

**CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE –  
2 NOVEMBER 2015**

**AN UPDATE ON LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE TO  
CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**Purpose of report**

1. This report provides the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee with an update on progress in relation to the Council's response to child sexual exploitation (CSE).

**Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

2. The report is written within the context of national guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children', published by the Department for Education 2015, 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 2013. In addition it is written within the context of the statutory guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' published by the Department for Education 2009.

**Background**

3. CSE has been given national and local prominence following the Savile Inquiry and events in Rochdale, Oxfordshire and Rotherham. A number of high profile national reports have been published; the government has elevated CSE to the level of a national threat and set up a national inquiry chaired by Lowell Goddard. Locally this has necessitated an accelerated response and an equally determined focus. The Strategic Partnership Board (SPB) has made CSE one of three key priorities for this year.

**Schools contribution to the CSE agenda**

4. An increased focus locally has been on the contribution of universal services to the CSE agenda including schools and colleges. Engagement with the Leicestershire Secondary and Primary Heads group has resulted in:
  - a) Briefing slides on CSE for school staff has been produced and sent to all Head Teachers at start of term to enable them to cascade key messages;
  - b) Endorsed material for school websites and bespoke lesson plans have been added to the Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB website (resources for schools) <http://lrsb.org.uk/cse-awareness---resources-for-sc>

- c) A letter to all school governors was sent at the start of term outlining their responsibilities in relation to CSE;
- d) Presentations on CSE were made to over 100 primary and secondary governors at three recent Leicestershire chairs of governors meetings;
- e) Chelsea's Choice has been re-commissioned to tour local schools across Leicestershire this autumn. An eight week run of the applied theatre production started on 21st September with plans for fifty-eight performances in forty schools. A wraparound package to support the tour has been developed including bespoke lesson plans and the multi-agency specialist CSE team being on hand to offer support in case of disclosure;
- f) Working groups involving secondary schools are currently exploring issues relevant to CSE including how to improve information sharing and referral pathways from schools to Children and Family Services and Leicestershire Police, and conducting research and insight with children and young people to find out how we can more effectively get messages across to them about CSE;
- g) Future engagement is planned with primary schools to ensure messages reach all age groups and bolster work in relation to e-Safety and healthy schools.

### **Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner Partnership Bid**

- 5. A partnership bid aimed at funding provision over the next two financial years has been submitted for final endorsement at the Strategic Partnership Board Executive on 29th October 2015. The bid encompasses a range of initiatives that intend to build capacity, capability and improve the effectiveness of the partnership in preventing, identifying and tackling CSE. The business case seeks funding for both one-off and non-recurring projects, as well as extending existing projects and good practice. In addition, it seeks a temporary increase in structures and staffing, demonstrating that to do so will provide an evidenced 'step change' in outcomes. Leicestershire County Council will have responsibility to manage the funding on behalf of the partnership.

### **Joint Targeted Area Inspection**

- 6. Leicestershire recently agreed to participate in trialing the development of a new inspection regime. The two day Joint Targeted Area Inspection trial held in September involved the inspectorates for children's services, police, health and probation - Ofsted, HMIC, HMIP and CQC – combining their resources to undertake a multi-agency inspection focusing on the theme of CSE and missing children. No judgement was given and the findings will not be published, however, the feedback from inspectors has helped all agencies involved to identify areas for further improvement.

## **Multi-Agency Specialist CSE Team**

### **Protocol**

7. A protocol for the multi-agency specialist CSE Team has recently been developed. It gives clarity to and outlines in detail the remit, roles and responsibilities of the specialist team and external teams in relation to CSE. The protocol has been developed to begin to outline partner agency remit, roles and responsibilities within the specialist team and how they collaborate. The new procedures will link to a revised LLR CSE Joint Protocol encompassing updated practice guidance and procedures also in its last stages of completion. The protocol includes reference to referral pathways and a new CSE Risk Assessment form to be used by the specialist team in tandem with other assessment processes.

### **Staffing**

8. In September 2015 three new recruits were added to the Council's contribution to the specialist CSE team. To complete the team further recruitment is planned.
9. A CSE Coordinator post for Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland started in June 2015. This post holder is line managed by the Council's Strategic Lead for CSE and Complex Abuse, and is currently jointly funded by the Leicester City LSCB and Leicestershire and Rutland LSCB. Twelve months funding has been secured pending further review. Longer-term funding is being sought through the Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC) bid. It is proposed that the CSE Coordinator will be responsible for implementation of the projects arising from the bid.
10. A specialist return interview focusing on children at high risk of CSE who have returned after being reported as missing is due to start late October 2015 initially funded for 12 months. The post funded by the OPCC has been commissioned from Barnardos.

### **Communications**

11. A communications approach has been developed to formally launch the specialist team internally encompassing online channels including Yammer (an internal social media channel) and offline channels including roadshows and inviting onsite visits.

### **Referral Data**

12. From 1 April 2014 to 31 March 2015 184 CSE referrals were received by the specialist CSE team, up from 85 referrals during the same period in 2013-14. This has been attributed to greater professional and public awareness of CSE, in part due to the local awareness raising campaign, in addition to increased confidence of victims to come forward.

13. Over Quarter 1 and Quarter 2 2015-16, the first six months of this business year, 125 referrals have been received. This has translated into an increasing number of joint investigations and operations with the police.
14. The Council's contribution to the specialist CSE team is coordinating the Council's response to a number of non-recent abuse and CSE investigations and operations working in close partnership with the police. One operation has involved working closely with another region's police force – the operation is now planned to be in two phases taking the investigation into late 2016.
15. A joint operation in North West Leicestershire led to a successful investigation and prosecution, the perpetrator received an eight year custodial sentence for drug offences. In this case, from initial disclosure of CSE by the children to the sentencing of the perpetrator took six months demonstrating the impact of the specialist CSE team. The operation has developed into a second phase, involving close working with local schools and community partnerships. With increasing national and local attention on CSE it is highly likely that more cases will be uncovered showing a clearer picture of the prevalence and extent of CSE.
16. Due to the impact of CSE a number of children have required specialist care placements both in order to keep them safe and protect them from the risk of further abuse from perpetrators and to provide support to them through the post abuse recovery process. Placements that can deliver the desired outcomes are currently commissioned from high cost external specialist residential providers. A number of known victims of CSE as part of their care and protection plan have been placed at a distance from Leicestershire in safe accommodation where they have received wrap around therapeutic support.
17. The specialist CSE team has become increasingly involved in providing a formal response to safeguarding issues related to children placed in Leicestershire by other local authorities. The team has developed links with the majority of the approximately 30 private children's homes in the County and monitor safeguarding concerns where children go missing and/or are at risk of CSE.

### **Goddard Inquiry Strategic Governance Group**

18. A strategic governance group has been formed to ensure coordination of activity in relation to preparation for the Goddard Inquiry, and strategic and operational work in relation to non-recent abuse and CSE.
19. Simon Lawrence has been appointed as the Council's Non-Recent Abuse Coordinator.

### **Regional Developments**

20. A seminar hosted by the East Midlands ADCS Group was held on 23<sup>rd</sup> October 2015 involving senior leaders from a wide range of agencies from

across the region. Keynote contributors included Ofsted and the Crown Prosecution Service. The event provided an opportunity to reflect on CSE practice and critical issues, highlighted improvement themes and engaged delegates in a discussion about regional approaches.

21. A draft regional CSE framework was previewed at the event. The framework encompasses a range of regional principles and standards. It received wide support and was endorsed as the first step toward developing a regional compact.

### **Resource Implications**

22. Funding has been provided by the government to create regional police CSE Coordinators. One has recently been appointed in the East Midlands.
23. MTFs growth of £560,000 was agreed by the County Council on 18 February 2015 and is funding the Council's contribution to the multi-agency specialist CSE team.
24. Placement costs were not included in the growth bid and those costs are now contributing to the pressure on this area of the budget. Additional resources to enhance the work in relation to CSE are being pursued through the Strategic Partnership Development fund held by the Office for the Police and Crime Commissioner (see section 5 above).

### **Background Papers**

None.

### **Circulation under the Local Issues Alert Procedure**

None.

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### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

25. Enhancing the Council's approach to safeguarding children and child protection is integral to the work in relation to tackling CSE. National research would suggest that boys and young men, children from BME and LGBT communities are underrepresented in the local numbers of referrals of

children identified at risk of CSE. This is likely to be due to underreporting. Work has been identified to address this.