

Bath & North East Somerset Council

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| MEETING/ DECISION MAKER: | Early Years, Children and Youth Panel. | |
| MEETING/ DECISION DATE: | 24th November 2014. | EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE: |
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| TITLE: | Update on the Council's response to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation. | |
| WARD: | All | |
| AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM | | |
| List of attachments to this report: | | |
| None | | |

1 THE ISSUE

- 1.1 Over the past three years the profile of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has increased considerably. High-profile investigations into large-scale exploitation of young people in Rochdale, Rotherham and Oxford have all served to heighten the awareness of CSE in the media and for the public in general.
- 1.2 The learning that professionals have been able to take from the reports which have followed these concerns is that two different types and patterns of exploitation appear to be emerging. Firstly, there is considerable concern in regard to the organised exploitation of very vulnerable young people by sophisticated gangs, often linked to criminal behaviour and involved the illegal supply of and distribution of drugs, alcohol and prostitution. The investigations in Rochdale, Rotherham and Oxford were characterised by clear links to these types of criminal activity.
- 1.3 The Second type of concern is linked much more to peer-to peer exploitation and is often (although not exclusively) characterised by issues of e-safety, bullying and peer pressure and levels of intimidation for (mostly, but not exclusively) young women to engage in sexual acts by young men or groups of young men.
- 1.4 There are a number of concerning features that characterise both types of CSE. These are a mis-use of power and influence over younger, more vulnerable young people, and clear links between CSE and young people that go missing from home and from care.
- 1.5 A helpful definition of CSE is as follows;..... "CSE is a form of Child Abuse. Any child or young person may be a risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their background or circumstance. Sexual Exploitation can take many forms, from the seemingly

“consensual” relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking”

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 There are no specific recommendations attached to this paper, it is tabled for the purposes of up-date and discussion.

3 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS (FINANCE, PROPERTY, PEOPLE)

- 3.1 There are no specific resource or financial implications outlined or addressed in this paper as it's remit is one of broad update. The initiatives and response we have already undertaken are currently undertaken within existing resources and staffing numbers. However it is important to highlight that should the concerns or profile of Child Sexual Exploitation continue to rise or be identified in ever increasing numbers this could require review in the future.

4 STATUTORY CONSIDERATIONS AND BASIS FOR PROPOSAL

- 4.1 There are no specific statutory considerations to be addressed in this report. The Council will continue to address any identified issues of Child Sexual Exploitation under its powers under the Children Act 1989 and 2004.

5 THE REPORT

- 5.1 Since the emergence and recognition of CSE as an issue of considerable concern both the Council and its partners on the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) have commissioned a series of training and awareness raising workshops for all staff within LSCB agencies that have contact with young people across BaNES. This initial round of training was undertaken by the Children's Society and concluded in April of this year.
- 5.2 In addition to this training the LSCB recognised that a more detailed and sophisticated response was also required by our-selves and our partner agencies. In order to develop these response's we have commissioned a local expert in CSE to deliver more targeted training to staff and to develop a comprehensive Strategy document as well as supporting documents that set out to all staff what needs to happen when CSE concerns are identified.
- 5.3 Alongside this initiative, Children's Services set-up the multi-agency Risk Management Panel in October 2013 to ensure that there a process for evaluating risk and formulating shared plans for responding to and reducing risks to young people where concerns of risk-taking behaviour had been identified. The types of risk-taking behaviours that were appropriate for the panel would be concern of young people going missing, excessive use of drugs and Child Sexual Exploitation. In the past year the panel has identified 27 young people as at risk of a range of Sexual Exploitation, and of that cohort it has identified three young people where the concerns were felt to be serious and could be linked to organised, criminal activity. All three young people have been offered specialist support and intervention through the Barnardo's BASE project.
- 5.4 The BaNES LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy was agreed in September 2014. This strategy was launched earlier this month with an awareness raising event and was well attended by a large number of agencies. As well as raising the awareness of the strategy with partners the event was utilised to recruit volunteers for the "Virtual" CSE team. The creation of a virtual team of specially trained staff from a variety of

professions was a key element of how we wish to reduce the risks to young people and is a key element of the strategy document. We now have 15 volunteers from a variety of professions who have volunteered to work alongside young people where risks of CSE have been identified. These volunteers will not be the “lead professional”, rather their role will be to attempt to establish a relationship with the young person. This will enable them to develop a trust and dialogue so that over time the young person might be able to discuss the concerns and make informed choices about the exploitative relationships they are experiencing. We have targeted the creation of the virtual team at professionals such youth workers, school nurses and workers from voluntary organisations such as Mentoring Plus and Project 28 as we feel these staff groups have the proven skills in engaging with difficult to reach young people and have proven skills in maintaining relationships with them.

5.5 The training for the virtual team starts in January, with a start date for late February. The managers of all staff involved in the virtual team will also receive training so that they can appropriately support their staff in these tasks. All CSE cases where there is a need to allocate a virtual team member will come to the Risk Management Panel so that the case can be matched with a virtual team member.

5.6 Other training will also be continued to be delivered through the LSCB to all partners in terms of raising awareness across all professions and settings, as well as with the council Licencing Team who monitor taxi cab firms and fast food outlets. Both of these types of business where central to the recruitment of, and movement of vulnerable young women in the Rochdale, Oxford and Rotherham investigations.

6 RATIONALE

6.1 The need to heighten the awareness and understanding of Child Sexual exploitation is clear. It is important that CSE is not seen as a “stand alone” issue. It is form of child Protection and the prevalence of utilising issues power and vulnerability in relationships is line with many features of child abuse.

7 OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

7.1 Not applicable

8 CONSULTATION

In preparing this report I have consulted with the LSCB.

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| Contact person | <i>Richard Baldwin; 01225 396289</i> |
| Background papers | <i>LSCB CSE Strategy.</i> |
| Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format | |