

21st September 2020**Agenda Item: 5****REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES****CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND CHILDREN MISSING FROM
HOME AND CARE: ANNUAL REPORT 2019/20****Purpose of the Report**

1. Members requested an annual report to the Children and Young People's Committee following high profile enquiries into child sexual exploitation and missing children in several local authorities. Update reports were presented to the Committee in June 2019 and December 2019, providing an overview of the work to address children who go missing from home and care and child sexual exploitation. This report provides an update against the Council's 2019 - 20 priorities and analysis of the statistical data for the year end 2019/20.
2. The report seeks approval for the Committee to receive quarterly performance data, to be included in the quarterly performance reports to this Committee, and further six monthly reports providing an overview of the work to address the threat of child sexual exploitation and children missing from home and care in Nottinghamshire.

Information**Strategic Partnerships, Governance and Service Provision**

3. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and children missing from home and care continue to be high priority areas of work by partner agencies in Nottinghamshire. Until recently, the Child Sexual Exploitation Cross Authority Group (CSECAG), chaired by the Detective Chief Inspector (Public Protection), oversaw this work on behalf of Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City safeguarding partnerships, and it has since been agreed that the governance structures across exploitation work (to include criminal exploitation for example) be pulled together. To this end a new group has been agreed with a first meeting planned for October 2020. Work concerning Children Missing from Home and Care is overseen by the County Missing Children Steering Group. Both groups report into the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCP). Statistical information for both service areas is reported quarterly and annually to the NSCP.
4. The statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children was updated in July: *Working together to safeguard children 2018*. This updated version includes brief guidance on Contextual Safeguarding which recognises the complexities of assessing children who are at risk of exploitation from

individuals/sources in the community, outside of their families. CSE is one form of such exploitation, others include criminal exploitation, trafficking by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines and radicalisation. The Council agreed and circulated the Child Criminal Exploitation Guidance and Procedures in April 2020, this document details the processes now in place to address Child Criminal Exploitation and the services available to support children and families. Professionals are reminded of the importance of considering all types of exploitation to which children may be exposed and the interrelated nature of these.

5. The most recent Police Problem Profile (November 2019) notes a 6% decrease in crime from 2018, however there is a 13% increase in demand. Of the offences investigated, 47% involved contact with the child and 33% was online. Perpetrators of CSE in the County are predominantly White British males; 17% of perpetrators are female. The exploitation is committed largely by individuals and on occasion with more than one child. Alcohol and drugs remain key factors in sexual exploitation. Nottinghamshire data bears out this data.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

6. Annual CSE data is as follows:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total children identified as potentially at risk of CSE	433	525	560	502
New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals re CSE	263	324	361	326
CSE Risk Assessments completed	335	439	378	344
Children considered at CSE Strategy Meetings	82 + 16 ICPCs	108 + 20 ICPCs	64 + 38 ICPCs	56 + 42 ICPCs
Peak age range (yrs)	14-15	15-16	15-17	14-17
Female: Male ratio	80:20	79:21	74:26	89:11
Children monitored at Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel	N/A	65	54	65

* (new and open cases)

7. A total of 502 children were identified as potentially at risk of CSE; 326 of those children were new referrals to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and 344 CSE risk assessments were completed. Referrals to MASH for CSE concerns dipped in 2019/20, this coincides with the Police noting a reduction in crime occurrences. The numbers of meetings considering children at risk of CSE remain relatively consistent since 2016 apart from a spike in 2017/18.

8. Those children deemed at risk of CSE whose parents are assessed as unable to protect them are considered at child protection conferences rather than CSE strategy meetings; this number increased significantly in 2018/19 and has increased slightly in 2019/20.
9. Most of the children identified at risk of CSE are aged between 14 and 17 years, and the majority are female. The mean age of children monitored at the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel was 14 years, 8 of whom were male. Most of the children are of British White ethnicity.
10. The Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel, MASE, has been running for 18 months. It is attended monthly by senior management representatives from Children's Social Care, Police, Health services including sexual health, The Children's Society, Safeguarding Lead for the District Councils and Education services. The Panel considers those children on the Police database deemed at high risk of CSE, those identified as perpetrators of exploitation and places of concern. This ensures interventions are coordinated, robust and effective.
11. The current age range is not dissimilar to the range reported nationally. This adolescent life stage is characterised by young people seeking greater independence from parents, coming under an increasing influence of peers and extra familial associates and exploring relationships and sexuality, these largely age appropriate behaviours increase this group's vulnerability to grooming and sexual exploitation.
12. Children's Social Care continues to undertake preventive and keeping safe work with children and their parents/carers who meet the threshold for Social Care involvement. Social Workers complete CSE risk assessments with the identified children, subsequent work is co-ordinated to address these risks and can include CSE Strategy Meetings attended by Children's Social Care, Police, Health, Education Services and The Children's Society. The Family Service also undertakes preventive and keeping safe work with those children not meeting the threshold for Social Care involvement. The TECT team has worked with children in selected primary and secondary schools to develop raps, poems and resources to address issues of online safety, harmful sexual behaviour and exploitation for use in schools.
13. The Children's Society is currently commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council to provide both focused support to children and their families to those children most traumatised by sexual abuse including CSE, however this contract is due to end in June 2021 and the re-commissioning process is underway. The East Midlands Children and Young People's Sexual Assault Service provides medical care and assessment to those children who have been sexually assaulted and access to the Children's Independent Sexual Violence Advisors who offer support and advocacy. The Children's Society service will be available to provide therapeutic support to these children.
14. The Police and the Local Authority work closely to address incidents of CSE with individual children and families and in the strategic overview provided by MASE. In addition, a bi-monthly Concerns Network Meeting allows the Police to share intelligence about people and places with partner agencies to aid prevention and early intervention.

15. Ongoing work is undertaken with Council staff to ensure the procedures are understood and put into practice. Planning is underway to move the NSCP Multi Agency CSE training online.
16. Where children are found to experience both CSE and CCE (Child Criminal Exploitation), the pathway for the predominant risk is followed while ensuring all risks are addressed in the work undertaken.
17. The impact of Covid 19 and lockdown has not resulted in a marked reduction in either CSE or CCE concerns and it is thought that some concerns may have been hidden during this time.

Children Missing from Home and Care

18. Annual children missing from home and care data is as follows:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
Total notifications of children 'missing' and 'missing – no apparent risk'*	2,662	2,461	2,764	2,462
*relating to individuals	994	951	967	911
*ratio males to females	52:48	54:45	53:47	56:44
*age range (yrs)	14-17	13-17	14-17	14-17
	Validated post year end 2016/17			
Children missing from home (relating to individuals)	705	695 (1,269 episodes)	686 (1,230 episodes)	646 (1,078 episodes)
NCC Children missing from care (relating to individuals) <i>NB includes NCC looked after children missing from out of area</i>	163	140 (764 episodes)	173 (973 episodes)	166 (774 episodes)
Other Local Authority Children missing from care in Notts (relating to individuals)	145	119 (427 episodes)	147 (582 episodes)	124 (610 episodes)
% Return Interviews (RI) required	82	77	80 (total of 2,235)	87 (total of 2,154)
% RIs required from Children's Social Care			62	55
% RIs required from Family Service			17	21
			>1	2

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	2019/20
% RIs required from Adoption Service % RIs required from other Local Authorities			21	25
% RIs completed by Children's Social Care % RIs completed by Family Service % RIs completed by Adoption Service % RIs completed by other Local Authorities			70 (977) 94 (354) 100 (1) 36 (173)	75 (893) 96 (413) 100 (2) 29 (148)
% Multi-agency meetings * required <i>NB of total notifications of missing and missing-no apparent risk</i>	12	11	13 (360 total)	13 (321 total)
% Multi-agency meetings completed <i>NB of meetings required</i> <i>*MAM held when child missing 72hrs or 3 times in 90 days</i>	74	67	78 (284)	68 (218)

19. The overall number of children missing from home and care remains consistent with previous years as does the average age at which children go missing and there continues to be a slightly higher number of boys going missing. The main reasons given for children going missing remains due to relationship difficulties between parent and child or resistance to boundaries within the home/care setting and most of these children are missing for less than 4 hours at any one time.
20. Over 80% of reported missing episodes, this includes both children assessed by the Police as 'Missing' and those assessed as 'Missing – no apparent risk', require a Return Interview. The Return Interview is a key opportunity to understand a child's missing experience.
21. The majority of Return Interviews are undertaken by Children's Social Care with a completion rate of 75%. While this figure requires improvement, it is noted this is largely due to administrative issues rather than a lack of action by social workers in response to a child reported missing (i.e. not recording activity in a way that it can be reported). This figure also includes Return Interviews completed with NCC Looked After children placed in other local authority areas.
22. For those children placed in Nottinghamshire by other local authorities (OLAs), it is the responsibility of the placing authority to complete (or arrange for the completion of) Return Interviews. As previously reported, completions (or attempts) we are made

aware of remains stubbornly low at 29%. OLA accounts for 14% (124 children) of the total missing children. As not all local authorities provide a return interview for children assessed as 'missing – no apparent risk' given this is not a statutory requirement (though is recommended by the All Party Parliamentary Group for Missing children and adults), this results in ongoing difficulties in obtaining RIs from some LAs despite the expectation being that Social Workers follow the Missing protocol of the LA in which the child is placed. The joint protocol agreed by East Midlands regional partners has gone some way to addressing this, however the latest figures indicate that the bulk of issues lie with near neighbours. Discussion with senior managers in those authorities is taking place to escalate this issue and promote compliance with the regional agreement. Two further authorities outside of the region have also been identified for further escalation of concerns which will take place as soon as possible.

23. The last quarter 2019/20 saw Nottinghamshire caring for 923 looked after children with 79 of these children placed outside of the East Midlands region. The Children Missing Officer routinely contacts a child's placement when notified of a placement out of area to provide Nottinghamshire's missing protocol and contact details to ensure Nottinghamshire children placed out of area receive support and intervention when they go missing from care.
24. More children go missing from home than from care however more children go missing from care on multiple occasions than from home. Children in the care of the Local Authority have complex issues and their missing episodes reflect this, children placed in residential care and supported accommodation are more likely to go missing on multiple occasions.
25. The Children Missing Officers and the Police Missing Team work closely to address missing in Nottinghamshire ensuring police reports of missing children are sent promptly to the Children Missing Officer. The Police Missing Team and the Children Missing Officer then work closely with residential staff and social workers to assist in finding missing children following the guidance.
26. The Police-led multi-agency Missing and Hotspots meeting meets monthly to consider those children who go missing most frequently, ensuring information is shared to assist in finding them and appropriate plans are in place to address the missing behaviour.
27. The Missing Steering Group meets quarterly and takes a strategic lead in the coordination of inter-agency work in relation to children who go missing from home or care in Nottinghamshire as defined in the NSCB/NCSCB Children Missing from Home and Care Joint Procedures including those children deemed missing – no apparent risk by the police.

Progress against key priorities for 2019/20

28. These key priorities were identified in the annual report, previously presented to Committee, for the year 2018-19. Below are those priorities along with the updated position.

Complete staff training with MASH colleagues to appropriately apply CSE flags	This training was undertaken in a bespoke session, it is recognised this will
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	need to be repeated as new staff join the service.
Continue to raise the profile of the Concerns Network	The work of the Concerns Network and use of the Operation Striver forms is covered in all CSE training
Through CSECAG, work to improve the partnership's understanding of vulnerability specific to minority communities, boys, LGBT+, disability and additional needs relating to CSE	A review of the work of CSECAG began in 2019/20 to include the wider Children at Risk of Exploitation agenda, this remains underway. The vulnerabilities of these groups are addressed through CSE training.
Develop strategies to increase the response rate and quality of Return Interviews	Strategies include weekly reminders to managers alerting them to RI approaching the due date. While this has led to some improvement, further work is needed to increase and maintain progress.
Develop a Mosaic 'step' to record Return Interviews and Multi Agency Meetings	This remains underway due to the pressures on the Mosaic Team.
Develop strategies to improve communication from and to other local authorities who place looked after children in Nottinghamshire from outside of the East Midlands	This remains underway.
Ensure that the children missing from home and care procedures are incorporated into all agendas and training schedules about the exploitation of children	Missing children and the Missing Protocol information is planned into child exploitation training events and specific Missing Children e-learning has been agreed.

Key priorities for 2020/21

29. Priorities for the forthcoming year:

- working with the wider cross authority Children at Risk of Exploitation agenda to further integrate our response to children facing different types of exploitation
- work to further develop reporting from the MASE
- work to develop a Mosaic 'step' to record Return Interviews and Multi-Agency Meetings
- continue to work to increase the completion rate and quality of RIs
- work to improve Multi-Agency Meetings completion

- engage the Regional group to address and improve missing amongst OLAs
- explore early intervention to reduce the numbers of children missing from home
- explore and address multiple missing episodes for children in supported accommodation.

Other Options Considered

30. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

31. Agree future arrangements for the Committee to receive performance data and information on this work.

Statutory and Policy Implications

32. This report has been compiled after consideration of implications in respect of crime and disorder, data protection and information governance, finance, human resources, human rights, the NHS Constitution (public health services), the public sector equality duty, safeguarding of children and adults at risk, service users, smarter working, sustainability and the environment and where such implications are material they are described below. Appropriate consultation has been undertaken and advice sought on these issues as required.

Financial Implications

33. There are no financial implications arising from this report.

RECOMMENDATION/S

That the Committee:

- 1) agrees to receive quarterly performance data included in the quarterly performance reports to the Committee
- 2) agrees to receive annual reports to provide an overview of the work to address the threat of Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care in Nottinghamshire.

Laurence Jones

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Constitutional Comments (AK 07/09/20)

34. The report falls within the remit of Children and Young People's Committee by virtue of its terms of reference.

Financial Comments (SAS 08/09/20)

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

Background Papers and Published Documents

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.

[Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care: annual report 2018/19](#)
– report to Children & Young People's Committee on 17th June 2019

[Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home and Care: six monthly update](#) –
report to Children & Young People's Committee on 16th December 2019

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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