

16th December 2019

Agenda Item: 5

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE: SIX MONTHLY UPDATE REPORT

Purpose of the Report

1. Further to the annual report to Committee in June 2019, the purpose of this report is to provide the Committee with a six monthly update on the work currently in place to address the threat of child sexual exploitation in Nottinghamshire and children missing from home and care.

Information

Strategic Partnerships, Governance and Service Provision

2. 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) provides the primary governance for this multi-agency activity with the partnership receiving regular data and an annual report. Immediate governance for CSE work is provided by the Child Sexual Exploitation Cross-Authority Group (CSECAG) and a Nottinghamshire multi-agency strategic group for missing children.
3. As previously reported to Committee, following the publication of the revised statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children: (Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018), a focus has been on considering a wide range of 'contextual safeguarding' issues in recognition of the complexities of assessing children who may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. This includes CSE but also other forms of exploitation including criminal exploitation, radicalisation and trafficking by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines. Pathways to address these concerns have now been established and training is being planned. However it is recognised that there is potentially a significant overlap between different forms of exploitation and children missing can be both a symptom and /or increase vulnerability to all forms of exploitation. Consideration is currently being given to how strategic arrangements can be combined whilst not weakening what has been in place to date. It is anticipated that decisions will have been made and will be able to be reported by the time of the next annual report to Committee.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

4. Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 CSE data is as follows:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q1	Q2
Total children identified as potentially at risk of CSE*	433	525	560	136	166
New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals re CSE	263	324	361	78	99
CSE Risk Assessments completed	335	439	378	69	88
Children considered at CSE Strategy Meetings	82	108	64	10	13
Peak age range (yrs)	14-15	15-16	15-17	14-16	14-15
Female:Male ratio	80:20	79:21	74:26	77:23	71:29
Children monitored at Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel	N/A	65	54	10	13

* (new and open cases)

5. Caution should be taken when looking at individual quarter figures or half year figures as there are often variations that balance out at the end of the year. There is also a natural lag in some of the figures as cases work their way through the system. However, at this point it appears we are roughly in line with last year for new CSE referrals into the MASH and slightly up on the total when including CSE identified within existing open cases. Within the annual report presented to Committee in June 2019 it was explained that investigations had shown some incorrect flagging of CSE in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). Training was provided to address this but given the numbers not having reduced further consideration of these figures is required.
6. On current projections the number of CSE risk assessments carried out will be below that of last year. As this is a measure of completed assessments it could be subject to lag if there is any delay in beginning the assessment. Again, this will require investigation over the next quarter. Additionally the number of cases being considered at CSE strategy meetings is projected to fall. As previously postulated, this may be a function of an increased number of CSE cases being taken through standard child protection processes (i.e. to a child protection conference) or to the new Youth Violence and Criminal Exploitation Panel. As stated in the previous annual report, work is planned to explore this and will be covered within the next report to Committee.
7. The age range and gender split of children being considered remains consistent with previous reports.
8. The numbers of cases coming through for consideration by the Multi-Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE) appear in line with last year though as numbers are low conclusions are best drawn later in the year.

9. The Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner funded post working specifically with boys subject to exploitation across Nottinghamshire and the City is now up and running. This is a part time post hosted by the Children's Society alongside our current Children's Society commissioned services. It is early days but a small cohort is currently receiving a service and is said to be very positively engaged.
10. Very positive work with Nottinghamshire police continues in relation to the investigation, prosecution and disruption of CSE activity in the County. A revised confidential 'problem profile' is due to be distributed by the police before the end of the calendar year and this will allow priorities and tactical approaches to be reviewed.
11. Revised cross-authority, multi-agency CSE procedures have been developed to include learning from a recent serious case review. Further internal briefings for staff including foster carers are currently being delivered and further multi-agency training is planned before the year end.
12. Audit work looking at the impact of CSE interventions has been carried out in the last two quarters and a report of the outcome of this work will be taken to the NSCP Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement meeting in December 2019. A summary of the findings will be included in the CSE/Children Missing annual report to Committee.

Children Missing from Home and Care

13. Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 children missing from home and care data is as follows:

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q1	Q2
Total notifications of children 'missing' and 'missing – no apparent risk'	2,662	2,461	2,764	721	609
*relating to individuals	994	951	967	337	318
*ratio males to females	52:48	54:45	53:47	60:40	55:45
*age range (yrs)	14-17	13-17	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)	217 (293 episodes)	206 (296 episodes)
NCC Children missing from care (relating to individuals)	163	140 (764 episodes)	173 (973 episodes)	79 (262 episodes)	61 (161 episodes)

	2016/17	2017/18	2018/19	Q1	Q2
<i>NB includes NCC looked after children missing from out of area</i>					
Other Local Authority Children missing from care in Notts	145	119	147	47	58
(relating to individuals)		(427 episodes)	(582 episodes)	(166 episodes)	(152 episodes)
Return Interviews (RIs)					
% RIs completed by Children's Social Care			70% (977)	70% (238)	64% (168)
% RIs completed by Family Service			94% (354)	97% (131)	88% (105)
% RIs completed by Adoption Service			100% (1)	0 (0)	0 (0)
% RIs completed by other Local Authorities			36% (173)	31% (43)	34% (44)
% Multi-agency meetings completed	74	67	78% (284)	69% (66)	81% (48)

14. Total notifications (episodes) of children missing from home and care are currently on track to remain largely consistent with previous years. The numbers of individuals this relates to cannot be accurately predicted to year end as it would be expected that this measure will not increase uniformly (i.e. some individuals going missing will be represented all year with an uneven number of missing episodes per individual). Likewise there is a limited amount to be drawn from the profile information at this stage. The split between missing from home/care looks roughly in line with last year's figures with 'Other Local Authority' children at the moment projected to be slightly down.
15. As detailed in the annual report, return interviews (RIs) represent a key tool to enable workers to understand the reasons for missing and so intervene with an aim of reducing numbers of missing episodes. The RI is also important in understanding the level of risk a young person may be at whilst missing, informing work to mitigate that risk.
16. Increasing the number and quality of completed RIs was a priority this year and, notwithstanding quarterly variations, it is disappointing to see no improvement to date. Some of this is due to recording issues rather than actions not being completed. Very recently a new notification and recording process in the electronic file system, Mosaic, has been launched. This will make the system much more straightforward and it is expected that the second two quarters of the year will see an improvement. This will be an area for continued focus for the next six months.

17. There also remains attention to children from other local authorities who go missing in Nottinghamshire. Numbers of completed return interviews remains stubbornly low. Within the region the agreed protocol appears to be working but does not apply to those from further afield. In these circumstances a local chargeable service is offered but regularly not taken up. Cases will be addressed on an individual basis with the relevant authority and staff urged to use escalation procedures where appropriate.
18. Work will continue against all key priorities identified in the 2018/19 annual report and a full progress report included at year end.

Other Options Considered

19. No other options have been considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

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

Statutory and Policy Implications

21. 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

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

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee agrees to receive annual reports with a six monthly update 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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Service Director, Commissioning and Resources

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Constitutional Comments (EP 25/11/19)

23. The Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the contents of this report.

Financial Comments (SAS 25/11/19)

24. 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 and Young People's Committee on 17th June 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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