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| Young People's Scrutiny Committee |
| 18 th June 2014 |

| <u>Item</u> |
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Child Sexual Exploitation

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1. Summary

- 1.1 The report summarises the latest position in relation to Shropshire's response to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).
- 1.2 The report includes information regarding the national and local picture in relation to CSE.
- 1.3 The report includes information from the CSE multi-agency panel with regards to the processes and outcomes achieved.

2. Recommendations

- 2.1 The members of the panel are asked to note the contents of this report.
- 2.2 Members are asked to comment on strategies to improve Community and Private/Commercial Sector engagement in identifying and reporting CSE.

REPORT

3. Risk Assessment and Opportunities Appraisal

(NB this will include the following: Risk Management, Human Rights, Equalities, Community, Environmental consequences and other Consultation)

There are no human rights or legal implications arising from this report.

4. Financial Implications

- 4.1 This report does not have any direct financial implications, but presents information to support decision making. Accountable officers, senior managers and key decision makers may use the information to inform actions

or interventions for the prioritisation and use of resources. There are financial implications of not having robust strategies to prevent and manage CSE risks.

5. Background

5.1 Introduction

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of child abuse, which can happen to boys and girls from any background or community. It can range from seemingly 'consensual' relationships, informal exchanges of sex in order to get affection, accommodation or gifts, through to exploitation by gangs involved in serious, organised crime. The definition used by the Government is:

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

Professionals working with children and young people include Health Professionals, Social Workers, Carers and Teachers can often identify young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation. Poor family relationships, poverty, abusive environments, truancy, poor peer relationships, drug/alcohol misuse and a care background can be early indicators of vulnerability to coercers and abusers.

5.2 National Picture

As the prevalence of CSE across the country is beginning to be better understood (with high profile cases in Rochdale, Derbyshire, Oxford and Telford to name a few) there is a drive from government to tackle the issue at a national level as well as a directive to LSCB's to implement local strategies.

November 2013 saw the publication of the final report from the Office of the Children's Commissioner into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, '[If Only Someone Had Listened](#)'. This two year enquiry found that 2,409 children and young people were found to be victims of CSE by gangs and groups and that 16,500 children and young people were identified as being at risk of CSE, although this figure is likely to be higher. The report also found that agencies and services are failing to protect children and young people from CSE.

Following the completion of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's enquiry it is anticipated that there will be changes to government guidance, however in the meantime we continue to be guided by the Department for

Education guidance '[Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, 2009](#)' (issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 and Section 16 of the Children Act 2004, i.e. LSCB's, local authorities and their Board partners are required to act under its general guidance unless there are exceptional reasons not to).

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are responsible for ensuring that appropriate local procedures are in place to tackle child sexual exploitation. All frontline practitioners need to be aware of those procedures (including ones for early help) and how they relate to their own areas of responsibility. LSCBs and frontline practitioners should ensure that actions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are sexually exploited focus on the needs of the child.

A strong commitment from leaders and senior managers at a local level should be demonstrable; for example through the identification of CSE champions.

5.3 Local response

5.4 Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board

Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board through its Child Exploitation sub-group developed a CSE strategy and practitioners toolkit which was launched in the autumn of 2011 (and arrangements reviewed in summer 2013). The strategy and toolkit was designed to assist practitioners with the identification, prevention and appropriate intervention in relation to CSE and trafficking.

A multi-agency CSE Panel was created in December 2011 (and arrangements reviewed in summer 2013) to provide some oversight of CSE cases and develop appropriate responses to CSE. The CSE panel acts as the key mechanism for agreeing how relevant organisations will co-operate and work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are identified as experiencing or at risk of experiencing CSE in Shropshire.

5.5 Reporting and Outcomes

We have seen a 44% increase of cases (39) referred to CSE Panel in 2013/14 when compared to (27) 2012/13. This indicates that agencies are becoming more confident in identifying potential cases of CSE. Relevant data and profiling is reported to the SSCB to ensure effectiveness of arrangements to safeguard children from CSE. This is overlaid with data relating to children missing from home, care and more recently education as we know episodes of missing increase the risk of and vulnerability to CSE.

The multi-agency CSE panel has been integral to co-ordinating effective measures to disrupt the activity of CSE by utilising Local Authority child protection measures and the powers of the Police and Education colleagues. Such measures prevent perpetrators or potential perpetrators having contact with the victim, or prevent perpetrators and/or others from facilitating abuse or absence from school by prohibiting a young person gaining access to a certain address.

Schools are well placed to identify the risk indicators of CSE and to deliver preventative education to young people. There is head teacher representation

on the Child Exploitation sub-group and a number of schools, although lower than anticipated, have referred cases in to the CSE panel.

The need for a whole school approach to healthy relationships and CSE has become apparent through the cases considered at CSE panel over the last 2 years. It is acknowledged that schools deliver Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) differently and it is important that preventative education in relation to CSE is included in these programmes. Over the next 12 months the Child Exploitation sub-group will be working with Education providers to support this message.

The effectiveness of the CSE panel is monitored in a variety of ways including feedback from professionals. Below is an example from social work services.

“The use of CSE panel has demonstrated how a multi-agency approach is beneficial to the sharing of information between professionals and how an effective action plan can be devised to ensure these children and young people can be safeguarded. The information provided also gives the Local Authority assistance in completing assessments whereby, social worker intervention is required. It also highlights when referrals to Local Authority have been made and also where this has not taken place.

Direct work by social workers with children and young people who may be at risk of CSE always use the assessment toolkit which provides a good indication as to what level they maybe being exploited.”

5.5 Workforce

The SSCB has delivered training, with the aim of increasing professional confidence and knowledge in identifying and working with CSE, to frontline professionals with 100% of evaluations showing that the participants agreed or strongly agreed that they were satisfied with the training and that the course aims were met.

Additional training sessions were delivered to:

Elected Members, as part of their induction process on the 20th May 2013.

Multi-agency audience event held on the 10th December 2013 for 80 delegates, this included a performance of *Chelsea's Choice* a national recognised innovative 'applied theatre' performance that has now been seen by over 50,000 young people and hundreds of professionals throughout the UK.

Licensing group on the 17th December 2013; this focused on Child Sexual Exploitation and its implications to licencing and links in particular to taxi licences. This session was co-delivered with Police colleagues and Adult Safeguarding Board.

5.6 Direct work with young people

A two day targeted support programme called *Empower* was developed by Targeted Youth Support and the Police for girls at risk of CSE, going missing and the misuse of substances.

The first two pilots of the *Empower* project were very successful with all young people who participated saying that they learnt a lot and had a better understanding of some of the risks that they were exposed to.

There was a dramatic reduction in the number of missing episodes following young people's involvement with the programme and a number of young people were signposted to further support services as their needs were better understood. Self-evaluations by the participants of their journey through the programme were completed at the end of the programme. Each of the evaluations showed an increase in participants believing in themselves, learning and feeling empowered to make safe choices. The participating school also indicated that the sessions have helped with self-esteem and created deeper bonds within the friendship groups. It is believed that this will encourage the young people to 'look out for one another' in the future. In addition, it has been noted that there is a difference in their reactions to members of staff and a deeper level of trust in the staff.

There are plans to train more professionals to deliver this programme and also to develop something similar for young men.

5.7 Parents/Carers/Communities

The Child Exploitation sub-group will also begin to work with communities, hotels, nightclubs, public transport and shopping centres to further protect children from exploitation and will begin to work with partners, including PACE (Parents against Child Exploitation) the leading national organisation, to provide support to parents.

6. Additional Information

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| List of Background Papers (This MUST be completed for all reports, but does not include items containing exempt or confidential information) |
| A. Office of the Children's Commissioner report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, 'If Only Someone Had Listened' |
| B. Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance, 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, 2009' |
| C. Shropshire Safeguarding Children Board CSE Guidance, http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/pdfs/cse_prac_guide.pdf |
| Cabinet Member (Portfolio Holder) |
| Cllr Ann Hartley |
| Local Member |
| Appendices |