

Exploring the role of sensitive intelligence in child criminal exploitation investigations

Project exploring the role that sensitive intelligence has in investigating child criminal exploitation, considering the motivations and barriers to its use.

Key details

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Police region	North West
Collaboration and partnership	This project is supported by the College of Policing Bursary Scheme .
Level of research	Masters
Project start date	January 2024
Date due for completion	September 2024

Research context

HM Government has stated that child criminal exploitation (CCE) should be tackled as serious organised crime. The use of sensitive intelligence is central in law enforcement’s ability to effectively investigate and prosecute offenders. However, there appears to be a research gap when considering how sensitive intelligence is used to support the investigation of CCE.

The research question to be answered through this study is: 'What is the current role of sensitive intelligence in the investigation of child criminal exploitation?'

The following objectives will be used to support the answering of this question:

- critically analyse how sensitive intelligence is used to tackle CCE
- critically explore what motivates senior investigating officers (SIOs) to use sensitive intelligence
- critically review the barriers to using sensitive intelligence
- formulate recommendations to support law enforcement in using sensitive intelligence to tackle CCE

Research methodology

An explanatory sequential mixed methods design will be used to achieve the objectives through two phases of the research.

In phase one, a quantitative content analysis will be completed on existing covert investigative authorities under Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) and Investigatory Powers Act 2016 (IPA). This will enable statistical analysis to be completed on the data to understand the current use of sensitive intelligence when CCE is highlighted. Purposive sampling will be used to identify those members of staff responsible for the investigations and will inform phase two of the research.

Phase two will involve those leading the investigations involving CCE to be invited to complete semi-structured interviews to understand the motivations and barriers for the use of sensitive intelligence to tackle CCE.

Tags

- [Investigation](#)