

REPORT TO THE CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE'S SERVICES POLICY & SCRUTINY PANEL

DATE OF MEETING: 23 MARCH 2018

SUBJECT OF REPORT: CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

TOWN OR PARISH: ALL

**OFFICER/MEMBER PRESENTING: JACKIE MILTON, SERVICE LEADER
REFERRAL AND ASSESSMENT TEAM**

KEY DECISION: N/A

RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Panel receives and comments on the progress being made in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation.

1. SUMMARY OF REPORT

This report sets out the work currently undertaken in respect of child sexual exploitation.

An effective local multi-agency plan to combat child sexual exploitation requires clear leadership, guidance and support, delivered according to the overarching Working Together principles. It requires contributions from all multi-agency partners in accordance with local multi-agency arrangements. The effectiveness and implementation of multi-agency plans and arrangements to tackle child sexual exploitation should be monitored by the Local Safeguarding Children Board or its successor body. This should include ensuring joint-agency training is available

Child Sexual Exploitation. Definition and guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation DfE February 2017

2. POLICY

The child sexual exploitation activity meets the corporate aim of enhancing health and wellbeing.

3. DETAILS

3.1 The response to child sexual exploitation (CSE) in North Somerset is overseen by the CSE subgroup of the North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board (NSSCB). The CSE subgroup is chaired by the CSE lead practitioner and meets 6 weekly and its members include;

Avon and Somerset Police; Missing Coordinator; Police Officer based in Youth Offending Team; Neighbourhood Team

North Somerset Council; Safeguarding Adults Manager; Senior Safeguarding Adults Officer; Community Response Officer; Team Manager Looked After Children; Team

Manager Care Leavers; Team Manager Community Family Teams; Team Manager Disabled Childrens Team; Virtual Head; Contracts and Commissioning Officer; Young Victims Service/ Restorative Justice Manager; Housing Officer for 16 /17 year olds; Integrated Transport Unit Manager; Training Officer; Licencing Officer; Business Intelligence.

Health Services; Safeguarding Adults Lead; Safeguarding School Nurse Team; Designated Nurse: Children Looked After and Care Leavers

Barnardo's Service
Weston College

3.2 The CSE lead practitioner role sits within North Somerset Childrens Social Care. The post incorporates both strategic and operational roles and responsibilities, covering the range between supporting and developing front line service delivery and victim and perpetrator intervention to contributing and informing the NSSCB strategic planning response. The post holder is also responsible for overseeing the response to missing children in North Somerset which enables patterns and hot spots to be identified from the return from missing interviews that are carried out. The role involves close working with the police around perpetrator intervention and overseeing a multi-agency plan for disruption, protection & support. The post holder works across the Local Authority but is based in the Referral and Assessment Team and is directly supervised by the Service Leader.

3.3 The LGA paper 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation – Key Questions for Lead Members' (LGA December 2014) gives a useful framework to explore what work is underway locally. It recommends the key elements of a comprehensive local response and the following paragraphs are organised to illustrate what action is being taken in respect of each element.

3.4 RAISING AWARENESS

3.5 Multi agency training enables all professionals working with children and young people to be aware of the threat and the signs of CSE. The LSCB website has links to resources for professionals to improve their ability to recognise signs of CSE and a video by the police about on line grooming.

3.6 The CSE lead practitioner has undertaken joint initiatives with the police to raise public awareness in local towns. A series of road shows were delivered across North Somerset which generated conversations with members of the public and attracted visits from Sue Mountstevens Avon and Somerset Police and Crime Commissioner and Liam Fox MP North Somerset. Many parents and carers were advised on issues such as sexting, use of social media and sources of support both locally and nationally.

3.7 All taxi drivers whether renewing their licences or requesting a licence are required to attend a training session on CSE. The sessions also encourage taxi drivers to be alert to issues of modern slavery and trafficking. The next part of the strategic plan to raise awareness will target hoteliers and licenced premises.

3.8 The CSE lead practitioner has met with college staff, housing providers, pharmacists and members of pub watch to raise their understanding of CSE and improve community awareness and safety.

3.8 UNDERSTANDING WHATS HAPPENING

3.9 There are regular CSE network meetings held across Avon and Somerset Police Force area. These meetings bring together CSE leads from other Local Authorities with the Police and Voluntary sector to share information about perpetrators and hot spots. The CSE Network process provides a forum for information to be shared in complex cases to assess the circumstances and stimulate necessary action to disrupt, pursue and prosecute.

3.10 The CSE lead practitioner attends risk management meetings to understand the nature and prevalence of CSE within our communities. She also attends mapping meetings with professionals who are working with individual young people or groups of young people to advise on best practice when working with victims as well as information gathering to feed into the CSE network meetings. This includes working with residential children's homes in our area where children have been placed by other Local Authorities.

3.11 The CSE lead practitioner is also the link with BASE, the specialist service delivered by Barnardo's. The minutes from community initiatives such as Bourneville 1 and ASB Steering Group are also received in order to understand issues that may be developing in communities that indicate risk for children and young people. All of these activities enable information that in isolation might not raise concern, but when joined to other intelligence can indicate a potential risk arising which police / licencing might want to investigate further.

3.12 The CSE lead practitioner monitors all Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment's (SERAF's) that have been scored high. The link between children who go missing and increased risk of CSE is well known therefore all children who are deemed to be high risk due to their periods of missing are also monitored closely. A recommendation by Ofsted in respect of our response to children at high risk of sexual exploitation was for senior managers to effectively identify local patterns and trends. A report of the children at highest risk of CSE and those who are at high risk due to the frequency and length of time missing will be reported to senior managers alongside data on children missing education. In this way the most vulnerable children and young people in North Somerset will be monitored on a monthly basis.

3.13 DEVELOPING A STRATEGIC RESPONSE

3.14 The sub group have produced the North Somerset Safeguarding Children's Board (NSSCB) & North Somerset Safeguarding Adults Board (NSSAB) Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2016 – 2018. The strategy has 5 key objectives;

1. Inform – to ensure that identifying and stopping sexual exploitation is everybody's business.
2. Identify – to identify those at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation and those who sexually exploit.
3. Prevent – to prevent children, young people and adults being at risk from or experiencing sexual exploitation.
4. Protect & Support – to safeguard and support all those identified as being at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation.

5. Pursue & Prosecute – to investigate, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of sexual exploitation.

The Subgroup uses this strategy to monitor and develop the multi-agency response to CSE for both vulnerable adults and children and young people. It provides oversight and scrutiny of the Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan. The subgroup action plan feeds into the NSSB business plan and is used to inform, strategic development, quality assurance, staff training and development, and communications.

3.15 SUPPORTING VICTIMS OF EXPLOITATION

3.16 North Somerset has commissioned support from Barnardo's BASE project for a small number of young people. Since April 2017 they have supported 30 children. There are currently 28 children with CSE hazards attached to their records which indicates that their SERAF score was high and that they are vulnerable to CSE; the majority of these children and young people are supported by social workers in the Community Family Teams or the Youth Offending Service. Child sexual exploitation is child abuse so it is important that it is not seen as something other with separate processes and lines of referral.

3.17 Barnardo's have been involved with dedicated victim support around CSE for 20 years and in addition to supporting victims of CSE they also support the development of the workforce to provide appropriate support and responses.

3.18 FACILITATING POLICING AND PROSECUTIONS

3.19 The Police priority is making sure victims are safe and this is a greater priority than prosecution, however there have been successes in taking perpetrators out of the equation by prosecuting for crimes committed even if unrelated to CSE.

3.20 The CSE subgroup make sure all agencies know how to report crimes relating to CSE when they are not being directly reported by the victim. There is clear guidance and links on the NSSCB website and the multi-agency CSE training provides information about reporting. The Police have developed an intelligence sharing form which is published on their website to enable the reporting of information and intelligence around specific crimes including CSE, trafficking and criminal exploitation. As part of the night time economy training for Taxi drivers a dedicated email address has been created by licensing to allow them to share soft intelligence which is forwarded to the Police. The CSE lead gives advice and guidance to practitioners to ensure any intelligence identified is directed through the proper process to the police.

3.21 The CSE network meetings enable the sharing of information regarding more complex cases to agree an enhanced strategy to pursue and disrupt the suspect and to manage risk.

3.22 For children missing from home or care good quality timely return home interviews allow police to make the best use of child abduction notices, harbourers warnings, civil orders and other appropriate legislation, civil powers and litigation.

3.23 The CSE lead professional has developed links with the Border Force and Organised Crime Unit and is proactive in raising awareness of related issues such as trafficking and modern slavery and county lines exploitation.

4. CONSULTATION

4.1 For the purposes of this report I have consulted with the CSE lead practitioner and LSCB sub group chair.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The financial cost of supporting children and young people who have been sexually exploited can be high. Some young people require highly specialised residential placements in locations many miles from their persecutors and the damage caused to the young person and the disruption to their support network can have a long lasting impact into adulthood and continue to place a high demand on local services. Whilst North Somerset does not have large numbers of cultural groups like Bristol, Rotherham or Oxford; with better awareness of CSE more young people might need to become accommodated in order to protect them.

Costs

Within existing budgets

Funding

Within existing funding

6. LEGAL POWERS AND IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Working Together to Safeguard Children March 2017
Local Authority statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Act(s) include specific duties in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (under sections 17 and 47 of the Children Act 1989).

7. RISK MANAGEMENT

7.1 The North Somerset Safeguarding Children Board continues to monitor closely the progress made by all relevant agencies and holds them to account in regard to protecting children and young people from harm. The Executive Member for Children and Young Peoples Services holds the Director and staff to account for the Directorates work with vulnerable children and young people and the Director ensures that risks and mitigations are shared with the NSSCB, the Chief Executive and the Executive Member for Children and Young Peoples Services.

8. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

Children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation are responded to as children in need of protection. Legislation and guidance make clear the responsibilities of local authorities and North Somerset policies are compliant with legislation and demonstrate best practice.

9. CORPORATE IMPLICATIONS

Enabling young people to reach their potential and supporting families to give their children the best start in life are ambitions under the corporate plan.

10. OPTIONS CONSIDERED

N/A

AUTHOR

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BACKGROUND PAPERS

None