

17th June 2019

Agenda Item: 15

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES**CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME AND
CARE: ANNUAL REPORT 2018/19****Purpose of the Report**

1. Elected 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 a number of local authorities. Update reports were presented to the Committee in January 2019 and April 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 2018-19 priorities and analysis of the statistical data for the year end 2018/19.
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 6 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 and the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (NSCP) requires assurances of work being completed to address these issues via quarterly and annual reporting systems.
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 guidance around 'contextual safeguarding' which recognises the complexities of assessing children who may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. This very much relates to CSE but also to other forms of exploitation including criminal exploitation, radicalisation and trafficking by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines. The Council is currently developing procedures and services to address these wider issues and threats but it is important to highlight the relevance for CSE and the significance for children missing from home and care as this can be an indicator of child exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

5. Annual CSE data is as follows:

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

* (new and open cases)

6. A total of 560 children were identified as potentially at risk of CSE with 361 of those children being a new referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). An increase in MASH recordings of CSE indicators was noted between October and December 2018. As can be seen in the table above, only 378 CSE risk assessments were completed and so an audit exercise was undertaken to consider this gap. A number of cases were found to have been incorrectly flagged as CSE at point of triage in the MASH when in fact the issues when reviewed related to child sexual abuse or harmful sexual behaviour. Staff training is to be planned to address this issue with MASH colleagues. This would go some way towards understanding the reduction in both CSE Risk Assessments being completed and children being considered at CSE Strategy meetings. Additionally, some children with CSE concerns are considered at child protection conferences when parents are considered to be unable to protect them so reducing the numbers going to a CSE strategy meeting. However, further exploration of this particular issue will be undertaken to fully understand the position.
7. The peak age range for children identified as being affected by CSE is between 15 & 17 years, the large proportion of those children being female. The majority of children monitored at the Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel were aged 14 years and only 6 of those were male. There has been a child as young as 8 years monitored at the MASE panel but the majority are aged between 12 & 15 years.
8. The current age range is not dissimilar to the range reported generally, this coincides with adolescent behaviour including greater independence from parents, greater influence of peers and those outside the family and exploration of relationships and sexuality, thus increasing this age range's vulnerability to grooming and sexual exploitation.

Children Missing from Home and Care

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

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19
Total notifications of children 'missing' and 'missing – no apparent risk'	2,662	2,461	2,764
*relating to individuals	994	951	967
*ratio males to females	52:48	54:45	53:47
*age range (yrs)	14-17	13-17	14-17
	Validated post year end 2016/17		
Children missing from home (relating to individuals)	705	695 (1,269 episodes)	686 (1,230 episodes)
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)
Other Local Authority Children missing from care in Notts (relating to individuals)	145	119 (427 episodes)	147 (582 episodes)
% Return Interviews (RI) required	82	77	80 (total of 2,235)
% RIs required from Children's Social Care			62
% RIs required from Family Service			17
% RIs required from Adoption Service			>1
% RIs required from other Local Authorities			21
% RIs completed by Children's Social Care			70 (977)
% RIs completed by Family Service			94 (354)
% RIs completed by Adoption Service			100 (1)
% RIs completed by other Local Authorities			36 (173)
% Multi-agency meetings required <i>NB of total notifications of missing and missing-no apparent risk</i>	12	11	13 (360 total)
% Multi-agency meetings completed <i>NB of meetings required</i>	74	67	78 (284)

10. Total numbers of children missing from home and care remain consistent with previous years. Similarly, the ages of children missing remains consistent and there continues to be a fairly equal gender division. The main reasons given for children going missing remains

due to relationship difficulties between parent and child or a resistance to boundaries within the home/care setting and the majority of children are missing for less than 4hrs at any one time. Without appropriate help, children who run away from home or care are highly vulnerable and at risk of substance misuse, exploitation and criminality. The Pathway to Provision sets out a robust tiered response to children who go missing from home and care which includes the provision of a Return Interview.

11. The Return Interview is a tool which is shown to be essential in understanding a child's missing experience. Overall over 80% of reported missing episodes are followed up with a return interview; this includes children who are assessed by the Police as 'Missing' and 'Missing – no apparent risk'. This is significant as not all local authorities provide a return interview for children assessed as 'missing – no apparent risk' but our Cross Authority procedures follows recommendations from the All Party Parliamentary Group for Missing children and adults and research from the Children's Society that children classed as at no apparent risk from their missing episode are also likely to be impacted by the risks associated.
12. The large majority of Return Interviews are completed by Children's Social Care. The completion rate for Return Interviews completed by Children's Social Care Service is at 70%. This figure requires improvement, although this is largely due to administrative issues rather than a lack of action by social workers when a child is 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 who have been placed in other local authority areas.
13. 36% of Return Interviews are completed or attempted for looked after children placed in Nottinghamshire by other local authorities. The communication required for this intelligence gathering is a nationwide issue but the East Midlands region has this year been able to agree a joint protocol for responding to children missing from care and placed outside of area which provides greater assurances that missing episodes will be appropriately addressed and communicated going forwards within the East Midlands. It is often the case that other local authorities are providing support and intervention for those children placed in Nottinghamshire who go missing from care but further work is required to improve communications with other local authorities outside of the East Midlands region.
14. As at 8th May 2019 Nottinghamshire was caring for 879 looked after children and only 88 of these children were 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 in order to share Nottinghamshire's missing protocol and contact details. As such, the Committee can be assured that there are measures in place to ensure that Nottinghamshire children placed out of area are receiving support and intervention when going missing from care.
15. More children go missing from home than from care but more children go missing from care on multiple occasions than from home. Children placed in the care of the local authority have complex issues and their missing episodes are often a reflection of this. Additionally, looked after children are more likely to go missing on multiple occasions from residential care, those being the young people with some of the most challenging life experiences. As per the cross authority procedures for children missing from home and care, the children missing officers and the Police missing team work closely with residential staff and social

workers to both assist in the finding of a missing child and in following the guidance when reporting a child missing.

Progress against key priorities for 2018-19

16. 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.

Priority Area	Update
Continue to collaborate with the Police and partner agencies to produce an updated multi-agency problem profile of CSE in Nottinghamshire. This will inform ongoing work to identify and address CSE at the earliest opportunity.	The problem profile of CSE was produced in October 2018 and has been shared with partner agencies via CSECAG members and with other partners including members of the Concerns Network and CSE Licensing Officers Group. This work is completed by Police Analysts with input provided by partner agencies co-ordinated via the Child Sexual Exploitation Cross Authority Group (CSECAG) with the intention of focusing resources where the need is highlighted.
Through the Child Sexual Exploitation Cross Authority Group (CSECAG), work to highlight and address CSE in boys and minority groups.	CSECAG has been able to influence the Police and Crime Commissioner fund to commission the Children's Society to provide a service to boys considered to be at risk of CSE; this post has now been recruited to and will commence at the end of May 2019. This post will also focus on LGBT+ and BME groups though these minority groups will continue to be highlighted as under-represented in training opportunities and at CSECAG, thus ensuring professionals remain aware.
Revise the CSE multi-agency procedures to ensure clarity of the process, following the findings of the CSE Audit.	The CSE multi-agency procedures have now been completed and are due to be agreed at CSECAG in July 2019. The new procedures are based on the basic format provided by TriX and detail the processes to be followed when addressing CSE concerns.
To further refine the operation of and develop reporting from the MASE	The MASE continues to meet monthly to discuss children considered to be at an on-going medium/high risk of CSE to review the structures and plans in place. This is a system that is becoming better embedded in practice and better understood by professionals. The names of those children heard at MASE are generated jointly by the Police and Children's Social Care and actions

Priority Area	Update
	<p>are recorded for professionals to be guided by. A MASE data base has been developed to generate data related to those children discussed. The MASE heard 54 cases in the year 2018-19 ranging in age from 8-17yrs, with the majority aged 14yrs. Of the 54 cases, 5 have been LAC and 49 are based at home with family. MASE data is reported to CSECAG quarterly.</p>
<p>To continue to work with County Licensing Officers to engage and train licensed premises in identifying and responding to CSE and vulnerability.</p>	<p>This group meet three times per year to discuss the continued work required to ensure that licence holders have an awareness of CSE and undergo the appropriate checks and training prior to commencing their businesses. This work then feeds into the Nottinghamshire Authorities Licensing Group which also meets three times per year. A lot of work has been undertaken to ensure that taxi drivers have safeguarding training including awareness of CSE and DBS checks are completed as standard. There is a current action plan for each of the districts to distribute leaflets to licensed premises within their communities to further raise awareness of how to spot signs of CSE and how to report this with many premises having already received these. There are still some inconsistent practices between districts and further work is needed to continue to drive forward this agenda and utilise the good practice that is available.</p>
<p>Develop early intervention strategies that will reduce the numbers of missing children having multiple missing occurrences.</p>	<p>The reasons for children having multiple missing occurrences are complex and the Council has not seen a reduction in multiple missing occurrences this year. The data for children missing on multiple occurrences identifies that these figures have remained consistent since 2016/17 but there has been a reduction in children who go missing for the first time in 2018/19. The primary reason given by children for their missing episode is due to boundary issues/difficult family relationships within the home and targeted work is provided by the Family Service to specifically address these concerns. A large proportion of children who go missing on multiple occasions are children in Local Authority Care and there are a lot of</p>

Priority Area	Update
	<p>resources focused upon meeting the needs of those individual children. In addition to the multi-agency training that followed the publication of the cross-authority missing procedures in October 2018, the Children Missing Officers have worked closely with the Police Missing Team, children's social care teams and foster carers/residential workers to ensure that the procedures are used appropriately for the reporting of missing children and in working together to find and protect them. This has improved the response to children missing but there is no notable reduction in multiple missing occurrences. There are a number of new initiatives commissioned by Police Commissioner funding and developed in partnership with the Local Authority which are anticipated to have some positive impact upon those children in care settings who are highly vulnerable which include missing episodes.</p>
<p>Increase the quality of Return Interviews by supporting professionals to engage children in the process.</p>	<p>As planned, subsequent to the multi-agency training in 2018, the Children Missing Officers have visited locality teams to reinforce the procedures and share good practice guidance for the completion of Return Interviews. This issue continues to be an area for development however. Return Interviews are not always completed within timescales and the quality of those interviews continue to be inconsistent. A closer examination of individual children's social care files often reveals that the issues around a child's missing episode is being addressed and this can be seen in case notes, within the child's assessment and in supervision. However, the return interview document does not always reflect this and is not always completed in a timely fashion.</p> <p>The way in which this data is recorded on Mosaic is a barrier to information being captured in a timely fashion and this is being addressed by the Information and Systems department. Nevertheless, the key message for completing Return Interviews, particularly where the child is going missing repeatedly, is to be persistent in reaching out to that child and to do that as soon as possible after the</p>

Priority Area	Update
	missing episode. The creation of a new Mosaic 'Step' for recording missing interview and multi-agency meeting data is anticipated to go some way to improving both the quality of interviews and timeliness of them due to the requirement of management oversight and quality assurance.
Build on existing close multi-agency relationships to further improve information sharing at the earliest opportunity to ensure children are found quickly.	Overall, multi-agency working to find children when missing is positive; the Children Missing Officers are in communication with the Police Missing Team on a daily basis upon receiving missing children reports to share information more widely. The Police Missing Team manages social media communications and the cross authority missing procedures clearly identify roles and responsibilities for services involved with the child. The Multiple Missing and Hotspots meeting continues to meet monthly which focuses upon children missing on multiple occasions but is also an opportunity to share good practice and identify areas for multi-agency improvement.
Address Missing OLA through developing regional protocols and effective working arrangements with those local authorities who most use Nottinghamshire to place children.	A shared protocol has been agreed by senior managers within the East Midlands Region to address these issues. This includes more robust practices around placement notifications, information sharing of children missing risks and escalation processes where procedures are not followed by the placing authority. It is recognised that this will not in itself impact on authorities outside of the region so individual agreements with placing authorities, in line with the East Midlands protocol, will be sought on a case by case basis.

Key priorities for 2019-20

17. Priorities for the coming year will be to:

- complete staff training with MASH colleagues to appropriately apply CSE flags
- encourage a consistent approach by District Councils to engage and train licensed premises in identifying and responding to CSE and vulnerability.
- continue to raise the profile of the Concerns Network

- through CSECAG, work to improve the partnership's understanding of vulnerability specific to minority communities, boys, LGBT+, disability and additional needs relating to CSE
- audit work to consider how CSE concerns are managed between the child protection conference and CSE strategy meeting processes
- develop strategies to increase the response rate and quality of Return Interviews
- develop a Mosaic 'step' to record Return Interviews and Multi Agency Meetings
- develop strategies to improve communication from and to other local authorities who place looked after children in Nottinghamshire from outside of the East Midlands
- ensure that the children missing from home and care procedures are incorporated into all agendas and training schedules about the exploitation of children

Other Options Considered

18. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

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

Statutory and Policy Implications

20. 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

21. 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.

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Constitutional Comments (EP 30/05/19)

22. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of this report.

Financial Comments (SAS 30/05/19)

23. 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: Mid-year update 2018/19 – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 29th April 2019.

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

C1257