

# Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

15 May 2024

## Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy

### Report of the Statutory Scrutiny Officer

#### 1 Purpose

- 1.1 To scrutinise the Council's response in tackling child exploitation, including the Child Exploitation Strategy 2024-26, how the Strategy is implemented through the Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children's Partnerships and the Tackling Child Exploitation Steering Group.

#### 2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to:
  - 1) To make any comments or recommendations on the Strategy or implementation of the Strategy, and partnership working in tackling child exploitation.
  - 2) That future scrutiny of the issue is considered including bringing the item back to Committee to assess performance after 12-18 months.

#### 3 Background information

- 3.1 The Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee had previously considered child exploitation and had made a number of recommendations:
  - 1) That the Child Exploitation Strategy is co-produced with partners and that it seeks to embed trauma informed practice and engagement with all frontline workers who may have contact with children and young people.
  - 2) Review implementation of the Child Exploitation Strategy and, when it does so, invite representatives of Nottinghamshire Police to attend.
- 3.2 Child exploitation occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person into an activity that results in financial or other advantage for the perpetrator or facilitator.
- 3.3 The Council's vision is to reduce child exploitation in Nottingham, to keep children safe, so they can lead healthy lives. The Council is committed to taking new, innovative, and evidenced based approaches, focusing on

harm reduction in its communities, preventing victimisation and repeat victimisation, ensuring the lived experiences of the child sits at the centre of its approach.

- 3.4 The Council's Child Exploitation Strategy 2024-26 states its commitment is to: "Create a single whole system response, working in partnership to reduce child exploitation and extra-familial harm and protect our communities. All partners understand that anyone under 18 facing these harms, or causing harm to others, must be seen and treated as children and young people first and foremost and our success in tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm is evaluated against this fundamental principle."
- 3.5 The Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnerships are working collaboratively to implement the Child Exploitation strategy. It is being driven through the "Tackling Child Exploitation(TCE) Steering Group (this group is cross Local Authority and Safeguarding Childrens Partnerships), which meets on a quarterly basis.
- 3.6 This steering group includes representatives from the Police, Children's Social Care, Youth Justice Service, Early Help, Education, the ICB, Health Providers, and the National Probation Service.
- 3.7 The aim is to raise the profile of child exploitation to protect and safeguard children from harm achieve this by developing and maintaining effective local responses and through the delivery of an effective multi-agency strategy and delivery plan delivered by key partners through the Tackling Child Exploitation Steering Group. This includes the implementation of timely and effective risk management and the implementation of a comprehensive range of child centred interventions for children who are at risk or are victims of sexual and/or criminal exploitation.
- 3.8 The steering group has committed to introduce the multi-agency principles for Tackling Child Exploitation (Research in Practice with The Children's Society and Safer Lives at the University of Bedfordshire 2023). The 8 principles underpinning our response to the exploitation of children and young people are:
  - Putting children and young people first
  - Recognise and challenge inequalities, exclusion, and discrimination
  - Respect the voices, experiences and expertise of children and young people
  - Be strengths-based and relationship-based
  - Recognise and respond to trauma
  - Be curious, evidence-informed and knowledgeable
  - Approach parents and carers as partners wherever possible
  - Create safe spaces and places for children and young people

3.9 The attached report sets out in more detail the background, further information and action taken, and the next steps.

#### **4 List of attached information**

4.1 Report from the Director of Children's Integrated Services

4.2 Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy

#### **5 Background papers, other than published works or those disclosing exempt or confidential information**

5.1 None

#### **6 Published documents referred to in compiling this report**

6.1 None

#### **7 Wards affected**

7.1 All

#### **8 Contact information**

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