best Value Review and an internal Self Inspection of Child Protection Units (CPUs).

**3 EQUAL OPPORTUNITIES IMPLICATIONS**

The Implementation Plan will ensure compliance with existing Force Equal Opportunity Policies and the Race Relations Amendment Act.

#### **4 HUMAN RIGHTS IMPLICATIONS**

Progression of the recommendations will support article 2, right to life and article 8, right to respect for private and family life of the European Convention on Human Rights and the Human Rights Act 1998.

#### **5 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications directly arising from the contents of this report.

#### **6 RECOMMENDATIONS**

Members are asked to:

- i) Note the content of this report which highlights the progress made by Northumbria Police against the implementation timescales outlined by Lord Laming in his report.
- ii) Agree to receive further progress reports as appropriate.

## APPENDIX A

Below is a chart of Lord Laming's key recommendations with implications for the Police Service and the way services to support children and families are organised and managed.

<b>No</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
91	Save in exceptional circumstance, no child is to be taken into police protection until he/she has been seen and an assessment of his/her circumstances has been undertaken. (para 13.17)	30 April 2003	Force policy has been amended to cater for the requirement for a child to be seen and an assessment carried out prior to taking children into police protection
92	Chief Constables must ensure that crimes involving a child victim are dealt with promptly and efficiently, and to the same standard as equivalent crimes against adults. (para 13.24)	30 April 2003	All staff have been instructed of the requirement to deal with child victims promptly and efficiently.
93	Whenever a joint investigation by Police and Social Services is required into a possible injury or harm to a child, a manager from each agency should always be involved at the referral stage, and in any further strategy discussion. (para 13.52)	30 April 2003	Within CPU, where a joint investigation is required, a manager is involved at the referral stage and further strategy discussion.
94	In cases of serious crime against children, supervisory officers must, from the beginning, take an active role in ensuring that a proper investigation is carried out. (para 13.55)	30 April 2003	For all cases of Serious Category Crime (SCC), supervisory officers will manage the investigation process. This is monitored via the completion of SCC booklets and is audited on a monthly basis using the CPU Audit Manual.

<b>No</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>98</b>	The guideline set out at paragraph 5.8 of Working Together must be strictly adhered to: whenever Social Services receive a referral which may constitute a criminal offence against a child, they must inform the police at the earliest opportunity. (para 14.46)	30 April 2003	A letter has been forwarded to: Chief Executive, Head of Children's Services, Area Child Protection Committee Chair and Child Protection Co-ordinator for each of the 6 Local Authority areas within the Northumbria Police area highlighting this requirement.
<b>96</b>	Police Forces must review their systems for taking children into Police Protection and ensure they comply with the Children Act 1989 and Home Office Guidelines. In particular, they must ensure that an independent officer of at least Inspector rank acts as the Designated Officer in all cases. (para 13.68)	31 July 2003	Northumbria Police has approved a change in policy in order to comply with this policy. Training requirements are being progressed with Training Department. This recommendation will be achieved by 30 July 2003.
<b>97</b>	Chief Constables must ensure that the investigation of crime against children is as important as the investigation of any other form of serious crime. Any suggestion that child protection policing is of a lower status than other forms of policing must be eradicated. (para 14.15)	31 July 2003	The Chief Constable has provided continuous support to Child Protection working. A Best Value Review has been conducted and an evaluation of this is ongoing. The evaluation will consider the remit and location of CPU within Northumbria Police.

<b>No</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>105</b>	Chief Constables must ensure that Child Protection Teams are fully integrated into the structure of their forces and not disadvantaged in terms of accommodation, equipment or resources.(para 15.45)	31 July 2003	Child Protection is structured within Crime Management, servicing area commands. All Child Protection accommodation was reviewed in 2002 ensuring Child Protection teams were suitably located within mainstream police stations. Equipment levels were reviewed. Resources were examined by Resource Management Group and a paper in relation to an increase in support staff establishment is currently being considered.
<b>106</b>	The Home Office must ensure that Child Protection policing is included in the list of ministerial priorities for the police. (para 15.46)	31 July 2003	Progress is being made at a national level.
<b>107</b>	Chief Constables and Police Authorities must give Child Protection investigations a high priority in their policing plans, thereby ensuring consistently high standards of service by well resourced, well managed and well motivated teams.(para 15.46)	31 July 2003`	Child Protection working is included within the Northumbria Police Policing Plan and the Corporate Plan.
<b>108</b>	The Home Office, through Centrex, must add specific training to child protection policing to the syllabus for the strategic command course. This will ensure that all future Chief Officers in the police service have adequate knowledge and understanding of the roles of Child Protection Teams.(para 15.53)	31 July 2003	Progress is being made at a national level.

<b>No</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>95</b>	The Association of Chief Police Officers must produce and implement the standards based service, as recommended by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in the 1999 thematic inspection report, Child Protection. (para 13.66)	31 January 2005	Progress is being made at a national level.
<b>99</b>	The Working Together arrangements must be amended to ensure the Police carry out completely, and exclusively, any criminal investigation elements in a case of suspected injury or harm to a child, including evidential interview with a child victim. This will remove any confusion about which agency takes the lead or is responsible for certain actions. (para 14.57)	31 January 2005	Progress is being made at a national level.
<b>100</b>	Training for Child Protection Officers must equip them with the confidence to question the views of professionals in other agencies, including Doctors, no matter how eminent those professionals appear to be. (para 14.73)	31 January 2005	A Child Protection training course has been prepared. It is intended for all Child Protection staff to receive this training over the next 12 months.
<b>101</b>	The Home Office, through Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary, must take a more active role in maintaining high standards in child protection investigation by means of its regular basic Command Unit and Force inspections. In addition, a follow up to the Child Protection Thematic Inspection of 1999 should be conducted.	31 January 2005	Progress is being made at a national level.
<b>102</b>	The Home Office, through Centrex and the Association of Chief Police Officers, must devise and implement a national training curriculum for Child Protection officers as recommended in 1999 by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary in its thematic inspection report, Child Protection. (para 15.16)	31 January 2005	Progress is being made at a national level.

<b>No</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>103</b>	Chief Constables must ensure that officers working on Child Protection Teams are sufficiently well trained in criminal investigation, and that there is always a substantial core of fully trained detective officers on each team to deal with the most serious inquiries. (para 14.24)	31 January 2005	Northumbria Police will ensure that all Child Protection Officers are fully trained Detective Constables.
<b>104</b>	The Police Information Technology Organisation (PITO) should evaluate the child protection IT system currently available, and make recommendations to Chief Constables, who must ensure their Police Force has in use an effective Child Protection database and IT management system. (para 15.40)	31 January 2005	Progress is being made at a national level.



## APPENDIX B

Below is a chart of Lord Laming's key recommendations with implications for the Police Service in relation to multi agency working.

<b>No</b>	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Implementation Date</b>	<b>Progress Update</b>
<b>21</b>	When a professional makes a referral to Social Services concerning the well-being of a child, the fact of that referral must be confirmed in writing by the referrer within 48 hours. (para 4.59)	30 April 2003	Discussions are ongoing with local ACPCs, Strategic Health Authority and Social Services Inspectorate to clarify the practical implications of this recommendation and the effect upon working practices.
<b>6</b>	Each Local Authority with Social Services responsibilities must establish a Committee of Members for Children & Families with lay members drawn from the management committees of each of the key services ie Police Authority, Local Authority, Health trusts. (para 17.97)	31 July 2003	Awaiting publication of the Green Paper.
<b>7</b>	The Local Authority Chief Executive should chair a Management Board for services to Children & Families which will report to the Member Committee referred to at Recommendation 6. (para 17.97)	31 July 2003	Awaiting publication of the Green Paper.
<b>9</b>	The budget contributed by each of the local agencies in support of vulnerable children & families should be identified by the Management Board for Services to Children & Families. (para 17.97)	31 July 2003	Awaiting publication of the Green Paper.

