

## **LEICESTERSHIRE SAFER COMMUNITIES STRATEGY BOARD**

**28 JANUARY 2015**

### **THE RESPONSE TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN LEICESTERSHIRE**

#### **Introduction**

1. This report shall advise the Board on the progress made locally to respond to child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Leicestershire.
2. The report shall set out the steps taken following the publication of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, led by Professor Alexis Jay, in August 2014. That report had been commissioned to consider the extent of CSE in Rotherham and the response of that Council and its safeguarding partners.

#### **Policy Framework**

3. This report is made within the context of national guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', published by the Department for Education 2013, and the formal duties set out for the Lead Member for Children and Family Services and the Director of Children and Family Services published by the Department for Education in 2012.

#### **Background**

##### **Response to the Rotherham Inquiry**

4. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham investigated that Council and its safeguarding partner's responses to the incidence of child sexual exploitation (CSE) from 1997 until 2013. At the point of publication the report received considerable attention from national media.
5. In view of this the County Council initiated a number of internal checks in relation to some of the conclusions of the Inquiry.
6. An immediate audit to determine whether any children known to the County Council had been placed by us in Rotherham, or had moved there with their

family. The purpose of this was to determine whether in the light of the Inquiry any further steps were required regarding any such children's welfare. The check identified that in the past five years one child has been placed in Rotherham. This was in a special school placement and no indicators of concern regarding this child's welfare have come to light.

7. A further check was made to determine whether any children in the care of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council that may have been placed in the County. This has shown that we have not been notified of any placement of this kind.
8. In addition, the Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) undertook a multi-agency audit to ascertain local progress in relation to the conclusions of the Inquiry. A small number of priority areas for improvement were identified. Progress on action against these has been made.
9. The LSCB also completed a benchmarking exercise against the recommendations of the Inquiry. This was to determine the extent to which the multi-agency partnership has addressed the recommendations of the Inquiry and whether any further action is required. Again a small number of priority areas for improvement were identified. Progress on action against these has also been made.

### **Strategic Oversight**

10. Improving the local response to CSE has been a County Council priority for some time. This is reflected in the MTFs report which includes a proposed extra investment of £560,000 to increase staffing and ensure that referrals can be responded to. In April 2014 an all-Member briefing took place regarding CSE which focussed on the role of elected members in their constituencies, as Corporate Parents and as scrutineers of County Council's policy and practice. Subsequently the newly formed Children's Social Care panel has agreed that CSE shall be its priority.
11. CSE remains a business priority of the LSCB. In August 2012 a joint Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) LSCBs CSE, Trafficking and Missing Children Sub Group was established. In February 2013 a LLR strategy and action plan was launched.
12. To effectively respond to the increased national focus on CSE the work undertaken by the Sub Group has been accelerated. The membership of the Sub Group is being continually reviewed to keep pace with these changes, for example the CPS is attending the next Sub Group meeting in February, the

Police Licensing Inspector is a new member and the Office of the PCC are represented.

13. A priority of the Sub Group has been to establish a comprehensive multi-agency data set to enable a clearer picture of the nature and extent of CSE in the area. This remains a work in progress however substantial progress has been made. The data and analysis is reported to the LSCBs.
14. In November 2014 Ofsted published a CSE Thematic Inspection Report 'the sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it?' (November 2014). The thematic inspection was commissioned to evaluate the effectiveness of local authorities' current response to CSE. A benchmarking exercise similar to the Rotherham Inquiry is being planned in relation to the full Ofsted recommendations. The recommendations have already been considered by the Sub Group and it was agreed the benchmarking exercise should be LLR.
15. The Directors and Assistant Directors of Children's Services from Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Councils recently met with the Assistant Chief Constable and Head of Safeguarding at Leicestershire Police to discuss the development of the recently formed specialist multi-agency team. A number of key principles were agreed, including the following:
  - Establishment of a single LLR approach to tackling the issues of CSE, trafficked and missing children;
  - Sharing, pooling and an equitable distribution of resources within a single multi-agency team.

### **Operational Response**

16. In July 2014 staff from the County Council joined with the Police to form a multi-agency operational team specifically dealing with CSE, trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation and missing children.
17. The plan is that the team will be multi-agency and multi-disciplinary, and develop in phases in line with any emerging need and threat.
18. As a provisional step five members of staff have been placed within the joint team with the police forming the County Council CSE Team.

19. At this early stage the team has already had an impact in improving the local response to CSE including:
- Improving the timeliness of joint decision making;
  - Reducing duplication and enhancing the sharing of resources;
  - Enhancing the process for sharing of soft information and intelligence;
  - Improving the collective knowledge of children at risk of CSE and profile of locations;
  - Increasing capacity to deliver specialist direct work to children at risk of CSE;
  - Disclosures from children to the CSE Team resulting in the development of a police operation.
20. From 1<sup>st</sup> April 2014 to the 21st January 2015 the team has received 145 CSE referrals of children at risk of CSE compared to 54 referrals in 2012-13 and 85 referrals in 2013-14. For the majority of referrals the CSE Team provide consultation and support to other professionals where a child is identified as at risk. Where a child is identified as medium or high risk of CSE or a known victim of CSE the team will become directly involved and this currently equates to 21 children. The increase in referrals reflects improved and heightened professional and public awareness.
21. The CSE Team is:
- Providing an immediate and urgent response to the significant increase in CSE related referrals;
  - Providing an improved and enhanced response to ensuring the safety and protection of children at risk of CSE and known victims of CSE;
  - Providing central strategic and operational coordination of LCC's response to a number of complex investigations and police operations.

### **Raising Awareness**

22. As part of the CSE awareness raising campaign launched in October 2013 entitled 'Can You Spot the Signs?' more than 8000 children in schools locally benefited from a theatre based workshop called 'Chelsea's Choice'. This production was also seen by staff and a small number of Elected Members. In the wake of this a number of disclosures of abuse were made and responded to, an emergency advice line was established for school staff, and designated safeguarding training for schools was refreshed to include signs of CSE.
23. The second phase of the CSE raising awareness campaign aimed at the hospitality trade and taxi drivers has been launched and received positive media coverage. As part of the campaign, Leicestershire Police are visiting

hotels and B&Bs to talk to reception and bar staff and help them recognise potential signs. Taxi drivers have also attended a forum hosted by North West Leicestershire District Council. Representatives of the Sub Group have met with the Leicestershire Licensing Forum to discuss next steps.

24. The Sub Group have begun to consider the direction of future phases of the campaign including the targeting of specific locations or groups.
25. Planning is underway in relation to a LLR CSE, Trafficking and Missing Conference to be held on 26th February 2015 in Leicester. The aim is to: launch the revised practice guidance, procedures and tools; highlight key local developments; and provide an update on national developments and share learning from national best practice.
26. Work is ongoing to raise awareness of CSE amongst professionals. In 2014 a number of seminars were held focusing on CSE and Internet Safety. A revised CSE risk assessment tool has been produced outlining the signs and risk indicators of CSE and draft revised practice guidance and procedures are out for consultation. The LSCB continues to provide multi-agency safeguarding training; to inform future training delivery a training needs analysis is shortly to be undertaken across the wider workforce.

### **Background Papers**

1. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham can be found at:  
[http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent\\_inquiry\\_cse\\_in\\_rotherham](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham)
2. The Ofsted Thematic Inspection Report into Child Sexual Exploitation can be found at:  
[https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/386598/The\\_20sexual\\_20exploitation\\_20of\\_20children\\_20it\\_20couldn\\_E2\\_80\\_99t\\_20happen\\_20her\\_e\\_2C\\_20could\\_20it.pdf](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/386598/The_20sexual_20exploitation_20of_20children_20it_20couldn_E2_80_99t_20happen_20her_e_2C_20could_20it.pdf)

### **Recommendations**

1. That:
  - (a) The Board note the contents of the report.

**Officer(s) to Contact**

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