

25th April 2022

Agenda Item: 13

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, EDUCATION, LEARNING AND SKILLS

TACKLING EMERGING THREATS TO CHILDREN TEAM

Purpose of the Report

1. The report provides an update to Committee regarding the work of the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children (TETC) Team. The last report to Committee was provided in March 2021.

Information

2. The Tackling Emerging Threats to Children (TETC) Team was established in January 2017 and comprises:
 - Team Manager (TETC)
 - Safeguarding Children in Education Officer
 - Anti-bullying, Online-safety & Behaviour Co-ordinator
 - Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator
 - Three School Health Hub Co-ordinators.
3. The TETC Team until November 2021 sat within the wider Psychology Services group, itself comprising the TETC Team, the Virtual School Team, the Educational Psychology Service, the Coping with Risky Behaviours Service, and the Education Improvement Adviser (Special Educational Needs & Disability). The TETC Team Manager reported directly to the Group Manager, Psychology Services. Since November 2021 the team has been located within Education Access, Standards and Safeguarding and reports to the associated Group Manager. The Group Managers report directly to the Service Director, Education, Learning & Skills.
4. Acting as a central point of contact for schools and other professionals working across children's services, the TETC Team provides support, advice, and training in respect of the health, wellbeing, and safeguarding agendas. This team does not hold child-level caseloads as any high risk children would be supported by other case holding services. The team's current remit includes:

- anti-bullying and child on child abuse
 - child criminal exploitation including 'County Lines'
 - child sexual exploitation
 - equality, hate crime and prejudice
 - female genital mutilation
 - forced marriage and honour-based abuse
 - harmful sexual behaviour
 - mental health
 - obesity and body image
 - online safety and behaviour
 - radicalisation and extremism
 - relationships, sex, and health education
 - risk taking behaviour (including thrill-seeking and anti-social activity)
 - substance misuse
 - youth violence (including knife crime).
5. Although team members have specialist knowledge, the aim of the team is to develop capacity and resilience across the children's workforce, building confidence and the necessary skills and understanding to deal with often complex and highly sensitive issues. Using a strengths-based approach, the team supports others to develop practices which enable practitioners to recognise risk and harm at the earliest opportunity. The team's practice is based on relationship-based and contextual safeguarding frameworks and the principles of partnership working, collaboration and co-production.
 6. The team works closely with other partners including Social Care, Family Service, Youth Justice, District Councils, Youth Service, Police, Health and the Third Sector. They also collaborate with colleagues across the Education, Learning and Skills Division.
 7. Safeguarding practices in school continue to be supported by the TETC Team through the development of model policies, audit tools, guidance documents, as well as the dissemination of key learning from serious case reviews and reports from the Children's Commissioner and other national bodies. All schools are regularly contacted directly with safeguarding updates and information. The Designated Safeguarding Leads network has been reinstated and now takes place virtually each half term, allowing a greater number of Designated Safeguarding Leads to attend. Working closely with the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub Education Advisor the team has been able to identify key themes to focus on to develop schools' understanding and raise their awareness of the latest guidance. Topics covered include: 'Private Fostering'; 'Preventing Sexual Violence and Sexually Harmful Behaviour Between Children in Schools'; 'Notts Knives and Weapons Guidance'; and 'The Revised NCC & NSCP Child Protection and Confidential File Audit Toolkit for 2021/22'. The events are well-attended and well-received.
 8. The Safeguarding Children in Education Officer (SCIEO) provides support and challenge to schools around safeguarding policy and procedures, and where appropriate carries out external safeguarding reviews. Since the last report the SCIEO has supported six schools through these reviews where there were identified concerns regarding their safeguarding practices. The SCIEO proactively supports the work of the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership and workforce development and represents the team at a number of

strategic and operational meetings. The SCIEO supports colleagues across the Education, Learning and Skills Division through training and advice.

9. The TETC Team is often required to respond on behalf of the Local Authority, or to inform the response made by Members and senior Local Authority officers where complaints are raised about schools' practices in regard to the areas listed in **paragraph 4**. This includes responding to Ofsted Qualifying Complaints. The team has responded to more than 30 Ofsted Qualifying Complaints / complex complaints to governors or other bodies during this reporting period and supported the Council's response to a number of Freedom of Information requests on sensitive topics.
10. Since the last report to Members key areas of work have come into focus. By far the most frequent requests for support relate to online safety, harmful sexual behaviour, child criminal exploitation and child sexual exploitation and concerns about weapons/violence. There has also been a significant increase in the number of enquiries relating to gender identity, racism and bullying in all its forms. **Appendix 1** provides some data to evidence the current trends. However, as a number of teams and partner agencies besides TETC provide support and advice around mental health, the figures do not accurately reflect the prevalence of concerns relating to children's emotional health and wellbeing. TETC staff have also noted significant concerns relating to the resilience and wellbeing of staff working in schools. There may also be a direct correlation between this and parental mental health based on the increasing number of complaints and conflicts the team has been asked to help resolve.
11. Demand for the service has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic. During this reporting period the team has faced some challenges in respect of capacity, including one long term staff absence and the secondment of another team member to simultaneously support the Council's COVID response work with schools and the education aspects of the Violence Reduction Unit's work (December 2020 - October 2021). The team has been carrying a vacancy since October when the said post-holder secured promotion. Public Health have however, secured some additional resource to enable the team to continue to support the work of the COVID Response Team. It is anticipated that the team will be back up to full strength from April 2022.
12. Increasingly, support from the team is being sought out by colleagues in Social Care and the Family Service as well as by school staff and governing bodies. Evaluations demonstrate that the work of the team is highly valued and feedback is overwhelmingly positive. All respondents indicated high levels of satisfaction and advised they would recommend the service to others. **Appendix 2** provides a sample of some of the qualitative feedback received by the team. Parents and carers and, more importantly, children and young people also report that the team's support has had positive impact. For example, one young person who was at risk of permanent exclusion and who had been referred to the Prevent team, has been supported to have his needs met following consultations lead by TETC staff with the school, colleagues in the Family Service, and his parents and carers. Having advised a child centred approach which focused on identifying and responding to his unmet needs, there has been a significant change in his behaviour and attendance. On being asked what had made the difference to him in terms of outcomes, he reported that he had "felt listened to". All involved have indicated that TETC involvement in the case made a significant difference. Feedback on consultations would suggest this is the norm rather than the exception.

13. As demand for the service continues to grow the team are turning their attention to how we can support parents/carers on a larger scale than is currently possible. This has resulted in discussions about how we might become involved in/contribute to the proposed family hubs in each locality, as well as making more effective use of the various Council and partner digital communication platforms. Over the coming months the team plans to refresh its own information hub on the schools portal, and will be developing a number of resources specifically aimed at supporting parents/carers to identify and respond to risk and vulnerabilities whilst strengthening protective factors. The intention is to further develop our training offer in order to upskill professionals across the children's workforce so frontline staff are suitably confident and knowledgeable to address the most prevalent threats in our communities.
14. Through the team's training offer, TETC has been able to equip a range of practitioners with the knowledge and confidence needed to carry out work on sensitive and challenging issues. Training is informed by the team's co-production work with young people and parents/carers. **Appendix 2** provides some feedback from course participants and indicates that this aspect of the team's work is also highly valued.
15. TETC staff are engaged in a number of strategic and operational groups involving multi-agency partnerships. By working closely with partners across specific localities they have good local knowledge of the issues and play a vital role in connecting schools and service providers. Work with district councils is particularly valued and by working collaboratively the team has been better able to ensure that the right support is put in place for some of the most vulnerable young people in our communities.

Other Options Considered

16. No other options considered.

Reason/s for Recommendation/s

17. Members requested an update on progress in respect of the TETC Team's work. The report is for noting.

Statutory and Policy Implications

18. 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.

Crime and Disorder Implications

19. The work of the team supports a multi-agency approach to some key crime and disorder agendas, including but not exclusive to: knife crime and youth violence; anti-social behaviour; child sexual exploitation; child criminal exploitation; radicalisation & extremism;

hate crime; female genital mutilation; forced marriage & honour-based abuse; drugs. The TETC Team works to raise awareness of a range of issues which can make young people vulnerable including being drawn into criminal activity or becoming victims of crime. By providing advice, training, and support to schools and other professionals across the children's workforce and by engaging young people in co-production of resources and training materials, the TETC Team aims to reduce the risk levels of young people being drawn into criminal activity.

Data Protection and Information Governance

20. The team is not a case holding service and consultations are conducted anonymously. As such no personal data is held about specific individuals. Any resources or training content developed through the team's co-production work is also anonymised so no individual can be identified. Any data relating to Ofsted Qualifying Complaints or other complaints is stored securely and in line with the General Data Protection Regulation.

Financial Implications

21. The total cost of the TETC Team is £365,330. The cost of the three School Health Hub Co-ordinator posts and the Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator post is £183,090 and will be funded by Public Health until 31st March 2023. The cost of the remaining posts is £182,240 and will be contained within the Education, Learning & Skills staffing budget.
22. The work of the TETC Team is best thought of as providing a universal service for the benefit of all Nottinghamshire children and young people regardless of where they are being educated. In this sense the TETC Team fulfils a key role of the Local Authority to champion the safety, health and wellbeing of all Nottinghamshire's children. In providing this service it is important that charging for the service does not get in the way of schools, professionals and other organisations from seeking the advice, guidance and access to the resources which the TETC Team makes universally available. The exceptions to this are where the TETC Team is asked to carry out work, e.g. training or external safeguarding reviews, which a school might reasonably commission and pay for from another source, or do for themselves. In these circumstances the TETC Team charges a daily rate roughly comparable to what is charged by other teams in the Division. Over the reporting period March 2021 to February 2022 the income generated for this work totalled £16,389. The source of this income was £3,725 from academies, £2,664 from maintained schools and other internal partners, as well as an additional £10,000 of Safer Streets funding from Bassetlaw District Council for work that the team was commissioned to undertake with schools in Worksop. In addition, £8,606 was provided by the Violence Reduction Unit in line with the secondment arrangements described in **paragraph 11**.

Human Rights Implications

23. The team seeks to support those working with children to uphold their rights by keeping them safe from exploitation and other forms of abuse and harm.

Implications in relation to the NHS Constitution

24. The team works to promote the physical and mental health of children and young people, with a focus on prevention and early intervention.

Public Sector Equality Duty implications

25. Many aspects of the TETC Team's focused work requires a conscious consideration of all the protected characteristics. The team is proactively co-ordinating working groups to develop anti-racist practice and trans inclusivity, as well as planned activity in respect of boys' emotional health and wellbeing and healthy masculinity. Part of the team's remit is to address gender-based violence, as well as challenge stereotypes which may result in young people not being identified as at risk of harm (for example boys at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation). Schools are supported to understand and fulfil their legal duties in relation to the general duty of the Public Sector Equality Duty, including advancing equality, fostering positive relations between people with different characteristics, and tackling discrimination, harassment, and victimisation. This is done through training and the provision of quality assured resources and intervention programmes. Case consultations also focus on developing an understanding of the 'whole child' so that advice can be tailored accordingly - this includes, but is not exclusive to, consideration of Special Educational Needs & Disability needs, race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, age, and pregnancy.

Smarter Working Implications

26. The TETC Team has made full use of the available technology to ensure effective service delivery during the current pandemic and will continue to work smartly moving forward.

Safeguarding of Children and Adults at Risk Implications

27. The TETC Team's work is entirely focused on safeguarding vulnerable children and young people and some aspects of the work also relate to the safeguarding of vulnerable adults (for example, women who have undergone female genital mutilation; those who are subject to exploitation by criminal gangs).

Implications for Service Users

28. Although the TETC Team does not work directly with individual young people and families a core principle of the team's work is to ensure their voices inform policy and practice. Our co-production work ensures the lived experiences of vulnerable children and parents/carers guides all aspects of both the team's work and that of our partners.

Implications for Sustainability and the Environment

29. The team makes best use of digital platforms and technology and is able to deliver much of the service offer remotely thus limiting its impact on the environment.

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee notes the update on the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children Team.

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Service Director, Education, Learning and Skills

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Constitutional Comments (LW 24/03/22)

30. Children and Young People's Committee is the appropriate body to consider the content of the report.
31. The total cost of the TETC Team is £365,029. The cost of the three School Health Hub Co-ordinator posts and the Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator post is £183,090 and will be funded by Public Health until 31st March 2023. The cost of the remaining posts is £181,939 and will be contained within the Education, Learning & Skills staffing budget.

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.

[Tackling Emerging Threats to Children team – report to Children and Young People's Committee on 15th March 2021](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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