Police analysis

(include in appendix for interest)

and that’s really frustrating because it is always going to be one on one and CPS come back with an advice file… and then they’ll say yes charge or sometimes they will say no, you know, we don’t think that this is going to go anywhere it is one on one and we don’t have any medical evidence corroboration, which can be a huge factor. But if you have got a traumatised child saying this is what happened, I can’t, you know 99.9% of what they are telling you is the truth, because there is no way on God’s earth that that has come from a film or it is too specific, it is too detailed for them to have made it up or read it in a book. It really frustrates me that despite putting in a file and putting in to words as much as you possibly can, and they have the video interview, the CPS our barristers and solicitors have the videos and the offenders interviews, so they know everything that you know basically, but despite that I don’t think that they necessarily get a feel for what has gone on and they are reluctant to push the cases that are a bit border line and where they think that we are really going to struggle on this one and they would rather not prosecute. (Jane)

Emotional impact – effect on perspective

There was also a gender difference in the emotional response to their work. Barry seemed to be less emotionally distressed; he had a different mindset and defines success differently. The female officers were more concerned with the emotional impact on the
victim compared to Barry’s primary focus on practicality of the child being protected in the future.

From a police officer’s perspective we are just understaffed you know, moral is so low because there is just so much going on and not enough officers and not enough hours in the day and still so much abuse going on. (Jane)

They (the victim) find it very difficult to understand that the police believe what they are saying, but it is not going to court …and it is very difficult to explain to a child that we believe you, but it’s in everybody’s interest that this doesn’t go any further or we don’t think that if it goes to court we are going to get a conviction. (Jane)

The CID officers made it clear that they worked differently from the child protection unit and social services. They were less concerned with the long-term care of the child that was somebody else’s concern; they were much more concerned that positive action should be taken as soon as possible and that time shouldn’t be wasted on meetings when there are offenders to apprehend.

My issue with CPU is that they are too woolly and fluffy. (John)

There have been many, many battles with social services because they want to do things differently; they are more pink and fluffy perhaps. (Dave)

CID have more success at getting their sexual abuse cases to court, presumably because they are extra-familial offences and easier to prove. This success-failure dichotomy may explain the different response from CID and CPU. CPU need to focus on the child
protection side of policing compared to the apprehending offenders because of the high percentage of failure to get conviction in intra-familial cases.

There was generally a feeling of powerlessness, but that you had to do something.

We have to keep on keeping on, because it is not perfect and it doesn’t work perfectly, but it sometimes works so we do catch some, and if we didn’t do anything then who knows. (Dave)