

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
22 DECEMBER 2015
CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
REPORT OF HEAD OF DEMOCRATIC SERVICES

1 Purpose

- 1.1 To consider an overview of the Council's work on tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Nottingham.

2 Action required

- 2.1 The Committee is asked to consider what action Nottingham City Council is taking to protect children in Nottingham from sexual exploitation.

3 Background information

- 3.1 CSE is a form of abuse in which children are sexually exploited. The nationally agreed definition of CSE is:
- 3.2 Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involving exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person (or third person/s) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or other performing on them, sexual activities.
- 3.3 Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition where, for example, a child is persuaded to post images on the internet or pass these via mobile phones.
- 3.4 The Children who are most at risk of being sexually exploited are children who:
- Are frequently missing from school, home or residential care;
 - Are vulnerable due to living in neglectful houses;
 - Have been separated or trafficked;
 - Are unaccompanied and seeking asylum;
 - Are living in residential care.
- 3.5 In 2014, Sir Michael Wilshaw, Ofsted's Chief Inspector, commissioned a report to build a clearer picture of how well local authorities and partners are working to prevent child sexual exploitation in their area, to offer protection to its victims, and to pursue and prosecute its abusers.¹ The

¹ Ofsted report, 19 November 2015,

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/386598/The_20

report made a series of recommendations to local authorities and Local safeguarding Children Boards.

3.6 The potential impact of Child Sexual Exploitation on children and young people, communities and statutory service came to public prominence as a consequence of a series of high profile investigations across the Country. Perhaps the most notable of these was in Rotherham, where there were two notable reports initially from Professor Alexis Jay and subsequently from Louise Casey. The City Council and key statutory partners have consistently re-evaluated local practice in response to the findings of these reports.

3.7 Focus for the review

What measures have been put in place to protect Nottingham children?

3.8 Considerable work has been undertaken to protect Nottingham Children and we are continually benchmarking ourselves against best practice and local partners to build on this. Nottingham City Council, along with 9 other Local Authorities have been involved in the Home Office, Department of Local Government and DfE relating to CSE. There have been a number of strands and workshops developed which have informed practice across the country. Copies of a briefing setting out some of the actions taken by the City Council accompany this paper.

3.9 In Nottingham City there has been practice guidance to support staff in responding to sexual exploitation for many years. This has been updated and revised to reflect improved understanding of the issue and changes to statutory guidance. The key principles set out in that guidance focus on effective recognition of risk and a robust, coordinated multi-agency response. Where a young person is identified as being at particular risk a multi-agency meeting will be convened to consider how best to protect them.

3.10 There has been ongoing training and awareness raising for staff, carers, and young people. This has included briefing events for GPs and other health professionals, in addition to specific CSE training delivered to Magistrates who sit in the Youth Courts to assist with the recognition of CSE and presenting behaviours, which may lead to victims of CSE being criminalised. Work has been undertaken within the voluntary and community sectors with events in December 2014 and March 2015. The Safeguarding Children Board has also promoted use of an E Learning package aimed at staff as well as delivering face to face training.

3.11 We have appointed a CSE co-ordinator who has been in post since September 2015. The CSE Coordinator takes the operational lead in driving practice and learning, as well as developing the operational

responses to the CSECAG work plan. In addition, she manages the Missing Children's Team, which will enable swift identification and intervention for any young people at risk of CSE.

Are there examples of joined-up working across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County?

3.12 The Child Sexual Exploitation Cross Authority Group [CSECAG] is a sub-group of the Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board and Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board. It meets bi-monthly to progress the child sexual exploitation strategy. This group is chaired by DCI Melanie Bowden. The work plan has 4 strands, which are currently being reviewed and Recovery is going to be included within the plan. The current strands consist of:

- **Prevention and response**
- **Safeguarding and protection**
- **Public confidence**
- **Bringing offenders to justice:**

3.13 In addition to the work completed under CSECAG Nottingham City Children's Social care have developed a Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation panel, chaired by Helen Blackman. The purpose of the group is to track children at risk of CSE, and collate information relating to perpetrators and location/hot spots. The group is comprised of colleagues from Children's Services, Education, Community Protection, Police and Health.

3.14 Information sharing at a case level is also promoted though

- The Concerns Network is a multi agency process which focuses on early identification of children and young people who are potentially vulnerable. It also collects intelligence relating to specific localities of interest. This network was highlighted in the September 2015 issue of the Home Office Bulletin as best practice.
- The Missing Hotspot meeting, which is a joint meeting between Police and Social care which considers the response to children and young people who go missing on multiple occasions to ensure that their circumstances are recognised and understood.

Is there any engagement with young people to ensure that young people know how to protect themselves?

3.15 Where risks are identified that relate to an individual young person a package of support will be put in place to address these. This will include direct work with them to support them to recognise how they are making themselves vulnerable. Support is also provided by the NSPCC Respect and Protect project, which is a specialist CSE service. To date 19 young people have accessed this programme for 1:1 support and 49 young

people have been part of preventative group work. The CSE Coordinator works closely with the Team Manager from Protect and Respect to ensure the service is being accessed by relevant children and young people.

- 3.16 In terms of awareness raising at a wider level Nottingham City Council has funded 36 sessions of a LUVU2, which is a theatre production aimed at young people. This has been rolled out to schools, colleges, alternative provisions as well as young people in care, community and youth centres. There were similar sessions delivered in the previous academic year which were well received. We also plan to send out a letter, via schools, aimed at all parents to help them recognise potential signs of risk and highlighting a specialist CSE on-line resource developed for parents.

Are there any examples of safeguarding across the Council workforce

- 3.17 Lunchtime seminars have been delivered by Caroline Riley and Liz Tinsley (Service Manager for NSPCC) to enable staff members to discuss concerns relating to specific cases, share good practice and raise their awareness of issues related to CSE and sexual harm.

How authorities plan to disrupt criminal activity and protecting children at immediate risk?

- 3.18 There continues to be improvement in working practices so that investigations of CSE are becoming more robust. This work is reinforced via the training of staff. The focus of the work is on disruption before abuse occurs – to that end the Concerns Network Meeting continues to play a valuable role, creating the opportunity for professionals to share isolated pieces of information relating to specific localities across the city and in relation to worrying behaviours of either children/young people or adults. Where there are immediate and established concerns then social care work closely with the police to investigate and safeguard the child or young person concerned. The Missing Children's Team is also influential in identifying cases of concern and highlighting such cases to Social Care.
- 3.19 Nottingham City is also taking part in an NSPCC pilot to develop a National Framework for assessing young people who present harmful sexual behaviour. This will enable consistent approaches and interventions in such cases and would assist in the identification of possible future perpetrators. The Assessment of Sexual Harm Arrangements (ASHA) is a meeting which takes place every three weeks to discuss cases of harmful sexual behaviour perpetrated by children under the age of 18 years. This offers a platform for identifying worrying behaviours and assists with the profiling of potential adult offenders.
- 3.20 Child Abduction Warning Notices can be issued by the police to prevent any contact with a named child. There were 15 issued last year within

Nottingham and currently a further 10 have been issued to date of writing.

What are the next steps in Nottingham to keep children safe?

3.21 Training and awareness raising activity will continue to be a key focus. In addition to this next steps will include the following:

- Developing a database of information relating to offenders and potential offenders. This will assist with mapping issues across the city and support professionals in understanding/identifying what leads people to offend in this way. In addition this will assist in the identification of links between offenders and the possibility of young people being trafficked across the city and wider;
- Continue to embed the working practices of the MASE panel to ensure appropriate safeguarding measures are in place;
- Working with regional CSE leads and tier 2 management groups in progressing agreed regional standards.

4 List of attached information

4.1 Briefing for staff and partner agencies.

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 Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, August 2014, Professor Alexis Jay.

6.2 Ofsted report – ‘The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn’t happen here, could it?’ 19 November 2014, Sir Michael Wilshaw.

6.3 Department of Communities and Local Government Report – ‘Report of Inspection of Rotherham Borough Council’ 4th February 2015, Louise Casey

7 Wards affected

7.1 All.

8 Contact information

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