

Meeting: Children, Education and Skills Sub-committee
Date: 16 November 2015
Title: Child Sexual Exploitation update

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Service: Safeguarding and Placement Services
Children Young People and Learning
Wards affected: All

1. Purpose of Report

This report provides the Sub-committee with an overview of the current local picture in relation to work being undertaken with respect to child sexual exploitation (CSE). It further updates the Committee following the report on the 20th July 2015 which described the national picture and how this was impacting on North Tyneside.

The report will set out local activity at 3 levels:

- What we are doing in relation to individual cases
- What we are doing across the Council
- What we are doing through wider partnership working

2. Recommendations

The Sub-committee is requested to consider the report, offer comment and advise of any recommendations for consideration.

3. Information

3.1 What we are doing in relation to individual cases

3.2 The Missing, Sexually Exploited and Trafficked (MSET) Panel is now well embedded within North Tyneside. It has continued to take place monthly, reviewing between 10-25 young people who are at risk of CSE or are prolific runaways. The panel is well attended by partner agencies and is chaired by John Douglas from Northumbria Police. A recent addition to the panel is a member of Operation Sanctuary and representation from community policing. Both have a huge part to play in information sharing and the sharing of intelligence, which is a critical role of the panel. Liaison between the chair of the MSET and the chair of the Vulnerable Adolescent sub-group ensures that there is an ability to escalate tactical issues to the strategic group, thus enabling appropriate intervention and oversight.

- 3.3 The pre-MSET Panel meets to ensure that there is high quality information sharing and is the preparatory forum where cases are triaged to ensure that they are appropriate (meet the criteria) for discussion at panel. Also within this meeting police and local Children's Services intelligence is discussed in respect of missing young people. The SCARPA worker collates information from return interviews and maps hot spots and/or addresses and themes that may be emerging within the borough and surrounding areas. There is a particular focus on the top ten most persistent runaways and this informs future case planning.
- 3.4 Our improved management of information within CYPL continues to assist recognition and tracking of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation and who are missing. Communication systems in respect to alerts and notifications are in place and ensure that when young people go missing or are at risk out of hours that the relevant professionals are aware and appropriate action taken. Weekly reports are now available to managers in order to manage risk and understand patterns of behaviour and contact.
- 3.5 North Tyneside has now seconded a full time equivalent social worker to Operation Sanctuary. Her role is to be a conduit for North Tyneside in respect of information and intelligence sharing. She will attend the MSET panel and all CSE meetings for North Tyneside young people who are identified as being vulnerable and may work directly with the young person. Work is also developing between this worker and the runaway officer to ensure intelligence is shared. Maps of hotspot areas where children gather within North Tyneside are being developed for social workers and teams to use to help early identification of potential risk. This worker will also act as a consultant to all North Tyneside employees in the area of CSE and offer training as her role develops.
- 3.6 Children's Services are currently in court proceedings with the first high risk CSE case as a consequence of our partnership work with Project Sanctuary. There has already been learning regarding the sharing of information and assessment work to inform planning. Good collaborative working has ensured that a safe package of support has been put in place for this young person.
- 3.7 **What we are doing across the Council**
- 3.8 The CSE contact group has continued to meet and its membership has extended to include for example, Leisure Services. The self assessment work is continuing and specific services are making contact with Local Authorities elsewhere to inform this work. The group will produce for its next meeting an overarching self assessment and action plan for council services improvements following its next meeting on 1st December 2015.
- 3.9 Awareness raising training sessions and CSE presentations have continued at various forums within the Council, for example, Regulation and Review Committee, Elected Members, SLT, leadership forum and the schools behaviour and attendance network.
- 3.10 Commencing in September 2015 there has also been an extensive programme of training delivered to licensed taxi drivers and 30 operators within the Borough. The programme is continuing but upwards of 1200 drivers have subscribed onto the training. Licensing officers are also engaged in regional collaboration and have done detailed self assessment work as part of the CSE contact group. In particular focusing on the taxi licensing failures identified in the Casey report regarding Rotherham which, broadly were:

- They had no policy
- Their admin and enforcement functions were delivered separately
- There was inadequate investigation of complaints
- There was political interference at the highest level
- Resources were inadequate

The conclusion of the self assessment is that we have a fit for purpose service where the Rotherham hallmarks are not present. The individual service and the CSE contact group will ensure that robust arrangements continue to be in place.

3.11 What we are doing through wider partnership working

- 3.12 A recent meeting was held between a representative from the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Safeguarding Adults Board (SAB) and Community Safety Partnership to consider their respective terms of reference, work priorities and areas of overlap for each of the boards. In relation to specific topics it was felt there were several areas where work could be more closely linked between the three Boards. One of the areas identified is sexual exploitation. Discussions are now progressing in relation to the possibility of revised arrangements around sexual exploitation and an integrated sub group reporting to all the three Boards. Decisions are expected to be made in this regard over the next few weeks.
- 3.13 Northumbria Police in collaboration with partners held a regional CSE conference on 20th October 2015. This was very well attended by partners and by staff from each Local Authority area and feedback has been positive from partners.
- 3.14 Northumbria Police also continue to host a sub-regional (6 Local Authority areas) CSE forum to which all Board Business Managers are invited. This is an opportunity to share best practice and develop action plans in relation to tackling CSE.