



Mr Andrew Cox
Senior Coroner for Cornwall & the Isles of Scilly

By email only: [REDACTED]

Date: 7th July 2023

Dear Andrew

Regulation 28 notification 306381

I am writing on behalf of [REDACTED], CEO, Cornwall Council in response to the regulation 28 notification [REDACTED].

It is our view that the findings of HM Coroner, in terms of the complexity of funding for sexual violence recovery services are correct. Currently, the only sexual violence recovery service that has a national requirement to be commissioned and delivered is the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which is commissioned by NHS England (NHSE), under the Public Health Functions agreement.

There is no record of Ms Dolamore having any contact with the Council's children's social care services as a child. Professionals, parents, carers and young people are able to request support from children's services through Cornwall's [Early Help Hub](#), which is the front door to Early Help services provided by the Council and Cornwall Foundation Trust (health). Early Help Hub staff are in place to help families consider whether a child is eligible for support and which service is most appropriate. The Early Help Hub has been successful in encouraging self-referrals from family members to empower young people and families to seek support when they need it; self-referrals are the second biggest source of requests for Early Help (after schools), with approximately 2,000 Early Help requests from family members over the last 6 months.

There is also no record of Ms Dolamore having contact with Adult Social Care. I understand that Ms Dolamore was briefly open to Cornwall Partnership Foundation Trust (NHS). I understand this was in relation to her clinical needs in 2017.

Cornwall Council | Konsel Kernow

County Hall, Treyew Road, Truro, Cornwall TR1 3AY

E: [REDACTED] | T: 0300 1234 100

www.cornwall.gov.uk

The Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) commissions the Independent Sexual Violence Advocate (ISVA) Service for those going through the criminal justice system and has involved Cornwall Council in developing the specification and assessing the bids for the current tender for this service.

In addition, Commissioners across Cornwall Council, NHSE and the Integrated Care Board (ICB) have pooled the limited resources available for longer term recovery services for those impacted by sexual violence and have commissioned the local Domestic Abuse and Sexual Violence service, Safer Futures, to provide therapy and group support for adults and children who have been impacted by sexual assault and violence.

Outside of this, recovery services such as counselling, group work, 1-1 support and therapeutic support rely on a mixture of national and local short term grant funding. Demand for all these services has always outstripped supply and has increased significantly over the last 3 years. Alongside increased demand the Domestic Abuse Services Cornwall Council commission are struggling to recruit enough qualified therapists, this is recognised as a national concern. Commissioners have managed to support some of this with Covid grant funding but there remain waiting lists for most services. Currently Safer Futures have a waiting list of approximately 4 months for therapy, with DASV services such, as CLEAR which is therapy for adults and children impacted by trauma, the Women Centres Cornwall providing therapeutic support and WAVES who provided counselling for Domestic Abuse have up to a 6 month wait for support.

There remains unmet need, as there does nationally. In part to address this, efforts to innovate and find more efficient and effective means of meeting demand for support continue to be actively explored. Across Cornwall, Devon, Plymouth and Torbay, commissioners and services are working together, pooling funds to pilot new approaches in providing support to those experiencing complex trauma following sexual violence, in an effort to bridge the gap between specialist mental health services (Community Mental Health Teams and Integrated Psychological Therapies) and sexual violence recovery services. This pilot is in its first year. In Cornwall, we are also piloting a sexual violence recovery toolkit to try and meet some of the increased demand by providing increased group and peer support which do not require qualified therapists, compared with traditional 1-1 therapy.

If professionals have concerns about a child's safety and welfare, in accordance with statutory guidance (Working Together 2018) and with Cornwall Our Safeguarding Children Partnership [policy and procedures](#), they are expected to contact Cornwall's [Multi-Agency Referral Unit \(MARU\)](#). The MARU provides a multi-disciplinary response to concerns about the welfare or safety of a child or young person. The MARU helps by identifying the service that can best help meet the child's needs, signposting if appropriate, or if appropriate

arranging for Children and Families Services to conduct an assessment to consider the most appropriate help.

The Council's children's services, and Cornwall's Our Safeguarding Children Partnership, have made improving the identification and response to Child Sexual Abuse a priority focus over the last 5 years, building on the findings and learning from a [Joint Targeted Area Inspection of sexual abuse in the family in Cornwall](#) in October 2018. An Our Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Sexual Abuse strategy, developed by a dedicated OSCP sub-group, underpins a thorough understanding of the risks and support needs for both victims of sexual abuse and children who show harmful sexual behaviour so that multi-agency stakeholders are able to make referrals that are prompt and proportionate. Resources are available from the OSCP to support this including a Child Sexual Abuse Referral and Assessment '[What happens guide](#)'. Partnership strategies address related issues such as violence to women and girls which incorporate a preventive approach. Cornwall's OSCP remains integral to promoting understanding, appropriate responses and learning in regard to Child Sexual Abuse. There is a strong partnership commitment to continuous improvement, with work currently underway, for example, on a Child-on-Child toolkit for use in education settings to identify and respond at the earliest possible stage to emerging indications of harmful sexual behaviour and Child Sexual Abuse in schools.

All cases where a child is identified as being at risk of or having experienced Child Sexual Abuse are subject to a strategy meeting involving the Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Children and Family Services, Police, Health and Education to gain a holistic perspective of the needs of the victim, and to agree multi-agency enquiries and actions to investigate and reduce identified risks. A series of themed multi-agency audits on our response to Child Sexual Abuse has highlighted significant improvements in our response to the sexual health needs of children, multi-agency participation in child protection enquiries, and appropriate assessment and management of need and risks for other children. Strategy discussions are timely, well attended by partner agencies and result in swift actions and outcomes, with child protection enquiries of a consistently good standard.

Strategy meetings are also routinely held in respect of children where there are identified concerns about the risk of harmful sexual behaviour to consider their individual needs, avoid criminalisation of children and prevent further sexual harm/abuse. The Council has made a significant investment in developing [Gweres Kernow](#), a specialist service to support children and young people who display concerning or harmful sexual behaviours. The approach is bespoke and looks to address the underlying issues relating to behaviours of concern promoting safety and wellbeing. This work is supported by a Clinical Psychologist. Gweres Kernow are integral to ongoing advice, guidance, and input into case referrals for harmful sexual behaviour. They provide a bespoke service and consultation on all matters relating to

HSB. Therapeutic, trauma informed child centred support is offered and promoted based on need rather than resource. Therapy is targeted, accessible and purposeful to the child and their carers.

Cornwall Joint Targeted Area Inspection in 2018 concluded that there is a wide range of appropriate commissioned services and a strong involvement of schools and of specialist psychological and therapeutic services, which provides individual psychological support to children and their carers, and we have continued to strengthen the range of support available to children and families since then.

The Council has made a significant investment in [Jigsaw](#), a therapeutic programme for children, young people and families who have reported sexual abuse. Jigsaw is the primary in house therapeutic counselling service offering a psychology-based person-centred counselling to children and their carers, however support reflects the immediate needs of children and their carers and recognises and supports pre-existing therapeutic relationships. Support may therefore be sourced from either Jigsaw or a wide range of other therapeutic providers in Cornwall including Clear Therapy, targeted youth work from our locality Early Help teams, Dreadnought, CAMHS, and Independent Sexual Violence Advocates.


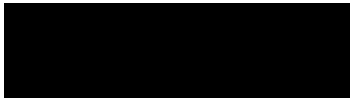
A strong working partnership with Safer Futures has led to commissioning of Non-Contact ISVA's and Domestic Abuse Support Advisors through First Light, present now in all areas, effectively ensuring that a full 360-degree service is offered to families allowing a safe working relationship for support through disclosures and reports of abuse. This is essential given the relationship between victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. In 2023 Children and Family Services have also made a further investment in two specialist non-contact Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs), integrated with front line social work teams, to further widen the range of support options for children who have experienced sexual abuse.

There is ongoing scrutiny and quality assurance of the quality and effectiveness of multi-agency partnership working for children who have experienced sexual abuse through Cornwall's innovative multi-agency Child Sexual Abuse dip sampling process. The dip sampling framework has found that up to 75% of reported child sexual assaults in Cornwall are child on child. Our specialist service for harmful sexual behaviour Gweres Kernow supports professionals on how to manage reports in a child first, trauma informed way as we are aware that children who present with these behaviours have often experienced their own adverse experiences as a child. This quality assurance framework has helped identify and reinforce best and better practice models, identify emerging area of concern and inform multi-agency stakeholder actions and service developments. Children and Family Services also attend the Sexual Assault Referral Centre peninsula wide sexual abuse dip sample audit

meetings to gain a broader perspective of Cornwall and Devon practice and support in both adults and children's sexual abuse.

Staff are skilled and well trained in understanding signs of symptoms of Child Sexual Abuse. Both Children and Family Services and OSCP training offers a robust training offer in respect of Child Sexual Abuse and harmful sexual behaviour open to all professionals that work with children and the [Brook Traffic Light system](#) is widely used to identify harmful sexual behaviour and those at risk of child sexual abuse. Workforce development around identifying and responding to sexual abuse has improved. Partners can access a range of training and development opportunities to improve knowledge and understanding. These include and training such as 'An introduction to sexual abuse', 'child on child sexual abuse' and 'Stopping me seeing the people I love'.

Yours sincerely
Dhywgh hwi yn hwir



Strategic Director
Care and Wellbeing
Email: 