

Report of the Chief Executive Office to the meeting of the Children`s Services Overview & Scrutiny Committee to be held on the 3rd February 2021

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Subject: Protecting Children & Vulnerable Adults at Risk of Exploitation

Summary statement:

This report provides an update to and builds on the report presented to the Council Executive on 5th November 2019 and more recently to the Executive Committee on the 9th November 2020.

The action required from the Executive Meeting on the 9th November meeting was for this report to be presented to this committee and the Health & Wellbeing board

This report focuses on the Strategic Response to all forms of exploitation in Children and Adults and how partners from the Working Together to Safeguard Children – the Bradford Partnership and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board work to drive improvements across the District and to hold agencies to account for their work in their area. This report also outlines the emergence of other complex safeguarding themes and outlines how partners are effectively collaborating and focussing upon the protection of vulnerable Children and Adults.

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Overview & Scrutiny Area:
Children`s Services, Health and Wellbeing

1. SUMMARY

1.1 This report provides an update to the report presented to the Council Executive on the 5th November 2019 and more recently 9th of November 2020 regarding the issue of Child Exploitation (CE). The Working Together to Safeguard Children – The Bradford Partnership (TBP) scrutinises the District responses to this and provides professional challenge to these responses. This ensures that partners are working to improve how children are supported and protected and to seek assurance for work in this area. This report will focus on the strategic response to all forms of exploitation to Children and Adults and how partners are contributing to improve service provision across the District. Partners are continuing to work together to protect vulnerable children and adults and particularly through increased collaborative work between TBP, Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). This has been achieved through an improved awareness and understanding which has enabled professionals to recognise and respond at an earlier stage to wider types of exploitation. (See **Appendix A** for definitions)

1.2 In summary:

- As part of the new arrangements, TBP partners have recognised the emergence of wider safeguarding themes within TBP Strategic Plan 2019-20.
- The Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding sub group which includes membership from the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) as well as The Bradford Partnership has continued to look at cross age responses to Exploitation. The group have agreed on a district strategic response to exploitation. This strategy has 6 headings
 - (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
- Partners have finalised a Strategic Response to CE and also a strategic response to Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding, and have published an Exploitation protocol [Child Exploitation Protocol](#) for children and also a Risk Assessment Tool for professionals [Risk Assessment Tool](#). These are utilised by professionals in their day to day assessment of the risks faced by children and young people in the district and to inform the responses to these risks.
- The Bradford Partnership has commissioned an independent thematic Serious Case Review of CSE. This is due to be published in early 2021.
- Front Door arrangements within Children's Social Care have been extended to address wider exploitation, with the development of new multi-agency processes. A multi-agency team involving Police, Early Help, Health, Barnardo's and Education work in partnership to share information and agree care plans and service provision to children at risk of exploitation. A Tri-weekly multi-agency CE meeting that looks at all aspects of Child

exploitation, Criminal, Sexual and Missing, along with County Lines and other forms of Exploitation takes place. This meeting tracks children who may be emerging, moderate or at significant risk. These meetings inform a monthly Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting that looks at a strategic overview of Child Exploitation and also monitors and assesses high risk cases which are assessed to have “blockages” in their management and look at multi-agency actions to overcome these issues.

- Bradford District Police Cyber Team and other partners continue to deliver training around topics relating to exploitation and on-line safety.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1 Nationally and locally, safeguarding partners are now addressing the emergence of numerous themes including Serious & Organised Crime, Modern Day Slavery and criminal exploitation as new threats in a similar way to the same conversations in the last decade around Child Sexual Exploitation. This is not only within children’s safeguarding arrangements but also recognising that vulnerable Adults can be exploited in the same way. These complex safeguarding matters impact across the Working Together to Safeguard Children – The Bradford Partnership (TBP), Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Scrutiny and quality assurance has also increased through the media, inspections and inquiries both locally and nationally.

2.2 Governance and Infrastructure

2.3 Working Together to Safeguarding Children - The Bradford Partnership (TBP)
Following changes brought about by government legislation the BSCB ceased to exist and the new arrangements commenced in 1st September 2019. The legislative framework behind these changes is the Children and Social Work Act 2017 as well as new guidance in Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018. The three key agencies responsible for safeguarding within the District, namely Bradford Council (through the Children’s Services department) the Airedale, Wharfedale and Craven, Bradford City and Bradford Districts CCG (Clinical Commissioning Group) and West Yorkshire Police lead on safeguarding have equal and joint responsibility for safeguarding arrangements. There are also a number of “relevant agencies” who are also involved with safeguarding of children within Bradford, **See Appendix B**.

2.4 Bradford has continued to develop opportunities to increase collaboration between the BSAB, CSP and TBP and linked sub-groups. Across each of the three Boards, the sub-group structures manage core functions as well Board specific objectives. Some of these core functions create obvious opportunities for a more consistent and collaborative approach that takes into account cross-cutting themes and presents opportunities for shared learning. Work has commenced to develop these work streams. **Appendix B** outlines the details of the arrangements.

2.5 Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB)
Work around exploitation of vulnerable Adults is still developing. This 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. Various work streams are

on-going which look at issues of homelessness, substance misuse, mental health and transitions. Partners have recognised that there are people who fall outside the statutory threshold for services as Adults but do need support and safeguarding. Present and future work streams include:

- Undertaking an analysis to estimate the additional activity that might be involved in widening our policy including learning from partners and other SABs, and the impact this will have on delivery and resources.
- The development, embedding and reviewing of a multi-agency Safeguarding Adults Policy and Procedures group to agree and support local guidance and best practice in emerging wider complex safeguarding issues.
- Establishment of a Risk Enablement Group which will be a conduit to developing a professional pathway for case escalation. It will take learning from other areas of work to identify pathways for addressing tensions within the system and identify ways we can work better collectively.
- Development of performance datasets, quality assurance and auditing to monitor the implementation and on-going quality of safeguarding responses to exploitation across the partnership
- Strengthening links with Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding Group and Housing complex needs panel in developing pathways of support for adults with complex Non-Statutory Safeguarding issues.
- Working with the Safeguarding Voice Group to identify issues they have encountered regarding exploitation and the development of an award winning Real Safeguarding Story around Mate Crime. This was based on a real life experience of one of the Safeguarding Voice Group Members and can be found here:

[Annie's Story](#)

Since undertaking this piece of work the individual has been supported to talk about her experience to different partner and service user audiences.

- An 'On the Buses' Safeguarding campaign was in the planning post Covid-19. This was a joint piece of work, led by Voice Group members in partnership with First Bradford and Community Safety Partnership. The aim of the project was to ensure that the busses were a safe place for all and how staff can recognise and respond to abuse. This was a piece of work that was identified following the Mate Crime work.

Unfortunately, due to Covid-19 this work was paused, however BSAB and Voice members are keen to progress the work when appropriate.

- Ensuring that the groups we work have relevant and up to date information regarding scams including availability of information on Safer Bradford website and building relationship with Yorkshire Standards. Voice group members are also leading on a piece of work that will involve a short virtual awareness raising workshop.
- A Safeguarding Voice newsletter, capturing service user opinions and experiences. At present we have a number of Voice Group members unable to access virtual meetings so we have using this as a tool to keep people engaged and connected. This is available on the SaferBradford Website here:

[Safeguarding Voice Group](#)

2.6 Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding Group.

Partners considered and developed a definition of complex safeguarding for children and agreed a local definition – behaviour or activity involving Children and

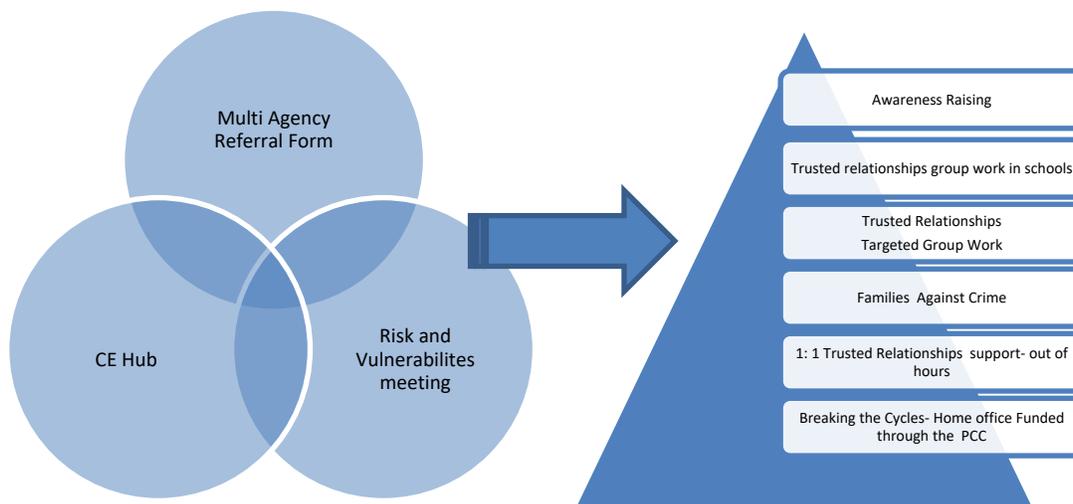
Young People and Adults with multiple vulnerabilities where there is exploitation, a risk of exploitation and/or a clear or implied safeguarding concern which is likely to lead to a serious and sustained negative impact on Children & Young People. This definition covers a number of individual safeguarding themes. The group has developed a Strategic Response (**Appendix C**).

2.7 West Yorkshire Risk and Vulnerability Group

Bradford continues to work closely with other Local Authorities and is a member of the West Yorkshire Risk and Vulnerability group which operates under the oversight of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (OPCC), seeking to support the delivery of the West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan (see document link in Section 12). This group has developed a West Yorkshire Contextual Children and Young People Safeguarding Strategy 2018-21. This group provides an opportunity for the sharing of good practice to learn and the development of a consistent approach to a number of processes.

2.8 Child Exploitation

Partners continue to work together to further develop the systems and procedures in Bradford for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children from Child Exploitation. Within the Integrated Front Door, the new management team have undertaken a reassessment of the structure, functions and responses to Child Exploitation within their team. This has led to a return to a specialised response multi-agency team to address concerns about child exploitation. This team works closely with the Breaking the Cycles, Trusted Relationship and Family Against Youth Crime Projects (Para 2.26 – 2.33) signposting children identified and assessed at risk of exploitation to specialist service provision.



2.9 The multi-agency procedures around exploitation ([Child Exploitation Protocol](#)) outline how partners provide an enhanced, effective service to reduce the risks and to ensure that interventions are focussed, co-ordinated to have a positive impact on outcomes for Children and Young People at the heart of the work. The protocols recognise the need to respond to all forms of exploitation of children and take into

account the pathways for Children and Young People who go missing, are at risk of Child Sexual or Criminal Exploitation, are at risk of Radicalisation or who have been Trafficked. This work utilises the exploitation assessment tool ([Risk Assessment Tool](#)) to assist practitioners when making referrals and allows the assessment team to make an informed decision. Between January 2020 and August 2020 the number of children assessed as at risk of CE fluctuated between 283 in January peaking in May at 389 and being at 311 in August. For full details of risk levels and a breakdown of types of risk see **Appendix D**.

The Police continue to work in partnership with Environmental Health, Taxi Licensing, Barnardo's, HMRC, Fire Service, Council Licencing, and Immigration. Areas of activity include cafes, fast food establishments, snooker and multi-entertainment halls, hotels and domestic dwellings. Since the changes brought on by the Coronavirus pandemic a number of these operations have been curtailed due to the closure of various locations, however the partners continue to monitor intelligence of locations of concern and respond accordingly. Over the last 12 months the group has continued to develop assessments and understanding of perpetrator profiles and victim profiles through the partnership analytical team. This has provided a variety of data around perpetrators and victims and helps look at the difference in both from a non-recent and recent perspective. This has enabled partners to identify trends and areas of focus and continue targeted work.

2.10 Child Criminal Exploitation.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) takes a variety of different forms (see **Appendix A** for definitions). It can include children being forced or coerced into moving drugs or money across the country as part of Organised Crime Groups to other types of activity such as shoplifting, pickpocketing, or to threaten other young people. Child criminal exploitation has become strongly associated with one specific model known as 'county lines'. While children of all ages have been subject to exploitation both locally and nationally research shows that criminal gangs are most likely to exploit children aged between 14 to 17 year olds. National thinking recognises the need for earlier help for children at risk, responses that see children as victims and not criminals, and joined-up national and local responses. CCE is a complex problem that requires a joined-up approach from statutory and non-statutory agencies, and accurate sharing of intelligence and recording of concerns facing children. Through coordinated, concerted efforts across statutory and voluntary sectors, and by working with local communities and families, partners can reach vulnerable young people more quickly and begin to disrupt child criminal exploitation. The government has issued refreshed guidance in January 2020 [County Lines Practical Guidance](#) which offers practical guidance to Youth Offending Teams and frontline practitioners. The understanding of the risk factors linked to all forms of child exploitation is still developing and the district is seeking to keep abreast of current thinking and responses. Across the UK there is much work still to do to fully understand all aspects of CE and the best responses to the risks children and young people face.

2.11 Partners contribute to Tri-weekly multi-agency Child Exploitation meetings (Risk Assessment Meetings – RAM) that look at all aspects of Child Exploitation, Criminal, Sexual and Missing, including County Lines and other forms of Exploitation. This meeting tracks children who may be emerging, moderate or at significant risk. Data from these meetings feed into a monthly Multi-agency Child

Exploitation (MACE) meeting. This meeting is a two-part meeting that looks at both a strategic review of victims, perpetrators and “hot spot locations of concern” within the district and also provides multi agency scrutiny to assist provide solutions to cases where there are blockages within agency work with victims or potential victims of exploitation.

- 2.12 Referrals and identification of potential victims continues to increase as does demands upon all partners to respond to these. These demands are monitored at the Children Services Improvement Board. Projects focusing upon preventive measures; working alongside other established locality models have continued across the district. These recognise the potential reduction in demands through prevention and early intervention.
- 2.14 Audit & Performance data indicates that the RAM & MACE meetings have been effective in identifying and reducing risk. Good practice is being identified and the learning is improving the response to incidents.
- 2.15 Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing
CSE response remains a high priority for partners. Under the new focus, CSE is considered within the wider context of Child Exploitation. While CSE can be a standalone concern, and is still flagged as such, it can often be a factor within wider exploitation concerns and the risk assessment processes seek to reflect this.

Philomena Protocol

The number of children missing in the district have reduced significantly since the launch of the Philomena Protocol. The protocol is designed to specifically support, understand respond to children in residential care who go missing. The protocol ensures every child placed in a residential provision has their own personalised missing trigger plan irrespective of whether they have the propensity to go missing or not. The plan is agreed with the Social Worker, Residential Provider and West Yorkshire Police.

- 2.16 TBP has sought to build on the successes of work undertaken by the Keighley Association Women & Children's Centre (KAWACC) which has worked in partnership across Keighley to raise awareness of CSE and engender constructive conversations across communities about how they can help deal with CSE in their communities, by starting discussions in other areas of the district about how to roll out the principles of KAWACC's work across the district.
- 2.17 West Yorkshire Police in Bradford were successful in obtaining funding to create a regional conference to discuss and share learning and practice around Child Exploitation along with a multi-agency training offer. This was planned for earlier in 2020 however due to the Covid-19 pandemic this was cancelled and currently work is now on going to convert this to a virtual event planned for 12th of February 2021. Equally the training that was planned as face to face training is being redesigned as a virtual offer.

Operation Dalesway – Historic CSE Concerns.

West Yorkshire Police and the Local Authority continue to work together in response to the issue of “non recent” CSE concerns. A specialist team was set up

in October 2014, known as The Bradford Historic CSE Team or “Operation Dalesway”, to deal exclusively with these forms of investigation within the Bradford District. There have been a number of successful prosecutions over recent years and their work continues.

The Bradford Historic CSE Team are currently working on ten live investigations, two of these are pending trial, both have individual victims, and a combined total of 15 suspects who are charged with 47 separate indictments.

Due to 14 suspects being charged in respect of one of these investigations, two seven week trials have been set (Bradford Crown Court struggles to accommodate more than ten suspects per trial), one commencing in May and the second in September 2021.

The trial for the suspect linked to the other investigation has been delayed due to Covid, but is now rescheduled to take place August 2021.

Of the live investigations which have as yet not progressed to the charge stage, five have a CPS complex case lawyers assigned who advise on the investigative process and assist with the case building processes.

All but one of the investigations have multiple linked suspects, with the possibility of further suspects being identified as the enquiries continue.

In recent months there have been numerous planned arrests made as part of the live investigative process and more planned arrests phases are scheduled throughout the course of 2021.

Victims for three of the live investigations have only recently engaged with the investigative process and are still at victim disclosure stage.

Two additional investigations are in the process of being discontinued, one because the evidence does not satisfy the police evidential test and the second because the victim has disengaged with the investigative process.

2.18 Partners in Bradford continue to maximise opportunities to learn and improve service provision and the response to CE. The Bradford Partnership has commissioned an independent thematic Serious Case Review into CSE. While this has been prompted by the convictions of nine men for grooming and abusing two young people in 2019, the SCR is a thematic review of CSE that is looking at other cases, both recent and non-recent, and is seeking to engage positively with victims of abuse so that their experience informs the work directly. Partners are contributing towards this review and will act on the recommendations and learning that result from this review. Due to Covid-19 the timescale for the review has been delayed and is now likely to report in Spring 2021. TBP has continued to monitor the learning and has met with agencies to share early learning themes to support interim changes pending the final outcome of the review.

2.19 The partnership recently made application for funding to the Home Office and Ministry of Justice through the Child Sexual Abuse Support Services Transformational Fund with support from West Yorkshire Police, Health and Barnados with the opportunity to create a specialist Child Exploitation Hub within the Integrated Front Door. Although the bid was unsuccessful. Partners are continuing the dialogue and developing proposals to enhance existing structures. It is hoped that through this development opportunity, the Bradford district will see better outcomes/ support for children, young people and parents, but also in the disruption and management of perpetrators and potential perpetrators, and where possible bring those individuals to justice

2.20 Bradford District Cyber Team

Child sexual abuse and exploitation continues to be identified across the district. This is particularly true of online abuse where ever-more-sophisticated digital tools protect anonymity and where apps encourage children to engage in risky behaviour. This has been subject of increased concern during the period of time when the district was in increased lockdown due to Covid-19 where children isolating at home are felt to be at an even higher risk of being targeted by online groomers for abuse.

Law enforcement agencies including the Police are working with partners from the industry and voluntary sector partners, both in the UK and abroad to raise awareness and support children and parents. TBP has published guidance for parents on the Safer Bradford website for advice about signs of this form of abuse.

The team has been in place since 2015 and since the beginning of the 2019-2020 academic year, the team have continued to make a significant contribution within the educational sector as well as targeting establishments that have key connections to early intervention, safeguarding and other various vulnerabilities.

The details of the work undertaken by the team is outlined in the report in **Appendix G**.

2.21 The Partnership Response to other forms of Exploitation and Vulnerability

2.22 Education.

A continued closer working relationship between internal and external partners is helping to support early identification and intervention along with better awareness of the increased vulnerability in children including those children who are looked after, children with SEN, children who are missing education and those not in receipt of efficient and suitable full time education. Professionals are considering indicators of wider exploitation and have reported that they find the Continuum of Need an enabling tool to support identification, risk assessment and appropriate referral to services for children who may be at risk or have experienced any form of exploitation or abuse. In addition, schools have welcomed the introduction of Early Help Coordinators to support schools in identification of needs.

Children Missing in Education (CME). During 2019/2020 853 pupils have been referred to the LA as missing from Education. This is a significant decrease from 1339 pupils the previous academic year but this is largely attributed to reduced movement of children as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. Of these enquiries have established the whereabouts of 92% and supported them into education settings or determined they have moved out of the district. The demographic of the population of Bradford often means that families move both within and out of the district without informing school staff of new addresses and contact details.

The Local Authority will support parents choosing Elective Home Education (EHE) where the delivery of education is sufficient and suitable for the age and aptitude of children. We recognise the varied approaches to home educating and this being a choice for parents to make at any point during a child's educational career. The number of EHE pupils in Bradford had risen over the last four academic years. Overall from January 2016 – January 2018 EHE registered pupils had risen by **63%**. From January 2018 – January 2019 the percentage increase was **7%**. From January 2019 – January 2020 there was less than a 1% increase in children who were registered as being Electively Home Educated, indicating our proactive approach over the last 4 years has stabilised the numbers. Since September there

has been a significant increase in the numbers of pupils who have been removed from a school roll, with parents sighting COVID-19 as the main reason for this. On 30th September 2020 there were **677** children registered as EHE, this is a 39% increase in one month and a 29% increase on this point last year.

Activity will focus on

- The LA has raised the concern over increasing numbers of EHE children to the DfE
- Raising awareness of Elective Home Education across the district through multi agency training
- Targeted training delivery in respect of vulnerable groups of CME children
- Performance related analysis of timescales for actioning initial enquiries for CME referrals and of informal enquiries conducted in respect suitability of education provision for EHE pupils.
- Maintain robust multi agency links to collect information in respect of whereabouts of children in the district including improved links with Border Agency
- Improved data analysis to identify themes and trends.
- Data collection and analysis to enable robust action involving the Regional Schools Commissioners (RSCs), Education and Skills Funding Agency (ESFA), OFSTED and the DfE if required, should evidence suggest illegal off rolling of pupils.
- Initiating school attendance orders where informal enquiries determine the education is not suitable or efficient.

2.23 Modern Day Slavery and Human Trafficking

The true scale of Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking in Bradford, like in the rest of the country, cannot be accurately quantified; reports from statutory agencies and the third- sector reference the fact that, due to the nature of the offences, there is a significant under reporting of the issue. Of data recorded between April 2019 and March 2020 shows there were 147 recorded offences that have been classified as Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking (MSHT) offences within Bradford District. These numbers reflect the awareness and understanding by professionals and confidence of victims in reporting cases.

At the beginning of this year the Bradford Modern Day Slavery Operational Group was formed. This was created to enable partners to be more involved in the planning of action against MS/HT intelligence and the subsequent days of action. As with many areas of business COVID has impacted the Operational Group which has now not been able to physically sit for a number of months. The aforementioned joint operation has been planned wholly using Skype facilities.

In other positive news the operational group has been used as a platform to push the use of the Partnership Intelligence Portal. In the last 6 weeks we saw an increase of 50% submissions within this area of business. However, this news must be salted with caution. As although the increase is 50% that is only from 12 to 24 pieces of MDS related intelligence inside a 6-week period.

Inside Bradford Police there is an ongoing review about the effective allocation of

MS/HT crimes to ensure that appropriately trained staff are dealing.

There continues to be an increase in the training and awareness of Police staff with recent attendance for a number of supervisors at the College of Policing Specialist Modern Day Slavery Investigators Course along with a training event held by the County Lines Coordination Centre into County Lines investigations.

Bradford Metropolitan District Council have worked hard to achieve an ethical procurement process and have obtained the CIPS (Chartered Institute of Procurement and Supply) Corporate Ethics Standard. This award means the Council is registered on the CIPS Corporate Ethical Register, and has achieved the first requirement of the Co-Operative's Charter Against Modern Slavery that has been signed by the Leader of the Council. This award also represents the Council's ongoing commitment to ethical procurement and supply chain, both in terms of current and future practice, by ensuring that the key principles of the standard are adopted by the Council. As part of achieving Corporate Ethics Standard, the council's procurement professionals have completed the CIPS Ethical Procurement and Supply Chain e-learning.

2.24 Harmful Sexual Behaviour

Harmful Sexual Behaviour (HSB) is developmentally inappropriate sexual behaviour which is displayed by children and young people and which may be harmful or abusive. It can be displayed towards younger children, peers, older children or adults, and is harmful to the children and young people who display it, as well as the people it is directed towards. If not recognised and dealt with this can lead to more serious sexual abuse. Work has continued through the Safeguarding and Professional Practice sub-group of TBP to create a Bradford HSB protocol and related training provided by NSPCC. Due to Covid-19 the training has had to be redesigned to be delivered virtually rather than by face-to-face delivery as initially planned and this has delayed the launch of the Bradford protocol.

2.25 Serious and Organised Crime (SOC)

Across the district we have a number of multi-agency/centrally funded posts who specialise in identifying, disrupting and preventing entry to Organised Crime Groups (OCG's). Work has been focused in key areas of the district.

Education and awareness raising is key to developing our SOC response. In 2019 there were two conferences focussed on SOC delivered in Bradford that have been organised by West Yorkshire Police and the Home Office. A further Tackling Exploitation event planned for March 2020 had to be postponed. The exploitation of young and vulnerable people for criminal purposes is a concern, especially relating to the drugs trade including "County Lines" operations. Embedded drugs markets exist in parts of the district and there is a strong correlation between drugs and patterns of violence in the district.

Young people are a high-risk group in relation to exposure to exploitation, given the age profile of the Bradford district (above regional and national average for young people). A strong emphasis on youth diversion is required (see the work of Breaking the Cycle). Following the launch of both the Continuum of Need and Risk Identification Tool alongside the new exploitation protocol, work has been on-going to identify and offer early intervention support to children vulnerable to many forms

of exploitation including criminal exploitation.

Galvanising our understanding and response to SOC within our communities is key. This has included working with key community partners to identify assets and areas for development in partnership work.

The Organised Crime Partnership Board is currently meeting every 6 weeks and brings together a number of statutory and non-statutory partners to discuss emerging issues around SOC and OCG's. The development of this board is being supported by the Home Office.

2.26 **Service Provision**

2.27 Youth Service.

Youth Services continue to offer a broad range of interventions to young people across the district. Covid-19 has changed the way the service and staff work, with closure of open access provisions and an increased focus on detached work and garden gate visits. Services have established new ways of supporting young people using a range of tools and social media platforms and have created self-help packs for young people around bereavement and mental health, recognising and responding to the identified needs.

In each constituency the Youth Service maintains a locality-based youth work team, providing direct support to young people who are identified as being at risk of CSE, CCE and other exploitations. This work is taking place 1-1 and in small peer support groups. During the Covid-19 pandemic the Service has been quick to adapt to new ways of working, to continue to provide support and be a trusted adult for young people - adopting a "still here to help" approach, ensuring young people have "someone to talk to" and working hard to identify young people who are more vulnerable or who are feeling more isolated by not been able to associate with their peers. Equally it has worked with "fearless" young people and those who have not been compliant with Covid-19 restrictions. Youth Services have employed young people as Covid-19 Ambassadors putting young people at the heart of the work shaping youth appropriate safety messages.

The Youth Service continues to engage and support the work of Early Help teams in localities, and with those involved in ASB ensuring young people are in receipt of support as early as possible and to prevent escalation to threshold services.

2.28 Young Lives Bradford Consortium - Trusted Relationships

The consortium continues to support young people in the district who are at emerging risk of CE. The five partners are Barnardo's; James – Motor Education Services; e; merge; Project 6- Keighley; Bradford YMCA.

2.29 Trusted Relationships (TR) 1:1 work

At the beginning of spring 2020 the country moved into lockdown due to the Covid-19 pandemic. During this time Trusted Relationship's aim was to find ways to provide as many services in the safest way to meet the needs of our young people who were socially isolated. The team have seen an increase in referrals for young girls being a victim of online grooming. Staff working at home have been able to meet the needs of all referrals and allocate to appropriate workers with the skills and expertise to remotely engage and build trusted relationships. Families situations have become more crisis lead due to lack of food, debt and poverty. In response to this worker have used a holistic family approach and worked in

partnership with the local authority and other voluntary organisations, for example the weekly delivery of food parcels. Staff have utilised social media platforms, phone contact, newsletters and wellbeing packs. Keeping safe resources were produced and delivered to support engagement and the emotional wellbeing of the young people.

Most of the young people referred to TR prior to and during lockdown have continued to engage with their allocated worker. TR have worked creatively to ensure the focus of the work remains to be child exploitation related whilst ensuring they do not re-traumatise the young person.

A recent Covid-19 study by a mental health charity reported that 83% respondent's felt that their anxiety had increased over this time. This is reflected in the work that the team are doing with young people where many have asked for their sessions to be extended because of lockdown. The team know from their support sessions that young people are struggling and predict that when the district finally moves out of lockdown we will experience a further crisis as they present to our services with practical and mental health concerns – Case Study (**see Appendix E**)

Safeguarding has continued to be a priority; workers have maintained a presence in Child Protection Conferences via virtual meetings. Also, TR staff reported and supported young people through disclosures and ensured safeguarding is "everyone's business" including parents. TR have created resources that have been delivered to over 4000 families across the district.

See **Appendix G**

As Covid-19 restrictions continued, TR implemented Covid-19 safe working environments across all Trusted Relationships providers. Restrictions did not prevent delivery, TR providers increased the number of weekly interventions to reflect the nature of support available to compensate for the reduction in face to face support and improve trust. TR increased focus on support networks such as family relationships providing a weekly check-in with parent/carer to support and signpost with wider household issues and increase protective factors in place.

When buildings re-opened TR are seeing more young people face to face in their services and in their local communities applying Coronavirus safe protocols. All of the young people have adapted to the strict measures and guidance for new ways of working, however the quality of the trusted relationship with social distancing can be harder to form and dependant on what local facilities are available. For example, if a young person lives in a locality where there are no local parks, community venues or outside facilities.

During the school holidays young people's 1-1 sessions have taken place mainly during the day and TR have been able to reintroduce group activities following National Youth Association guidelines. Since the re-opening of schools in September, TR have supported young people in schools and or after school in safe space venues. TR have supported them around their anxieties of returning to the school environment.

All young people are allocated a TR keyworker within the two-week allocation date. There has been an increase in significant safeguarding incidents for young people supported through TR. TR have worked closely with parents and partner agencies

to ensure families receive the support they need from the statutory services – **See Appendix E** for case studies.

Young people have accessed summer provisions and had the opportunity to meet youth workers in the community and build friendships with other young people. Opportunities, to explore outdoor parks with young people enabling them to access local spaces have been a positive of Covid-19 times. Young people and families that have been closed have contacted keyworkers for advice, support and to give positive updates. TR have also provided guidance and encouragement to parents to support their children emotionally and physically during Covid-19. During this period there has been an increase in referrals to TR the highest percentage being for online grooming, due to young people accessing phones and the internet whilst they are spending more time indoors. TR keyworkers have focussed their work around internet safety, safe use of social media, keeping safe and positive relationships. Trusted workers are able to provide encouragement and motivation when young people have struggled to be at home. They have a person and space to offload and seek advice. Psycho-educative interventions have been delivered to young people face to face and over video calls. Resources and visual aids have been provided to enable the worker and young person to work effectively and ensure young people with different learning styles needs are met. TR workers have provided support with lockdown regulations and understanding of missing episodes linked to breeches of lockdown versus missing episodes linked to exploitation. Due to young people not being in school or able to socialise with their peers TR have seen this impact on young people's emotional wellbeing, confidence and self-esteem. TR workers have supported young people and referred to Youth in Mind services for additional support when necessary.

There has been a reduction in risk to young people who have accessed the TR service evidenced by the reporting of improved scores – see **Appendix E**

See **Appendix F** for a breakdown of statistics for Trusted Relationship engagement.

2.30 Trusted Relationships – Group Work (TRGW)

In line with national advice during Covid-19 the TRGW programme has been busy developing new ways of working. Support has been delivered remotely to ensure professionals, services, young people and families have continued access to support and guidance. All young people on the one to one caseload have received 2 weekly contacts (Phone or video) and doorstep/garden visits every 3 weeks to take activity/resource packs. Schools in East have been offered support with emotional wellbeing resources for young people and online safety resources provided throughout Covid-19 restrictions. Wellbeing activity packs, journals and online safety information have been sent to 15 young people through targeted group work. TRGW included the same TR resources within packs and sessions reaching a further 14 young people in East over the quarter (84 district wide including siblings).

Additional resource/capacity has been put in to one to one work whilst group work isn't being delivered face to face, so TR are working with an additional 5 young people (2 with YMCA & 3 with Barnardo's). During this period YMCA worker have had themes for one to one work of online exploitation / imaging / CE.

Engagement has been consistent despite lockdown moving support to a remote offer. TR have carried out socially distanced face to face work with two young people (siblings) who do not have access to digital technology by working with school and meeting on school grounds. Consideration was given to applying for technology from the education hub however it was agreed with the social worker that this would not be appropriate in the household due to wider family issues that would need further work undertaking by SW first.

Activity funds have ranged from essential hygiene supplies, arts materials to sports equipment. One young person has used the activity fund to create a chill out area where she has space to herself (5 young people in the household) for time out and confidential one to one session.

TRGW piloted an online Arts Award group for 6 weeks working with 3 young people to ascertain how they could adapt delivery in an engaging way whilst embedding online safety within sessions/activities.

The TRGW programme has however delivered awareness messages by:

- producing regular newsletters
- joining ROC conversations (forum)
- linking with schools to deliver messages via their social platforms
- sending out awareness materials in 'wellbeing packs' / 'food parcels'
- remaining in touch with partners

By doing this they have been able to distribute information to at least 274 professional/partners and estimate that TRGW awareness materials have reached an audience of over 2,300 families across the district in a three-month period.

2.31 Breaking the Cycles

Breaking the Cycle has been funded by the Violence Reduction Unit to intensively work with young people who are involved in serious organised violence including those who carry and use knives and sharp instruments as part of their criminal activity.

The Breaking the Cycle Case study 3 in **Appendix E** outlines the value and additionally the Violence Reduction Unit funding has brought to the project. This is but one example of many that could be evidenced, but demonstrates how additional resource to existing good practice can support and truly make life changing impacts on young people's lifestyles and future life choices, thus reducing the burden on future services and finances associated with criminal justice, police and health.

2.32 Turnaround

Turnaround staff or Trusted Workers attend the daily CE RAM meetings. Turnaround staff take referrals for Moderate or Significant risk young people and they are only closed when their level of risk has reduced unless they have been moved out of area, service not appropriate (for example due to not being due to mental health concerns) or they have declined a service (very low percentage). Over 50% referrals are White British, next largest group is Asian Pakistani and there has been an increase of referrals for Eastern European young people. Turnaround has seen an increase of young people using Class A drugs – crack cocaine; heroin; crystal meth. This includes increase in intravenous drug use.

Throughout Covid-19, Turnaround staff have continued to work directly with young people. At the start of lockdown there was an increase in the amount of support

offered by telephone/video call; and a reduction in the amount of direct face to face contact. At this time support was focused on maintaining consistency and existing positive relationships in order to support young people's emotional health and wellbeing during lockdown; often through frequent check in calls and messages.

Emotional health and wellbeing packs and other resources were provided either by post or dropped off in person. These have included a range of resources such as; journals; colouring books; other art materials; and tools to support emotional regulation (e.g. stress balls, worry stones). Issue based resources have been explored in sessions either in person or through phone calls and video calls if appropriate.

Due to the nature of the support offered by Turnaround – largely therapeutic; and levels of safeguarding and crisis support needed; direct contacts have been carried out with a number of young people from quite early on whilst still in lockdown. This support has been provided where it has been assessed as essential.

Over time the amount of direct contacts with young people has increased and the majority of young people are now being seen in person on a regular basis.

We have taken a flexible approach which has been led by the support needs of young people. Direct contacts have been carried out in a range of settings including; on doorsteps; in gardens; in houses; and at Listerhills.

There have been high levels of crisis throughout Covid-19 and a number of young people have been involved in the criminal justice process have been seen more frequently. See stats in **Appendix F**.

- 2.33 Supporting Families against Youth Crime (SFAYC) is a multi-agency partnership funded by the Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government (MHLG) with a focus on preventing and tackling youth crime and gangs with young people aged 6-13 and their families.

The programme was initially funded for the period 2019 – 2020; however, as a result of a mobilisation underspend a limited programme will continue to March 2021.

Based on the learning from the key strengths of the pilot programme, the Families First contract managed by Barnardo's in partnership with Brathay Trust, JAMES and Bradford YMCA have delivered:

1. Support for keyworkers, teachers and other professionals working with children and young people (school year 6-7) who are at risk of becoming drawn into gang crime, serious violence and the youth justice system. This included key worker provision following a 'Think Family' approach in order to support improved parenting skills, increased attendance at school following a period of absence from education due to Covid 19.

During the period of the service extension referrals have been received via Schools/Early Help Coordinators and through the Early Help Gateway. Key workers have assessed need and offer targeted interventions with 30 young people and their families. This has included a mixture of virtual (social media) home garden

visits and 1:1 work with young people in open air and/or Covid secure youth work settings.

2. A school outreach team service – working flexibly across target schools in ‘hot spots’ and in partnership with the LA (Early Help Coordinators) TEH, Police to identify young people who are vulnerable learners who will have suffered further disadvantage as a result of school closures and who schools feel will be least prepared for transitioning from primary to secondary school and will be at high risk of criminal exploitation as a consequence.

This has included delivery of virtual school assembly presentations and small group based work. School assembly presentations have been delivered to over 350 year 6-7 pupils across five (primary/secondary) schools in targeted areas.

Further work is due to take place MHLG in a review of the programme. A summary of the key learning and will be shared across strategic groups.

2.34 **Training and Communication**

- 2.35 TBP has continued to provide varied training opportunities around a number of topics relating to exploitation, in a wider variety of formats and partners have also provides specialist training. While training delivered face to face has been curtailed by the Covid-19 pandemic TBP and BSAB have both reinforced their on line training offer via the Virtual College about all aspects of safeguarding including contextual safeguarding. The training sub groups of both TBP and BSAB are exploring alternative multi-agency training delivery options including Webinar, Podcast and video materials to fill the gaps created by the suspension of face to face training provision. During Covid-19 restrictions the Business Unit made available basic safeguarding training provision for staff who were redeployed into new roles or volunteering to assist with responses to the pandemic so that they were better able to spot where safeguarding concerns might be evident and how to respond to this should they see it.

[Coronavirus crisis Info for volunteers](#)

[Safeguarding message to volunteers video](#)

[Covid-19 Vulnerable Adult Poster](#)

[Covid-19 Safeguarding Children Poster](#)

- 2.36 Real Safeguarding Stories is a learning tool dedicated to raising awareness of safeguarding issues. By telling compelling stories based upon real life events, it can help professionals from many walks of life understand these complex issues. Understanding and relating to these stories is the first step towards individuals and organisations being better able to support those at risk. The videos come with guidance to support wider training or awareness activity. Bradford continues to develop these tools and this year has produced stories around County Lines and Modern Day Slavery.

[\(Real Safeguarding Stories\)](#)

- 2.37 Bradford Safeguarding Adult Board – Voice Group

The Safeguarding Voice Group is a sub group of the BSAB made up of Service

users. The role of the group is to ensure that voice of service users shape the priorities of the SAB and support the SAB in the improvement of services and information to safeguard Adults in the District. The group has continued to be involved in BSAB development work including providing increased guidance about vulnerable adults staying safe during the restrictions brought on by Covid-19. These were published on the Safer Bradford website

[Safer Bradford website](#) and that, along with other advice related to Coronavirus, were designed to provide practical guidance to members of the public about staying safe and raising concerns during the period where professional contacts were more difficult to maintain.

2.38 **Emerging Themes**

2.39 **Coronavirus (Covid-19)**

The Covid-19 pandemic that has struck the world has impacted on the way that services have been provided to both children and vulnerable adults. During the time of lockdown both TBP and BSAB have facilitated meetings with partners to monitor provision of services to the public. The Boards have offered assistance, via the local authority's communications team, to provide appropriate messages to the public and to share information to professionals working across the district. The Safeguarding Business Unit has created a section of the Safer Bradford website for advice during the pandemic including safeguarding information to volunteers (see Safer Bradford Website and links in 2.37 above).

The effects of Covid-19 restrictions, both initial and subsequent, on the exploitation of children and vulnerable adults are yet to be assessed fully although it is clear that in the same way that service provision has evolved so too has the methodology used by exploitation gangs to continue their activities.

3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS

3.1 There are no other considerations.

4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL

4.1 The Bradford Safeguarding Business Partnership Team is funded by a combination of contributions from the partners, including the Local Authority.

4.2 The Bradford Safeguarding Business Partnership Team provides support to the Bradford Partnership and Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board. In particular, the teams coordinate and facilitate safeguarding activity and the delivery of strategic priorities and Delivery Plans. This is achieved through: -

- Coordination of inter-agency working.
- Administration of meetings
- Coordination of Local Child Safeguarding Practice Reviews and Safeguarding Adults Reviews
- Multi-agency audits and challenge
- Learning and Improvement including multi-agency training
- Performance, information and audit including Section 11 and Section 175.
- Production and publication of the Annual Reports

Funding for the Team covers staffing costs, multi-agency training and audits and reviews.

4.3 The staffing resource for Bradford Safeguarding Business Partnership Team is:

- Business Manager,
- 2 x Deputy Managers (one deputy for children one for adults)
- Business Administrators X2
- Learning and development coordinators X2
- Performance and information officers (1.5 FTE)
- Communication and Project officer

4.4 TBP also has an Independent Chair and Scrutiny Lead and the BSAB has continued with an Independent Chair. See **Appendix B** for further information.

5. RISK MANAGEMENT AND GOVERNANCE ISSUES

5.1 The protection of Children and Vulnerable Adults is the highest priority for the Council and its partners when considering the implications of exploitation, as is the provision of services to support those who are victims of this abuse. Failure to protect and provide appropriate services significantly increases the risk to Children and vulnerable Adults in the District. It would also lead to significantly reduced public confidence in Bradford Council, West Yorkshire Police and other partners, as has been demonstrated in some other Districts.

6. LEGAL APPRAISAL

6.1 In relation to the protection of children and vulnerable adults, the report engages a number of legislative areas, including the Children Act 1989, Children Act 2004, Children and Families Act 2014, Children and Social Work Act 2017 and Working Together Guidance 2018, Care Act 2014, Modern Day Slavery Act 2015, Forced Marriage (Civil protection) Act 2007, Mental Capacity Act 2005, Equality Act 2010, and Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006. Some legislative provisions have been amended temporarily under the Corona Virus Act 2020.

7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS

7.1 EQUALITY & DIVERSITY

Child exploitation is a crime committed by predominantly male perpetrators, from all different backgrounds. Victims of exploitation also come from all backgrounds. Nevertheless, local experience and national research indicates that recognised victims and perpetrators do not necessarily reflect the gender ethnicity and other characteristics of the District's population.

7.2 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS

None .

7.3 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS

None

7.4 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

7.41 Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults is a criminal offence. The consequences of exploitation can be long-standing for the victim and there is growing research evidence that victims of CE are themselves over-represented among young people coming to the attention of police services as potential offenders. In addition, Exploitation has lasting consequences for families of victims and perpetrators and has potential implications for community relations.

7.42 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) currently oversees the commissioning of funding from the passporting of Police and Crime Commissioner funding against key priorities, including CSE and now wider exploitation.

7.5 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT

7.51 Sexual and Criminal Exploitation is a violation of the rights of the child/adult under the Human Rights Act. The arrangements made by the Council and its partners are intended to prevent the rights of the child/adult being violated in this way.

7.6 TRADE UNION

None.

7.7 WARD IMPLICATIONS

7.71 It is recommended that each Area Committee receives an update report regarding criminal and sexual exploitation in the next 6 months.

7.8 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)

➤ Include details of contribution to priorities within the Area Committee's Action Plan. For further guidance contact the relevant Area Co-ordinator.

7.9 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING

7.91 National and local evidence shows that children who are looked after by the local authority are more likely to become victims of Child Exploitation than other groups. This means that in relation to safeguarding and corporate parenting responsibilities, partners have a responsibility to understand the safeguarding risks facing children, and especially in relation to Child Exploitation.

7.10 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT

7.11 The nature of Sexual and Criminal Exploitation work requires partners to manage confidential matters and data under GDPR regulations in accordance with individual agency guidelines. There is no sensitive data included in this report that requires a Privacy Impact Assessment

8. NOT FOR PUBLICATION DOCUMENTS

None

9. OPTIONS

None

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That the contents of the report be noted.

10.2 That a further report be presented to this Committee in 12 months.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix A - Definitions

Appendix B - Working Together To Safeguard Children – The Bradford Partnership.

Appendix C - Strategic Response to Risk and Vulnerabilities in Complex Safeguarding

Appendix D - CE Missing Data Overview

Appendix E – Case Studies

Appendix F – Trusted Relationships Statistics

12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

B Working Together to Safeguarding Children 2018 - [Working Together 2018](#)

The Care Act 2014 - [Care Act 2014](#)

West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan - [West Yorkshire Police and Crime Plan](#)

Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018 - [Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2018](#)

West Yorkshire Police Serious and Organised Crime Strategy - [West Yorkshire Police - Precision](#)

Children's Society Counting Lives Report: responding to children who are criminally exploited - [Children's Society – Counting Lives Report](#).