

TO: EXECUTIVE
18 NOVEMBER 2014

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
Director, Children Young People & Learning

1 PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 This report and appendices will outline the multi-agency work undertaken within Bracknell Forest to identify, protect and support young people who may be subject to Child Sexual Exploitation.

2 RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 **That the Executive notes the content of the attached report and appendices and endorses the work that is being undertaken jointly by agencies within Bracknell Forest to address the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).**
- 2.2 **That the Executive endorses the circulation of guidance to Elected Members so that they can be vigilant about possible CSE in their Wards and are aware of how to report any suspicions or concerns.**

3 REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 Due to the high profile of this issue nationally, the Executive needs to be fully informed and supportive of the work being undertaken locally.

4 ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1 None.

5 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

5.1 Introduction

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse and has been brought to the public notice by recent high profile situations in places such as Rochdale, Rotherham and Oxford. This report will outline the multi agency work undertaken within Bracknell Forest to identify and protect young people who may be subject to child sexual exploitation

5.2 What is child sexual exploitation?

- 5.2.1 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse that involves the manipulation and/or coercion of young people under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for things such as money, gifts, accommodation, affection or status. The manipulation or 'grooming' process involves befriending children, gaining their trust, and often feeding them drugs and alcohol, sometimes over a long period of time, before the abuse begins. The abusive relationship between victim and perpetrator

involves an imbalance of power which limits the victim's options. It is a form of abuse which is often misunderstood by victims and outsiders as consensual. Although it is true that the victim can be tricked into believing they are in a loving relationship, no child under the age of 18 can ever consent to being abused or exploited. (Barnardo's 2012).

- 5.2.2 Child sexual exploitation can manifest itself in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional or physical control over a young person. It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes within gangs and in gang-affected neighbourhoods, but not always. Exploitation can also involve opportunistic or organised networks of perpetrators who may profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men (Barnardo's 2011).
- 5.2.3 Exploitation can also occur without physical contact when children are persuaded or forced to post indecent images of themselves online, participate in non-contact sexual activities via a webcam or smartphone, or engage in sexual conversations on a mobile phone (DfE, 2011). Technology is widely used by perpetrators as a method of grooming and coercing victims, often through social networking sites and mobile devices (Jago et al, 2011).

5.3 **Bracknell Forest activity**

- 5.3.1 There are two groups which meet in Bracknell Forest to monitor the work in relation to CSE; the LSCB Strategic Sub Group and the CSE Operations Group (formerly Mapping Group). Members of the CSE Strategic Group are the strategic leaders of the LSCB partner agencies. The CSE Operations Group (formally mapping group), is attended by middle managers and lead practitioners from partner agencies who are directly involved with young people who are vulnerable to, or experiencing CSE and those who may be suspected of perpetrating the abuse.

5.4 **LSCB CSE Strategic Subgroup**

- 5.4.1 The LSCB Strategic CSE Sub Group, which was established in April 2013, meets quarterly and is chaired by Karen Roberts, Head of Service, Youth Offending. The role of the CSE Strategic Group is to develop the LSCB Strategy and monitor the implementation of the action plan for Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation. This group provides Strategic co-ordination and oversight of multi agency activity in this area of practice with the overall aim of reducing the risks to children and young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation.
- 5.4.2 The initial focus of the first 3 meetings was to develop the Bracknell Forest LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan, which was completed in June 2013 and approved by the LSCB (see Appendix 1). Attendance and participation at meetings has been good and all Partners have been actively engaged in taking the work forward within their respective agencies. Chairs of the other relevant LSCB and Community Safety sub groups are represented on the CSE Strategic Sub Group and have taken the lead in incorporating Child Sexual Exploitation into the work of their sub group
- 5.4.3 The Strategic Group has continued to meet quarterly to monitor the CSE Strategy and partners report on their agency's progress against each area of the action plan, i.e. Prevention, Identification, Support and Prosecution (see Appendix 2 and

Appendix 3). The group considers and reflects upon CSE issues from a National as well as local perspective, and develops the local response to recommendations from reports published by the lead national agencies, e.g. Barnardo's and the Office of the Children's Commissioner. The CSE Strategic Group receives a report on the activity of the CSE Operations Group and provides a 6 monthly update report to the LSCB Executive and Forum.

5.4.4 The CSE Strategic group have reviewed the reports and recommendations arising from significant national cases e.g Rotherham, Derby and will continue to do this on each occasion to ensure that if there are lessons to be learned for Bracknell Forest, that these are taken forward into the practitioner training programme and communicated back to the LSCB with recommendations for action. The recent Jay Report on CSE in Rotherham highlights the importance of an effective scrutiny function in a Council, both in terms of holding people to account, providing challenge and also Councillors testing proposals by reference to their broad experience and knowledge of the Borough and their own constituents. So far the profile of the cases in these areas has been very different from the nature and concerns about CSE in Bracknell Forest; the main points being that victims were not listened to or taken seriously and responses from agencies, particularly at management level, were not sufficiently robust and joined up. There is evidence that this is definitely not the case in Bracknell Forest, but neither is there complacency, so we will continue to review all national cases and take forward the recommendations from the reports where applicable. Most recently the Coffey report on CSE in Greater Manchester was published, and Ofsted are carrying out themed inspections in 8 LA on CSE with the objective of publishing information on best practice. The learning from this will be considered by the CSE Strategic Group and taken forward within our local action plan.

5.5 Mapping Group

5.5.1 Since late 2011, Bracknell Forest Council's Children's Social Care (CSC) has had a multi-agency professionals CSE Mapping Group in existence which was established and chaired by the Team Manager, Over 11's Team. This meeting was developed as a result of concerns about a number of young people - predominately females - who were regularly 'missing', had issues with school attendance, were using drugs, and were engaging in risky relationships.

5.5.2 The purpose was to share information and 'map out' the links between girls, their male associates, addresses they were known to use, and to consider what more could be done to support these young people and reduce risks of harm. There were a number of positive factors in the approach used to address these concerns, and from the onset, multi-agency engagement has been very positive.

5.5.3 The Mapping Group has also proved effective in enabling a multi agency approach to dealing with young people at risk of CSE. For example, in 2012 a group of young girls in Sandhurst were identified in a Mapping Meeting by several agencies, including YOS and the Police as exhibiting behaviours that suggested that they were at risk of CSE. A multi-agency approach was taken to raising their awareness and give them a safe place to meet rather than hanging about on the streets where they were at risk from potential perpetrators. The Youth Service provided premises and a YOS Worker, PCSO and Youth Worker engaged the girls and involved them in awareness and discussion sessions in relation to 'Grooming' and keeping safe.

5.5.6 During 2013, concerns relating to child sexual exploitation were highlighted in a number of high profile disclosures and criminal trials nationally. This, coupled with

'The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups' interim report from November 2012, indicated a significant under reporting of childhood sexual abuse and a need for all agencies to improve performance their reporting and actions in this area.

5.6 **CSE Operations group**

- 5.6.1 In February 2014, the mapping group was reviewed and an Operations Group was established and chaired by Sonia Johnson, Head of Service, Specialist Support. The model of working was reviewed to fit the current need. The role of the operational group is to identify and map numbers of young people who are at risk of exploitation, and to ensure that active plans are put in place, with a further remit being to raising awareness amongst practitioners. The terms of reference was reviewed.
- 5.6.2 The group has good commitment and engagement of members which includes the Education service, a representative from Bracknell's special needs school, the Safeguarding lead person for Education, the Police - both local and the CSE leads and a member of the Youth Offending Service. There is a clear and shared understanding in this group that it is a collective responsibility for identifying those children and young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation. In June, Membership was again reviewed with invitations extended to Health, Sexual Health, and Probation colleagues.
- 5.6.3 The referral route to the group is usually via a CSE risk assessment tool, however it is sometime via a CAF - in these instances one outcome would be for the lead professional to complete a CSE risk assessment. All young people who are identified as at risk of CSE are required to have a CSE action plan, this ensures everyone is clear who is doing what to minimise the risk. This may be in the form of a Child In Need, Child Protection or Looked After Child Plan. If a young person is not subject to any of these plans, a CSE action plan must be completed.
- 5.6.4 The Operations Group reviews each young person at risk, with agreed levels of concern (1, 2, 3 or Archived), to ensure that there are sufficient actions taking place to reduce risk, as well as ensuring each relevant agency is aware of all the current information relating to a YP. The previously 'archived' persons are reviewed to ensure there is no new information and to be sure any links between archived YP and current YP are not missed. This is particularly important in relation to 'victims' who have turned 18. An action is set to refer to Adult Social Care anyone who is active on the agenda and approaching adulthood. The group also discusses any new completed CSE risk assessment tools.
- 5.6.5 The group maps any concerning adults who are linked to the young people with particular relevance to the identification of organised groups. Discussions also focus on locations/ hot spots to enable the police to target areas for monitoring and or disruption. It also enables other agencies to be aware of areas they should be concerned about if they hear YP are frequenting.
- 5.6.6 Finally, the group uses this meeting as an opportunity to look at training and audit reviews when knowledge is shared and attendance promoted on any recommended training plus feedback on any learning from audits / reviews.
- 5.7 In August, the CSE Operations Group merged with the local Missing Children's Panel and is now jointly chaired by CSC and TVP.

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The group shares relevant information in order to:

- Prevent child sexual exploitation.
- Identify, protect and support identified victims of child sexual exploitation and those at potential risk, including those who go missing from home or care.
- Disrupt and stop perpetrators, secure justice and gain convictions.
- The group discusses any Child / Young Person who has been missing 3 times in 90 days that have not already not already been discussed during the CSE discussion phase of the meeting

5.8 During 2014, Bracknell Forest Council Children Social Care and partner agencies have worked hard to review the current arrangements and to develop the established systems and services that drive the CSE agenda forward, the focus being on prevention, identification, support and prosecution.

5.9 On-going work

- 5.9.1 A process map has been drawn up to ensure that the CSE operations group fits with, and complements, Children Social Care / Child Protection procedures – though it is not a substitute for mainstream safeguarding processes.
- 5.9.2 More recent group meetings have focussed on ‘victim’ risks and needs. A smaller group will have a one-off meeting in August 2014 to look at males who have been linked to the young people so that we can scale the list of concerning males down to those that are current and of ongoing concern as opposed to those who were discussed previously but no longer feature as being of significant concern. This group will have a representative from Neighbourhood Policing and the CSE Police team as well as CSC.

5.10 Training

- The LSCB CSE training programme is now in operation with 3 targeted multi agency workshops having been delivered to practitioners. The KWANGO Introduction to CSE e-learning package is available on the Bracknell Forest E learning zone and this has been publicised.
- Bracknell Forest has jointly commissioned two specialist CSE training dates in partnership with RBWM and Slough to be delivered by Just Whistle. The first of these was delivered in September in Bracknell.
- Over the next few months, members of the CSE Strategic Sub Group will be attending national workshops as members of the National Working Group to keep up to date with emerging themes and developments

5.11 Future actions

5.11.1 CSE Operations Group

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- To consider inviting representatives from the voluntary sector to the group
- Decide when it is appropriate to use CSE action plan and when it is not necessary (for example, if CSE issues are already clearly being addressed as part of a CP plan / CIN plan).
- Explore the group's role in mapping concerning adults and areas, and more clearly determining processes for any information gathering and sharing
- Develop members' awareness and response to boys at risk of grooming / sexual exploitation as currently the group almost exclusively focused on females at risk of CSE.

5.11.2 LSCB Strategic Sub group

Since the Bracknell Forest LSCB CSE strategy and action plan (Appendix 1), has been in place (June 2013), agencies have been working on implementation of the action plan, as detailed in Appendices 2 and 3.

The focus of further work for the CSE strategic group in taking forward outstanding actions in the LSCB CSE strategy and action plan will be:

- To commission local research in respect of 'problem profiling'. This project will be overseen by the CSE strategic sub group and will involve a staged approach to gathering data / information about children and young people at risk, alongside the gathering of information about perpetrators and locations associated with such abuse. The operations group will feed information to this project as appropriate and act upon any recommendations made. This work may also identify new young people of concern for the group's awareness and interventions
- To take forward the recommendations from the Deputy Children's Commissioners Report, ("If only someone had listened"), which is a major challenge for a small Local Authority with limited resources to support the LSCBs work in this area, particularly in relation to requests for data and carrying out a multi agency problem profiling exercise. The proposed methodology in respect of the latter has been the subject of consultation involving all agencies represented within the sub group and has now received approval. Due to the significant amount of work involved it remains in its early stages of implementation and progress is slow. During August 2014, a data set was agreed and all agencies are now in the process of gathering the requested information. Due to slow returns a further deadline has had to be set for agencies to submit the requested information. Once all returns have been submitted the data will be analysed and collated.

6 ADVICE RECEIVED FROM STATUTORY AND OTHER OFFICERS

Borough Solicitor

- 6.1 The relevant legal provisions are contained within the main body of the report.

Borough Treasurer

- 6.2 The Borough Treasurer is satisfied that no significant financial implications arise from this information report. The care and accommodation cost of all young people being looked after, including those arising from CSE, are considered each year as part of the Council's normal budget setting process, with resources allocated to cover the cost of known cases.

Equalities Impact Assessment

- 6.3 CSE can affect all communities and ethnic groups. Whilst recognising that the cases in Rotherham and some other areas have involved particular ethnic groups as perpetrators, other cases have included all ethnic groups. Locally, however it does appear to be young girls who are most at risk, and various national reports highlight those young people who have particularly difficult backgrounds for example those who have been in care or experienced troubled families where risk taking is a more likely feature of their lives. The age of the girls involved in CSE that we are aware of have ranged in age from 13 to over 18 years of age. We are aware of a predominately female cohort although there are also young men involved as victims. Please see EIA screening at Appendix 4.

Strategic Risk Management Issues

- 6.4 The nature and intensity of the required response to CSE does have a significant impact on the resources of the departments and agencies who are involved with these cases in terms of staff time and cost. Since April 2012 four young people have had to be accommodated by the Local Authority in out of area placements in order for the risk of sexual exploitation to be minimised.

Placing young people into care can be a volatile area because there are usually a number of issues that contribute to the decision. However, for the 2013/14 financial year, there were 3 residential placements where the primary reason can be attributed to CSE. The total cost of these placements amounted to £0.396m.

Any care and accommodation costs will be dealt with in the same way as all other LAC costs, and in accordance with the agreed funding strategy of the Council. So, should any costs need to be incurred, if there are insufficient funds in CYPL, then a bid will be made to the Corporate Contingency for one-off funding. Any on-going costs would need to be included within budget proposals for the relevant year for consideration by the council as part of the overall budget setting process.

7 CONSULTATION

Principal Groups Consulted

- 7.1 Children, Young People & Learning Departmental Management Team

Method of Consultation

- 7.2 Papers submitted and discussion.

Background Papers

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Appendix 1 CSE Strategy and Action Plan

Appendix 2 Summary of the work carried out by partner agencies and sub-groups to deliver the BF LSCB CSE Strategy and Action Plan April 2013 – November 2013

Appendix 3 Summary of work carried out by partner agencies and sub groups to deliver the BF LSCB CSE Strategy and Action Plan December 2013 – June 2014

Appendix 4 EIA Screening

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