

Support for Schools to Safeguard Children

1. Purpose of the Report

1. The purpose of the report is to request temporary funding over three years totalling approximately £1.2m from the Schools Budget Reserve. This funding would enhance a range of support for schools to identify children with emerging vulnerabilities and tackle specific threats that they might encounter.
2. Support would be specifically designed to help tackle child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and promote a range of early help interventions.
3. The report will describe the context to these issues, the proposed support that would be put in place for schools and children and the level of funding required.

2. Context

4. The Council already works with partners including schools, health and the police, to help tackle a wide range of underlying vulnerabilities and threats to children.
5. However we want to do more to prevent and disrupt such threats, improve services that support victims and deliver more universal training and advice to schools.
6. This will help identify and support children at risk to ensure we are affording them the safest and most secure start in life.
7. To achieve this, the Council has considered a range of interventions which would form a package of support for schools. Support would range from Universal training and awareness programmes to targeted and specialist support for those most at risk or those recovering from abuse.
8. Our intention is to build on activity that is already happening, for example theatre performances in schools regarding the dangers of child sexual exploitation delivered through Pintsize Theatre or the development of a radicalisation toolkit aimed at supporting young Muslims and countering far right rhetoric.
9. Sharpening our focus on these issues also provides an opportunity to undertake a commissioning exercise to pull this activity together and develop a coordinated approach to ensure that schools, children and their families receive the right support.

3. Universal Support

10. A third (£0.4m) of the £1.2m requested over three years would be spent on commissioning a range of training, awareness initiatives and early intervention programmes to support schools parents, carers and children in relation to:
 - a. the risks faced by child sexual exploitation

- b. radicalisation and extremism
 - c. grooming, sexualised chat and indecent images
 - d. cyber bullying
 - e. internet safety in relation to the issues above and associated forums and chatrooms
11. Evidence shows that abuse and exploitation of children, including through the internet and social media, is increasing and parents and carers are often unaware or underestimate the risks children face.
- a. For example the County Council are identifying a growing number of children who are either being sexually exploited or are vulnerable to exploitation.
 - b. The Police also are also conducting a growing number of investigations into the kinds of issues mentioned above.
12. These concerns are particularly relevant because schools are in an excellent position to identify those children that maybe more vulnerable to sexual exploitation, bullying, radicalisation or other threats.
13. For example, children vulnerable to CSE exhibit a range of indicators and are particularly vulnerable when they are disengaged from education. These indicators include:
- a. physical injuries
 - b. drug or alcohol misuse
 - c. older boyfriends or girlfriends
 - d. reduced contact with family or friends
 - e. repeated sexually transmitted diseases.
14. With the right support and training, schools would be better equipped to identify these signs early on and play an active part in preventing exploitation, abuse and manipulation.
15. Commissioning this training would also help schools with PSHE and SRE curriculums by building strong messages from qualified staff on topics such as respectful relationships, sex education, bullying, sexual bullying, consent, internet safety and exploitation.
16. Radicalisation is another example of an emerging threat and public agencies have a responsibility to prepare children for life in modern Britain and to promote the values of respect, tolerance and democracy.
17. Briefings in the autumn and spring terms advised Heads and Chairs' of the need for vigilance in recognising the signs of radicalisation and extremism and provided information about referral pathways.
18. Universal training and awareness raising regarding radicalisation would help to clarify referral pathways and communication protocols for schools and other frontline staff.
19. This coordinated approach would also provide consistent advice and guidance so schools can be confident about how to respond to a whole range of issues and are aware of support available.

4. Early Help Support

20. Schools and other universal settings regularly inform the Council that support regarding a range of early help concerns is valued and allows staff to better support their pupils.

21. In response to this a further third (£0.4m) of the requested £1.2m would be used to augment our Early Help support to schools and other universal settings.
22. As part of the development of the new Family Service, the Council will establish three Tier Two Development Worker posts to support schools when concerns about a child first emerge.
23. Funding from the schools budget reserve would allow three more Development Workers (six in total) to be established, spread evenly over Nottinghamshire's three localities:
 - a. Bassetlaw and Newark & Sherwood
 - b. Mansfield and Ashfield
 - c. Broxtowe, Gedling and Rushcliffe
24. These Development Workers will dedicate their time to supporting lead professionals in schools and other universal settings. For example supporting schools to implement their own early intervention strategies or help them access the right support and referral routes.
25. In full, the Tier Two Development Workers will offer:
 - a. Advice on consent, the completion of early help assessments, gathering and sharing of information and analysis of risk and need
 - b. Support in identifying and accessing community, health and early help services
 - c. Help to move "stuck" cases forward and advising when a "Complex Case Resolution Meeting" might be appropriate
 - d. Chairing of Team Around the Child/Family meetings where there are a number of different professionals involved and a level of independence is felt to be useful

5. Specialist Support for Child Sexual Exploitation

26. The final third of the £1.2m (£0.4m) would be used to commission an augmented specialist child sexual exploitation service.
27. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a high profile issue, both locally and nationally and it is important that in Nottinghamshire that we do not fail children at risk of, or subject to, CSE.
28. Currently, the NSPCC and Barnardos provide preventative and therapeutic support for children affected by CSE through one fulltime Barnardos professional. The service is limited to those children most at risk¹ of exploitation and anecdotal evidence suggests that referrals into the service are under representing the problem.
29. CSE is a priority for the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board and through the Board, partners are working together to prevent exploitation, disrupt CSE activity and prosecute perpetrators. However, more can be done to support the children at the centre of this abuse.
30. Scoping work is underway to develop an enhanced service that would build on current arrangements and lower the thresholds for support and provide:
 - a. support for children who have been or are being sexually exploited

¹ Those children that have been subject to a CSE Strategy meeting between Children's Social Care, the Police and other key agencies.

- b. an early intervention service to those children identified as being at risk of CSE
31. The new service would work directly with children and families and also with schools and other educational settings to help tackle child sexual exploitation through:
- a. one-to-one work with children delivered by qualified staff
 - b. working with families of these children where appropriate
 - c. pathway work with Health and Sexual Health Services including services offering therapeutic services to support victims of CSE
 - d. training and support to social care staff, education and health professionals
 - e. establishing a multi-agency concerns network to:
 - i. allow education, social care, early help, health and the police to identify common concerns and themes to help disrupt activity before abuse can occur
 - ii. recognise best practice and help improve how services tackle CSE
 - f. offering a critical friend (support and challenge) role:
 - i. learn from areas where significant incidents of CSE are uncovered and challenge practices and policies within Nottinghamshire
32. This enhanced service would have a positive impact on schools by:
- a. Helping to identify risks earlier
 - b. providing earlier and better support to schools who have concerns regarding CSE
 - c. offering opportunities to discuss concerns and themes across agencies.
33. In addition to this early scoping work, CSE training sessions are planned for headteachers and governors during June 2015 to consult on what specific support schools would like.
34. The development of this enhanced service to tackle child sexual exploitation will enable children to move towards a safer and more settled lifestyle and help victims recover from exploitation and abuse.

6. Accountability

35. To evidence the impact of the support described in this report, it is suggested that bi-annual performance reports be received at the Schools Forum and at associated Education Trust Boards.

7. Financial Comments

36. The expenditure referred to in this report can be charged to the Schools Budget as a 'combined budget' under The School and Early Years Finance (England) Regulations 2014 with the agreement of the Schools Forum and the Secretary of State.
37. The requirement for Secretary of State approval is due to a restriction on new commitments or increases in combined budgets expenditure from those already reported in 2012-13 via the Section 251 Budget Statement.
38. A combined budget is for services which are partly funded from the Schools (Non-ISB) Budget, partly from other budgets of the County Council and are providing an educational benefit to pupils. The funding for this can be met from the Schools Non-ISB reserve

(accumulated DSG underspend), referred to in this report as the Schools Budget Reserve.

8. Summary

39. This report requests an in principle agreement to release temporary funding of £0.4m per year for three years to the total value of £1.2m from the Schools Budget Reserve to:
- a. commission a suite of training and early intervention programmes to schools in relation to child sexual exploitation, radicalisation and other risks relevant to children
 - b. establish three additional fulltime Tier Two Development Worker Posts based across the county to help schools benefit from early help services
 - c. Commission an improved specialist service to tackle CSE including support for schools and the establishment of a Nottinghamshire Child Sexual Exploitation Concerns Network.

RECOMMENDATION/S

1. The Schools Forum approves, in principle, the use of the Schools Budget Reserve to fund the initiatives detailed in this report up to the value of £1.2m.
2. The Schools Forum agrees to receive a detailed report in September 2015.

For any enquiries about this report please contact:

Steve Edwards
Service Director for Children's Social Care
T: 01159 774782
E: steve.edwards@nottscc.gov.uk