

Family pack support booklet

Providing information and support to the families of suspects arrested for indecent images of children.

First published

11 July 2024

Updated

28 August 2025

Key details

Stage of practice	Untested
Purpose	Prevention
Topic	Child abuse Cybercrime Criminal justice
Organisation	Avon and Somerset Police
HMICFRS report	National child protection inspection: Avon and Somerset Constabulary (2023)
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Region	South West
Partners	Police

Key details

Stage of Implementation	The practice is implemented.
Start date	December 2021
Scale of initiative	Local
Target group	Adults Families

Aim

The booklet has been designed to support families by explaining what the journey through the criminal justice system will look like for the suspect and what they can expect.

Intended outcome

The intended outcomes of the family pack support leaflet is to:

- reduce mental harm and self-harm among online sex offender families
- reduce self-harm and suicide to online sex offenders' families
- increase public confidence in the police for families of online sex offenders

Description

It is widely recognised that within child abuse investigations, the families of the offenders are also affected. Their lives can be torn apart and they may be subject to community ostracisation. It can also affect their mental and physical health.

Support booklet

The booklet was designed to take away some anxieties by explaining what the journey of the suspect through the criminal justice system will look like and what they can expect. This includes

sections on:

- the law
- social services and safeguarding
- explanations of legal terms such as release under investigation (RUI) and remand
- civil orders to protect potential victims
- links to support and guidance

The booklet contains links to support they can access. When developing the booklet, practitioners and supervisors of indecent images of children (IIOC) offences worked together on what they felt they should include and the common questions from families.

The detective chief inspector lead for the internet child abuse team approved the final draft. Stock photos were used to make the booklet more aesthetically pleasing. Approval of these photos was required from the media team on a number of occasions so that the photos that would be relevant but not triggering. Photos within the booklet focused on families doing everyday activities.

The officers now take this booklet on all their warrants. Due to the simplicity of introducing this new practice, no training was needed but staff were briefed on the implementation. There is also a hyper linked e-version where the support services can be accessed. This can be viewed on a computer or mobile as it is a PDF of the hard copy.

Overall impact

No feedback has been received but given the circumstances of what it is and who we give it to then this is not entirely expected.

Staff have been very receptive of it and have stated it has helped to give them focus on what to discuss with the families and ensure that they don't overlook anything.

Learning

This practice was implemented without many challenges but there were some main points of learning from its implementation:

- the media team who physically made the booklet had large back logs of other work, overall it took approximately four months to finalise the booklet

- the choice of photos were potentially triggering, this resulted in providing specific descriptions of what was required for the booklet
- the booklet is a reasonable size and this had cost implications, it cost approximately £500 for 1000 copies
- although there is an e-version, it is possible that the families' devices would be seized at the initial police contact hence hard copies are also needed
- work with the victim support unit to proof-read the content
- collaborating with operational staff proved to help the development of the booklet significantly

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Tags

Child abuse Child sexual exploitation Safeguarding