



Scenario



Child commits an offence where concerns about criminal exploitation of child by adults involved in serious and organised crime

Police Scotland staff on making a referral to the reporter



Police:

I was hoping we could discuss the case of Rohi, a 13 year old girl who has come to our attention for theft by shoplifting on a number of occasions. The report about Rohi has come to me as a Youth Justice Assessor.

Rohi has been charged on 2 occasions before. The first time she got a warning, the second the case was discussed through EEI and it was arranged for her to meet with a social worker to discuss this. She attended a couple of meetings but the sense was that her engagement was quite superficial.

On this most recent occasion she was arrested while attempting to leave a department store with several high value items – perfume and jewellery. The security guards in the store were convinced that she was acting with some others who were present in the store – another girl about the same age and a couple of adults who seemed to be watching what they were doing.



The other girl was caught as well and she too was in possession of similar items. The adults just disappeared. The security guards asked who these adults were but the girls just looked at each other and said nothing.

When both girls were searched they were found to be in possession of similar items not available in the store. When asked about them Rohi and the other girl said that they were theirs and they had bought them. That obviously wasn't true. The combined value of the items in each girl's possession was over several hundred pounds. It's also worth noting that the store is over 50 miles away from where Rohi lives.

I just wondered about whether to refer to the reporter, and if so, what information to provide.

Reporter:

Before we look at the statutory criteria, what are your concerns for Rohi?

Police:

Well, she has committed an offence, but my major concern is that the circumstances around the offence suggest that she is being criminally exploited by others. It's not totally clear, but it looks like she's stealing to order for someone else.

Reporter:

Okay. Let's think about the criteria for referral then - does Rohi need protection, guidance, treatment or control, AND might a compulsory supervision order - a CSO - be necessary for her?



Police:

Well, she does need guidance given her behaviour, but the other concern is a child protection issue. As I said it looks like she is being exploited by others. Who they are, we don't know.

Reporter:

And what about the need for a CSO?

Police:

I think that it might be necessary, yes. There has been some involvement on a voluntary basis but the information we have suggests that her engagement wasn't meaningful.

Reporter:

So, should you make a referral?

Police:

Yes.

Reporter:

How would you make the referral? I'll put that a better way! Would you submit the referral by submitting an SPR2 or would you submit an iVPD form?

Police:

It will depend on the relative significance of the concerns around offending and criminal exploitation. In this situation I would submit a referral to the reporter in the form of an SPR2.



However it wouldn't just contain just information about the offences. As Youth Justice Assessor, it would be important for me to make sure the SPR2 included detailed information about the wider concerns around criminal exploitation. Those concerns would also be referred to explicitly in the section which sets out why Rohi was being referred. We should include information about the earlier offences.

I am aware that there may be a different approach taken in different Divisions where both an SPR2 and a concern report may be submitted. The SPR2 focusing on the offence whilst the concern report will highlight the vulnerability/concern identified which like this case may be wider than just the nature of the offence.

We would also share those concerns with the local authority. Whatever the way the referral is made to the reporter, there is a child protection concern here. It's very likely that an Initial Referral Discussion - an IRD - would be arranged to allow Rohi's circumstances to be discussed at a multi-agency meeting. It might be that an additional referral focussing on the criminal exploitation would be made following that discussion.

Reporter:

That's helpful. Anything else you think it would be good for reporters to know?

Police:

Yeah, it's worth mentioning that as Rohi is someone who would seem to have travelled with adults from one area to another in order to shoplift, and is therefore someone who may have



been trafficked, and is therefore someone who may have been trafficked, that she would be referred through the National Referral Mechanism for a decision to be made about her status as a victim of Trafficking.

The decision about that referral wouldn't be made by me, though, and it wouldn't affect any decisions we would make about referring to the reporter or not.

Reporter:

Thanks. I hope that discussion's been helpful to you. It's certainly been helpful to me.

