

Minutes of a meeting of the Keighley Area Committee held on Thursday, 20 January 2022 in Council Chamber, Keighley Town Hall, Keighley

Commenced 6.44 pm
Concluded 7.39 pm

Present – Councillors

LABOUR	CONSERVATIVE	LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AND INDEPENDENT GROUP	GREEN	THE INDEPENDENTS	INDEPENDENT	THE QUEENS BURY WARD INDEPENDENTS	BRADFORD INDEPENDENT GROUP	BINGLEY INDEPENDENT
Lintern Firth Hussain	Brown Ali Herd K Green							Error! No document variable supplied.

VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS:

NON VOTING CO-OPTED MEMBERS

Observers:

Apologies:

Councillor Brown in the Chair

16. ALTERNATE MEMBERS (Standing Order 34)

Councillor Goodall for Councillor Clarke

17. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST

None received.

18. INSPECTION OF REPORTS AND BACKGROUND PAPERS

19. PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

None received.

20. YOUTH SERVICE UPDATE - KEIGHLEY

Resolved –

- 1. That the item be deferred to a future meeting of the Keighley Area Committee.**

21. PROTECTING VULNERABLE CHILDREN AND ADULTS AT RISK OF EXPLOITATION

The Chief Executive presented a report (**Document ‘G’**) which provided an update on the contemporary strategic response to all forms of exploitation of children and adults at risk of exploitation and how partners from The Bradford Partnership – Working together to safeguard children and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board work to drive continuous improvement and are able to hold agencies to account for their work on this subject. The report also presented issues from the Covid-19 Pandemic. This provided a contemporary response to exploitation.

Members sought to understand how those who are not already on the Council’s radar are flagged as at risk of exploitation, and what signs are looked for. Officers explained that this information comes from intelligence. This can be members of the public or neighbours and there is also a safeguarding business initiative, with businesses such as Yorkshire Water who are entering homes and may be able to identify exploitation, which will help to keep people safe. Furthermore, the ‘Front Door’ service provides a, team of experienced practice supervisors, and any contact is dealt with by the bespoke exploitation team. This allows the team to set the child’s journey off on the right trajectory. Officers also explained that they are hoping to have a launch campaign over the next year to raise the profile of child sexual exploitation. Officers stressed that through the Multidisciplinary approach, they want CSE to be at the forefront of people’s minds.

Members were keen to understand how officers are engaging faith communities in the Keighley Central Ward. Officers explained that they wouldn’t have data of Keighley specifically but this is something that is in progress. Officers made members aware that they need to build on that in order to progress for the next steps. Officers identified that faith communities can be a very fast point of contact

in Keighley central.

Officers suggested a need to improve in faith communities. Officers explained that they will circulate ward specific data if necessary.

Members sought to understand what was meant by 'not yet assessed' and whether those identified as 'not yet assessed' are moving through the system. Officers explained that exploitation assessments are taking place and that they are supplementary and take place along the statutory assessment. Concerns come through front door and are initially assessed in locality areas. There is a Daily Risk Assessment Meeting which allocate specialised and supplementary assessments for children who need it. Thus happens every day and will be cleared within the next 4 weeks.

Members asked if someone is accused are they accused until they become a perpetrator and whether this is flagged up whilst they are accused? Because if that was the case the DBS check would be clean, even though accusations could have built up over years. In Keighley there are a number of investigations of non-recent exploitation offences. Adult males, not exclusively, now may have children of their own or in their network. Members sought to clarify if there is a process to identify whether these people pose any risk. Officers explained that the threshold application is different in children's services. Officers use 'beyond reasonable doubt' to ensure a balance of probability. Furthermore, officers work closely with West Yorkshire Police and any allegations made are identified as they maybe connected to other children. A complex strategy discussion between social care, health and police is held to identify what the allegation is and then risk assessment is carried out within 45 days to identify if there is any threat to children. Safeguards are implemented, as the accused temporarily move out of family home. The safeguards that are put in place are Influenced by different factors, such as children's ages and genders. Going forward, officers will follow same process.

Members sought to understand how officers deal with situations where Children and Adults won't admit or aren't aware they're being exploited. Officers explained that this is a complex area of work, as not everyone sees themselves as a victim. However, with the use of the partnership approach, young people are encouraged to identify risks themselves. Support is not always achievable through dialect, or the wrap around with professionals and family members. With peers and the victim's immediate circle there can be a wealth of information and intelligence. Officers explained that practitioners will get alongside of that young person and are supported by education safeguarding, drug recovery and health. As a result of this the problem can be identified, and that child will be allocated a worker who will make contact, and will then look with colleagues where they are in different locations in order to cause disruption to the issue. Officers explained that it is not unusual, to retrieve young people whilst social care finds a placed for them. This is a good base to start relationship on. Officers explained that it can be gritty and rough as staff must be their critical friends but only when they have that strong relationship. Officers explained that there are youngsters around the Keighley area that are tough and may not be able to identify exploitation as it is not a term they recognise. This means CSE officers have to work intensively for a long period of time and it can be difficult to break that cycle.

Work on breaking the cycle is vital in district. Work engaging with money, how do you engage with families that e not in need or poor. – process is process. Same process of raising concern to parents, always the same. Even if haven't been on

radar before. Whatever presenting issues then safeguarding trigger. Have parents got the ability to protect. Look to take more statutory intervention if needed.

Officers clarified that the process for identifying those at risk of exploitation is the same for those in poorer areas and those in wealthier areas. It is the same process of raising concern to parents, even if those children may not have been on the radar before. Furthermore, whatever the presenting issues is the relevant safeguard is triggered and parents are looked at for their ability to protect. This process is used for every child.

Members sought to understand the impact of Lockdowns on the levels of emerging cases in the district. Officer explained the data tracked since its publication highlighted that there has been a decrease in missing episodes overall and a slight increase in October and November. Officers explained this is an anomaly as it is not the usual pattern. However, this is a similar trend across West Yorkshire authorities, and wasn't different in Bradford. Officers demonstrated the Philomena Protocol is always reviewed and trajectories improved upon. Officers assured there is more consistency and more police traffic cars.

Members highlighted the report on missing children out of education and asked officers if these children are likely to be more vulnerable to exploitation. Officers assured members this is one of the indicators, and officers are looking to strengthen relationship between schools and education safeguarding. Fundamentally officers demonstrated a desire to where possible, keep kids in school. As if Children are in education, it causes disruption to them being exploited and it can break the cycle.

Members were keen to understand the support that officers can access in order to keep themselves well. Members learnt of the TRIM mechanism used by officers when dealing with traumatic incidents. Officers drew attention to the fact that every day is a traumatic day due to the nature of the job, but there are a lot of mechanisms for wellbeing and agencies outside to refer to. However, it is not a perfect science. Despite this, officers assured members they always have someone to talk to if they are struggling.

Officers stated that Members can continue to help them in protecting vulnerable children and adults at risk of exploitation by advocating for children and continuing these efforts to be good corporate parent. Members were encouraged to learn from cases and shared outcome.

Resolved –

- 1. That the report be noted.**
- 2. That a commitment be made to working closely with partners to continue to raise awareness of exploitation of both adults and children.**
- 3. That ward specific data be circulated to members of the Committee**

as agreed.

- 4. That the Chief Executive be requested to provide a further report in 12 months' time.**

Chair

Note: These minutes are subject to approval as a correct record at the next meeting of the Keighley Area Committee.

THESE MINUTES HAVE BEEN PRODUCED, WHEREVER POSSIBLE, ON RECYCLED PAPER