

Operation Aster Executive Summary

IPCC independent investigation into the South Wales Police response to reports, information and intelligence about the alleged criminal conduct of Ian Watkins between October 2008- October 2012

Introduction

- The following is an executive summary detailing the IPCC independent investigation into how South Wales Police responded to reports, information and intelligence about the alleged criminal conduct of Ian Watkins between October 2008 and October 2012.
- On 29 December 2008, Ms Joanne Mjadzelics telephoned Rhondda Cynon Taff (RCT) Children's Services to report that Ian Watkins, the lead singer of the Lostprophets rock band, had told her he had given an infant child cocaine and touched the child inappropriately. RCT Children's Services passed this information to South Wales Police; a Strategy Meeting was convened in respect of Ms Mjadzelics' report on 8 January 2009.
- The report was investigated by staff at the Northern Basic Command Unit (BCU) Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU). On 18 May 2009, the sergeant on the unit determined that there was insufficient evidence to support Ms Mjadzelics' claims. The matter was finalised with no further action taken.
- Over the next four years, numerous complaints and intelligence reports about Watkins' alleged drug use, possession of indecent images of children and sexual interest in children were submitted to South Wales Police; the allegations originated from Ms Mjadzelics and also from other sources. In addition, reports about Watkins' sexual interest in children were made to other police forces, specifically: Bedfordshire Police, South Yorkshire Police, Essex Police and the Metropolitan Police. In addition, West Yorkshire Police provided assistance to South Wales Police in progressing their enquiries into Ms Mjadzelics' allegations in 2009. Further, South Yorkshire Police conducted enquiries in Doncaster at the request of

South Wales Police in March 2012, and in Barnsley following a report from one of Watkins' eventual co-defendants in March 2012.

- None of the reports or intelligence submissions made from December 2008 to June 2012 led to Watkins being arrested, questioned or otherwise required to respond to the allegations made against him.
- On 11 June 2012, South Wales Police received intelligence that suggested Watkins showed signs of a disturbing interest in children and that he had indicated in a text message that he wished to stupefy Child A. The report also indicated that he was a drug user and that he regularly imported drugs from America which he kept at his address.
- An account was obtained from the informant and applications for a Section 8 PACE warrant and a drugs search warrant under Section 23 of the Misuse of Drugs Act 1971 were prepared. Searches were subsequently authorised at two addresses linked to Watkins in the South Wales Police area.
- The warrants were executed on 21 September 2012; as a result of the searches, Watkins and his then-partner were arrested that day on suspicion of possessing controlled drugs. A large number of computers, mobile phones and digital media storage devices were seized and submitted to the South Wales Police Hi-Tech Crime Unit for examination. Watkins and his then-partner were interviewed under caution on the day of their arrest; both denied possession of controlled drugs. They were granted unconditional bail which they were due to answer at Pontypridd Police Station on 25 October 2012.
- On 4 October 2012, some 40 indecent images of children were recovered from a media storage device seized from Watkins' home address. On 10 October 2012, an indecent image of an infant in sexual contact with an adult female was recovered from one of Watkins' mobile phones. This led to the arrest of B, one of Watkins' eventual co-defendants, for making and distributing indecent images

of children. The investigation was referred to the South Wales Police Specialist Crime Investigations Department on 19 October 2012; on 22 October 2012, DCI Peter Doyle assumed responsibility for the investigation, which was given the codename Operation Globe.

- Analysis of the seized hardware resulted in Watkins being further arrested on 24 October 2012 on suspicion of possession of indecent images of children and of publishing an obscene article. He was further interviewed and released on conditional bail later that day, which he was due to answer on 11 March 2013. He was subject to stringent bail conditions.
- On 21 November 2012, a further female conspirator, P, was arrested when the Operation Globe team discovered she had sent indecent images of a child to Watkins.
- Analysis of Watkins' computer equipment was a major endeavour for South Wales Police: he possessed more data storage than the whole police force, some 27 terabytes of data. Analysis of remote Cloud-based servers was also conducted. Evidence retrieved from encrypted devices and telephones was overlaid with ANPR data and financial information to build a case against Watkins and his fellow conspirators.
- As a result of police enquiries, on 17 December 2012, Watkins and his two female accomplices were further arrested on suspicion of serious sexual offences, including conspiracy to rape a child; they were subsequently charged and appeared at Cardiff Magistrates' Court on 19 December 2012, where they were remanded in custody until trial. On 26 November 2013, Watkins entered a late guilty plea to 13 of the charges brought against him and was subsequently sentenced to 29 years in prison, with an additional period of 6 years to be spent on licence. His co-defendants, P and B, were sentenced to 17 years and 14 years respectively.

Referrals made to the IPCC

- On 24 January 2013, South Wales Police made a voluntary conduct referral to the IPCC as a result of an internal review which indicated that multiple reports had been made to the force in relation to Watkins' interest in children between 2008 and 2012. On 28 January 2013, the IPCC determined that the matter would be subject to an independent investigation; this decision was communicated to South Wales Police on 29 January 2013.
- On 26 February 2014, South Wales Police made a mandatory conduct referral to the IPCC as a consequence of reviewing an email Ms Mjadzelics had sent to the force 'ACPO [Chief Officers]' inbox' on 29 May 2011.

Complaints against police

- Ms Joanne Mjadzelics initially made a complaint about the conduct of South Wales Police in May 2011. This complaint was sent to the force 'ACPO inbox', an email inbox where members of the public could send correspondence for the attention of the Chief Constable. She complained that insufficient action had been taken in relation to a report she had made to police in 2008/09 about Ian Watkins' alleged involvement in child sexual abuse. The 2011 complaint was not recorded, investigated or otherwise treated as a complaint against police at that time. This is the matter which was referred to the IPCC in February 2014, mentioned above.
- Ms Mjadzelics subsequently made a number of complaints against South Wales Police and other forces on an IPCC direct complaints form dated 31 May 2013.

IPCC investigation

- The IPCC has conducted a number of independent investigations into complaints and conduct matters linked to Watkins' offending, with a particular focus on investigating the sufficiency and effectiveness of the South Wales Police response to reports and intelligence submitted about Ian Watkins from October 2008 to October 2012. We also considered how South Wales Police interacted with other forces and the response of those other forces to the allegations made against Watkins.
- The following IPCC reports have been produced:
 - Report into complaints against police made against DS A and DC B by Ms Mjadzelics. The complaints concern action taken by police following a report Ms Mjadzelics made against Ian Watkins in December 2008. The report also considers action taken following a separate complaint made against Watkins, by a person known to him, in February 2012.
 - Report into how South Wales Police responded to reports and intelligence about the alleged criminal conduct of Ian Watkins between October 2008- October 2012 (Operation Aster).
 - Report into action taken by South Yorkshire Police when Ms Mjadzelics took her laptop to Doncaster Police Station for examination in March 2012.
 - Report into a complaint against police made by Ms Mjadzelics about action taken by Bedfordshire Police following a report she made in October 2012 against the female who was later tried and convicted as one of Ian Watkins' co-defendants.

Subjects of the investigation

- During the investigations into South Wales Police, three officers were served misconduct notices: DS A, who was the supervising sergeant in the Child Abuse Investigation Unit (CAIU) of the Northern basic Command Unit Public Protection Unit and also DCs B and C, who were detective constables working within the same unit.

Background information: Ian Watkins

- Ian Watkins, currently aged 40 years, was the lead singer of a rock band, the Lostprophets, whose members were originally from the Pontypridd area of South Wales. The band was successful, achieving considerable fame and worldwide record sales. The Lostprophets toured worldwide; when not touring, Watkins spent much of his time in Los Angeles, London and the Pontypridd area of the South Wales Valleys. His family lived in the South Wales Valleys.
- Watkins was well-known in the Pontypridd area. He carried out charity work in Wales, acting as an ambassador for young people for the Kidney Wales Foundation in 2008, after his mother received a kidney transplant. He met with parents and children when he toured the Children's Centre with his mother that year; he also staged a concert to promote the cause on 31 December 2008. His public profile was enhanced by relationships with other celebrities.
- The evidence gathered in the course of this investigation indicates that when away from the public eye, Watkins lived a dissolute lifestyle, characterised by heavy drug use and casual relationships with multiple sexual partners. A number of ex-partners described him as bisexual and emphasised his high sex drive, drug use and his proclivity for extreme sexual practices. The evidence indicates that he habitually recorded his sexual encounters, storing the recordings on electronic devices such as iPhones, iPads, laptops and external

hard drives. He was also a prolific user of email and internet instant messaging sites such as AOL Instant Messenger (AIM); he used numerous other sites to communicate with fans and partners, including Twitter and Skype.

- The evidence shows that, in addition to having a sexual interest in children, Watkins also gravitated towards vulnerable females. A number of the women he had relationships with suffered mental health conditions and were drug users. Drug use featured heavily in his relationships, many of which overlapped. The evidence indicates that Watkins encouraged his sexual partners to take drugs with him and that he also expressed a strong desire to stupefy several of his child victims with drugs.
- South Wales Police received numerous reports about Ian Watkins during the period under investigation; these reports broadly concerned his alleged drug use, motoring offences, his sexual interest in children and his alleged possession of indecent images of children.
- Whilst Watkins' devices were encrypted, he told many of his casual sexual partners about his sexual interest in children. When interviewed by the IPCC, Ms Mjadzelics described Watkins' arrogance and spoke of his belief that he would not be apprehended by police. She stated that he taunted her about her inability to persuade the police to take action. On her account, he continued to disclose information about his offending to her despite knowing that she had reported him to the police several times. Other women he had relationships with also spoke of his enthusiasm for sharing details of his offending with them. Ms Mjadzelics advised Bedfordshire Police in 2012 that he had set up a Twitter account to which 'superfans' sent indecent images of children. In a similar vein,

in 2012 Witness D advised South Wales Police that Watkins would be easy to 'catch' as he was gullible.

- Watkins initially entered a 'not guilty' plea to all charges brought against him; he maintained this plea up to the start of his trial on 25 November 2013, when he entered a late guilty plea. In sentencing him, the Honourable Mr Justice Royce passed comment on the severity of his offending and the risk he presented to young people: *'I am satisfied that you are a deeply corrupting influence; you are highly manipulative; you are a sexual predator; you are dangerous. The public and in particular young females and children need protection from you.'*¹
- Mr Justice Royce also made mention of Watkins' drug-taking: *'the taking of drugs linked with your sexual activities is a recurring theme'*. This observation is borne out by the intelligence submissions made about Watkins before his arrest, and also by accounts provided by his sexual partners. The pre-sentence report compiled in respect of Watkins spoke of his admission that he did not know to what extremes he would have gone but for his arrest; the report concluded: *'Mr Watkins presents a high risk of causing serious sexual, physical, emotional and psychological harm to children, both male and female, and to women, specifically his female sexual partners...it is also my assessment that the child victims in this case appear to be coincidental to his need to dominate and to test out the extent to which his sexual partners would collude and participate in his sexual interests'*. In passing sentence the judge made reference to Watkins' *'almost complete lack of remorse'*.
- Watkins and one of his co-defendants sought to appeal their sentences in 2014. Watkins sought to appeal on the basis his total

¹ *R v Ian Watkins and B and P* (2013), sentencing remarks

sentence was 'manifestly excessive'. Both parties were refused leave to appeal on 23 July 2014.

Background information: Joanne Mjadzelics

- When interviewed by the IPCC, Ms Mjadzelics explained that she entered into a sexual relationship with Ian Watkins in December 2006 which endured, intermittently, for several years.
- Joanne Mjadzelics:
 - was the first person to formally raise concerns (with police and Social Services) about Watkins' sexual interest in children;
 - made a number of reports about Watkins' alleged criminal behaviour to a number of police forces, specifically: South Wales Police (in 2008/09, 2011 and 2012 respectively), Bedfordshire Police (2012) and South Yorkshire Police (2012); and
 - had knowledge of both of Watkins' co-defendants due to her activity on social media; she reported concerns about them both, some time before they or Watkins were arrested, alleging that they were allowing Watkins access to their children.
- Joanne Mjadzelics was interviewed by the IPCC at length as a significant witness. She told the IPCC that she first became aware of Watkins' sexual interest in children some time before September 2007 when he told her that he took the virginity of 14 year old fans and said he would have vaginal and anal sex with them. She said she thought he had been engaging in this behaviour since he had been in the band. Her first formal report about his behaviour was made to RCT Social Services in December 2008.

- On 16 January 2013, Ms Mjadzelics was arrested by the Operation Globe team on suspicion of conspiracy to rape a child. The arrest came about as a result of the recovery of DVD film footage from the home address of Ian Watkins. She was subsequently interviewed but no charges were brought.
- In March 2014, an investigation conducted by South Wales Police led to Ms Mjadzelics being charged with four counts of possessing indecent images of children, two counts of distributing indecent images of children and one count of encouraging another to distribute indecent images of children. The alleged offences arose from enquiries conducted in relation to Watkins’ offending. She was tried at Cardiff Crown Court in January 2015; she was acquitted of all charges on 14 January 2015.

Other investigations

- As explained above, the investigation into Watkins’ criminal activities, codenamed Operation Globe, commenced on 22 December 2013.

Chronological summary of events

Date	Summary of events
2008	
31 October 2008	A solicitor from Calvert Solicitors, London, telephoned South Wales Police on the ‘101’ ² line at 12.41pm on 31 October 2008 to report that her client Ian Watkins was being harassed and blackmailed by his ex-partner, Joanne Mjadzelics.

² For non-emergency calls

	<p>The solicitor disclosed that Ms Mjadzelics had been harassing Ian Watkins for the past 4 months, threatening to make public personal photographs and communications such as voicemails and emails. She explained that Ms Mjadzelics had signed a civil [legal] agreement, which was witnessed, stating that she would destroy photographs and communications and that this had not been done.</p> <p>The solicitor alleged that the harassment had worsened since September of that year and that Ian Watkins had received a call from Ms Mjadzelics that day (31 October 2008) during which she said that she was within the South Wales Police area, that she was going to visit his family home while he was away in London and that she would leave something 'very nasty' for his family.</p> <p>An update was subsequently placed on the police log at 7.22pm on 31 October 2008 to indicate that a welfare check had been carried out at Ian Watkins' mother's address and that all was in order. It was noted that Ian Watkins would update his solicitor and that no further police action was required.</p>
<p>29 December 2008</p>	<p>Joanne Mjadzelics telephoned Rhondda Cynon Taf County Borough Council Children's Services to make a report that Ian Watkins was abusing a child. Children's Services subsequently reported the matter to South Wales Police on 30 December 2008. This matter is subject of a separate IPCC report.</p>
<p>2010</p>	
<p>Crimestoppers logs</p>	

<p>30 March 2010</p>	<p>Information received by Crimestoppers was entered into a South Wales Police log on this date. The intelligence, which was from an untested source whose reliability could not be judged, was as follows:</p> <p><i>'Ian David Karlake WATKINS who is the lead singer of the band Lostprophets and resides in Pontypridd is involved in child pornography.</i></p> <p><i>He has got images of boys and girls aged around 8 years on his computer. He has also stated that he wanted to get involved in sexual relations with children.</i></p> <p><i>He uses cocaine, crack cocaine, crystal meth and heroin.</i></p> <p><i>WATKINS is described as a 32 year old white male, has dyed black hair and several tattoos. His email address is [email address supplied] and he uses Myspace [Myspace address supplied]'</i></p> <p>A reply was sent to Crimestoppers to indicate that Public Protection Unit (PPU) officers had made enquiries and that the information was believed to be false/malicious. No further police action was taken.</p>
<p>29 June 2010</p>	<p>Information received by Crimestoppers was entered into a South Wales Police log on this date. The intelligence, which was from an untested source whose reliability could not be judged, was as follows:</p> <p><i>'Ian David Karlake Watkins of [address supplied] is dealing drugs. He is selling the drugs to minors in order to pay for his own heroin and crystal meth habit. He smuggles the drugs into the country in his body cavities when he travels with the band the lostprophets. He also obtains, views and produces child pornography. He watches the child pornography on his computer. He has</i></p>

	<p><i>claimed to have previously molested [Child A] when she was 4 years old. He uses Facebook [Facebook weblink supplied] and twitter [Twitter weblink supplied]. He uses these sites to groom underage males and females. Watkins is described as a white 32 year old male. He drives a black Mercedes SLK. He lives with his mother. His mobile phone number is [number provided]. His email addresses are [email address supplied] and [email address supplied], No further information available.'</i></p> <p>The update added to the 'research results' field of the log was '<i>DS [A] PPU is aware of this³, these allegations seem to be coming from a female in London who has had a relationship with Watkins. PPU are monitoring the situation.'</i> No further police action was taken.</p>
<p>5 August 2010</p>	<p>Information received by Crimestoppers was entered into a South Wales Police log on this date. The intelligence, which was from an untested source whose reliability could not be judged, was as follows:</p> <p><i>'Ian Watkins, the lead singer of the Lostprophets, regularly forces young girls to have sex with him after performances. He records the acts on a laptop. He lives in the Pontypridd area with his mother. The women that he forces to have sex with him range in age from 14 years old. He takes over all their social networking in an attempt to stop them from telling people. He also threatens that he will come round and sort them out if they tell.'</i></p>

³ When interviewed by the IPCC, DS A denied being aware of this matter at that time.

	<p>The update added to the 'research results' field of the log was 'investigated by PPU officers, information believed to be malicious'. No further police action was taken.</p>
<p>Report made by Witness B</p>	
<p>3 October 2010</p>	<p>The following information was passed to South Wales Police by the Metropolitan Police:</p> <p><i>'Concern regarding disturbing comments made by Ian Watkins of the Lost Profits [sic] band (H/A [home address] not known)- we have third party information that Watkins has boasted about having child porn on his computer. He has talked about this and shown an ex girlfriend. He has also said that he wants to amrry [sic- marry] a woman and tern [sic- turn] her into a junkie and have children with her and abuse them. Our inft is [Witness B] of [address provided] [telephone number provided].He lives in [details of locality provided].</i></p> <p>The occurrence was tasked to DS A on the morning of 4 October 2010; he placed an update on the occurrence at 10.53am that morning. He requested that the intelligence be linked to Watkins' nominal record. He noted:</p> <p><i>'I have supervised a previous investigation where his ex-partner Joanne Mjadzelics made a number of allegations against him which could not be substantiated and since that time I note there are four intelligence logs stating the same type of allegations. The intelligence from the Met is poor as it is not graded and does not state where offences are taking place. Although Watkins has a property in Pontypridd he spends the majority of the time out of the country at different properties or touring. If any</i></p>

	<p><i>action is to be taken the DSU [Dedicated Source Unit⁴] would need to research the subject and any action would not fall within the remit of the CAIU. Any police action to be taken would attract huge publicity and a full review needs to be undertaken to see if there is any credibility to the claims, as with my previous involvement his ex-partner was making malicious allegations due to there [sic] break-up.'</i></p> <p>The occurrence was finalised with no action taken in respect of it, other than the creation of a NICHE⁵ intelligence report.</p>
<p align="center">2011: Complaint made by Ms Mjadzelics through the police 'ACPO inbox', concerning alleged lack of police action</p>	
<p>29 May 2011</p>	<p>On 29 May 2011 Joanne Mjadzelics emailed the South Wales Police ACPO (Chief Officer) email inbox requesting assistance in locating PC [sic- DC] B. The email explained that she had referred a matter to DC B in December 2008, concerning her 'close friend' Ian Watkins. She advised that she told DC B that Watkins was molesting a 4 year old child and that he had also told her about a 12 year old he had molested in Los Angeles. She explained that she had sent DC B photographs of the 4 year old that Watkins had emailed to her and that she also provided her mobile phone and laptop, to supply evidence of conversations she had engaged in with Watkins.</p> <p>She suggested that DC B was intimidated by Watkins' lawyer and that he was never interviewed and his home</p>

⁴ DSUs manage covert human intelligence sources and other sources.

⁵ NICHE is a police system, used to record actions taken in respect of crimes and incidents.

	<p>never searched. She pointed out that it took four months for an officer to take a statement from her. She observed that, by that time, even if the police had visited him, he had already hidden everything at a friend's house.</p> <p>Ms Mjadzelics concluded her email by disclosing that Watkins was 'raping at least one 5yr old girl on a regular basis and sometimes he doesn't do it alone, he has at least one female accomplice, and has texted me pictures of him raping her'. She indicated that Watkins had wanted to rape a 5 year old in LA over webcam so that she could see, but that she refused to take his call. She reflected that she wished she had, because then she would have screenshots of the call. She expressed her disgust 'at how I was treated from day one of reporting it' and asked 'please can we work together to stop this?'</p> <p>No action appears to have been taken in response to the allegations made against Watkins in the email.</p> <p>An information marker was added to the NICHE occurrence in respect of the Witness B report on 23 June 2011 [some 8 months later] by DC K. The wording of the marker is as follows:</p> <p><i>#####For officers information#####</i></p> <p><i>Mjadzelics has made a number of allegations against IAN WATKINS (30/7/77) a member of the band 'Lost Prophets'. None of which have been substantiated. They are ex-partners and separated some time ago. Allegations are continuing and officer to be cautious if they are contacted by Mjadedzilcs [sic].</i></p> <p><i>Officers to be cautious if contact is received from Mjadedzlics [sic].</i></p>
--	--

	<p>This marker would have been accessible to officers accessing Ms Mjadzelics' nominal profile on the police NICHE system.</p>
<p>2012: Report made by Witness A</p>	
<p>27 February 2012</p>	<p>On the afternoon of 27 February 2012, Witness A attended at Pontypridd Police Station where he reported that his daughter may have been molested. He explained that there may be photographic evidence. He requested that an officer attend at his home address to obtain further details. How this matter was dealt with is considered in a separate investigation.</p>
<p>2012: Report made by B</p>	
<p>27 March 2012</p>	<p>B, currently aged 25, was one of Ian Watkins' co-defendants. She is currently serving a custodial sentence for offences committed in relation to her son, Child B.</p> <p>On 27 March 2012, B attended Barnsley Police Station, South Yorkshire, wishing to discuss with an officer her belief that Ian Watkins may have sexually assaulted her 11 month old son. She also disclosed that she had found indecent images of children on his computer.</p> <p>B reported that she had been staying at the Copthorne Hotel, Cardiff, with Ian Watkins on Friday 16 March 2012 when she woke to find him naked with her son, whose nappy had been removed. She stated that she thought this was extremely unusual as he was not the child's father; she also stated that her son seemed uncomfortable but observed this may have been due to him being away from home.</p>

	<p>She also disclosed that there were rumours that Ian Watkins may have raped a five year old and said that she had seen indecent images of children on his computers. She explained that the devices were encrypted but she had the password [which she provided]. She also advised that he was a drug addict and regularly used crystal meth. She confirmed that she was in regular contact with him, that he was unaware of her report to police and that he also had access to other young female relatives. She explained that he was at the K West Hotel, London, but that he should be back in Cardiff by that evening.</p> <p>On 28 March 2012, B was visited at home by South Yorkshire Police officer, DC M. DC M interviewed B and at the conclusion of the interview, B signed the interview notes to indicate they were a true reflection of her account. She declined to provide a statement; she stated that she wished to remain anonymous but would be happy to be contacted by police again if '<i>anything came of</i>' the allegations made by Ms Mjadzelics.⁶</p> <p>The medical examination of B's child was performed on 19 April 2012; it was noted that there were no signs to indicate sexual abuse.</p> <p>Under the Home Office Counting Rules (HOCR) the scene of the alleged concerning behaviour fell within the South Wales Police force area.</p> <p>The IPCC found no evidence that South Wales Police took steps to investigate the allegation that Ian Watkins possessed indecent images, despite being given the location of the computer (in his attic), the password to</p>
--	---

⁶ Joanne Mjadzelics had raised concerns about Watkins with South Wales Police. South Yorkshire Police had agreed to assist as Ms Mjadzelics was a resident in their area.

	<p>access it (provided in the notes from the interview of B) and a clear description of what images could be found.</p>
<p>2012: Report to Essex Police</p>	
<p>26 April 2012</p>	<p>Joanne Mjadzelics sent an email to a third party based in Essex at 11.46am on 26 April 2012. The content of the email can be summarised as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • That she had tried to report the matter to the police at the beginning of 2009 but South Wales Police ‘brushed her allegation under the carpet’; • Ian Watkins told her that he wanted to rape children and that he’d tried to rape a little girl in Russia in 2001 and had also ‘done things’ with a 12 year old girl who was part of a choir singing on his band’s album track at a recording session that took place in Hollywood. • That he emailed her photographs of a female child holding a tile with a line of cocaine and razor blade on it, holding a rolled up note in her other hand. That he also sent her a photograph of the same child with her mouth open and tongue sticking out. That he told her he had abused the child and administered drugs to her. She stated that they were both addicted to cocaine at the time and so she ‘didn’t really process any of this’ until she stopped taking drugs a few months later and everything

	<p>became clear and she thought 'WTF??!! [what the fuck].</p> <p>The email was hand-delivered to Essex Police by the third party that afternoon.</p> <p>The information stamped on the fax suggests that Essex Police sent it to South Wales Police at 3.29pm on 3 May 2012.</p> <p>This investigation has found no evidence that South Wales Police took any action in response to this fax.</p>
<p>2012: Report made by Witness D</p>	
<p>28 April 2012</p>	<p>Witness D, an Australian national, sent a series of emails to South Wales Police, providing information about her knowledge of Ian Watkins' drug use and alleged child molestation.</p> <p>She attached a picture of drugs paraphernalia she said he had sent to her, together with screenshots of a Skype conversation during which he:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • alluded to previous sexual contact he had engaged in with her; • boasted about getting his 13 year old relative 'high as fuck' and of having sex with her; • said she should be with him so that they could have sex with 'underage sluts' together; • expressed his hopes that Witness D and his 13 year old cousin would fall pregnant by him;

- Expressed a desire to have sex with his own future 3 year old child.

Witness D explained in the email that she had met Ian Watkins earlier that year. She provided his correct date of birth, his home town and explained that he was currently on tour with the Lostprophets. She disclosed that he made his own GHD [sic- GHB] and that he used meth and heroin. She further disclosed that he 'drugs young girls, some that are even underage and then has sex with them in hopes to get them pregnant'. She explained that the messages she had attached showed what he said he had done or wanted to do to children. She also stated that a 15 year old friend of hers in England had texts from him, stating that he wanted to have sex with her.

The email continued with a plea: 'Please do not disregard this as it is serious. If I need to be called, please do not hesitate, I will tell you everything I know'. She stated that she had witnessed Ian Watkins having sex with young girls over Skype, that he had told her 'shocking and disgusting' things over AIM [instant messenger], sent her pictures of him participating in sexual activities with men and women and that she had also watched him take drugs over Skype. She provided her contact telephone number and said that 'a lady by the name of Joanne Majik' [sic] had filed a report against him for child molestation. She also provided contact details for her friend in England. She closed the email by stating 'I hope to hear back from you as soon as possible and I am willing to do anything to help with this. Please don't disregard anything'.

	<p>The emails sent by Witness D were tasked to the Northern BCU CAIU. An update was added to NICHE by DS A on 8 July 2012, as follows: <i>'This matter can be finalised as no offences have been substantiated and it is an ongoing investigation into Ian Watkins who due to his fame has a number of fans and ex-girlfriends making allegations that when investigated are false. Enquiries will continue on linked occs.'</i> There is no evidence on NICHE that any action was taken in relation to Witness D's report.</p> <p>The IPCC made contact with Witness D on 4 November 2015. She confirmed that, after exchanging initial emails to supply information to South Wales Police, she was not further contacted to provide a full account or to assist in any other way.</p>
<p>2012: Intelligence log, June, Witness C</p>	
<p>11 June 2012</p>	<p>On 11 June 2012, information was received by South Wales Police and entered into an intelligence log. The information concerned Ian Watkins. A woman, Witness C, who had not previously made any reports about him alleged that he exhibited signs of an unnatural interest in children and had indicated in a text that he wished to stupefy an infant relative for sexual purposes. She reported that he was a drug abuser and supplier and that he regularly kept drugs in the house.</p> <p>The NICHE occurrence was updated by DI G at 2.42pm on 25 June 2012 to indicate that intelligence had been brought to her attention that day regarding Ian Watkins.</p>

	<p>DI G requested intelligence research into Ian Watkins and for applications for a Section 8 PACE warrant and a drugs search warrant to be prepared. She subsequently authorised applications to conduct searches at two addresses occupied by Ian Watkins.</p> <p>On 21 September 2012, the warrants were executed at two addresses linked to Watkins in Pontypridd. Officers from the Northern BCU were supported by specialist search officers from the Territorial Support Team (TST). A package suspected to contain drugs was recovered from one of the addresses; Watkins and his then-partner were arrested on suspicion of possession of a controlled drug. A large number of computers, mobile phones and digital media storage devices were seized and examined. Both Watkins and his partner were interviewed; they denied the offence. They were both granted unconditional bail, which they were due to answer at Pontypridd Police Station on 25 October 2012.</p> <p>On 4 October 2012, the force Hi Tech Crime Unit (HTCU) recorded the recovery of 40 images of child abuse from a media storage device recovered from Ian Watkins' home address. On 10 October 2012, examination of a mobile phone led to the recovery of an image of a male infant in sexual contact with an adult female. The image was sent from a mobile phone used by B.</p> <p>On 12 October 2012, South Yorkshire Police contacted South Wales Police to advise they had arrested B.</p> <p>On 21 November 2012, P was arrested. Analysis of data held on Watkins' seized equipment found that indecent images of a child had been sent from an ISP with an identified router address. Urgent applications showed that</p>
--	---

	<p>the address belonged to P who had sent images to Watkins between 17 and 21 August 2012.</p> <p>On 17 December 2012, Watkins and his two female accomplices were arrested on suspicion of serious sexual offences, including conspiring to rape infants. All three were charged with conspiracy offences and were remanded in custody on 19 December 2012, when they appeared at Cardiff Magistrates' Court.</p>
--	--

Could Ian Watkins have been arrested sooner?

- The report made by Ms Mjadzelics in December 2008 was investigated by South Wales Police but the IPCC identified shortcomings in the investigation. Crucially, the IPCC found that the alleged victim and her parents were not visited at the time, contrary to the South Wales Police Child Abuse Investigation Policy (CAIP).
- Ms Mjadzelics' mobile phone was not examined in 2009. If it had been, it would have been found to hold a message Ian Watkins sent to Ms Mjadzelics on 12 August 2007, which read: 'WISHLIST RAPE A 12 YR OLD FUCK TWO UNDERAGE TWINS'. The message corroborated Ms Mjadzelics' allegations that Watkins had expressed desires to abuse children.
- It was the investigator's view that a reasonable misconduct tribunal could find that the 2010 Crimestoppers intelligence reports were not progressed as they should have been: these reports corroborated information Ms Mjadzelics had provided to police in 2009. The intelligence provided by Witness B in October 2010 was also of great significance as it corroborated Ms Mjadzelics' account, was entirely independent of her and provided additional lines of enquiry in the

form of named witnesses. Reports made by Witness D and B in 2012 do not appear to have been progressed at all.

- The investigator's view was that a reasonable tribunal could also find that the complaint Ms Mjadzelics made to the ACPO inbox in May 2011 was not progressed. In the course of a series of emails, an agreement was reached between officers that the matter would be taken forward by the PPU; there is, however, no evidence that any investigative activity subsequently took place.
- It is the investigator's view that the evidence therefore shows that numerous opportunities to obtain evidence in relation to Watkins' offending were missed, as follows:
 - 2009: examination of Ms Mjadzelics' mobile phone and visit to the alleged child victim subject of her initial report;
 - 2010: three anonymous Crimestoppers reports and the report made by Witness B;
 - 2011: Ms Mjadzelics' ACPO inbox complaint; and
 - 2012: Witness D's report, B's report and the fax from Essex Police, respectively.
- Whilst the focus of this investigation has necessarily been on Watkins' commission of contact child sex offences and possession of indecent images of children, further information existed about his use of and possession, production and sale of illegal drugs. Save for the report made in June 2012, none of the intelligence about Watkins' alleged drug use was directed to officers for action. His arrest for a drugs offence on 21 September 2012, and evidence about his drug use gathered by Operation Globe, indicates that the numerous prior allegations about his drug use were well-founded. The judge who sentenced Watkins on 18 December 2013 concluded that use of drugs played a significant role in his commission of child sex

offences. It is submitted that arresting Watkins for drugs offences at an earlier stage may have provided an opportunity to disrupt his offending towards children and vulnerable women.

Potential influences on the police investigation

i. What impact did Ian Watkins' celebrity status have on those responsible for investigating allegations made against him?

- Ian Watkins was the lead singer of the Lostprophets and was, therefore, one of the most recognised and widely known members of the band. The Lostprophets was not a mainstream band: they had only two Top 10 hits in the UK singles chart. However, the band achieved considerable commercial success, selling some 3.5 million albums worldwide. The band and its members were well-known in the Pontypridd area of South Wales.
- Ms Mjadzelics' explained that Watkins was aware of the power his celebrity gave him [when she was interviewed by West Yorkshire Police in March 2009]:
'...he just wouldn't think....I think it's because...since he's been a teenager he's been in bands and he's had that life, he's not had a normal life so I don't think he thinks like a normal guy would...he's intelligent...but because he thinks "oh I can have anyone I want, I can do whatever I want" you know and "I've got lawyers to back me up"...he made me laugh because when he first mentioned lawyers, "I've got the same lawyers as Puff Daddy and Madonna had, they'll rip you apart".'
- According to Ms Mjadzelics' account, Watkins felt that he could offend with impunity. This is borne out by other evidence gathered in the course of this investigation. The accounts of Joanne Mjadzelics and Witness B are consistent in that they both state that Watkins was open with his sexual partners about his offending behaviour. Witness

D advised South Wales Police that he would be easy to catch as he was gullible. B and the June 2012 informant both disclosed that he spoke openly about his offending.

South Wales Police

DS A

- When interviewed by the IPCC, DS A stated that he carried out 'Google' research on Ian Watkins in late 2008/early 2009, in response to Joanne Mjadzelics' first report. He stated that he briefed DI H on the investigation, as Ian Watkins was a high profile suspect.
- During his IPCC interview, DS A stated that he was 'aware of the "gagging order" Joanne [Mjadzelics] had signed... stating that the allegations she was making were false and due to the high profile of Ian WATKINS and the band Lostprophets I was concerned at robust police action where there was no reasonable suspicion, could reflect badly on the reputation of the force.' He stated he had dealt with other high profile people, and that it can impact upon the community and multi-agency working.
- DS L added the following notes to the police computer record maintained in respect of the March 2012 report made by B:

t/c [telephone call] received from [DS A] at South Wales Police. [DS A] provided background information in respect of a constant stream of reports made to SWP by Joanne Mjadzelics..... It appears she has a fixation with Watkins and he has taken an injunction out against her. **[DS A] advised that the timing of this latest report by Joanne links in with the Lost Prophets releasing a new album and being signed for a couple of the big festivals including Glastonbury** [*Lead Investigator's emphasis*].

- DS A added the following update to the Witness B occurrence to indicate that there were risks in taking action against Ian Watkins:
'Any police action to be taken would attract huge publicity and a full review needs to be undertaken to see if there is any credibility to the claims, as with my previous involvement his ex-partner was making malicious allegations due to there [sic] break up.'
- DS A added the following update to the occurrence created in respect of Witness D's report:
*'This matter can be finalised as no offences have been substantiated and it is an ongoing investigation into Ian Watkins **who due to his fame** [Lead Investigator's emphasis] has a number of fans and ex-girlfriends making allegations that when investigated are false. Enquiries will continue on linked occs.'*

DI J

- DI J stated that he copied a response in the ACPO inbox chain to a Detective Chief Inspector because he identified the potential reputational risks associated with Watkins' status.

DC B

- DC B stated that her knowledge of Watkins before she dealt with Ms Mjadzelics' 2008 report was limited: 'personally I'd never heard of the band he was in, I couldn't tell you the songs they sing.'

DC C

- DC C stated as follows when asked about her knowledge of Ian Watkins' celebrity status: *"To the best of my recollection I would not have been aware of the 'local rock status' of WATKINS back in 2012,*

and even if I had been this would not have influenced my thoughts or decision making process.”

Other witnesses

- Witness A provided a statement to the IPCC, stating that he believed the police were taking Watkins’ celebrity status into account in their response to the allegations.

West Yorkshire Police

- DC D stated that she recalled a telephone conversation with Watkins or someone acting on his behalf, possibly his manager, during which they complained that Ms Mjadzelics was continuing to contact him. DC D stated that she advised Ms Mjadzelics that she should cease contact with Ian Watkins and anyone connected with him and that, if she failed to do so, this could constitute the offence of harassment. She stated that this occurred whilst the investigation was ongoing and had no impact on the way the investigation was conducted.

South Yorkshire Police

- DS L made no mention of her knowledge of Ian Watkins or any potential impact his celebrity may have had.

Bedfordshire Police

- Ms Mjadzelics made a report to Bedfordshire Police on 9 October 2012, indicating that a female resident in the Bedfordshire Police area was allowing Ian Watkins access to her baby. DS A spoke to DC E and DS F of Bedfordshire Police but there were no recorded references to Ian Watkins being a celebrity.

- On 9 October 2012, DS A spoke to DC E and she made the following notes of the conversation on the Child Protection Incident Report (CPIR):
 - Ms Mjadzelics was well known to DS A.
 - She had made various allegations about Ian Watkins over the years which had been unfounded.
 - Ms Mjadzelics had mental health issues and had previously been sectioned. Ian Watkins had taken out a restraining order against Ms Mjadzelics and Doncaster Police had warned her for harassment.
 - A warrant had been executed at Ian Watkins' address three weeks previously and his computers had been seized.
 - The examination of the computers was ongoing but at that stage it was known that an indecent image of a child had been found (level 4), together with an image classed as bestiality.
 - Also recovered was webchat between Watkins and an unknown person describing kidnapping, raping and killing children. DS A believed that the unknown person may be Ms Mjadzelics but this could not be confirmed. This was all currently being investigated and DS A was the lead in respect of the matter.
 - Videos of Ian Watkins having sex with men and women were recorded on his laptop.

DC E noted that DS A had advised her that any allegation of child sex abuse made against Ian Watkins should be taken seriously. She noted that he also asked to be kept informed of developments in respect of Ms Mjadzelics' allegations.

Conclusion

- The evidence outlined above shows that a number of the officers were aware of his celebrity status. However, we do not believe that this status led to him escaping justice; rather, the evidence shows a complex situation involving a celebrity offender and a reporting person who was, ultimately, not believed because of early assessments about her credibility, based to a significant degree on some early evidence from one of her relatives around her vulnerabilities.

ii. Did Joanne Mjadzelics' lifestyle and presentation influence the service she received from South Wales?

- Joanne Mjadzelics was, at the time of her relationship with Ian Watkins [and by her own admission], a sex worker. She also admitted to taking illegal drugs with Watkins and to continuing her sexual relationship with him despite having grave concerns about his sexual interest in young children.

DC B

- When interviewed by the IPCC, DC B stated that she did not send Ms Mjadzelics' mobile phone and laptop to the Hi-Tech Crime Unit because she had formed the view that her allegations were malicious.
- It is the investigator's view that DC B appears to have deemed Ms Mjadzelics' compromised status as a witness to be determinative: she did not seem to consider the value of seeking to secure evidence through other sources, such as her mobile phone.

DS A

- When interviewed by the IPCC, DS A stated that he felt Ms Mjadzelics had mental health issues based on information provided by one of her relatives and due to updates provided by DC B. He stated that, as a result, he was cautious about the information she provided. He stated that, in light of her family member's assertion that Joanne had fabricated evidence, intelligence provided by her would be given a low grading and would require corroboration before it could be acted upon.
- More generally, DS A stated that child abuse investigation is a complex area of policing due to a number of factors. He stated that one area that is not taken into account is that a large percentage of allegations or reports are false and 'at times malicious'. He stated that a high percentage of cases he has investigated and supervised have been false, including some high profile cases.

DC C

- DC C stated that no-one sought to influence her perception of Ms Mjadzelics and that she could not imagine any situation in which a "gagging order" would have influenced an investigation.
- The undertakings between Ms Mjadzelics and Watkins are significant: as a strict matter of law, the undertakings were a contract; if Ms Mjadzelics breached it, Watkins had a right of action for breach of contract. The evidence suggests that the way in which the undertakings were referred to over time may have created an impression amongst police officers that they had status as a criminal or civil sanction, implying that they were the result of an adjudication by a court, which was not the case. This could potentially have influenced the police view of her credibility.

Bedfordshire

- DS F added an entry to the Child Protection Incident Report (CPIR) at 7.18pm on 9 October 2012, indicating that he had also spoken to DS A.

His notes included information that DS A shared information about Joanne Mjadzelics' background and previous reports to police over the past five years, which he said were unfounded. The notes also contained information from DS A about webchat between Watkins and a female (who DS A believed to be Ms Mjadzelics) about abduction and abuse of children

The notes continue that DS A had advised not to make arrests based on Ms Mjadzelics' information, but to carry out a joint welfare check as a starting point.

Potential bias by investigators

- Joanne Mjadzelics had declared mental health issues and was a sex worker. One of her relatives had provided evidence to the police about her vulnerabilities, indicating that officers should be cautious about the truth of her allegations. She was also in an ongoing on/off sexual relationship with Watkins, despite continuing to report serious concerns to police about his apparent sexual interest in children.
- Witness C provides a useful comparator. Her reports to police were clearly treated differently to those of Ms Mjadzelics in that they effectively triggered the work done to obtain a drugs warrant which was executed at an address linked to Ian Watkins. However, it is difficult to determine why this was the case, as several of factors came into play when she made her report; chief of these was the intelligence picture, which by that point was overwhelming. When Ms Mjadzelics made her initial report, she was the first person to raise

concerns about Watkins. When she raised concerns again in 2011 and 2012 there were several intelligence reports on police systems from different people but the evidence suggests that DS A believed her to be the original source of each of them, despite different reporting parties. It is clear that DI G also became involved in progressing the intelligence from Witness C after it was brought to her attention.

- DS A stated that Witness C changed the police approach because she provided evidence:

'We then feel that [Witness C] gives us that breath of fresh air. That extra person now who's given us evidence. Who's given us information that feel there's enough now to plan to take out a warrant and that's something that myself and DI G decide that there's enough now. We're gonna take a warrant out.'

Conclusion

- It is the investigator's view that Ms Mjadzelics was not singled out by South Wales Police due to perceptions of her lifestyle, as South Wales Police also took little or no action in relation to the allegations made by Witness D and B. However, it is clear that Ms Mjadzelics' credibility was affected at a very early stage by the statement provided by her family member and that DS A, in particular, recorded his views on her credibility on police systems.
- It is the investigator's view that, despite the undertakings and the statement provided by her relative, Ms Mjadzelics presented as a credible witness when she was interviewed by West Yorkshire Police in 2009. She provided a detailed account of her knowledge of Watkins and a number of further lines of enquiry, including the identification of a location where Watkins potentially kept a laptop that held indecent images of children.

- It is the investigator's view that the undertakings and the statement from Ms Mjadzelics' family member both undermined her credibility with the police, as did the 2011 NICHE warning marker. However, the evidence shows that steps could have been taken to corroborate her account at an earlier stage. A basic triage of her mobile phone in March 2009 would have provided evidence that Watkins had made wholly inappropriate comments in a text about his wish to have sex with underage children.

South Wales Police internal reviews

Review of intelligence processes

- In January 2013 the force commissioned an urgent review of the force's intelligence structures and processes to '*assess the capacity, capability and effectiveness of the organisation at managing threat, risk and harm, whilst considering intelligence structures in respect of BCU and force systems*'.
- The key relevant findings of the review are considered here to capture the work South Wales has done to improve intelligence management since the matters considered within this report came to light.

Crimestoppers

- The review found that the process surrounding the management of Crimestoppers intelligence logs was '*not fit for purpose...and fails to provide a clear audit trail*'. It recommended that a review of Crimestoppers should be conducted which '*concentrates upon the flow of intelligence, risk management, actionable outcomes and performance framework*'.

Daily Management Meeting (DMM) process

- The review recommended that all actionable intelligence must be assessed at Daily Sector Tasking and escalated if necessary.

Corporate minimum standards

- The review found that there was a lack of consistency in relation to intelligence submissions, audit, processes and decision making at both BCU and force level. A recommendation was made that a set of minimum standards should be devised, to ensure consistency of approach and compliance.

Assessment of threat, risk and harm

- A new Triage Model has been introduced and embedded into the case management system (NICHE) to ensure a consistent approach to the management of intelligence.

Audit

- A recommendation was made that a process should be created within NICHE to ensure that all action taken, with outcomes, was captured in respect of actionable intelligence.

Guidance

- A procedure has been drafted, providing guidance on the management of intelligence and tasking.

Training

- The force has implemented an action plan in respect of standardised training for intelligence staff.

South Wales Police PPU reform project

- In 2011 South Wales Police undertook a review of the public protection workstream as a result of which redesign proposals were put forward. One of the main findings of the review was that public protection was under-resourced and that additional staff (largely police staff posts) were needed to meet growing demand. Three new referral units were created as a result of the review, and a total of twenty-five new posts were created.
- A further recommendation was that all public protection policies should be reviewed and rewritten.

South Wales Police review of Public Protection Unit supervision

- In early February 2013, a review of PPU supervision was instigated by South Wales Police Specialist Crime. The review considered in particular the roles of the PPU Detective Inspector and Detective Sergeant.

The review acknowledges that there were:

- a 'clear shortfall in DIs evidencing their supervision which is a risk to the organisation as well as the individuals'. This finding chimes with the findings of this investigation.
- a lack of consistency in relation to daily tasking and supervision meetings, stating: 'the meetings are generally infrequent and very rarely documented by way of agenda or minutes'. Best practice identified included 'daily briefings with DSs to establish priorities, safeguarding and compliance...discussions around existing workload commitments via an informal or dedicated meeting either pre or post DMM [Daily Management Meeting].

- Shortcomings in relation to skills, knowledge and training, with only half of the DIs who took part responding 'yes' to the question '*Do you feel you are equipped with the correct skill set for your role?*'
- Huge demands on DIs in attending meetings and recommended that meetings should be delegated where appropriate.
- Concerns around welfare due to the lack of an auditable process identifying welfare support from immediate line managers. The review recommended that DIs should schedule regular face to face welfare briefings with their sergeants to ensure that the workload they held was manageable and that support was encouraged; 'regular' was not defined. A similar recommendation was made in respect of DIs meeting with their line managers.

South Wales Police review of Northern BCU CAIT Sergeant's caseload

- A review of the Unit's workload was instigated in early 2013, with a view to ensuring that 'no outstanding safeguarding issues exist'. The review incorporated consideration of the multi-agency case conferences and strategy meetings.
- The review found 'no considerably poor management decisions...which would require escalation to address any concerns around lack of appropriate investigations or safeguarding' but identified that some of the Sergeant's processes were poor, including 'finalising occurrences prematurely, not providing sufficient updates on occurrence evidence logs (OELs) to robustly substantiate finalisation of the enquiry and lack of appropriate summaries following joint agency meetings'.
- The review explained that the Northern PPU management instigated procedures to address shortcomings as follows:

- A dedicated sergeant given responsibility for coordinating case conference procedures;
 - Thorough reports prepared for conferences, ensuring that police observations are properly represented at meetings if staff are unable to attend;
 - Work is ongoing to establish practices in other areas of the force to ensure that the best practical processes are recommended; and
 - The review further explained that a few of the processes identified for development had already been addressed and implemented force wide
-
- The review advised that the Northern PPU was given an administrative support post, and that the person carrying out this role would take over the role of intelligence collation for case conferences. Operation Aster identified that, at the time of this incident, there was a need for additional administrative support in preparing for multi-agency meetings.
 - The Inspector on the Northern MASH⁷ provided a statement, outlining changes to force practices in recent years which have mitigated many of the risks present during the period under investigation. DI N stated that he was aware that there was a high volume of work within the PPU in late 2012 and that he raised concerns about this with force senior management. DS A made representations about his workload and working conditions throughout his interviews with the IPCC. The evidence gathered in the course of this investigation suggests that South Wales Police has made many changes to its processes, structures and procedures since the events outlined in this report occurred.

⁷ Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub

Finding 1: The South Wales Police response to allegations and intelligence concerning Ian Watkins was insufficient

- Where investigated, allegations were not pursued with sufficient rigour and professional curiosity (B report and ACPO inbox complaint). A significant number of reports/intelligence submissions were not investigated at all (Crimestoppers; Witness B report; B report). It is the Lead Investigator's opinion that Ms Mjadzelics' credibility was a focus and that there was insufficient focus on understanding the risk Watkins posed to children and to vulnerable adults.
- Prior to his arrest on 21 September 2012, Watkins was not required to attend interview (voluntary or otherwise) or to provide an account in response to the allegations made against him.
- No action was taken in response to the report made by Witness D or the fax from Essex Police. Further, there was no meaningful attempt to investigate the allegations made by B.
- The reports made by Witness B and B and were not investigated at all and in this investigator's view, save for the information provided in June 2012, none of the intelligence submitted was sufficiently developed.
- The allegations made against Ian Watkins between 2008 and his arrest in 2012 were serious; they were also consistent, in that concerns were repeatedly raised about his drug use, possession and production, together with his interest in and alleged commission of contact child sex offences and indecent images of children. This investigation found little evidence of South Wales Police building a case against Watkins before the June 2012 intelligence was received.

Finding 2: South Wales Police did not take sufficient steps in response to reports, information and intelligence to safeguard victims throughout the period under investigation

- Officers working within public protection have dual roles: they are responsible for investigating crimes but also for safeguarding victims (ACPO 2009; CAIP 3.4.3).
- It is the investigator's view that whilst officers formed the view that Ms Mjadzelics' allegations were without foundation, they did not take sufficient steps to investigate them. Emphasis was placed on weaknesses (her credibility and motives) rather than consideration of how the allegations could be investigated and evidence obtained, to ensure that any potential victims could be safeguarded.

Finding 3: Many of the reports about Ian Watkins were made by third parties rather than victims. The force policy in place at the time did not specifically address third party reports.

- Much of the literature on child sexual abuse refers to statutory services needing to believe the victim and take what they say seriously; there is less frequent mention of third parties, unless they are concerned professionals. The South Wales Police CAIP in force at the relevant time did not specifically advise on the approach to be taken in investigating reports from third parties. In this case almost all of the reports were made by Watkins' ex-partners. The only exception to this, as regards the matters dealt with specifically in this report, was Witness B, who passed on concerns about details passed to him by a named individual. Whilst such reports may not satisfy the criteria for recording as a crime, they should be recorded as 'crime-related incidents' and taken seriously; it is noted that the report made by Witness B was simply noted on police systems as a 'message' rather than as a report of alleged child abuse.

Finding 4: South Wales Police's record keeping in relation to its interactions with other forces was insufficient

- During the investigation into Watkins, South Wales Police relied on outside forces completing significant tasks for them.
- The CAIP in force at the time explains that '*working arrangements in cross-border investigations need to be agreed on a case by case basis*'. However, South Wales Police's poor record keeping in respect of the reports made by Ms Mjadzelics (2008 and 2012) and B (2012) meant that it was unclear what information had been shared and when; it was also unclear what each force would be doing to take the investigation forward. In the investigator's view, South Wales Police's records do not compare well with those kept by forces it worked with at the time: it is of significant concern that in the investigator's opinion South Yorkshire Police officers made better records of what South Wales Police were doing than South Wales officers themselves did.
- It is recommended that in all cases where a cross-border child abuse investigation is conducted, clear records are kept by South Wales Police (if leading the investigation) of decisions made, information shared and received, actions proposed and conclusions reached. It is noted that the new force guidance on Child Protection and Safeguarding is silent on the issue of cross border investigations, although it does signpost to the relevant Authorised Professional Practice (APP).

Finding 5: Opportunities to submit devices for examination were missed by South Wales police officers

- In the investigator's view, insufficient prominence was given to the role of internet activity in the complaints made against Watkins. Consistent reports were made to South Wales Police about Watkins' use of social media, Skype and AIM. The force was provided with

Watkins' AIM username and his email address but this information was not recorded on South Wales Police systems, nor was it linked to Watkins' nominal profile or developed.

- In March 2009, Ms Mjadzelics stated during her video recorded interview with West Yorkshire Police, when asked whether she had any text messages from Watkins referring to children:

'...yeah on that phone there [Samsung U600]....because I'd said to him...what's your ultimate fancy [fantasy]....he sent me a reply back saying 'wish list, 2 underage twins and a mum and her underage daughter'.
- Operation Globe discovered this text message on the U600 mobile phone in 2012 when Ms Mjadzelics again provided her phone for examination. Her phone was not examined in 2009 on the basis that her report was malicious. The rationale for the failure to examine the phone was not recorded, but it should have been apparent that evidence from the mobile phone would have gone a long way towards resolving any issues with the credibility of the reporting person.
- However, it was not until the Operation Globe investigation began in 2012 that the potential of computer-based evidence against Watkins was realised. At no point up until his arrest in September 2012 were any of his devices seized. Screenshots provided by Witness D were simply filed on NICHE with no action taken. Ms Mjadzelics' mobile phone and laptop were not examined when she submitted them in 2009, despite the mobile phone holding crucial evidence. The email addresses and web pages linked to Watkins by intelligence reports were not recorded on his profile for development. B provided the password for Watkins' computer, but no steps were taken by South Wales officers to locate and seize it. Both Ms Mjadzelics and B (in 2009 and 2012, respectively) informed police officers that Watkins

had a computer in his attic with indecent images of children on it. South Wales Police was privy to both accounts at the time they were provided but did not take steps to locate, seize or examine the computer.

- The CAIP in place at the time was unambiguous on the procedure to be followed where a computer is involved in the allegations: *'in cases where the use of a computer is involved in the allegations...it should be treated as a crime scene'*.

Finding 6: By the time of the imposition of the NICHE marker in June 2011, the established view was that Ms Mjadzelics was not credible, despite there being no proper investigation of her allegations

- It is now known that Ms Mjadzelics was fundamentally telling the truth about Watkins, but in the view of the investigator this was obscured at the time due to a number of challenges posed to her credibility, due in part to the statement provided by her family member and the undertakings she signed in 2008.
- ACPO's Core Investigative Doctrine refers to the need to be aware of potential personal bias- it seems that the South Wales Police view was that Ms Mjadzelics was not credible. Whilst the undertakings and the statement from her family were clearly undermining, it is our view that insufficient efforts were made to investigate what she was saying when presented with opportunities to do so (by speaking to other reporting persons, such as Witness B, or by submitting Ms Mjadzelics' devices for examination).
- It is the investigator's opinion that no meaningful effort was made to overcome this perceived obstacle and that South Wales Police showed a lack of professional curiosity in dealings with Ms Mjadzelics: there was a lack of action despite an increasingly troubling intelligence picture. This is evident in relation to the report

made by Witness B in October 2010, which was written off on the basis that an ex-girlfriend had been making false allegations.

- In the investigator's opinion, there was no objective basis for the decision to treat the intelligence submitted by Witness B as malicious; similarly, the information provided by Witness D was independent of Ms Mjadzelics. Evidence obtained from laptops, mobile phones and storage devices was eventually key to bringing Watkins and his co-defendants to justice. This investigation has shown that Ms Mjadzelics made repeated attempts to alert police to Watkins' activities online, even furnishing her personal log-in details to assist them. Any concerns about her reliability could have been overcome if attempts had been made to corroborate (or disprove) what she was saying; this could easily have been achieved by examining the mobile phone she provided.
- The manner in which Ms Mjadzelics was treated potentially has wider ramifications than this case. Victims of child sexual abuse may be conflicted, may present as inconsistent or unreliable witnesses or seek to retract their accounts. South Wales Police did not have processes in place to prevent one particular view of Ms Mjadzelics' credibility having a detrimental influence on her attempts to report alleged crimes. A poor police response could lead to victims or third parties being dissuaded from reporting. Ms Mjadzelics stated that she was dissuaded from complaining due to her perception that she was not believed.

Finding 7: Reports and intelligence submitted about Ian Watkins did not attract more police resources because of the enhanced power his celebrity status gave him, or because of the potential reputational risks of mismanaging such reports

- In the course of this investigation it was established that, where allegations of abuse are made against professionals, such as lawyers

and teachers, in the South Wales area, a 'professional' strategy meeting is held. Ian Watkins was clearly not a 'normal' member of the public in the sense that he was a celebrity with a large following, access to many young people, wealth and mobility. Whilst DS A made reference to risks to the force's reputation in dealing with an alleged celebrity offender, there is no evidence that the PPU senior management gave consideration to the profile of the offender; the reports did not seem to attract more police resources because of the enhanced power Watkins' celebrity status gave him, or because of the potential reputational risks of mismanaging such reports. In fact, the evidence presented in this report suggests that reports about Watkins were actually given *less* resources than the CAIP demanded for a 'normal' case, in that all child protection reports should be supervised by an officer of Detective Inspector rank (see para 1.4 of the CAIP). There is scant evidence that this occurred over the four year period considered by this investigation.

Provisional Recommendation 4:

- The NSPCC report entitled 'Giving Victims a Voice' (published in 2013, so post-dating the allegations covered in this investigation) states that sexual abuse '*often involves the use of powerful coercion, intimidation and manipulation to exploit the vulnerable*'. We would suggest this power differential could be magnified in cases where the perpetrator possesses unusual wealth, personal attractiveness and celebrity. It is submitted that the current South Wales Police 'professional strategy meeting' or 'regular' strategy meeting should be revised to relate to a wider definition of "persons of 'public prominence'".
- It is also recommended that the South Wales Police Safeguarding Procedure is amended, to give specific consideration to suspects who may pose additional risk by virtue of their profile, which may be

elevated due to their profession, wealth, celebrity or good-standing in the community. It is recommended that, where allegations are made about suspects who fall within this category, the investigation must be subject to mandatory periodic, documented review by an officer holding at least the rank of Detective Inspector. In addition, such matters should not be closed with an 'NFA' result on NICHE without an Inspector endorsing the log.

Finding 8: No adverse result arose as a result of the delay in uploading the March 2010 intelligence report onto the PND (Police National Database)

- This investigation found that the March 2010 intelligence report was not uploaded to PND until 10 November 2012, after Watkins had been arrested. When South Yorkshire Police checked PND to further their enquiries into B, this report was not available to them. There was no adverse result, as other, similar reports were available but the information was not uploaded in a timely way.

Finding 9: Five potential crimes were being run on the same NICHE occurrence and this was a significant contributing factor to the failure of South Wales Police to investigate the allegations made by B and Witness D

- It is noted that the reports made by B, Witness D, Witness C and Ms Mjadzelics (when she took her laptop to Doncaster)⁸ were all managed on the occurrence created in respect of Witness D's February 2012 complaint; five potential crimes were therefore being run on the same occurrence which, in the Lead Investigator's opinion, was a significant contributing factor in the failure to investigate the allegations made by B and Witness D.

⁸ IPCC South Yorkshire Police findings release

Provisional Recommendation 5:

It is recommended that, in light of the growing number of child sexual exploitation reports, the South Wales Police Child Abuse Investigation Procedure is updated to indicate that all incidents and crimes with a unifying factor (e.g. same victim or perpetrator) should be subject of an individual occurrence before they are merged with others matters, in order that the distinct facts of each report are clearly recorded.

Provisional Recommendation 6:

It is further recommended that each crime or incident should be finalised separately, and that clear, auditable records should be maintained as to how each matter is progressed.

Finding 10: There is little evidence, up to June 2012, of the involvement of DS A's supervisors in the allegations made against Ian Watkins

- DS A was a supervising officer on the Northern PPU. Of significance to this investigation is the relatively minor role played by his managers: there is little documented evidence that he was supervised in his day-to-day work. There are scant entries on NICHE to indicate that an officer of Inspector rank was actively managing his workload and overseeing his decisions. This absence is problematic for a number of reasons:
 - DS A stated that he had more work than he could physically complete in his working hours; this situation seems to have continued unchecked for an extended period. DI N has stated that there was a high volume of work.
 - This investigation has found that DS A developed an opinion of Ms Mjadzelics (that she was a malicious ex-girlfriend) that did not change until Watkins' arrest. The absence of an objective reviewing officer meant that all reports about Ian

Watkins were sent to DS A, who showed signs of having made his mind up that Ms Mjadzelics was not credible.

- DS A stated that he spent an inordinate amount of time at Strategy Meetings, which necessarily impacted on his ability to supervise his officers.
- The CAIP explicitly addresses performance management, providing that ‘effective performance management in child protection cases enables the optimum use of resources, the identification of trends, good and poor performance, and gaps in the service. It also provides a structure for ownership and accountability. Performance in connection with both child abuse investigations by specialists and other police staff should be an integral part of the overall performance management regime.’

Provisional Recommendation 7:

It was recommended that South Wales Police take into account the findings of this report in responding to the PEEL recommendations about the role of managers in supervising investigations⁹.

Force policy (CAIP)

Finding 11: A confusing and overly complex distinction was made in the CAIP between document review dates, ‘first implementation’ dates and ‘implementation dates’. Poor version control has led to difficulty in establishing what version of the Procedure applied, when it was revised and when it was due for review

⁹ HMIC’s recent PEEL inspection concluded that South Wales Police ‘*should improve its investigations of cases involving vulnerable victims, specifically victims of domestic abuse and child sexual exploitation, by ensuring that cases are allocated to officers with the appropriate professional skills and expertise to carry out such investigations and these are effectively supervised*’.

- The investigator's review of previous versions of the CAIP showed that version control had not been adopted effectively and aspects of it were out of date. South Wales Police has advised that these problems are now rectified with the implementation of a new Procedure [on Child Protection and Safeguarding Children and Young People]; the Lead Investigator's views on the adequacy of that document are explained below.

Finding 12: Whilst the CAIP made clear that intra-familial abuse falls within the remit of the CAIU, it did not provide clear advice on the particular considerations and challenges of such cases. The new Procedure is silent on the matter

Finding 13: The Child Protection and Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedure is too brief and lacks detail; is too high level to provide any meaningful support to officers. It is therefore not fit for purpose

- The CAIP has been replaced with a 'Child Protection and Safeguarding Children and Young People' Procedure which is supported by Guidance. At the time of drafting Operation Aster, the Procedure was last updated in January 2016. That version confused procedure and guidance and, in the investigator's view, was unclear as to what is mandatory.
- The new document is much briefer than the CAIP: it provides very little explanation of terminology and processes, albeit some relevant documents are hyperlinked. It is submitted that the College of Policing Authorised Professional Practice on child abuse should be more prominent, as the new document does not clearly signpost the national guidance or accord any status to it. In addition, no mention is made of indecent images of children or how they should be dealt with; there is no link to the force Procedure in relation to Digital Forensics & Cyber Crime submissions.

Provisional Recommendation 8:

- It is recommended that the Procedure/Guidance document is reviewed against APP. It is suggested that the Procedure should link to APP and clearly explain how local processes are mapped.

Finding 14: Ownership of investigations was a problematic issue in respect of Ian Watkins

- It is the investigator's view that on one hand, too many matters were sent directly back to the DS at the CAIU without an Inspector having sight of them, such as the report made by Witness D. Conversely, other matters were not clearly 'owned' by anyone, such as the Crimestoppers intelligence and the ACPO inbox complaint. The outcome was the same, in that no action or insufficient action was taken.

Management of Police Information

Finding 15: South Wales Police intelligence management was ineffective

- Intelligence management was poor in the following respects:
 - (i) Intelligence reports were not tasked to officers on the system; it was difficult to establish individual responsibility for progress, updates or rationales for no action.
 - (ii) Separate matters were documented on the same Intelligence Report, meaning that the chance of progressing each report was reduced. Significant information was not recorded appropriately: email addresses and social media information were not recorded appropriately on the system and was not developed.

- The CAIP provides that '*CAIU staff should be alert to the intelligence opportunities such as those available through police sources, information from the public and from other agencies*'.
- Failure to act on intelligence that Ian Watkins was dealing drugs was significant, in that drug abuse was a significant factor in his offending. A conviction for a drugs offence could have led to restrictions being placed on his ability to travel, e.g. to the United States, and therefore potentially achieved safeguarding abroad.
- The CAIP provides that '*information and intelligence should be examined regularly to identify patterns and concentrations of behaviour. Any recent or new information or intelligence should lead to further assessment*'. This investigation has established that by late 2010 South Wales Police had received a wealth of intelligence about Ian Watkins' possession of drugs, indecent images of children and involvement in contact child sex offences. The fact that none of this intelligence was actioned is of major concern.
- In the Lead Investigator's opinion, South Wales Police failed to evaluate the intelligence in a systematic, holistic way. The intelligence review has led to improvements in process and procedures.

Finding 16: South Wales Police record keeping and retention was ineffective

- The notes made on NICHE occurrences are poor, particularly in terms of recording decisions or action taken. Where no action was taken, rationales provided seem insufficient. This poor record keeping has made it difficult to ascertain what information South Wales Police possessed and how it was managed.

Finding 17: Officers did not sufficiently or effectively progress the complaint made about police contained within Joanne Mjadzelics' 2011 email to the ACPO inbox

- There were two occasions when complaints against police were made in writing but not progressed. The first was Ms Mjadzelics' 2011 complaint to the ACPO inbox; the second was a complaint made to DS A by Witness A. It is the investigator's view that the failure to deal with these complaints meant that an opportunity to independently review the allegations made by Ms Mjadzelics was lost and therefore there were potential missed opportunities to halt Ian Watkins' offending earlier.
- The evidence gathered in the course of this investigation suggests that no action was taken in respect of Ms Mjadzelics' complaint to the ACPO inbox. The only recorded action taken in respect of Ms Mjadzelics around that time was the addition of a warning marker to her nominal record on NICHE, essentially warning officers that she was making malicious allegations against Watkins.

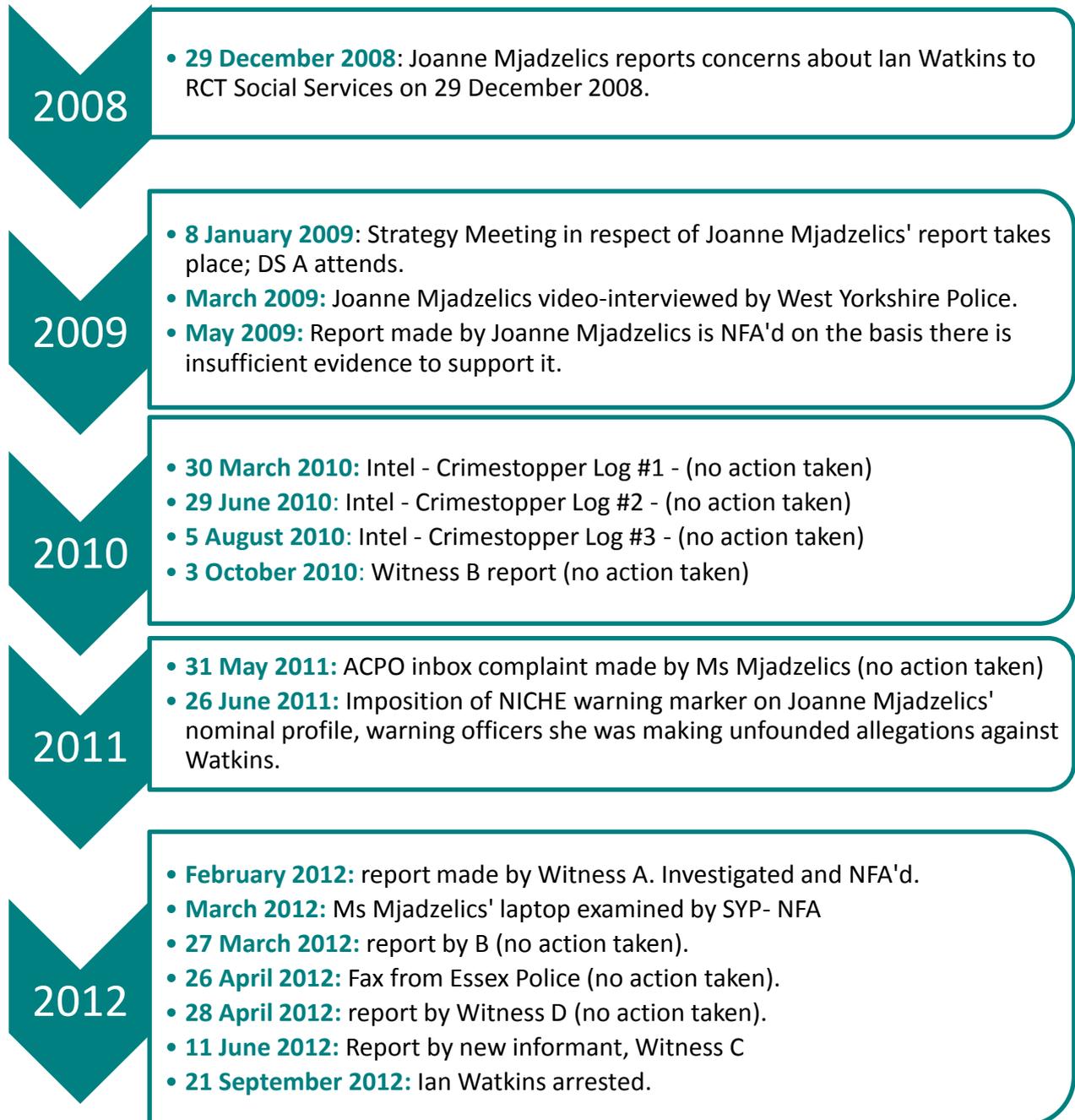
Summary

- This report has identified major shortcomings in the following areas:
 - Investigative rigour;
 - Safeguarding;
 - Third party reports;
 - Approach to complaints made about high profile individuals who fall outside the 'professional strategy meeting' approach;
 - Supervision; and
 - Management of Police Information, in particular, management of intelligence.

- The evidence suggests that Ian Watkins was deviant and determined; that he engineered opportunities to gain access to young children and encouraged others to participate in his crimes. There is evidence of planning in the commission of offences¹⁰, much of it conducted over the internet and therefore, in the investigator's view, this was evidence which was vulnerable to detection by law enforcement agencies.
- Watkins was not arrested or interviewed until 2012 despite South Wales Police having numerous reports from various sources relating to his offending. The consequence of the force's failings was arguably that: a predatory paedophile offended over an extended period of time. The evidence obtained in this investigation suggests that South Wales Police was faced with a litany of reports about his behaviour, yet in some instances did not carry out even rudimentary investigation, made errors and omissions and missed opportunities to bring him to justice earlier than he ultimately was.

¹⁰ Text messages and instant messenger messages exchanged with his co-defendants.

Appendix 1: Timeline of events



Appendix 2: Summary of findings

Finding 1: The South Wales Police response to reports, information and intelligence concerning Ian Watkins was insufficient

Finding 2: South Wales Police did not take sufficient steps in response to reports, information and intelligence concerning Ian Watkins to safeguard victims throughout the period under investigation

Finding 3: Many of the reports about Ian Watkins were made by third parties rather than victims. The force policy in place at the time did not specifically address third party reports

Finding 4: South Wales Police's record keeping in relation to its interactions with other forces was insufficient

Finding 5: Opportunities to submit devices for examination were missed by South Wales Police officers

Finding 6: By the time of the imposition of the NICHE marker in June 2011, DS A had developed the view that Ms Mjadzelics was not credible, despite not investigating all her concerns.

Finding 7: Reports and intelligence submitted about Ian Watkins did not attract more police resources because of the enhanced power his celebrity status gave him, or because of the potential reputational risks of mismanaging such reports

Finding 8: No adverse result arose as a result of the delay in uploading the March 2010 intelligence report onto the PND

Finding 9: Five potential crimes were being run on the same NICHE occurrence and this was a significant contributing factor to the failure of South Wales Police to investigate the allegations made by B and Witness D

Finding 10: There is little evidence, up to June 2012, of the involvement of DS A's supervisors in the allegations made against Ian Watkins

Finding 11: A confusing and overly complex distinction was made in the CAIP between document review dates, 'first implementation' dates and 'implementation dates'. Poor version control has led to difficulty in establishing what version of the Procedure applied, when it was revised and when it was due for review

Finding 12: Whilst the CAIP made clear that intra-familial abuse falls within the remit of the CAIU, it did not provide clear advice on the particular considerations and challenges of such cases. The new Procedure is silent on the matter

Finding 13: The Child Protection and Safeguarding Children and Young People Procedure is too brief and lacks detail; is too high level to provide any meaningful support to officers. It is therefore not fit for purpose

Finding 14: Ownership of investigations was a problematic issue in respect of Ian Watkins

Finding 15: South Wales Police intelligence management was ineffective

Finding 16: South Wales Police record keeping and retention were ineffective

Finding 17: Officers did not sufficiently or effectively progress the complaint made about police contained within Joanne Mjadzelics' 2011 email to the ACPO inbox

Finding 18: Insufficient consideration was given to the pursuit of other lines of enquiry following the medical examination of B's child

Appendix 3: Summary of provisional recommendations

Provisional Recommendation 1: It is recommended that all the officers included in the ACPO inbox email chain are reminded of the need to ensure that any 'expression of dissatisfaction', whether an explicit or implied complaint, is passed to the appropriate person for a recording decision to be made.

Provisional Recommendation 2: It is recommended that staff responsible for managing the ACPO inbox, together with Divisional Commanders, are reminded of the importance of notifying PSD of complaints against police, whether the officer is named or not. PSD can then determine whether or not the complaint should be recorded and, where relevant, if proportionate enquiries could identify the officer subject of complaint.

Provisional Recommendation 3: It is recommended that in all cases where a cross-border child abuse investigation is conducted, clear records are kept by South Wales Police (if leading the investigation) of decisions made, information shared and received, actions proposed and conclusions reached. It is noted that the new force guidance on Child Protection and Safeguarding is silent on the issue of cross border investigations, although it does signpost to APP.

Provisional Recommendation 4: 'Giving Victims a Voice' states that sexual abuse '*often involves the use of powerful coercion, intimidation and manipulation to exploit the vulnerable*'. This power differential could be magnified in cases where the perpetrator possesses unusual wealth, personal attractiveness and celebrity. It is submitted that the current 'professional strategy meeting' or 'regular' strategy meeting is too narrow in that it does not include persons of 'public prominence'.

Echoing the findings of 'Giving Victims a Voice', it is recommended that the South Wales Police Procedure is amended, to give specific consideration to suspects who pose additional risk by virtue of their profile, which may be elevated due to their profession, wealth, celebrity or good-standing in the community. It is recommended that, where allegations are made about suspects who fall within this category, the investigation must be subject to mandatory periodic, documented review by an officer holding at least the rank of Detective Inspector. In addition, such matters should not be closed with an 'NFA' result on NICHE without an Inspector endorsing the log.

Provisional Recommendation 5: It is recommended that, in light of the growing number of child sexual exploitation reports, the Procedure is updated to indicate that all incidents and crimes with a unifying factor (e.g. same victim or perpetrator) should be subject of an individual occurrence before they are merged with others matters, in order that the distinct facts of each report are clearly recorded.

Provisional Recommendation 6: It is further recommended that each crime or incident should be finalised separately, and that clear, auditable records should be maintained as to how each matter is progressed.

Provisional Recommendation 7: It is recommended that South Wales Police take into account the findings of this report in responding to the PEEL recommendations about the role of managers in supervising investigations.

Provisional Recommendation 8: It is recommended that the Procedure/Guidance document is reviewed against APP. It is suggested that the Procedure should link to APP and clearly explain how local processes are mapped, e.g. what is a MASH and how does it operate? Who attends Strategy Meetings? What should be recorded and where? What are the different types of medical examination and when are they appropriate?

Provisional Recommendation 9: It is recommended that the current Procedure is amended to make specific reference to resources available to officers where the investigation is particularly challenging. Force assets should be itemised, e.g. DSU, Digital Forensic & Cyber Crime Unit in addition to external specialists such as the NCA's CEOP Command, Interpol and the NSPCC.

Provisional Recommendation 10: It is recommended that a senior officer reviews the correspondence between the IPCC and South Wales Police in relation to access to documentation; correspondence was exchanged in the late stages of 2014 and in the summer of 2015. It is recommended that this matter is debriefed with senior officers in Specialist Crime in order that they fully understand the force's legal duties and to prevent a reoccurrence.