



## **PCC's Statement on Safeguarding**

### **What is the Police & Crime Commissioner's role in protection?**

The Police & Crime Commissioner (PCC) is committed to her responsibility to safeguard and protect the interests and welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults across Avon and Somerset.

The PCC acknowledges that some children, including disabled children and young people or those from ethnic minority communities, can be particularly vulnerable to abuse and she accepts the responsibility to take reasonable and appropriate steps to ensure their welfare.

PCC's have a legal responsibility to hold their chief officers to account for their duties in terms of protecting children and vulnerable adults. Specifically, section 1(8)(h) of the Police Reform and Social Responsibility Act 2011 states that:

*'The police and crime commissioner must, in particular, hold the chief constable to account for the exercise of duties in relation to the safeguarding of children and the promotion of child welfare that are imposed on the chief constable by sections 10 and 11 of the Children Act 2004.'*

The PCC works closely with other partner organisations through Local Safeguarding Children's Boards to oversee actions in place to improve the well-being of children. The OPCC also oversee the Constabulary through attendance at Strategic meetings, such as the Children and Young People Strategy Board and the Mental Health Strategic Board.

Offences committed against children can be particularly sensitive, and often mean the police need to work with other organisations, such as children's social care, when carrying out any investigation. The responsibilities laid out by section 11 of the Children Act 2004 apply equally to children who may be victims of criminal offences and to children who are alleged to have committed criminal offences.

The Care Act 2014 places a requirement that the local Chief of Police is a statutory core member of the Safeguarding Adults Board, working with partners to identify vulnerable adults and provide support. They also have a duty under the Victims Code of Practice 2013 to assess the immediate needs of victims and enable that person to be appropriately supported through the criminal justice system. The PPC will hold the Chief Constable to account for these responsibilities.

The Office of the Police & Crime Commissioner has a policy so that staff know what positive action they must take if they suspect abuse.

- Protecting children
- Working with partners
- Child sexual exploitation
- Child trafficking
- Safeguarding vulnerable adults

Examples of how the PCC has worked to positively improve the wellbeing of children and adults include;

- Partnership working with Wiltshire PCC, Police Forces, Local Authorities and Clinical Commissioning Groups across Avon and Somerset has resulted in a bid to the Home Office for match funding to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation;
- The commissioning of new advocacy services for children and young people and vulnerable adults who are the victims of crime helping them to cope and recover.