
Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

13 April 2015

Name of Cabinet Member:

Cabinet Member for Children and Young People - Councillor Ed Ruane

Executive Director Approving Submission of the report:

Executive Director of People

Ward(s) affected:

All

Title:

Coventry Strategic Objectives and Delivery Plan for Children and Young People who are missing, at risk of, or experiencing Sexual Exploitation

Is this a key decision?

No

Executive Summary:

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a complex issue that requires thorough understanding of the impact on victims, how patterns of behaviour start and by whom it is perpetrated. There has been extensive national coverage of this issue with associated guidance and recommendations as a result of a number of enquiries and reviews in key areas of the Country. Coventry agencies have come together and committed significant time and resources reflecting on this national learning and indeed the findings and recommendations from such have been used to inform the development of a local delivery plan to address this issue.

Furthermore the plan is supported by clear strategic objectives and has been informed by facts and findings contained within a CSE problem profile produced by West Midlands Police.

A key aspect of the plan is to not only ensure that a safe, responsive and effective service is provided to all children and young people who experience Child Sexual Exploitation but to proactively identify children and young people that could be vulnerable to this and other types of harmful behaviour so that interventions that negate or minimise risk can be provided.

The plan facilitates the coordinated activity and resources of multi- agencies working together in Coventry to prevent risk of harm to children and young people through targeted

action against perpetrators and in locations across the City where this issue could take place.

A significant area of work within the plan is to enhance public awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation, in particular with parents and carers and to ensure that young people are made aware of the issues around exploitation and that preventive services are in place.

Recommendations:

The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People is recommended to -

- (1) Consider the content and approach by Officers set out within the delivery plan; attached as Appendix 1 (this plan is still in draft form and is a “living document”) and provide further recommendations for Officers where further action is required.
- (2) Refer the delivery plan to Scrutiny for progress monitoring and updates.

List of Appendices included:

1. Coventry Strategic Objectives and Delivery Plan for Children and Young People who are missing, at risk of, or experiencing Sexual Exploitation

Other useful background papers:

Key documents

Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance (DCSF-00689-2009) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance>

Has it been or will it be considered by Scrutiny?

To be confirmed: Child Sexual Exploitation was considered by Scrucro at their meeting on the 10th December 2014 where they requested additional information on the action plan and progress updates.

Has it been or will it be considered by any other Council Committee, Advisory Panel or other body?

No

Will this report go to Council?

No

Report title:

Coventry Strategic Objectives and Delivery Plan for Children and Young People who are missing, at risk of, or experiencing Sexual Exploitation

1. Context (or background)

1.1 National guidance and publicity has highlighted the scale of Child Sexual Exploitation that is happening in the UK and that it can happen in all cities and communities.

1.2 Child sexual exploitation is a complex issue which demands a co-ordinated multi-agency and community response. Since the publication of many National and regional reports Coventry has accelerated local action to not only improve our understanding of the issue in the City but to also strengthen our collective multi-agency response to CSE including:-

- The establishment of a dedicated multi-disciplinary CSE and Vulnerable Persons team to respond to and oversee cases of child sexual exploitation having been staffed by professionals from the Police, Social Care, and Youth Services who have direct links to the Community Safety Team. This is facilitated by further recruitment to the Child Violence & Sexual Violence Co-ordinator post. The team has also been co-located with RAS and MASH in Christchurch House to strengthen the process for receiving referrals, risk assessment and sharing of information with which to determine most appropriate action and interventions. Additionally the Integrated Youth Support Service and Community Safety Service are also based in this building so closer daily working relationships take place. The Officers in the team will provide dedicated support and advise to both early help and social care officers in addition to support for CAF Co-ordinators and Safeguarding team.
- A reorganisation of the Police Public Protection Unit (PPU) has resulted in the establishment of a dedicated CSE Central Team based in Birmingham. This team is tasked to target high risk offenders. Additionally the local Child Abuse Team manages criminal investigations into CSE and works closely with the Coventry Local Policing Unit (LPU) in targeting those perpetrators whilst identifying locations where CSE can take place in order to disrupt activity and target operational action. This issue is a West Midlands Police Force priority and as such is discussed at their daily Neighbourhood and Response Police Team tasking meetings.
- An initial regional problem profile was produced which informed the development of the local plan. A self-assessment and health check of Coventry's response to this was also undertaken prior to the production of the plan. A further updated profile will be used to update the delivery plan and improve local understanding of this issue in the City.
- In January 2015, Coventry was the area in the region to launch a multi-agency Perpetrator Case Management Forum where CSE offenders are subject to multi agency scrutiny and both civil and/or criminal interventions. This was implemented as a result of the same successful approach to management of serial domestic violence and abuse offenders.
- All youth workers in Integrated Youth Support Services have been trained on 'signs and symptoms' for CSE and targeted detached work takes place in vulnerable and problematic locations. Young people identified as vulnerable to or at risk of CSE receives intensive one to one support from a specialist youth worker, as part of a safety plan.

- Barnardos has been commissioned to undertake return home interviews for all Looked After Children who have been missing from care and the new CSE team will offer support with risk assessments and safety planning.
 - Victims also receive post abuse counselling and support services. A recent sexual violence and health needs assessment has provided the evidence which will inform the commissioning of specialist services required to meet those needs.
 - Coventry, in line with regional best practice and standards has established a CSE and Missing Operational Group (CMOG) which was highlighted as an area of good practice during the Ofsted inspection. This is a Case Management Forum for victims/potential victims of CSE to ensure a range of interventions and safety plans are provided. This group will be strengthened to ensure that there is sufficient focus on children who are missing and those who are identified as vulnerable to CSE. The establishment of MACE meetings will ensure the voice of the child/young person and their family are heard and can influence their safety plan.
- 1.3 The framework for the Coventry CSE and Missing Delivery Plan was endorsed by the Local Safeguarding Children's Board in October 2014. The plan has now developed into a comprehensive range of activity to protect victims and vulnerable children and young people and prevention through disruption and targeted action and management of perpetrators. The extensive awareness raising seeks to raise the profile of this issue and improve the identification of such in order that agencies and communities can work together to respond whilst taking every opportunity to restrict the ability for it to take place in the first place.
- 1.4 Delivery of the actions within the plan will be overseen by the CSE Strategic Working Group made up of senior members of a number of agencies and organisations, providing regular updates and performance reports to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board. Within the CSE Delivery Plan there is a comprehensive training plan with specific focus on different communities and those who may be particularly vulnerable.
- 1.5 Officers continue to develop performance reporting and a local database is under development within the Safeguarding Service which will hold the details of all children and young people known or suspected to be affected by CSE. This will also lawfully hold information and intelligence in respect of adults/perpetrators and locations; to ensure an accurate overview of all is available to officers and can assist with the problem profiling and subsequent action required.
- 1.6 Since July 25th 2014, 80 children have been proactively identified and subject to CMOG triage assessments and management. Of these 57 cases required further multi-agency interventions.
- 1.7 Coventry has made their commitments to the regional framework and standards through the Leader of the Council. The adoption of the regional publicity campaign "See me, Hear me" has been reinforced through the development of a local campaign aimed at encouraging reporting; "say something if you see something" which has now also been adopted nationally. Coventry's Delivery plan reflects the key principles of this regional framework.
- 1.8 Coventry has completed the trial of the use of Rotherham risk assessment and learning has provided the opportunity for agencies to review training needs and agree the use of the most appropriate tool for our agencies

2. Options considered and recommended proposal

- 2.1 The recommendations have been determined based on the production of the delivery plan and the need to ensure the content, activity and approach is appropriate, proportionate and sufficient to protect children and young people from harm and provide officers and communities with the knowledge and confidence to deal with this issue.
- 2.2 Provide reassurance to Cabinet Member that the plan has been informed by national learning and developed using evidence from a problem profile to provide a thorough multi-agency response to this issue.

3. Results of consultation undertaken

- 3.1 A practitioners group has been established and meets on a monthly basis with the sole aim of raising awareness of CSE in Coventry. The members of this group ensure the effective co-ordination of resources and materials available to deliver consistent messages to the public on the signs to look for in identifying young people potentially at risk of CSE and then where to report these concerns. To support the development of the resources and campaigns the group has a young people's forum which informs this work. The young people meet with professionals on a fortnightly basis and are currently being trained to actively support future work in order to "youth proof processes, procedures, publicity and activity.
- 3.2 The delivery plan has been developed in consultation with and by members of a range of agencies from both safeguarding and community safety partnerships through the CSE & Missing Persons Strategic Sub-group of the Local Childrens Safeguarding Board.

4. Timetable for implementing this decision

- 4.1 The delivery plan is operational and being delivered against with performance management of progress and effectiveness being reported to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. Further recommendations arising from this report can be implemented with immediate effect.

5. Comments from Executive Director, Resources

5.1 Financial implications

Funding for the team has come from 2 sources: re-direction of existing work/resource and from the additional monies for Children's Services through the budget setting process (£13M in 2015/16, reducing to £10M in 2016/17). This funding approach reflects that work was already undertaken in this area, alongside the need to provide a more co-ordinated response and increase support and expertise in this area.

The additional resource for the CSE Team is £242K in 2015/16, and the team consists of a Team Manager, 2 social workers, 2 Children & Family workers and a Support Worker. The Child Violence & Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator post is funded from resource within Community Safety.

There is continued review and monitoring of the additional monies for Children's Social Care identified in the 2015/16 Budget Setting process, alongside activity levels and the requirements of the Improvement Plan. This area will need to be included as part of that process.

5.2 Legal implications

The Children Act 1989 imposes statutory obligations to safeguard children. These obligations are extended to specific persons and bodies to engage and work with the Local Authority to safeguard local children by virtue of Section 11 of The Children Act 2004.

These statutory safeguarding functions are supplemented by statutory guidance: 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2013' and 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation', 2009. The 2013 guidance imposes a legislative requirement on individual services to safeguard and promote the welfare of children; and requires a clear framework for the Local Safeguarding Children Board to monitor the effectiveness of local services.

Specifically in respect of CSE, the statutory responsibilities of local agencies, including councils, are set out in the 2009 supplementary guidance. The 2011 National Action Plan further clarifies these, and also brings together a range of commitments from national and local partners.

The Police have numerous legislative powers for safeguarding children, undertaking investigations and disruption of perpetrators. This requires close working together between the police, children's and health services to discharge their statutory duty to identify and eradicate CSE.

There are a range of civil interventions that Local Authorities can use, dependent upon the circumstances of individual cases.

The case of Birmingham City Council v Riaz and others [2014] provides Local Authorities with a precedent for invoking the inherent jurisdiction of the High Court to protect a young person and others from CSE.

6. Other implications

- 6.1 How will this contribute to achievement of the Council's key objectives / corporate priorities (corporate plan/scorecard) / organisational blueprint / Local Area Agreement (or Coventry Sustainable Community Strategy)?

Contribute towards the Children's improvement plan

Contribute towards delivery against The Community Safety Strategic Assessment and priorities for tackling harmful behaviour in 2015/15.

- 6.2 How is risk being managed?

Oversight and monitoring will be carried out by Local Safeguarding Children Board & Police Crime & Community Safety Board.

6.3 What is the impact on the organisation?

Management of victims, offenders and work to prevent or disrupt this behaviour taking in locations and near establishments will require the resources of a number of agencies and will impact on staffing and human resources.

6.4 Equalities / EIA

Equalities impact assessment will be required in relation to CSE as it affects vulnerable groups and will also need to consider the profile of perpetrators.

6.5 Implications for (or impact on) the environment

CSE happens in public spaces and locations and therefore has a devastating impact on the community's health and well-being and the environment. Tackling this issue from a people and place perspective is critical to improving the environment as well as improving people's lives.

6.6 Implications for partner organisations?

Responding to CSE requires a range of approaches, interventions and actions by a number of agencies and use of their resources with which to target and disrupt locations, protect victims and those vulnerable to this issue whilst managing perpetrators through sanctions.

The support and involvement of communities is critical to addressing and preventing this type of behaviour taking place

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