

15 September 2015		ITEM: 7
Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Child Sexual Exploitation – Action Plan		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision:	
Report of: Andrew Carter		
Accountable Head of Service: Andrew Carter		
Accountable Director: Carmel Littleton. Director of Children's Services		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

1.1 This report is to present the revised Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan 2015-16 and provide an update on the CSE actions since the Child Sexual Exploitation – Update report to Children's Overview and Scrutiny on 11th March 2015. This report has been requested by the Committee and is for the purpose of updating the committee on progress against the CSE Action Plan.

1. Recommendation(s)

1.1 For the committee to endorse the revised action plan and to add to the committee's work plan for robust ongoing scrutiny.

2. Introduction and Background

2.1 Please see the attached report: Child Sexual Exploitation – Update, presented to the 11th March 2015 Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

2.2 Child Sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse which involves children, male and female who are under the age of eighteen and subjected to exploitive relationships, violence, coercion and intimidation. Perpetrators of child sexual exploitation are found in all parts of the country and are not restricted to particular ethnic groups. Child sexual exploitation can also occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition. Exploitative relationships are characterised in the main by the child or young person's lack of 'availability of choice' resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability and can have serious long term impact on every aspect of their life, health and education.

- 2.3 Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are responsible for ensuring that: (a) appropriate local procedures are in place to tackle child sexual exploitation(CSE); (b) that frontline practitioners are aware of those procedures and how they relate to their own area of responsibility, and (c) that all actions undertaken focus on the needs of the child.
- 2.4 National action plans have recommend that LSCBs develop an effective local strategy ensuring there is a co-ordinated multi-agency response to CSE which builds upon and incorporates a range of successful strategic initiatives which includes: early identification through effective information sharing, underpinned by robust risk assessments and awareness raising across front line practitioners, local communities, children and young people.
- 2.5 We must recognise the well evidenced links between CSE and children who go missing and agencies must work together to: reduce incidents of missing, to locate the child and to learn from the child's experiences. Agencies have a joint responsibility to prevent children from becoming victims of CSE and to protect them from further risk of harm.
- 2.6 Sexual exploitation of children and young people is completely unacceptable and tackling it remains one of the most important challenges for Safeguarding Children's Boards, nationally, regionally and across S.E.T (Southend, Essex and Thurrock) authorities.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 As in the previous reports to committee this analysis has been structured using the headings below from the Ofsted Thematic Review into Child Sexual Exploitation - <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-exploitation-of-children-ofsted-thematic-report> - and the requirements within that review for local authorities.
- 3.2 **Improve management oversight of assessments, plans and case review arrangements**
- 3.2.1 A review has been completed of current and historic cases where CSE might be suspected over the past 5 years.
- 3.2.2 A dedicated Practitioner and Manager are in post to drive forward the strategic and operation objectives re: CSE.
- 3.2.3 A Peer Review of CSE processes in Thurrock and Southend was completed in July 2015.
- 3.2.4 Weekly tracking sheets re: children missing and CSE risks are provided to the Director of Children's Services and Head of Children's Social Care
- 3.2.5 The Thurrock MASE (Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation) Panel is now established and meets on a 6 weekly basis to review the strategic planning for

CSE in Thurrock and link into the strategic planning across the S.E.T, Children Sexual Exploitation Group.

3.2.6 The multi-agency, Risk Assessment Group (RAG), continues to meet on a fortnightly basis to review cases where there are concerns re: risks, including CSE, Missing and sexually inappropriate behaviour.

3.2.7 Effective data collection has been an issue for Children's Services within the current IT system and reliance is maintained on spreadsheets.

3.2.8 To address this Children's Social Care have purchased a CSE Workspace to add to the current Integrated Children's System. This IT system will allow for better data capture and analysis.

3.3 Every child returning from a missing episode is given a return interview

3.3.1 'Returning interviews' have been commissioned from the organisation Open Door and all young people who go missing must be referred for a returning interview.

3.3.2 The Risk Assessment Group is monitoring the referral process and the efficiency of this. Changes are being introduced to make the referral process quicker and easier.

3.3.3 Tracking and follow up is in place to monitor those young people who go missing on repeat occasions but decline to have a 'returning interview'.

3.3.4 Where interviews have been completed these are proving to be a valuable source of information to protect and support young people.

3.4 Schools and the local authority cross-reference absence information with risk assessments for individual children and young people

3.4.1 Children missing education are closely monitored by Children's Services. A monthly surgery is chaired by the DCS and actions monitored to ensure that children are in appropriate educational provision and safeguarded. Children missing education are considered at the RAG panel where there are additional concerns about their welfare. All schools are regularly reminded about their duties to offer a full time education to children on roll. Visits from a home education consultant are offered to families who choose to educate their children otherwise than at school.

3.5 Establish a targeted preventative and self-protection programme on child sexual exploitation for looked after children

3.5.1 Aspects of the programme are now in place and we continue to consult with the Children in Care Council. A full programme to support the individual work

that is already in place is planned for implementation by the end of September 2015.

3.6 Local authorities and partners:

- **Develop and publish a CSE action plan; progress should be regularly shared with strategic boards and senior leaders**

3.6.1 A revised local CSE Action Plan (see attached) and CSE Strategy are in place.

3.7 Proactive sharing of information and intelligence

3.7.1 Clear information sharing procedures are in place and supported by the MASH, MASE, RAG and S.E.T, Child Sexual Exploitation Panels / Groups.

3.8 Consider using child sexual exploitation assessment tools

3.8.1 Child Sexual Exploitation risk assessment toolkits are in place and their use is being monitored. Children identified as a medium to high risk are referred to the RAG Panel and a strategy meeting is required under child protection procedures.

3.9 Have sufficient therapeutic support available

3.9.1 Targeted and effective support for victims is available from SERICC (South Essex Rape and Incest Crisis Centre). The direct support and intervention available to young people via SERICC is seen as a local area of strength.

3.9.2 The specific commissioning arrangements in place with Thurrock Council mean that SERICC are able to offer support and intervention to both girls and boys (young men and women).

3.9.3 As part of local commissioning and sufficiency processes, Thurrock Council continue to review the current provision available to identify any gaps and ensure that the offer of support is comprehensive (particularly across genders).

3.10 Experiences of victims and families should inform strategies and plans

3.10.1 We continue to review plans and acknowledge that greater action is needed to fully co-produce our strategies and plans. This area of work has not progressed as quickly as we would like and is a priority area for development, however, feedback from SERICC is regularly sought to inform strategy and operations.

3.11 Enable professionals to build stable, trusting and lasting relationships with children and young people

3.11.1 We continue to promote and develop relationship based social work and direct work with children and young people to allow meaningful relationships. We have clear strategies and actions in place to retain and recruit a permanent workforce.

3.12 Effectiveness of local schools in raising awareness

3.12.1 Extensive e-safety and awareness raising campaigns have and continue to be undertaken with schools including the Walk Online campaign which reached over 5000 children in Thurrock.

3.12.2 We are working with schools to see increased awareness raising within PHSE programmes.

3.12.3 Education services are represented as part of the RAG and we are looking to include school representation within the Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation panel.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

4.1 To continually review and ensure the effectiveness of local responses to CSE.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 N/A

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

To be effective strategies to disrupt and prevent CSE must incorporate the full functions of the Council and its partners.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

**Implications verified by: Nicola Wright
Finance Officer**

The CSE Strategic and Practitioner posts are not within the core budget for CATO and the additional funding for these posts will need to be identified.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: Lindsey Marks
Principal Solicitor Children's Safeguarding.

The council has a clear legal duty to safeguard children and the measures as set out in the action plan are integral to the council meeting its legal responsibilities for safeguarding, crime prevention and community safety.

7.3 Diversity and Equality

Implications verified by: Natalie Warren
Community Development and Equalities Manager

CSE procedures must equally protect boys (young men) and girls (young women) and respond appropriately to their needs based on their racial, religious, cultural, linguistic, sexual orientation or other needs.

8. Background papers used in preparing the report (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan 2015-16
- 15.3.15 Overview and Scrutiny Report: Child Sexual Exploitation - Update

9. Appendices to the report

- Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan 2015-16
- 15.3.15 Overview and Scrutiny Report: Child Sexual Exploitation - Update
- Ofsted Thematic - the sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it? <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/sexual-exploitation-of-children-ofsted-thematic-report>

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