

2nd November 2020

Agenda Item: 13

REPORT OF THE SERVICE DIRECTOR, COMMISSIONING AND RESOURCES

SEXUAL ABUSE AND HARMFUL SEXUAL BEHAVIOUR INVOLVING CHILDREN IN CARE

Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of this report is to provide Committee with information regarding incidents of sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour involving children in the care of the Council and the response to such incidents.

Information

2. Some information relating to this report is not for publication by virtue of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972 and is therefore included in an **Exempt Appendix**. Having regard to all the circumstances, on balance the public interest in disclosing this information does not outweigh the reason for exemption because the information could lead to the identification of individuals or prejudice ongoing investigations.
3. On 18th September 2019 Policy Committee received a report on the Council's initial response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse. Contained in the report was an action plan including a commitment that a reporting process would be developed to provide oversight regarding incidents of sexual abuse and harmful sexual behaviour involving children in care, and the response to such incidents. This report provides details on such incidents that occurred during the period 1st July 2019 – 30 June 2020. Further reports will be provided at six monthly intervals and three months in arrears.

Allegations Against Staff in Residential Children's Homes

4. Three allegations were received by the Local Area Designated Officer (LADO) about contemporary allegations against staff members or volunteers relating to Nottinghamshire children in homes run or commissioned by Nottinghamshire County Council during the last 12 months. In two cases LADO and police investigations are ongoing and it is not in the public interest to provide details in this public report as it may identify the individuals concerned or prejudice the investigations. In the third case a LADO investigation took place and has been concluded and following a strategy meeting no police investigation was required. The details of this incident are not being made public as this may identify either the staff member or the child. Details are provided for Members of the Committee in the **Exempt Appendix**.

Allegations Against Local Authority Foster Carers

5. No allegations were received by the Local Area Designated Officer about contemporary allegations of sexual abuse against Nottinghamshire children by Local Authority foster carers.

Allegations Against Foster Carers Working for Independent Agencies

6. No allegations were received by the Local Area Designated Officer about allegations of sexual abuse against Nottinghamshire children cared for by carers from independent foster agencies (IFAs). Three allegations were received regarding carers in Nottinghamshire but none were caring for a Nottinghamshire child.

Other Incidents and Allegations Relating to Children in Care during the period

7. Staff across Local Authority Children's Services and from the Council's commissioned provider remain highly alert to any risks to children in care and even the most minor of allegations or concerns are fully investigated. Over the past 12 months there have been a number of incidents of concern falling into the following categories:
 - abuse committed by peers
 - attempts or actual contact by adults outside of the care environment as an attempt to sexually exploit the child either by electronic means or in person.
8. As the details of these incidents could lead to the identification of individual children or prejudice ongoing investigations these are provided in the **Exempt Appendix** along with the outcomes of investigations where applicable.

Other Options Considered

9. This report supports the Council's initial response to the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse and as such other options have not been considered.

Reason for Recommendations

10. The recommendations support the role of the Children and Young People's Committee in providing oversight of this important area and identifying any actions that are required to provide further reassurance.

Statutory and Policy Implications

11. 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

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

RECOMMENDATION/S

- 1) That the Committee considers whether there are any further actions it requires arising from the information contained in the report.

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Constitutional Comments (SS 20/10/20)

13. This report is appropriate to submit to Children and Young People's Committee who must bear in mind that any recommendations they make are also within their remit.

Financial Comments (SAS 19/10/20)

14. 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.

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse – Initial Response: report to Policy Committee on 18th September 2019](#)

Electoral Division(s) and Member(s) Affected

All.

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