

14 July 2014

Agenda Item: 10

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) UPDATE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to update the Children and Young People's Committee on the progress of child sexual exploitation work being undertaken within Nottinghamshire. It is proposed that a further report be provided to the Committee in six months.

Information and Advice

2. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) remains a high profile area of safeguarding children work and will be considered as part of an Ofsted inspection. It is also a subject that is of potential media interest.
3. Locally work remains overseen by a cross-authority (Nottinghamshire County and Nottingham City) multi-agency group which continues to take forward the work identified within the local strategy and action plan. This group meets quarterly and is chaired by a Detective Inspector from Nottinghamshire Police Sexual Exploitation Investigation Unit. The chair reports to the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board as this work is one of its key priorities. Within Children's Social Care there is a strategic lead whose role is to support developments in this area of work.
4. Since the last report to the Children and Young People's Committee in January 2014, the focus has remained on promoting professional awareness via: training; engagement with children, young people and their families; organisational issues; and data collation. Consideration has also been given to the final report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner Report (November 2013) *'If only someone had listened'* following its enquiry into child sexual exploitation within gangs and groups. The notable implications arising from this review are incorporated into this report.

Office of the Children's Commissioner Report (November 2013)

5. The Office of the Children's Commissioner has produced four reports linked to child sexual exploitation. The final report was lengthy and complex, detailing the findings of their research which identified both failings and examples of good practice alongside a set of recommendations. The report also set out a framework for tackling child sexual exploitation which will be further considered by the cross-authority group to ensure that the key areas are reflected within the local action plan.

6. Some of the more conceptual elements of the Office of the Children's Commissioner Report will be tested through a multi-agency Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board audit of cases during 2014/15. This will enable, for example, auditors to consider if *'the voice of the child'* has been heard in the context of *'don't make assumptions about who I am and what I need ... help make me safe and stop it happening'*.
7. Whilst the focus of the report was on gangs and groups, its scope and the subsequent findings were much broader. This report was one of a number of reports and research published regarding child sexual exploitation over a relatively short period of time.

Training and professional awareness

8. Training provided under the auspices of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board has continued to raise professional awareness in identifying and responding to child sexual exploitation. During 2013/14, and to date, there have been nine training sessions delivered to over 300 professionals from the County although it is recognised that this is a small proportion of the overall multi-agency workforce. Three more events are planned for 2014/15 and consideration is being given to a follow on course. Two events specifically focussing on the sexual exploitation of boys is also planned for 2014. To reach a wider audience, a basic e-learning module is now available; all agencies and contractors will be asked to promote its completion by all staff including those involved in more peripheral roles e.g. park rangers or licencing officers. Some workers who do not work directly with children may be in positions to identify concerning behaviour and share intelligence.
9. A practice forum, led by the NSPCC has been established. Its first meeting took place in December 2013 and a further meeting will take place by September 2014. The practice forum will contribute to meeting the 'voice of the professional' aspects of the Office of the Children's Commissioner report as it provides an opportunity for professionals to come together to discuss cases and share best practice and learning.

Engagement with children, young people and their families

10. As noted in the last report, thirteen schools and academies benefitted from a specially commissioned play performed by an educational theatre company. The play and an accompanying workshop aim to increase children's awareness of risks of sexual exploitation. Feedback was positive and all of the remaining schools and academies in Nottinghamshire have been offered one free performance with the option to purchase more.
11. It is important that parents and carers are aware of the risks of sexual exploitation to support them in trying to keep their children safe. To facilitate this a free e-learning course, developed by the voluntary sector, has been shared with a range of professionals who work with parents or carers with the request that they promote it. This included foster carers both within the Local Authority and the independent sector. All secondary schools and academies have also been asked by the Corporate Director for Children, Families and Cultural Services to promote the e-learning with the parents of their pupils.

12. A child sexual exploitation project worker from the voluntary sector is now available to work with a number of children who may be at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation. This post is available for a year and will be evaluated by their organisation in conjunction with officers from Children, Families and Cultural Services.
13. Over the next three to six months focus will be given to promoting the engagement of children by, for example, their participation in child sexual exploitation multi-agency meetings.

Organisational issues

14. To assist with strengthening and progressing both the development of the action plan and operational practice, it is proposed to ring fence a 0.5 full-time equivalent post from within the independent chair service. This will allow specific focus on key areas such as the engagement of young people and further develop joint working with the police.
15. In addition to the developmental work being undertaken, there is a well-established operational response to cases. Multi-agency strategy meetings are held for cases where it is identified that children or young people are at risk of, or are experiencing, child sexual exploitation. These meetings are chaired by a Child Protection Coordinator and relevant agencies are involved in order to ensure appropriate sharing of information and planning.
16. Feedback from the 2013/14 Governor Compliance Checklist for schools, which is specifically for secondary schools and academies, has been evaluated. They were asked the question:

Does your school include Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) within PHSE curriculum?

Circle in which year: - Year 7 Year 8 Year 9 Year 10 Year 11

17. Twenty-two out of 46 secondary schools/academies returned the checklist and of these 16 responded to the question. Seven of the 16 include child sexual exploitation within the curriculum across all year groups and nine across some. One learning centre also provides input across all year groups and four special schools confirmed that they provide work as appropriate to the needs of the children.
18. It is positive that many of the schools and academies that responded do provide learning opportunities about child sexual exploitation for their children and young people but equally there were a number of non-responders and therefore an unknown element.
19. With respect to the parental e-learning, before the end of the summer term all schools and academies will be contacted to ask if they have supported the promotion of the course referred to earlier in this report.
20. Promoted through Nottinghamshire County Council the NSPCC continues to offer work to all schools with Year 5 and 6 pupils on 'keeping happy and safe' which includes an e-safety and exploitation angle. The Nottinghamshire County Council anti-bullying co-ordinator also offers e-safety sessions to parents and schools and other settings, predominantly in the primary sector. The aim of this training for schools is to promote the embedding of e-safety within the curriculum, and the ethos of the school, by raising

awareness, showing and recommending resources and talking about the safeguarding issues for staff and students. For parents the emphasis is on keeping up to date with new technology and how young people are using it and how to support young people so they can grow up safely in the digital world. There are currently approximately 20 sessions provided each term.

21. There remains a significant opportunity to consider how to improve engagement, particularly with secondary schools and academies, over the subject of teaching child sexual exploitation within its curriculum. It is recognised that this is a difficult national issue as there is no statutory basis for this work, a point which was raised within the Office of the Children's Commissioner Report. Over the coming year further consideration will be given as to how schools and academies can be supported and influenced to engage their young people on the issue within the context of sexual relationship education or personal, social and health education work. The theatre group project and the governor compliance checklist will support this process and other strategies will also be considered.

Data

22. During 2013/14 104 sexual exploitation strategy meetings have been held in relation to 47 individual children and of these 13 related to looked after children and two who were subject to a child protection plan. The numbers of strategy meetings is an increase on the previous year which demonstrates a higher level of identification and referral to services. The risk of child sexual exploitation also features within some reports when children have gone missing. The police continue to investigate a range of cases linked to child sexual exploitation in collaboration with children's social care and other agencies and there have been convictions arising from their work.

Conclusion

23. As noted in previous reports, the concerns relate to a relatively small minority of young people but they are seen as vulnerable and in need of a robust response from agencies.
24. Building on previous work there have been many developments over the last two years in the way that child sexual exploitation has been managed and responded to both within Children's Social Care and across partnerships under the auspices of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board.

Other Options Considered

25. As this report is for noting, it is not necessary to consider other options.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

26. The Children and Young People's Committee should continue to have scrutiny and oversight of the developments to further develop the response to child sexual exploitation within Nottinghamshire.

Statutory and Policy Implications

27. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of finance, the public sector equality duty, human resources, crime and disorder, human rights, the safeguarding of children, sustainability and the environment and those using the service and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That:

- 1) progress made regarding developments in the response to child sexual exploitation within Nottinghamshire be noted
- 2) a further report be provided to the Children and Young People's Committee in six months.

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Constitutional Comments

28. As this report is for noting only, no Constitutional Comments are required.

Financial Comments (KLA 25/06/14)

29. There are no financial implications arising directly from this report.

Background Papers and Published Documents

Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 5 November 2012

Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 10 June 2013

Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 13 January 2014

'If only someone had listened' – Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, Final Report, November 2013

Except for previously published documents, which will be available elsewhere, the documents listed here will be available for inspection in accordance with Section 100D of the Local Government Act 1972.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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