

People Services Scrutiny Committee - 10th March 2016

Report of the Interim Chief Officer Children's Services

Child Sexual Exploitation - Dudley

Purpose of Report

1. To update scrutiny committee of CSE developments in Dudley.

Background

National Context

2. The CSE agenda remains a huge priority for national government and one which all local authorities must act upon. It is set against a backdrop of reviews undertaken in Oxford, Birmingham and Rotherham where it was estimated 1400 children were sexually exploited between 1997 and 2013. This led to the publication of a Government report in March 2015.
3. A series of recommendations have been made to ensure that this very vulnerable group of children are safeguarded and protected and that agencies work collaboratively sharing information and intelligence to protect vulnerable children. From these recommendations all Local Authorities must produce a prevention strategy and bring offenders to justice through successful prosecutions. Assessments of young people must be timely, robust and identify need at the earliest possible point. Service provision needs to be coordinated and targeted to support children at the earliest opportunity when concerns are identified.
4. The Government report has made a series of recommendations with, in particular, a new whistle blowing national portal for reports related to child abuse which is intended to help bring CSE to light and spot patterns of failure across the country.

Regional Context

5. West Midlands Regional CSE strategic group chaired by Solihull's Chief Executive Nick Page has developed a regional CSE framework. This is currently under review after its first year of implementation. The final document was launched in July 15.
6. The framework has 5 components and is based on the Office of the Children's Commissioner's "If only Someone Listened" Inquiry report:
 - Accountability for all safeguarding and strategic co-ordination

- Multi- agency strategic planning
- Partnership and information sharing for identification and assessment
- Coordination of multi-agency strategic groups
- Intervention and service delivery

Local Context

7. Dudley council plan has an objective under stronger and safer communities which states that it will develop and roll out a programme and awareness of CSE and work towards zero tolerance within the Borough.
8. Dudley Children Services Divisional Chief Officer Service Plan has a section on protecting the vulnerable of which CSE is a main objective. This is in order to ensure that there is consistent delivery of services within the council and to monitor performance against the Council Plan.
9. One of the Dudley Safeguarding Childrens Board priorities is to keep children safe. This encompasses keeping safe both inside and outside of the home and online with a specific objective around CSE. The Vulnerable Childrens Strategic Sub Group of DSCB, has overall responsibility for the CSE strategy which was approved March 2015. The strategy defines the actions to be undertaken by all partner agencies which include Dudley Council, to ensure children are safe from CSE and that there is awareness of these concerns within the community and throughout the partnership.
10. In order to deliver against the strategy and to ensure effective coordination of CSE, Dudley Council along with partner agencies has developed a CSE team. This team went live on the 14th September 2015.

CSE Team

11. The CSE team comprises of a number of professionals from Health, Education, Police, Integrated Youth Support, Children's Social Care and Voluntary Sector organisations. The focus is on receiving and screening all CSE referrals, delivering specialist therapeutic services, mapping out information and intelligence with partner agencies, signposting to early intervention services, case manage low to medium risk cases, offer training and raising awareness sessions, collate data, track individuals at risk of CSE and quality assure through audit activity in line with the Children's Directorate Quality Assurance Framework.
12. The CSE team has a dedicated CSE coordinator post. This post is funded for a year and administered through DSCB. The post is resourced from Proceeds of Crime Act 2002 funds and Children Services. Whilst this is funded for 12 months initially, DSCB will be reviewing this for a longer term position in order to provide continuity and focus on CSE concerns/developments. The coordinator was appointed on 10th August 2015.

13. The team currently operates from Parsons Street, Integrated Youth Support. As the Directorate develops its single front door and MASH (multi agency safeguarding HUB) arrangements, the CSE team will be co-located with MASH in order to share information, intelligence and receive appropriate referrals. A timely response for those requiring action under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 will be progressed into Children Social Care without delay having this consistent practice embedded across the section with oversight from the CSE coordinator.

Missing Children

14. Currently missing children are managed through the Runaways project who undertake return to home interviews for the Council. It is acknowledged that further work is required to ensure those children that go missing are assessed against CSE risk indicators. It is therefore proposed that Missing children and CSE team are functioning under one umbrella with oversight given at the young person's sexual exploitation (YPSE) panel. A worker who has a specialist missing background is part of the CSE Team.
15. Dudley has led on a West Midlands Police (WMP) pilot project from October 2014 where absent children have been recorded as missing in the police database. This project commenced following an independent review of missing children in Dudley. It was then identified that we need to ensure a comprehensive wrap around service to all children whether they are categorised as missing or absent. The learning from this will be collated by WMP and presented to the Regional CSE strategic group and DSCB to understand the impact of this pilot project and whether children have been afforded an improved response by the local authority in management of these risks.

CSE Framework and Procedures

16. Dudley has updated the strategy based on the revised CSE framework and related procedures. This was being signed off at DSCB in September 2015. The strategy will be presented to the Children and Young People Alliance, Health and Wellbeing Board and Police and Crime Commission. Dudley have incorporated the framework through the CSE team and streamlined the referral and response pathway.

DSCB Vulnerable Strategic Sub Group

17. The Vulnerable Children's Strategic Group and Young People's Sexual Exploitation panel are tasked to focus on the regional framework delivery plan which in broad context concentrates on Prevent, Protect and Prosecute.
18. YPSE panel currently offers partner agencies advice and support services to children where concerns identified through the National Working Group screening tool are assessed as high

risk of which they track/monitor the progress made with individual child. The data and intelligence of high risk victims is collated.

19. This information is shared at Vulnerable Children's Strategic Group and assists in intervention through WMP. It is recognised that the panel will need to be reviewed in light of the newly established CSE team.

Data and CSE Profile.

20. The data shared at the Regional strategic group for Quarter 3 period 1st September 2015 to 31st December 2015 was as follows:

- 64 children known to be at risk of CSE, this includes medium to high risk.
- Of which 12 children are classed as 'serious' risk
- Of which 13 children were LAC and placed out of Borough.
- Of which 7 children were LAC in borough

21. For children known to be missing/absent from home/care in the same quarter 3 period:

- 87 individuals reported as missing which equated to 174 episodes.
- Of which 62 individuals went missing from their home address with a total of 86 episodes
- And 32 individuals went missing from care with a total of 86 episodes
- The numbers above do not equate to the 87 individuals as there are multiple runaways that are recorded as going missing from both home and care. There are also runaways recorded where we don't hold the data as to where they've runaway from.

22. The Council plan and Directorate Chief Officer Plan has distinct objectives and targets on measuring the above activity and data. This will be linked to the Bedfordshire toolkit for data collection which is the regionally approved method. In the planning of the CSE team, IT are building a system to collate this data so there is one point of data collation. Currently, the CSE Team hold information on the secure Council filestore system. A spreadsheet is being collated by Youth Offending Service (YOS) administrators for the purposes of reporting data and analysis.

23. The dataset requires improvement to capture and coordinate all children at risk of CSE. A task and finish group is prioritising this activity to ensure we understand the scale of low, medium and high risk CSE cases.

Prosecutions

24. In the same Quarter 3 period Sept – Dec 15 there has been a successful prosecution. An offender was sentenced to eight years imprisonment. Another offender has been returned to custody following a breach in his licence conditions against a CSE victim.

25. There is a need to ensure that enforcements and prosecutions are robustly followed in order for Dudley to be a safe place for children to reside in. This work will be undertaken through DSCB whereby agencies will be challenged when there is insufficient evidence to support this priority under the CSE framework of prevent, pursue and prosecute.
26. Dudley Local Policing Unit are holding monthly CSE meetings to discuss, victim, offender and location profiles. This is building on the WMP profile intelligence document.

Raising Awareness

- Training

27. Dudley Safeguarding Children's Board has had a commitment and delivered multi agency training to partner agencies over the past 3 years.
28. Between September and December 2015 the CSE Team in partnership with DSCB Training support has delivered briefing sessions to 421 Children's workforce staff. Figures and breakdown are shown in Appendix 1.
29. The plan for 2015/16 is to deliver additional CSE training (both multi agency and single agency) in order to deliver key messages and embed the procedures into practice. This will include bespoke sessions for cabinet members and school Governors.

- Early Prevention

30. Schools and in particular local authority primary schools are planning the use of Miss Dorothy.com programme. This is a nationally recognised programme in the delivery of keeping safe and risks related to CSE amongst Year 5 children. Secondary schools have direct intervention from Dudley Saltmine theatre productions and Loud mouth productions. In addition there has been direct awareness raising sessions by neighbourhood police officer to 250 teenage students in 2014/15.
31. These raising awareness sessions have been supported with referral pathways and the use of National Working Group screening tool and assessment which was launched in Dudley October 2013.
32. The plan for 2015/16 is to continue with a consistent coordinated approach across all primary, secondary schools and colleges. As part of the framework for delivery on this area, the voluntary sector has put forward a programme of intervention to consolidate and add capacity to deliver against what already is in place through DSCB. This forms part of the overall action plan within the CSE strategy.

- Transition

33. Transition into adulthood is critical and a protocol is being devised in conjunction with adult services under the Care Act 2015. This protocol will ensure that young people who are at risk of CSE will continue to receive services and levels of intervention based on assessed needs. In line with this, it is proposed that children that are reaching the age of 18 will be discussed at YPSE if they are a victim of CSE. This will enable a robust pathway to be followed through into Adulthood.

- Community Awareness

34. Dudley Council has a prevent strategy in place led through Community cohesion and Safe and Sound. Home Office funding for specific prevent intervention is currently being mapped out with a view to targeted intervention being linked to intelligence identified within the recent media publication of WMP regional profile. The intelligence will be utilised in the commissioning process and delivery plan for prevent agenda across issues of CSE/radicalisation/management of allegations. This intervention will be targeted input and will enable an independent commissioned organisation to broker conversations within community groups on the whole prevent agenda so that community groups are aware and can share intelligence as well as help to protect our most vulnerable children in the Borough.

35. Community awareness continues to be a key issue to progress on. In 2015/16 a Community conference will take place to engage our elected members to work with officers in raising awareness in communities. This will also focus on engaging the community to identify and refer concerns and to support children and families in their communities to have a zero tolerance to CSE in their community. Voluntary organisations will be key in delivering this message and DSCB have commenced discussions with them to plan intervention and engage them in the upcoming conference.

- Licensing Team and Taxi firms

36. Dudley's CSE Team are working with Licensing Team and taxi firms across the Borough to review their roles and responsibilities under licensing conditions. Dudley council will be working to devise a pledge which will detail commitment to zero tolerance towards CSE in Dudley and to embed a joined up approach in tackling this issue. This will include mandatory training for all taxi drivers, regional CSE framework, standard award for driver, bespoke training to cover licensed operators drivers and escorts and linking this to condition of licence. The pledge will include managing issues for out of town taxi firms that come into Dudley and using intelligence gathering from the trade to inform local intelligence. There will be improved transparency around decision making and complaints which will in turn offer a more cohesive and joined up approach in tackling this issue within this area. Dudley are leading on this work for the Region. The initial briefing session took place in Summer 15. In December 15, at a meeting with Trade representatives, the Taxi Operatives agreed that they

would engage with the conditions of licence and developing a pledge for Dudley. Further briefing sessions are scheduled for January 16 with a programme of training sessions identified for 2015/16.

- Voluntary Sector

37. Dudley Council have over the years developed a positive relationship with the voluntary sector. It is recognised and valued that the work undertaken by voluntary organisations is invaluable and that we need to harness and nurture this relationship. DSCB have commissioned Streets team through Board funding for the past 3 years to deliver direct work children at high risk of CSE. Phase trust and Switch have been critical partners at YPSE and have also offered group and individual sessions. The future planning for the CSE team is through a partnership approach in delivering the services from the team, screening referrals, offering direct intervention and a programme of prevent workshops within schools. The other significant area of intervention will be engaging communities to assist the Council in progressing its objective of Zero tolerance. The Phase Trust is an associated member of the CSE Team who are an essential part of this whole agenda. Phase is not colocated with the team but are critical to the team and its functionality. Switch are also associate members of the CSE Team and attend all team meetings.

- Communications and Website development

38. The regional communications and engagement strategy, of which Dudley Council communications team are leading on is being implemented across the West Midlands. The aim of the visual integrated marketing campaign is to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation; what it is, the risk indicators and what to do if you are concerned about a child or young person. A wide variety of mediums including print, broadcast, digital and social media, outdoor advertising and engagement events are used to raise awareness and initiate narrative amongst audiences.

39. A Local website with a dedicated CSE page is being developed to link in with DSCB website page. This will be populated with information on the CSE team, local contacts, CSE framework, training and conference events and services available to access when concerns arise. This platform will share National, regional and local information, reviews and outcomes of any related research projects.

Conclusion

40. It is recognised that as a Council, we have a long journey ahead to eradicate CSE from our streets and to ensure that children are not exploited. However, there is a clear commitment to this agenda amongst Council officers and Directorates. This is evidenced through specific priorities within the Council plan, inclusion in the Children and Young Peoples Partnership

Board early intervention priority and DSCB priority to keep children safe inside, outside of the home and online and the introduction of a colocated CSE Team.

41. As the regional framework evolves, Dudley will be committed to respond to this along with national driver to ensure inclusion in its overarching delivery plan. The council is committed to embed a learning culture and through ongoing analysis, reviews, user feedback and audits, it will ensure this remains a priority so that we are responding in a timely manner to children's needs.
42. Community engagement and children's voices will be the key to long term management of CSE and overall success in developing safer communities. Our commitment to engaging the community in direct discussions through forums and events will enable the Council to prioritise within our plans how we keep our children safe collectively.

Finance

43. There is funding for this post up till 31st March 2016 of £34K, £17k from the Proceeds of Crime Act (POCA) funding and £17k from one-off savings from Childrens Services (Family Solutions). This post was appointed on 10th August 2015. Further funding will need to be identified in order for the post to be retained after 31 March 2016.

Law

44. Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, requires local authorities in the exercise of their social services functions to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State.

Equality Impact

45. There will be a range of Equality Impact Assessments carried out for this particular agenda.

Recommendations

46. At this stage for scrutiny to endorse the development of the CSE Strategy.



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List of Background Papers

DSCB CSE Strategy

Appendix

Briefings Attended 2015

Briefings Attended 2015

	Adults	Children's Social Care	Early Years	Education	Health	Voluntary	Other	Police	DUE	TOTAL
CSE Raising Awareness 12/5/15	3	7	0	5	5	5	1	0	2	28
CSE Raising Awareness 1/7/15	1	10	0	11	11	10	0	1	0	44
CSE Raising Awareness 15/9/15	7	5	0	4	7	1	2	0	1	27
CSE Raising Awareness 3/11/15	19	6	0	10	7	1	4	0	0	47
CSE Team briefing 17/11/15	5	12	1	7	17	2	0	0	0	44
CSE Team briefing 30/11/15	4	7	1	22	12	0	1	0	0	47
CSE Team briefing 11/12/15	4	27	3	20	9	7	3	0	1	74
CSE Team briefing 14/12/15	4	24	10	20	1	3	2	5	0	69
CSE Team briefing 17/12/15	1	13	0	16	6	1	1	3	0	41
	48	111	15	115	75	30	14	9	4	421