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To: Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2)

21<sup>st</sup> October 2021

Subject: Children's Services Horizon Team (Child Exploitation Team)

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## 1 Purpose of the Note

- 1.1 To inform the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) of the safeguarding measures and engagement approaches adopted by the Horizon Team when working with children and young people deemed at risk of Child Exploitation and the progress to date.

## 2 Recommendations

- 2.1 The Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Board (2) are recommended to:

- 1) Consider the content of the briefing note and appendix
- 2) Identify any recommendations for the Cabinet Member

## 3 Information/Background

- 3.1 The Horizon Team sits within Responsive Services and work closely alongside the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and Emergency Duty Team (EDT).
- 3.2 The Horizon Team, is a multi-disciplinary team, comprising of social workers, youth workers, child and family workers, a harm reduction and victim support officer, Missing Coordinator, West Midlands Police Officers from the Child Sexual Exploitation Team, Child Criminal Exploitation, Youth Violence Reduction Unit and LOCATE Missing Police Team.
- 3.3 The Horizon Team work with children and young people resident in Coventry aged between 10-18 years who are deemed at risk of child exploitation.
- 3.4 The Horizon team accept referrals directly from MASH and via the internal transfer protocol from Social Work Teams.
- 3.5 The Horizon Team hold smaller caseloads to deliver intensive and bespoke intervention plans for children and young people, allocated with the Horizon Team, Area Social Work Teams and Through Care service.

## 4 Safeguarding Measures

- 4.1 The Horizon Team work collaboratively to ensure children and young people who are deemed at risk of child exploitation are safeguarded.
- 4.2 The Horizon Team:
- Provide timely and effective interventions with children, young people and families to safeguard those vulnerable to exploitation. **Appendix 1 (Safety Planning, Key Ring Presentation and young people case studies presentation).**

- Practice in a Restorative and Relationship Based approach that is underpinned by the Signs of Safety Framework. The practice framework ensures that the intervention with children, young people and their families, will make a difference to their lives and improve their outcomes.
- Apply pro-active problem solving to address the risks associated with victims, perpetrators and locations and ensure children and young people who are or may be at risk from child exploitation are safeguarded.
- Work closely with parents and carers to keep children and young people within their family. The Horizon Team identify and implement bespoke intervention packages and safety plans to stabilise and strengthen relationships that reduce the opportunities for exploitation.
- Are creative in identifying services for young people post 18 to ensure that their needs continue to be met. The Horizon Team work closely with partner agencies to explore the safeguarding offer for all young people post 18.
- Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people by working in conjunction with the police to prosecute and disrupt perpetrators. This also includes support for young people that will provide evidence in criminal trials through a bespoke victim and harm package.
- To raise awareness and provide preventative education for the welfare of children and young people who are, or may be, exploited.

## **5 Collaborative Working**

- 5.1 The Horizon Team work collaboratively with stakeholders in response to the increased risks of child exploitation, to improve positive outcomes for children and young people within Coventry.
- 5.2 The Horizon Team work closely with the MASH to ensure a timely and robust response to new referrals involving children and young people deemed at risk of Child Exploitation is provided.
- 5.3 The Horizon Team provide Social Work teams case consultations when there are emerging child exploitation concerns identified for young people.
- 5.4 The Horizon Team have developed positive Cross Boarder working relationships with both Local Authorities and Police Departments across the region. This activity continues to strengthen and now includes both a Horizon and Youth Offending Representative attending bi-monthly meetings with Warwickshire Local Authority and Police Department. The purpose of this meeting is to share information and set actions to safeguard young people who are believed to be involved in County Lines, Groups or Gangs.
- 5.5 For the Regional Police Action Week scheduled for 11<sup>th</sup> – 17<sup>th</sup> October 2021, the Horizon Team and West Midlands Violence Reduction Unit have developed a Child Exploitation awareness event for Education Designated Safeguarding Leads. The purpose of the event is to identify gaps in knowledge for the Educational Safeguarding Lead within Coventry City Council to assist in the development of bespoke training packages for Education Provisions.
- 5.6 To compliment the raising awareness event, the Horizon Team have assisted in the co-ordination of Police School Link Officers offering continued support, raising awareness, assisting school staff in completing child exploitation screening tools and offering to speak with young people alongside staff members to build upon community engagement.

- 5.7 The Horizon Service Manager works closely with the Education leads to strengthen collaborative working at both a strategic and operational level. The Horizon Social Workers attend Education Provisions, that provides both the young people and teaching staff opportunities of joint interventions.

## **6 Safeguarding Arrangements**

- 6.1 The Horizon Team are accountable for leading, responding and managing the following work streams:
- Daily Missing Triage Meeting - The Missing Co-Ordinator or Team Manager within Responsive Services chair the daily missing triage meeting. In attendance are a West Midlands Police Missing Person Officer, West Midlands Police Youth Violence Reduction Officer and Education Representative. With this consistent attendance and information sharing from all representatives, a timely response to a child or young person's missing episode is achieved, evidencing risk management, defensible decision making, actions and solutions to reduce future missing episodes that are recorded on the child or young person's case file.
  - Weekly Child Exploitation Screening Review Meeting. The Horizon Team review all Child Exploitation Screening Tools to ensure a timely response to the risks identified can be implemented. This may involve, scheduling a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Meeting that will review, agree risk levels, identify and implement intervention and disruption plans with stakeholders, parents/carers and young people.
  - Weekly Extended Multi-Agency Child Exploitation and Missing Meeting. The purpose of this meeting is to review children and young people who have come to the attention of agencies in relation to child exploitation, serious youth violence, county lines and gangs inclusive of missing children. Panel members work collaboratively to achieve joint planning and decision making to develop a multi-agency risk management plan that compliments pre-existing plans. Panel members will monitor the progress and impact in order to achieve positive outcomes for children and young people who are vulnerable to exploitation.
- 6.2 The Horizon Team are Core Panel Members for the following panels:
- Monthly Serious Youth Violence Forum
  - Monthly Vulnerable and Missing Person (VAMP)
  - Monthly Child Operation Group (COG)
  - Monthly Youth One Day One Conversation (YODOC)

## **7 Action Plan: Safeguarding and tackling Child Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence**

- Recruitment of an additional five full time Social Workers and three full time Adolescent Workers to be achieved by January 2021.
- Appointment of a Health Navigator by November 2021.
- An additional two West Midlands Police Officers joining the Horizon Team by the end of November 2021. A further four West Midlands Police Officers will join within the New Year (2022).
- A three tier Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Training Package to be developed and implemented for Children Services and the Safeguarding Partnership Board by December 2021.

- Six weekly Champion Group Sessions will continue to be facilitated by the Operational Lead of the Youth Offending Service and Service Manager of the Horizon Team. This group offers participants access to updates on current trends and themes in respect of Child Exploitation within Coventry. Participants have access to resources, services and training opportunities that can be embedded into daily practice when working with children deemed at risk of Child Exploitation.
- The development of an intelligence product that shared across the partnership. This document will be designed to increase awareness of the trends, themes, services, resources and actions being taken to identify, safeguard, reduce and tackle Child Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence.

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## **Appendix**

Appendix 1: Safety Planning and Key Ring Presentation