

Report of the Assistant Director (Children's Specialist Services) to the Meeting of the Corporate Parenting Panel to be held on 19th November 2014.

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Subject:

Safeguarding Looked after Children at risk of Sexual Exploitation

Summary statement:

The implications of the Jay report into historical abuse in Rotherham has led to widespread media, social and public interest in CSE. This report provides assurance to elected members as to the arrangements in place in Bradford to safeguard young people.

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1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The implications of the Jay report into historical abuse in Rotherham has led to widespread media, social and public interest in child sexual exploitation. This report provides assurance to elected members as to the arrangements in place in Bradford to safeguard young people.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 On 26th August 2014 an Independent Inquiry Report into the handling of child sexual exploitation (CSE) by children's social care (CSC) and South Yorkshire Police in Rotherham was published. It is estimated that 1,400 children were sexually exploited between 1997 and 2013. Over a third of the victims were known to CSC due to safeguarding concerns. Senior managers within CSC were said to have underplayed the scale and seriousness of the problem. Three reports identifying CSE as a major problem were ignored. The majority of those behind the abuse were described as Asian, while the victims were predominantly young white girls, some of whom were looked after children.
- 2.2 Partnership working to address sexual exploitation of children in the Bradford District dates from 1995. In October 2011 the independent chair of Bradford Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) sought assurance as to the effectiveness of the multi-agency response to CSE. At this point, services within the District were less effective in sharing information and responding in a co-ordinated way to concerns that children were being exploited.

The key outcomes of a "structured challenge" to partners were:

- BSCB "Champion for CSE" identified: Police Superintendent;
 - A multi-agency co-located service, known as "The Hub" was established in January 2012, based at Javelin House.
 - BSCB to be responsible for strategic response to CSE.
- 2.3 Prior to the Hub being established, the Council Chief Executive convened a meeting of senior council officers, key elected members and senior police officers in December 2011. The purpose of this meeting was to ensure that there was a full, shared understanding of the incidence, impact and broader implications of CSE activity in the Bradford District. A key outcome of this meeting was the endorsement of the concept of the Hub. A further meeting of key officers, politicians and police officers took place on the 20 June 2012 to review the implementation of the Hub. Key outcomes of this second meeting were that the Council committed a full time manager to further support the work of the Hub and identified £250,000 to invest in CSE services during the period 2013 – 2015.
- 2.4 The Director of Children's Services (DCS) convened a meeting for all Secondary Head Teachers in June 2013. This was addressed by the DCS, Safeguarding Board Manager and Senior Officers from West Yorkshire Police. Head Teachers were notified of the West Yorkshire wide "Know the Signs" public campaign and other initiatives relating to CSE.



- 2.5 In February 2014 the Council's Strategic Leadership Team devoted an extended meeting to the topic of CSE, receiving a detailed presentation from the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board setting out the current incidence, disposition of services, challenges and new developments in partnership working.
- 2.6 The additional £250,000 is being invested in CSE preventative work. Services have been commissioned from our Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS) partners which mean that from September 2014 a programme will commence which includes:
- Every year 10 student in Bradford attending a CSE drama which is reinforced by pre and post performance lesson plans for schools to deliver;
 - Work in Keighley by the Hand in Hand project has been boosted to provide more preventative group work for young people and to train peer mentors;
 - Barnardo's has been commissioned to expand its work to support more boys and young men, and to develop a new resource pack for work with families to raise awareness of CSE;
 - PACE (Parents against Child Exploitation) has been commissioned to deliver preventative group work to parents and to provide intensive support to the parents of children who are known to be experiencing CSE.

3. REPORT ISSUES

3.1 Key Points

The Rotherham Independent Inquiry contains 15 recommendations which are grouped into 11 themes. Where relevant, the following key points are cross-referenced with recommendations from the Inquiry.

3.2 Risk Assessment

- 3.2.1 The Inquiry Report recommends that "senior managers should ensure that there are up to date risk assessments for all children affected by CSE". In Bradford managers are responsible for ensuring that all children affected by CSE have a multi-agency child protection or child in need plan. When risk to a child is assessed as being at high or medium risk, the case is managed by the District's multi-agency, co-located CSE team, known as the Hub. These high and medium risk cases are regularly reviewed and plans updated at multi-agency meetings that take place each morning at 9.00 am.
- 3.2.2 The Inquiry notes that a numeric risk assessment tool has recently been introduced in Rotherham, and that this should be kept under review. A multi-agency risk assessment tool was developed for use in Bradford when the Hub was established in January 2012. This tool has been revised in the light of operational experience and is now used across West Yorkshire. The tool requires professionals to record their professional opinions about risk where the specific nature of the concern is not adequately captured by the tool.



3.3 Children Looked After

- 3.3.1 The Inquiry report recommends that “managers should develop a more strategic approach to protecting looked after children who are sexually exploited”. There is a particular focus on the appropriate use of out of area placements to remove children from immediate risk and to work with them to address their underlying vulnerabilities.
- 3.3.2 Bradford Children’s Services ensures that all children looked after are regularly reviewed by independent reviewing officers. This includes children placed outside the local authority area. There are clear practice standards to ensure that these children are visited regularly by social workers, and where appropriate have access to an advocate to ensure that their views are heard, understood and considered by those responsible for their care.
- 3.3.3 A number of young people are placed out of district because their needs cannot be met locally. Where CSE has been a risk factor, the commissioning and monitoring of the placement is carefully managed. All placements have to meet set criteria regarding Ofsted inspection and the location and links to local safeguarding arrangements are considered. Recent changes to the children’s homes regulations ensure that all homes adhere to yearly risk assessments with the local Police in relation to the risk of CSE. Each placement is reviewed and monitored by the Social Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer but also through multi agency placement team monitoring to ensure that the assessed needs of the young person are being met.

3.4 Outreach and Accessibility

- 3.4.1 The Inquiry expresses concern that over the period considered significant numbers of children and young people affected by CSE were not recognised as vulnerable by Council staff or by professionals from other agencies. There is a concern that some young adults may not yet have received support to help them deal with the consequences of the abuse that they have experienced.
- 3.4.2 It is not possible to guarantee that every victim of CSE will be identified and then be able to accept appropriate services to achieve safety and recovery. However, there is pro-active outreach work undertaken in the Bradford District through schools. This is undertaken by VCS partners and supported by safe schools officers.

3.5 CSE Procedures

- 3.5.1 Whilst the Inquiry makes no specific reference to the need for clear, up to date, inter-agency procedures it is clear that the absence of clear procedures or poor compliance with procedures significantly inhibited the capacity of professionals to recognise and respond appropriately to CSE. Within Bradford, comprehensive CSE procedures are in place around CSE and other related procedures are in the process of being updated, for example, children missing from local authority care



and home. Case file audits and challenge panels capture adherence to procedures.

3.6 Joint CSE Team

3.6.1 The report makes three recommendations which are intended to clarify the role of the recently established Rotherham Joint CSE team and to ensure that partners are committing appropriate management and operational resources to the team.

3.6.2 Since January 2012, the CSE Hub has been in place in Bradford. This is a local partnership response to CSE and is now well established. The 2014 Ofsted inspection commended the CSE Hub: *“the co-location of police, social care and Barnardo’s within the Child Sexual Exploitation Hub is a particular strength”*. There are currently 23 professionals working at the Hub and they are drawn from 4 key agencies: West Yorkshire Police, Children’s Social Care Services, Bradford District Care Trust and Barnardo’s. A further 5 agencies, both statutory and voluntary, attend morning meetings at the Hub and are involved in case discussions.

3.6.3 A recent review of the Hub was undertaken and the findings were reported by the Independent Chair of BSCB to the Council Chief Executive and Director of Children’s Services. The review considered a number of sources of information including:

- Operational data provided by the Hub
- CSE case file audits undertaken by managers from West Yorkshire Police and Specialist Children’s Services
- A Bradford University research project into the experiences of young people affected by CSE, facilitated by Barnardo’s Turnaround and Hand in Hand
- A self assessment of CSE partnership working against standards developed by the University of Bedford
- Home Office Innovation Fund evaluation of parental support work undertaken in the Bradford District by Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE).

3.6.4 Some of the key conclusions of the review were:

- Since the Hub was established in January 2012 operational pressures have resulted in increased dedicated staffing resources from both LA Specialist Children’s Services and West Yorkshire Police. Increases have been primarily in management and administrative capacity.
- The Hub has now been externally scrutinised by both Ofsted (as part of the recent inspection of Local Authority Children’s Services) and the National College of Policing. Ofsted found that: *“The co-location of police, social care and Barnardo’s within the CSE hub is a particular strength. It promotes effective and early information sharing across agencies where children and young people are at risk of or are suffering sexual exploitation. Timely and robust multi-agency involvement ensures that risks of CSE are identified and plans put in place to reduce these risks”*. The National College of Policing awarded the Hub “Gold Standard” and has encouraged other police forces to adopt this operational approach as best practice.



- Operational data shows that numbers of high and medium risk cases managed through the Hub is between 60–100 at any one time. Work is underway to amend ITC systems to provide reliable reporting of all CSE cases, including those identified as low risk.
- There is increased recognition of CSE cases from the Gypsy/Roma community; agencies' experience of working with vulnerable families and children from this community is still developing.
- As of June 2014 the ethnic profile of perpetrators shows a significant majority of perpetrators are of British-Pakistani heritage.
- Audit of practice shows that cases are generally well managed within the Hub. The presence of a social work team manager in the Hub strengthens joint working between the police and social workers. Revised referral pathways for CSE cases have been implemented as a result of learning from audit.
- An understanding young people's experiences is central to developing services that are responsive, protective, help young people to change their behaviours and support young people in making and sustaining complaints to the police. The Hub and partners will implement "Viewpoint" as a system to methodically gather and analyse information about young people's experiences.
- The current operational response to CSE is based on an effective multi-agency model. Partners have shown themselves responsive to increasing demand and complexity of cases and working arrangements. It is likely that demand will continue to increase, at least in the medium term.

3.7 CSE Training

In addition to CSE training provided by individual agencies, Bradford Safeguarding Children Board provides multi-agency training for professionals. This is delivered by both e-learning and face to face courses. Training about CSE was offered to elected members in 2013 and 2014 and there was encouraging take up. The CSE training receives positive feedback from participants.

3.8 Minority Ethnic Communities

- 3.8.1 The Inquiry recommends "more direct and more frequent engagement by the Council and also the Safeguarding Board with women and men from minority ethnic communities on the issue of CSE and other forms of abuse". Furthermore the review recommends that the issue of under reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse in minority ethnic communities be addressed. There are local initiatives in place which are proving to be effective in relation to child protection. Work with mosques and madrassahs has been funded by BSCB, and agreement has been made to extend the project into 2015.



3.8.2 There have been a range of community meetings and smaller meetings with leaders from minority ethnic communities and faith leaders regarding the issue of CSE. These have been led by BSCB and West Yorkshire Police, and have taken place with Keighley Muslim Association, Bradford Council for Mosques, Bradford Imams' Forum (no longer active), the Muslim Women's Council and Christian Clergy for the Keighley area. The previous Bishop of Bradford, provided a great deal of assistance in brokering some of these meetings.

3.9 **Quality Assurance**

3.9.1 Joint audits of CSE cases were undertaken by the Council and West Yorkshire police. The report of these audits was used to inform the review of the Hub, described above. These audits together with learning from the review of cases is informing local service development and leading to revisions in training for staff in partner organisations. On the same day that the Rotherham Inquiry Report was published, a national CSE Local Safeguarding Children Board Performance and Data Management Framework was also published. All local partners are committed to providing regular data to complete this framework and to use it to benchmark and improve services in Bradford.

3.10 **Strategic Response to CSE**

In 2013, BSCB adopted the "7 Point Strategic Response to CSE" which summarises partnership priorities. This strategy is currently being updated and will be re-launched. It is likely that the number of strategic priorities will rise from 7 to 9. The West Yorkshire Strategic CSE group is chaired by an independent LSCB chair from another West Yorkshire Local Authority area.. BSCB has an identified "Champion for CSE" – a Bradford Police Superintendent.

4. **OPTIONS**

- 4.1 A CSE review team has been set up to respond to any historic allegations of CSE that are brought to the Local Authority and the Police. The team is made up of suitably trained professionals from the West Yorkshire Police and Children Specialist Services.
- 4.2 The team will investigate all allegations with the aim of supporting the victim, prosecuting any identified offenders, raising awareness of issues and learning and further developing the joined up response to CSE.

5. **CONTRIBUTION TO STRATEGIC PRIORITIES**

- 5.1 A sound and robust response to child sexual exploitation in the district will protect children and young people from harm. Safekeeping vulnerable children is a key corporate priority.



6. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 To continue to work within allocated budget and partnership working to enhance effectiveness and efficiency of service provision in relation to child sexual exploitation.

8. APPENDICES

None.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

“Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham: 1997 – 2013”
(the Jay Report):

http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham

