

# **Report of the Chief Executive Office to the meeting of the Children`s Overview and Scrutiny to be held on 15th of December 2021**

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**Subject: Protecting Vulnerable Children & Adults at Risk of Exploitation**

## **Summary statement:**

This report provides 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 to hold agencies to account for their work on this subject. This report also outlines the challenges presented to the partnership following the global pandemic – Covid 19 and the current update on progress made to the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Thematic Review recommendations published on July 27, 2021.

**Appendix D – Is exempt under paragraph 7 (Crime Prevention) Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972**

## **EQUALITY & DIVERSITY:**

The exploitation of both adults and children is a crime committed by perpetrators from all different backgrounds, age, gender, and ethnicity but are primarily committed by males. Victims of exploitation also come from different backgrounds, ages, gender, and ethnicity. Nevertheless, local experience and national research indicate recognised victims of exploitation do not necessarily reflect gender, ethnicity and other characteristics.

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**Portfolio: Children and Families,**  
**Overview & Scrutiny Area:**  
**Children`s Services**

## **1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 This is the annual update report provides 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 (TBP) and the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB) work to drive continuous improvement and to hold agencies to account for their work on this subject. This report also outlines the challenges presented to the partnership following the global pandemic – Covid 19 and the current update on progress made to the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Thematic Review recommendations which were published on July 27, 2021
- 1.2 Partners are continuing to work together to protect vulnerable children and adults at risk through increased collaborative work between the Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board, The Bradford Partnership, and the Community Safety Partnership on the issue of exploitation. This has been achieved through continued awareness and understanding, which has enabled professionals to recognise and respond to at an earlier stage
- 1.3 The All-Age Exploitation (AAE) sub-group has replaced the Risk and Vulnerability Sub Group. The AAE sub-group has a greater focus on the district's strategic response to those suffering from and experiencing exploitation, whether as an adult or a child. Superintendent Richard Padwell, who has recently joined the district, is the chair of this sub-group. There is a cross-section of representation from the Community Safety Partnership, Domestic and Sexual Violence Board, Adult Safeguarding Board, and TBP.
- 1.4 In February of this year, The Bradford Partnership, in conjunction with West Yorkshire Police, held a virtual conference on Criminal Exploitation. The conference had over 300 delegates attending.
- 1.5 The impact of the global pandemic Covid -19 changed the nature of vulnerability and has seen different methodologies being used by perpetrators to facilitate their continued offending behaviour. The Police and other law enforcement agencies have adapted their tactics to counter the threat they pose.
- 1.6 Building upon the existing structured response to exploitation, the Council's additional financial investment in services will develop an enhanced specialist multi-agency exploitation hub.
- 1.7 The CSE Thematic review, which was published on July 27, 2021, had 30 recommendations. A specific multi-agency monitoring group with external support has been established to ensure the developmental action plan recommendations and actions are progressed and completed.
- 1.8 TBP have produced their annual partnership reports covering the period of April 2020 to March 2021. (Appendix A)

## **2. BACKGROUND**

- 2.1 National research indicates a relatively small but significant number of young people and adults in the UK are victims of one or more forms of exploitation. They may be exploited sexually, financially, or exploited criminally through selling drugs, money laundering, weapons storage, or the `cuckooing` of property (e.g., illicit drugs, drugs cultivation), or perpetrators may exploit them through the use of their labour and other forms of labour.
- 2.2 Exploitation negatively impacts young people's and adults at risk health, family relationships and community environments, and the safety of online social media platforms. These negative impacts can often challenge professionals. They can manifest into episodes of missing, disengagement from education, distrust of professionals, poor or deteriorating mental health, and fractured communities.
- 2.3 Nationally and locally safeguarding partners are addressing the issues of exploitation and how to respond best to support their workforce in mounting a response to this range of significantly complex issues and their cause(s)
- 2.4 The exploitation of children and adults in the United Kingdom is not a new phenomenon. Still, globalisation, advances in the use of technology, and change in socioeconomic contexts are shifting the form and function exploitation takes, bringing new policy and practice challenges to keeping young people and adults at risk safe.
- 2.5 Locally, the ability of partners and services to identify exploitation has improved, so too has the understanding of its nature and challenges to designing and providing an effective response.
- 2.6 **Governance**
- 2.7 The Bradford District has continued to develop opportunities to increase collaboration between Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board (BSAB), The Bradford Partnership (TBP), and the Community Safety Partnership (CSP). Across each of the three boards, the sub-groups structures manage core functions as well as board-specific objectives. Some of these core functions create an obvious opportunity for a more consistent and collaborative approach, consider cross-cutting themes, and presents opportunities for shared learning.
- 2.8 Irrespective of the global pandemic Covid -19, identifying, understanding the harm caused by exploitation and serious violence is of the utmost importance to the Bradford Partnerships
- 2.9 The assessment of serious violence and exploitation, particularly against or perpetrated by our young people, has been under constant assessment linked to serious organised crime, domestic abuse, and sexual abuse
- 2.10 **All Age Exploitation Sub Group (AAE)**

Partnership work continues to develop around those at risk of exploitation s in particularly through the tri board partnership All-Age Exploitation sub-group, which has representation from colleagues from both children and adults social care,

Police, colleagues from the health economy, including public health and the voluntary care sector. The All-Age Exploitation sub-group is chaired by a senior police officer, Superintendent Richard Padwell. The AAE sub-group has a greater focus on the district's strategic response to those suffering from and experiencing exploitation and recognises that those who are exploited often span an age range that sits across both Children and Adults.

- 2.11 The AAE reports directly to both TBP & BSAB (BSAB) and has strategic lead for the district's child exploitation action plan and reviewing the Child Exploitation Protocol annually. The CE Protocol and risk assessment tool are utilised by professionals in their day-to-day assessment of risks faced by children and young people. In addition, the AAE is looking to understand and address transitions from adolescents to adulthood as a multi-agency partnership and has gained external support and guidance from the National Working Group – NWG to achieve this. Transitions will remain a priority for this group in 2022.
- 2.12 On September 10, 2021 – The AAE sub group hosted a large multi-agency partnership assessment event held at Bradford City FC. The purpose of the event was to better understand the threat, harm, and risk in Bradford, what works well and what areas where the collective partnership response can be enhanced, and to understand the changing nature of vulnerability.
- 2.13 The partnership event was attended by over 100 frontline practitioners' adult social care, children social care, health economy, housing providers, public health, Police, VCS, faith groups, education, amongst many others, and included individuals with lived experiences. The event was supported by the Centre of Expertise for Child Sexual Abuse, a team of partnership analysts, including the senior West Yorkshire Police analyst for exploitation, and the National Vulnerability Knowledge Practice Programme.
- 2.14 The findings from the event will form the foundations for a Bradford District Partnership Exploitation Strategy.
- 2.15 In Bradford, there is a strong strategic partnership for serious organised crime, which supports mapping the size and scale of organised crime groups, including exploitation. From this partner can identify young people who can be seen as being vulnerable to violence and exploitation and plan using the Programme Precision 4 P plan
  - Pursue
  - Protect
  - Prevent
  - Prepare



- 2.16 The Programme Precision is the initiative's name involving West Yorkshire Police, local partners, and the public to work together to tackle serious and organised crime in the county. Serious and organised crime covers a range of crimes, including drugs, firearms, child sexual exploitation, cybercrime, modern slavery, gangs, and county lines affecting both adults, children, and communities.
- 2.17 The Programme Precision steering group is chaired by Bradford's Chief Executive Kersten England.
- 2.18 The Bradford District has joint control strategies at strategic, tactical, and operational levels. This is reflected in the different strands and interventions operating within the field of serious organised crime
- 2.18 **Assessments & Response**
- Within Bradford, there is a clear focus on partnership working to reduce the risks of all forms of exploitation.
- 2.19 In respect of children and young people, where any practitioner is concerned or receives information that a child or young person is at risk of exploitation, a multi-agency referral (MARF) is submitted along with a child exploitation assessment form
- 2.20 The Integrated Front Door (IFD) specialist team will take the lead and review the risk assessment. This is done daily and is referred to as a DRAM – daily risk assessment meeting. The completed risk assessment is presented at the daily risk assessment meeting by the allocated social worker
- 2.21 The DRAM is chaired by the IFD team manager for child exploitation and missing and attended by all partners located within the exploitation safeguarding hub, including Police, health, children social care, and colleagues from the voluntary care sector. This meeting is held to consider vulnerabilities and safety plans for children and young people at risk of harm and oversees the mapping of

interventions to support and reduce their vulnerability. Interventions and associations are scoped through regular mapping to support interventions and disruption. Following a recent Ofsted monitoring visit noted the practice improvements in the context of exploitation

*"The complex (exploitation) safeguarding hub provides an authoritative and confident response for children at risk of exploitation. The hub's thorough screening of contacts and referrals about children, the specialist advice and consultation provided across the service, and regular assessment meetings have strengthened practice in this area"*

The role of the multi-agency staff in the exploitation hub is to offer a 'complimentary' service to children in receipt of statutory social work interventions. The workers will provide a co-working role to ensure exploited children receive a 'better than good enough' response. By only offering a statutory service, the partnerships run the risk of measuring the outcomes against minimum standards. The partners recognise that minimum standards do not achieve sustainable change for victims of trauma.

- 2.22 Where an individual is identified as a high risk of CSE, a joint investigation team (JIT) consisting of Police and Social Care Workers is allocated to that child or young person. The JIT team will work alongside other practitioners to build a relationship to allow the child or young person to feel comfortable making a disclosure should they be a victim of exploitation.
- 2.23 The Bradford District Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting is held every six weeks and is co-chaired by the strategic leads for Social Care and West Yorkshire Police. Senior managers from the Health Economy, Education, and VCS are also present. The meeting provides additional support and oversight of those cases where there is no reduction in risk. Leaders can 'unblock' resource issues to ensure that those at risk have access to timely support. The meeting is split into two parts to consider local issues, demographics, and data alongside specific cases. Each month the team manager for the exploitation hub will provide a highlight and analysis report
- 2.24 Missing episodes can often be a key sign when a person is subject to exploitation. The number of children reported as missing within the Bradford district has reduced significantly since the introduction of the Philomena Protocol. The protocol is designed to specifically support, understand, and 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 upon with the Social Worker, Residential Provider, and West Yorkshire Police.
- 2.25 The district has four Police Community Support Officers who are jointly funded by the local authority who are responsible for attending to incidents of missing from a care home provision and working with the children and young person(s) to reduce missing episodes. The function is supported by a dedicated missing person coordinator, a Detective Constable who reviews all missing episodes for both adults and children. The reduction in missing incidents has been significant and has had a direct impact on reducing the threat of exploitation

- 2018 – 3653 Missing Incidents – 48.3% being children in care
- 2019 – 2973 Missing Incidents – 45.3% being children in care
- 2020 - 1671 Missing Incidents – 38% being children in care

A total reduction of 1892 missing incidents reported to Police.

- 2.26 During the pandemic and this year, the number of missing incidents has continued to reduce; while it is accepted that certain legal restrictions associated with the pandemic may have contributed to the reduction, the partnership would like to highlight effective and innovative partnership working has maintained that reduction through the focus on the Philomena Protocol which has without a doubt delivered improved practice notifications.
- 2.27 The impact has changed the nature of vulnerability in many ways for both adults, children, and communities. Covid 19 has increased the numbers of those living in relative poverty and dried up many grey market employment options. This, in turn, has driven more people to turn to other ways to earn money.
- 2.28 Unlike many other local authority areas, Bradford District, has retained a strong locality-based Youth Service. Bradford's large youth population means that partnerships have prioritised young people, and during the pandemic, Youth Workers' practice changed to become more detached and street-based in its approach. The deployment method has enabled youth work practitioners to develop strong links to the communities/neighbourhoods in which they operate.
- 2.29 The past twelve months have seen changes to the organised crime' business model' with examples of exploited young people involved in County Lines activity who have previously been placed on trains to travel to 'cuckooed' addresses now being transported by road vehicles, often by their perpetrator /associates
- 2.30 At this time, those particularly vulnerable may accept help from those who seek to exploit them. We can assume that the greatest opportunity for abuse, particularly during the last 12 months during the Covid 19 crisis, has been financial exploitation for adults at risk.
- 2.31 Bradford District has an established multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) dedicated to those adults at risk of abuse or neglect. Oversight and coordination are undertaken by adult social care and police colleagues of Section 42 enquiries; this includes those who may be exploited.
- 2.32 The Care Act 2014 (Section 42) requires that each local authority make inquiries or cause others to do so if it believes an adult is experiencing or is at risk of abuse or neglect. An enquiry should establish whether any action needs to be taken to prevent or stop abuse or neglect and, if so, by whom.
- 2.33 The Bradford District has a close working relationship with the West Yorkshire Financial Exploitation and Abuse Team (WYFEAT) and has supported several investigations of financial exploitation. The WYFEAT team is a multi-agency task force consisting of social workers, financial investigators, Police, and social workers and operates as part of Trading Standards.

## **2.34 Breaking the Cycles – Criminal Exploitation**

Breaking the Cycle has been funded by the West Yorkshire Violence Reduction Unit (VRU) to intensively work with young people involved with serious organised violence and those who are criminally exploited. The overall aim is one of harm reduction, protection, and breaking the cycle of criminality. Work often starts on the street, as mentioned in paragraph 2.27. Work is undertaken with young people on a 1 to 1 basis and with their wider peer group.

2.35 This project has continued to grow in response to need, with workers now picking up cases direct from the Accident and Emergency Departments (AED) alongside the usual referral routes. This team are also working with our new asylum-seeking families and new arrivals to the city, enabling safety work to be started and integrated into a broader range of support offered to a vulnerable group of people

2.36 Breaking the Cycle team has seen over 90% of those referred to the service engaging positively.

## **2.37 The Youth Service**

The Youth Service ensures that young people accessing all provisions are given support and information around safety and exploitation. Open access sessions and detached youth work sessions take the messages to a broad range of young people and ensure that there is consistency and responsiveness to the work undertaken in the area of exploitation and safeguarding.

2.38 Each of our area Youth Work teams remain committed to empowering young people to support them in making safe choices and considering safety when out with friends, in public spaces, or traveling around. Our area teams work 1-1 with young people. They have supported several young women regarding CSE, particularly in some of our new communities where there are cultural differences around what is acceptable and what constitutes a healthy relationship.

2.39 Our "Youth in Mind" work gives 1-1 support to young people with poor mental health and for those in mental distress, and our LGBTQ project has and continues to ensure young people are given keep safe messages and can take actions to keep themselves safe from exploitation and harm. Our workaround identity and acceptance are key to this.

2.40 Within our areas, we also will run, in response to need specific pieces of work – an example of which is our "Girl on the Street" project. Delivered in the Great Horton area, this project is focused on positive action by girls and young women to tackle and not tolerate verbal and physical abuse and sexual innuendos, which were being directed towards girls and young women just going about their daily business. This work has empowered young people of both genders to better understand sexual exploitation, forced or arranged marriages, - forced or coerced criminality, and domestic servitude. It has created a safe space, educated and raised awareness of the stages of child sexual exploitation, enabling young women to identify earlier the signs of concern and know what can be done about this, and support them in feeling safer. These young women are now developing a group of Young Women Safeguarding Ambassadors to stand against any form of exploitation.



2.41 The Youth Service has also been working with national organisations, including the BBC Childline, the NSPCC, and Missing People UK, to develop the "Is this, ok?" app developed in a partnership project Bradford and Waltham Forrest and piloted in Bradford. This app provides a safe space that is chatbot enabled and linked to telephone support services and provides a free, confidential chat service for 13–18-year-olds where concerns can be "checked out." The initial six months pilot proved the need for such a service, and further funding has been agreed to support this being rolled out to other local authority areas.

## **2.42 Turnaround – Sexual Exploitation**

Turnaround is a partnership between Barnardo's and Bradford Metropolitan District Council, West Yorkshire Police, Bradford Early Years Grant, and Bradford & Airedale Teaching Primary Care Trust.

Turnaround provides a specialist service to young people which aims to increase self-esteem and fosters confidence, skills, and knowledge about reducing the risks of sexual exploitation.

2.43 The children and young people who are identified as 'significant or moderate risk' of sexual exploitation are referred to Turnaround to prevent their risk from escalating and to support them from exiting and recovery from child sexual exploitation

2.44 The current referral rate to the Turnaround project is eight children per fortnight. Using trauma-informed, strength-based; relational; and psycho-educative practice models, the experienced and highly skilled workers work directly with the young people to reduce risk and vulnerability.

## **2.45 Trusted Relationships**

Trusted relationships offer 1 to 1 support to Young People aged 10-14 years who have been identified as at risk of exploitation. The project works with Young People on a tailored plan to address their needs and issues, including activities and opportunities in safe, accessible locations.

2.46 The project has reported an increased number of referrals and has started to deliver group work with another Trusted Relationships provider addressing the common themes of risks of online exploitation. The project reports that young people are still heavily using online platforms for social interaction with peers. Attached in Appendix B are some case studies of the work being undertaken

## **2.47 Cyber Crime Unit**

The Bradford Police Cyber Crime Unit has continued to raise awareness of the dangers of online grooming & exploitation. This has been an area of concern nationally during the lockdowns where more and more people were accessing social media online. The team has continued its significant contribution within the educational sector and targeting establishments that have key connections to early intervention, safeguarding, and other vulnerabilities. However, due to Covid, the Cyber team has embraced social platforms themselves to deliver training and awareness sessions.

#### 2.48 Other interventions developed / embedded during the last 12 months include

- The NHS, Emergency Department colleagues have a process framework for those young people and children attending accident and emergency departments (AED). For children who are flagged at risk of criminal and sexual exploitation, child protection plans, or children looked after, a notification is sent to appropriate services working with that young person or child, including to the Police where there is evidence of a crime and criminal activity.
- All Paediatric triage in AED is reviewed for intelligence regarding who attended with the child, their names, and their relationship. AED staff are trained to ensure this information is captured and recorded. In all cases where exploitation is suspected, this is reviewed by the Safeguarding Team, and additional safeguarding measures are tasked and/or implemented.
- The Trust Safeguarding Team reviews the AED attendance of young people and children, noting attendance history, the number, types, and nature of injuries. Where appropriate, the Safeguarding Team will make a referral to the Exploitation Team.
- The Bradford Royal Infirmary has a Plastic Surgery speciality, and as such, does see patients from out of the area attending following the violence. This information is always captured, reviewed, and shared with the admitting hospital to ensure continued safeguarding measures.
- On April 21, the hospital trust has launched the "Navigator Role" in conjunction with the work being undertaken with the Breaking the Cycle project. The data captured from the AED will identify ward areas and hotspots of concern, thereby enabling partnership resources to be deployed proactively to reduce and prevent young people from being subject to or involved in serious violence. Through this interaction, work will also focus on building emotional intelligence and resilience to take positive steps to ensure they do not become involved in serious violence.

#### 2.49 **Education**

The local authority Educational Safeguarding Team has been proactive throughout the pandemic. As with most local authorities, Bradford has seen an increase in the number of children open to Children's Social Care seeking elective home education (EHE).

- 2.50 The Education Safeguarding Team has robust procedures in place for the response to EHE where there is a concern that education provision is not suitable for the child's age, ability, and aptitude. All notifications of an intention to EHE are cross-referenced with CSC records to identify any related to vulnerable children. Any such children or young people known to CSC are specifically reviewed to encourage parents to consider attendance at school.

- 2.51 The Education Safeguarding Team provides additional support and advice for schools. The district has additional processes in place for welfare checks for any children that do not return. This may be a joint visit between Police and Children's Social Care.
- 2.52 Officers work closely with other agencies with an established relationship with the family. They have supported Children's Social care colleagues to prevent children subject to Child in Need and Child Protection intervention.
- 2.53 The Bradford district has 16 Safer School Police Officers. These officers are fully trained in recognising and identifying children and young people who may risk exploitation and other contextual safeguarding issues.
- 2.54 The Bradford Partnership under the stewardship of the Independent Scrutineer has undertaken the monitoring of services response through weekly meetings. EHE has been a key feature of these meetings.
- 2.55 Bradford Youth Justice Service uses a multi-agency approach to identify and address a lack of education and NEET status by highlighting gaps and then communicating directly with Educational Safeguarding Officers to help reengage young people into mainstream education or other relevant provision. In aiming to address issues of truancy and exclusion, the Youth Justice Service is linked in through the Multi-agency Initial Planning panels, where every young person's case is reviewed upon entry to the Youth Justice Service. This ensures key information sharing is completed while identifying additional supporting provisions; this aids case managers in understanding offending patterns, complete informed risk assessment, and strengthen education links.
- 2.56 The Safer School Police Officers work with schools to do joint visits for those who do not return without explanation.
- 2.57 The district has several outreaches and funded projects locally on intervention and education. For example: -
- The Community Cougars Foundation (CCF) in Keighley delivers sports sessions alongside education awareness on exploitation and other related subjects. As schools and venues re-open, the CCF project will deliver these projects back to the school.
  - Working with a local Imam who facilitated workshops with over 900 children a week attending.
  - `Out-loud Project` - Delivering one to one and group support for children & young people who are at risk of exploitation through gangs in the south of the city
- 2.58 The Bradford Partnership, in conjunction with Ineqe, launched the Safer Schools APP in September the Safer Schools APP is an award-winning educational approach to digital safeguarding. It currently provides local authority schools through the sponsorship of the local authority insurer Zurich Municipal for staff, parents, carers, and pupils to have

- Access to credible, contemporary relevant information
  - Age-appropriate resources
  - CPD courses for school staff, including Governors
  - Customised communications through push notifications
  - Advice, guidance & signposting to seek help
  - Artificial Intelligence Prompts
- 2.59 The Bradford Partnership is in the process of making the APP available to all schools across the Bradford district via the Safer Bradford Website. The APP will complement and enhance the suite of safeguarding tools available for staff.
- 2.60 Within a week of the launch, 30 schools had signed up to receive the APP
- 2.61 **Enforcement / Pursue**
- POLIT**  
The Bradford Police Online Investigation Team (POLIT) is the district's specialist response to subjects who view and/ or distribute indecent images of children or groom, incite, and/or facilitate sexual activity with children through the internet.
- 2.62 The POLIT team is a relatively new arm of the response to exploitation but reinforces the changing nature of the crime committed by perpetrators.
- 2.63 POLIT detectives have responsibility for reactive referrals from the community, the National Crime Agency (NCA), and other law enforcement agencies worldwide. Their works also contain referrals from worldwide social media groups, e.g., Facebook, regarding users sharing indecent images of children, alongside national operations targeting known organised crime groups and paedophiles.
- 2.64 On average monthly, the team are receiving
- 15 referrals from West Yorkshire Abuse Images hub with search warrants to execute.
  - 2 Live Internet Vigilante Predator Groups cases
  - 4 Referrals from the Regional & Organised Crime Unit
- 2.65 In addition to this, the team of 7 has 152 live investigations. Investigations are complex and time-consuming. The Unit has seen a substantial rise in the number of investigations during the past 12 months, with more offending behaviour committed while at home.
- 2.66 During September, made 17 arrests for offences. Police colleagues believe the demand to be high for the next 12 months

**Appendix C** – Highlights two recent cases of work undertaken by the Unit.

2.67 **Disruptions Officer**

The Bradford District has an experienced and skilled officer whose sole responsibility is dedicated to pro-active multi-agency disruption work. Examples of the recent work being undertaken include

- Tackling 'gaming' centres – where intelligence and information suggest are being used for exploitation or gang-related activity.
- Utilising enforcement powers in conjunction with the West Yorkshire Fire Service to close premises in cases where no substantial criminal offences are identified.
- Joint operations with HMRC at Shisha Bars.
- Joint patrols on identified hot spots and locations
- Disruption and detailed patrols on public transport, including work with British Transport Police on local train networks – Overt and Covert Tactics used to identify vulnerable young people or adults at risk and identify/prevent offending behaviour.
- Previous operations have included multi-agency work with hoteliers.

## **2.68 Partnership Intelligence Portal**

The Bradford Partnership is promoting the internet-based Police Partnership Intelligence Portal (PIP). Partners are now using it to gather a better intelligence picture surrounding organised crime, including modern-day slavery and exploitation. This allows key strategic partners to submit intelligence to a central police triage team. It is automatically emailed to the Intelligence Management Unit (IMU) at West Yorkshire Police on submission. This is a 24/7 unit that triages all intelligence submissions for the entire force.

## **2.69 West Yorkshire Risk & Vulnerability Strategic Group**

The West Yorkshire Risk & Vulnerability Strategic Group, in partnership with the Police and partners were successful in their bid to receive support from the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Project. This will assist partners in Bradford to support strategies that target and disrupt perpetrators of exploitation. The TCE project will be presenting its report in November 2021.

## **2.70 Operation Dalesway**

West Yorkshire Police and the Local Authority continue to work together to report non-recent allegations of exploitation. Operation Dalesway is the Police operational name for such investigations. The specialist team was established in 2014 and had responsibility for the coordination, response, and oversight of non-recent investigations.

In partnership with local authorities and other organisations, West Yorkshire Police has developed a great deal of experience in investigating CSE and has brought a number of successful and highly publicised prosecutions in recent years, for Bradford these include

- Two men sentenced in 2013 for a total of 36 years in prison
- Twelve men sentenced in February 2016 to a total of 140 years in jail following an investigation in Bradford and Keighley.
- An investigation in Bradford which saw nine men jailed for a combined 132 years in 2019

2.71 Currently, the team has ten live investigations at various stages of progress. Police forces across the Yorkshire and Humber region have noted a reduction in the number of non-recent cases on child sexual exploitation. The reducing number of non-recent cases is comparable with other regional local authority areas.

## **2.72 Additional Developments**

In April 2021, the Council made a significant investment into exploitation following a review of existing services. It is important to acknowledge that the review was planned and undertaken by the new leadership team as part of the Council's improvement plan. A commitment to annually fund just under 1 million pounds was made to further develop a 'Multi-agency Exploitation Hub.'

2.73 The Hub will feature specialist practitioners from Social Care, Education, Health, West Yorkshire Police, the Youth Service, voluntary sector organisations, Missing officers, and Business support. There will be an equal focus on perpetrator disruption and securing convictions alongside supporting victims and children.

2.74 Some key appointments have already been made, including a specialist health practitioner, an education safeguarding officer, and a dedicated disruptions officer.

2.75 The Bradford Partnerships are committed to raising the profile of exploitation, and the efforts to do this have recently been featured in a national article. 'Working in child exploitation is not just a job for me; it's about changing the lives of young people' | Community Care. This has, in turn, resulted in interest from other local authorities who consider Bradford's responses as a blueprint for good practice in their areas. Partnership colleagues have held several meetings with other Local Authorities to share best practices and embed learning on 'what works' in other places.

2.76 A significant focus is placed on supporting children with low or emerging needs to ensure early interventions are delivered, preventing an escalation of concerns. In addition to this, specialist services can focus their attention on the low number of children who are at significant risk so that the support they receive is intensive and impactful. The Team Manager in the Exploitation Hub reviews the cohorts of children weekly to prevent drift and delay.

2.77 There is national recognition of the gap in service provision for exploited children transitioning into adulthood. In response to this, a new flag called '18 and still vulnerable' has been developed, of which nine young people are presently identified. These young people must fit the criteria of either being a care leaver or having additional vulnerabilities. The circumstances for these young adults are reviewed, and universal safety plans are agreed with the RAM and MACE process described above.

2.78 There are ambitions to extend the criteria for young adults, and this concept is being explored within the All-Age Exploitation Group, which reports to the Bradford Partnership.

2.79 West Yorkshire Police state that the intelligence picture around Criminal

Exploitation, particularly "County Lines," has significantly increased across the force. "County Lines" is a form of Child Criminal Exploitation. It is a term used to describe the activities of 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 forms of "deal line". These gangs are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money. They will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. County Lines & Criminal Exploitation As the focus on this area is a priority. Police colleagues anticipate that the numbers of victims and perpetrators will increase.

2.80 Police improvements in crime recording has seen the numbers of recorded offences increased.

2.81 The pervasive nature of internet capable devices and their ease of use for criminal purposes ensure that future threats around online CSE continue to evolve. The technology available to law enforcement will also lead to increased demand for the West Yorkshire Police Force. ICACCOPs is an online web interface and will enable Forces to further respond to and tackle, online child sexual abuse.

## **2.82 Training**

The TBP and the Learning & Improvement task and finish group set up to look at opportunities for child exploitation training sessions across the district has continued its work. A series of sessions covering different aspects of the exploitation plan have been identified. The first session w focused on county lines; the second session concentrated on procedures and processes used in assessing cases within the exploitation hub. The sessions were launched earlier in the year. The feedback on the county lines sessions run by the Breaking the Cycles Team was extremely positive, and further sessions are being planned.

Other sessions being planned include: -

- Modern-Day Slavery
- Adverse Childhood Experiences
- Disclosures
- Child Medical Procedures
- Harmful Sexual Behaviour

2.83 The Bradford Partnership have commissioned from the NSPCC a series of training courses for frontline professionals responding to Harmful Sexual Behaviour displayed by children and young people

2.84 The sessions commenced in April 2021 and will run for 12 months. The commissioned service from NSPCC allows for the facility of a trainer the trainer. This has been made available to colleagues within the educational safeguarding team who can share the learning with designated safeguarding leads and deputies across the Bradford District.

2.85 The Bradford Partnership is hosting a series of Exploitation Masterclasses in November and early December on exploitation and will be delivered by a specialist

an external trainer – Sarah Henry. These sessions will be for frontline practitioners who are dealing with those at risk of exploitation. The sessions will include the findings from the recent publication of the Child Exploitation Thematic Review

- 2.86 The Bradford Teaching Hospital Foundation Trust Safeguarding team are part of the multi-agency training offer and teach on courses including to frontline practitioners who come into direct contact with children who may have additional vulnerabilities or disabilities
- 2.87 The Bradford Partnership are reviewing the current child exploitation protocol via one of the sub groups to ensure disabilities is referenced within the screening tool.

### **2.88 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Thematic Review 2021**

The CSE thematic review was published in July 2021, and the subsequent findings and recommendations have previously been reported to the Council committee.

- 2.89 The Partnership and its member agencies have accepted the findings of the review and are working to ensure the recommendations are carried out. A copy of the current developmental action plan is attached. It will be updated monthly, and actions may be amended and or added as required. The Chair and Independent Scrutineer have set a deadline for completing the action plan by the end of December 2021, which is challenging. Extension of current targets for completion will only be accepted on evidence of justifiable delay.
- 2.90 A further review of actions is planned for late October to consider the evidence of outcome/impact and check necessary changes have been embedded in practice.

**Appendix D** – Updated CSE Thematic Action plan

### **2.91 The Bradford Partnership and Bradford Safeguarding Adults Annual Partnership Reports**

The Bradford Partnership have published the annual report which sets the activity been undertaken during the period of April 2020 through to March 2021 to promote the welfare of children and young people in the Bradford District. This includes improving outcomes for children and young people, statutory case review activity, delivery of safeguarding training, quality assurance and performance, the strategic vision, and what partners have achieved during that period. The annual report also recognises some of the opportunities, emerging challenges, and risks.

- 2.92 The report can be found in **Appendix A** respectively.

## **3. OTHER CONSIDERATIONS**

There are no other considerations

## **4. FINANCIAL & RESOURCE APPRAISAL**

There are no financial implications.



## **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 will have been amended temporarily under the Corona Virus Act 2020.
- 6.2 This report is, of necessity, a very high-level description of key activities undertaken by the Council in order to protect the members of the local population who are at risk of unlawful exploitation due to their vulnerability. The statutory safeguarding duties of the Council under both the Care Act and the Children Act are of pre-eminent significance and involve complex co-operative activities with both local and national partners. Effectively discharging these duties requires their integration into all the other activities undertaken by the Council. For this reason, any list of specific statutory provisions must be qualified by the need to consider the practical effect of each and specifically whether it may lead to or facilitate unlawful exploitation.
- 6.3 The exchange of information with other statutory or involved agencies to facilitate measures to combat exploitation is a permitted form of data processing but requires the Council to undertake risk-assessments to ensure that the correct level and detail of information is communicated.
- 6.4 The new child safeguarding partnership arrangements were created by the Children and Social Work Act 2017. Statutory Guidance 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018' requires the Safeguarding Partners to publish a report at least every 12 months setting out what they have done as a result of the arrangements, including on safeguarding practice reviews and how effective the arrangements are in practice. The report should also include evidence of the impact of the work of the partners and agencies including training, on outcomes for children and families from early help to looked after children and care leavers and also an analysis of any areas where there has been little or no evidence of progress on agreed priorities.
- 6.5 The Bradford Safeguarding Adults Board is required to publish both an annual strategic plan and an annual report into its activities. The annual report is annexed to this report; and, as is required under Schedule 2 of the Care Act 2014, it describes:
- what it has done during the year to achieve its objective and implement its strategy, what each member has done during the year to implement strategy the findings of the safeguarding adult reviews (SARS) arranged by it

which have concluded during the year, the SARs arranged by it under that section which are on going at the end of the year, what it has done during the year to implement the findings of SARs arranged by it, and where it decided during the year not implement a finding of a SAR, the reasons for that decision.

## **7. OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no other implications

### **7.1 SUSTAINABILITY IMPLICATIONS**

None

### **7.2 GREENHOUSE GAS EMISSIONS IMPACTS**

None

### **7.3 COMMUNITY SAFETY IMPLICATIONS**

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.

- 7.31 The Community Safety Partnership (CSP) currently oversees the commissioning of funding from the passporting of Police and Crime Commissioner (now under the mayor's office) funding against key priorities, including CSE and now wider exploitation.

### **7.4 HUMAN RIGHTS ACT**

Exploitation is a wide concept; and there is no direct provision that deals with it in the Human Rights Act. The abusive or criminal exploitation of vulnerable people, whether they are adults or children, will inevitably breach specific human rights. Where the Council becomes aware of this it will have a duty, as a public body, to take all proportionate steps to prevent such abuse and to enable all persons to effectively assert their human rights. The arrangements made by the Local Authority and partners are intended to both prevent the human rights of children, young people and adults being breached and to enable those right to be effectively asserted.

### **7.5 TRADE UNION**

None

### **7.6 WARD IMPLICATIONS**

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

## **7.7 AREA COMMITTEE ACTION PLAN IMPLICATIONS (for reports to Area Committees only)**

None

## **7.8 IMPLICATIONS FOR CORPORATE PARENTING**

7.81 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.

## **7.9 ISSUES ARISING FROM PRIVACY IMPACT ASSESMENT**

7.91 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**

8.1 **Appendix D** – Child Sexual Exploitation Thematic Review Updated Action Plan - Is exempt under paragraph 7 (Crime Prevention) Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972

## **9. OPTIONS**

None

## **10. RECOMMENDATIONS**

10.1 The Children`s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is invited to note the report

10.2 The Children`s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee commit to working closely with partners to Continue to raise awareness of exploitation of both adult and children

10.3 The Children`s Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee commit to working closely with partners to deliver on the actions within the developmental action plan and progressing the extensive wider work presently on going in Bradford.

10.4 A further report to be presented in 12 months

## **11. APPENDICES**

Appendix A – The Bradford Partnership Working together to safeguard children annual

report 2020/21

Appendix B – Trusted relationships – Case Studies

Appendix C – Police Online Investigations Team Case Studies

Appendix D – Child Sexual Exploitation Thematic Review Updated Action Plan ( Not for publication)

## **12. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS**

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](#).