

Bradford District response to Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding

Introduction:

Bradford continues to recognise opportunities to increase collaboration between Strategic Boards and sub-groups. This recognises the emergence of more complex safeguarding matters which are under intense scrutiny through the media, inspections, and inquiries and impact across Children's Safeguarding, the Adult Safeguarding arena and the Community Safety Partnership.

In order to proactively safeguard children and vulnerable adults within a wide contextual safeguarding remit, a shared approach and collective understanding of the issues and experiences children and vulnerable adults is required. This approach recognises the broader group of people who do not fall under the criteria as Adults at Risk within the Care Act. The BSAB has commissioned work to improve understanding and the response to people who may fall within this term.

This strategy recognises that contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people and vulnerable adults form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Across the three Boards, there are detailed sub-group structures in place to manage core functions as well Board specific objectives. Some of these core functions lend obvious opportunities for a more consistent and collaborative approach which takes into account the cross-cutting themes and presents opportunities for shared learning. Bradford has developed this thinking with the Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding sub-group.

In the past Bradford has developed a strategic response to CSE and this strategy seeks to use the experience and methodology in developing this strategy.

Taken together, the strategic objectives are:

1. Identify and understand the nature and scale of the themes involved.
2. Prevention, Education and Awareness
3. Safeguarding vulnerable people, groups and communities
4. Effective leadership and governance
5. Disrupt and Prosecute
6. Communication, Engagement and Empowerment

Definitions

The BSCB considered the definition of complex safeguarding and agreed a local definition – Behaviour or activity involving C& YP and adults with multiple vulnerabilities where there is exploitation , a risk of exploitation and /or a clear or implied safeguarding concern which is likely to lead to a serious and sustained negative impact on Children & Young People

Contextual Safeguarding expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people and vulnerable adults are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts. This includes sexual exploitation, modern day slavery, harmful sexual behaviour, peer on peer violence and abuse including gangs and groups, criminal exploitation, and going missing and should not be seen in isolation as they often overlap , creating a complex set of harmful circumstances and experiences for children, young people, vulnerable adults, families, carers and communities.

County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas [within the UK], using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate

or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity:

- in exchange for something the victim needs or wants.
- for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator.
- through violence or the threat of violence.

The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can also occur through the use of technology. The criminal exploitation of children is not confined to county lines but can also include other forms of criminal activity such as theft, acquisitive crime, knife crimes and other forms of criminality.

Harmful sexual behavior (HSB) includes:

- using sexually explicit words and phrases
- inappropriate touching
- using sexual violence or threats
- full penetrative sex with other children or adults.

Children and young people who develop HSB harm themselves and others. More information is available [here](#)

Stakeholders

The strategy will include the following groups in all of the strategic objectives

- Children and young people, particularly those in transitions
- Vulnerable adults
- Communities
- On-line activity
- Parents and carers
- Professionals and people involved with children and young people

1. Identify and understand the nature and scale of risk and vulnerabilities

- Development of a vulnerability profile that includes relevant data sets and amalgamates individual profiles and assessments, to enable the partnership to utilise the profiles to effectively target resources and interventions effectively safeguard children and vulnerable adults. This should be done as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessments that all local authorities are required to produce.
- Develop data and performance measures that provides partners with an understanding of trends and allows challenge and scrutiny

- Enhancing the processes for recording flagging or 'markers' on service systems, to support effective consistent record keeping and information sharing with partner agencies, regarding those who pose a risk of harm to children and vulnerable adults.
- Implementing agreed information sharing pathways to enable effective sharing of early information and data between partners, to help collate intelligence and other information about communities, environments, perpetrators and victims, in order to support robust interventions for children and families where emerging problems are recognised.
- Identify specific vulnerable people and groups including transitions, homelessness and vulnerable learners

2. Prevention, Education and Awareness

- Working closely with key stakeholders to understand and respond to a range of risk and vulnerabilities
- Raising awareness amongst all communities, parents, carers and potential perpetrators
- Training for professionals to enable identification, understanding and responding to range of risk and vulnerabilities
- Establish effective working with early years, reducing the number of children beginning school with very low levels of development (Links with Keeping Kids Safe¹)

¹ Childrens Commissioners Report -Improving safeguarding responses to gang violence and criminal exploitation

- Make contacts count - There are many points where support for a child or family can reduce the risk of them joining a gang. At each of these points there are services tasked with working with these families, and the key is ensuring these services are used. (Links with Keeping Kids Safe¹)
- Focus upon all schools, colleges and alternative educational provision.
- Inform training and development opportunities that support agencies and practitioners to recognise that children can simultaneously be both a victim and perpetrator of exploitation, harm and abuse and therefore responses, assessments and interventions must child centred
- Work with the industry sector and night time economy to raise awareness and develop prevention strategies

3. Safeguarding and supporting vulnerable people, groups and communities

- Ensuring that robust multi-agency needs led risk management plans are in place that give full consideration to vulnerability and need factors, , ensuring that these are strengths-based in approach, coordinated, effectively actioned and compliment (where relevant)any statutory processes
- Support and intervention - timely therapeutic and support services, particularly recognising the vulnerability of young people and adults with mental health needs².
- Ensure that there is appropriate information to advise and access support

² Public Health Report - The mental health needs of gang affiliated young people

- Develop effective information sharing to identify and inform gaps in service provision
- Protect vulnerable locations – places where vulnerable young people can be targeted, including pupil referral units and residential children’s care homes³
- Focus upon transitional arrangements –ensure appropriate arrangements are in place to support and protect children who have been assessed as increasingly vulnerable
- Recognise and respond to the children and vulnerable adults with multiple vulnerabilities – including mental health, alcohol and substance misuse and Domestic Abuse

4 Effective leadership and governance

- Coordinate the delivery and oversight of this strategic response
- Ensuring that the local multi-agency response is informed by national / local research and learning and an understanding of the wider context of risk and harm
- Effective systems around the Front Door/ MASH and associated processes for both children and adults
- Encourage statutory and non-statutory partners to work together to develop and strengthen our collective safeguarding efforts
- Quality assurance of improved outcomes for children and vulnerable adults
- Developing best practice and learning

³ Home Office Report – Ending gang violence and exploitation

- Multi agency training at all levels – including specialist and non-specialist practitioners and linking with established programmes to widen knowledge of exploitation.
- Improving outcomes and reducing harm to young people and vulnerable adults who are at risk of exploitation and victims of exploitation

5. Disrupt and Prosecute

- Improve intelligence and information sharing and analysis, to assist local disruption plans and the prosecution of people and businesses where appropriate
- Making best use of licensing laws, Child Abduction Warning Notices, Sexual Harm Prevention Orders, Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders and other relevant legislation available to address offences to close down premises, deter perpetrators and prevent violence and abuse from occurring, escalating and /or recurring
- Collaborative working with law enforcement and criminal justice agencies
- Ensure a proactive response to prevent crimes and harm
- Supporting children and vulnerable adults through all aspects of the criminal justice system including court processes to improve their experiences and help minimise revictimisation created by the process/system including the often difficult court process and help achieve successful prosecutions of those who exploit, harm and abuse. Seek to identify and develop post CJS support networks and signposting for children, vulnerable adults and their families.

6. Communication, Engagement and Empowerment

- Develop a coordinated programme of information and education for all partners.

- Developing awareness messages/campaigns about what to look for, and how to report concerns, in order to enhance not only the identification of people and places of concern
- Creating public facing campaigns and user friendly materials to effectively signpost children, young people, vulnerable adults families and communities to appropriate advice, support and services, to develop community resilience to empower and involve communities
- Provide clear and unambiguous deterrent messages to perpetrators including campaigns to reach diverse groups
- Ensure effective internal communications to professionals across the partnership
- Maximise on-line and social media opportunities and campaigns
- Coordinating clear pathways to centrally collate feedback received from children, families and vulnerable adults; to enable the reality of children's and service users experiences to inform and enhance strategic knowledge, through developing and sharing that knowledge.
- Listening to the voice of children and making safeguarding personal for service users to inform thinking and future planning.