

Children In Care – Protection from Child Sexual Exploitation

SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report seeks to provide information on children at risk of exploitation (CSE); the impact that this has on children in care and the work being undertaken in Derby to raise awareness and safeguard children in care from exploitation.
- 1.2 There has been government and national recognition that children are now affected by ‘modern day risks’ and that exploitation does not recognise race, ability, disability, sexual orientation, gender or class and all children are vulnerable to exploitation. Child sexual exploitation is child abuse and is recognised as such within Derby City.
- 1.3 There are a number of common risk factors which affect children who are sexually exploited and these include:
 - A history of abuse
 - Recent bereavement or loss
 - Low self- esteem and poor confidence
 - Lack positive friendship or support network from the same age group
 - Being in care or leaving care
- 1.4 Children being in local authority care are identified as risk factor therefore additional safeguards are needed to ensure that these children are protected from sexual exploitation. As a result of this specific work is being undertaken with social workers and partner agencies to raise awareness of sexual exploitation to ensure that a multi-agency approach is taken to deliver the best safeguarding plans.
- 1.5 **Summary for Children and Young people**

It is very important that all children are protected from harm and exploitation and it is for this reason we have put in place safeguards which involve raising the awareness of CSE for **all** children in line with their age and understanding. Most of the children who are in care will have seen videos or had discussions in school (both primary and secondary) about CSE which tell you about the risks of CSE and how to recognise behaviours which make them feel uncomfortable and advise them to tell a trusted adult about this, for example a member of their family, a social worker or school teacher.

RECOMMENDATION

- 2.1 To approve the ongoing work related to safeguarding children in care in Derby

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 3.1 To ensure that children in care are supported to reduce the likelihood of them being exploited.
- 3.2 To ensure that the exploitation strategy has true participation from children.
- 3.3 Develop the remit of the CSE champions across the local authority and consider the addition of young people as CSE champions.

SUPPORTING INFORMATION

4.1 Support to Children In Care

Derby has recognised that children are vulnerable to many forms of exploitation and as a consequence the authority has developed a Vulnerable Young People's group which is made up of different professionals across the local authority and health agencies. The group considers different vulnerabilities and how they impact on children including children who are in care. This includes drug misuse, missing children, young people involved in offending behaviour etc.

- 4.2 The Police and Crime Commissioner and Derby Safeguarding Children Boards from City and County have jointly contracted Safe and Sound a registered charity specialising in support to victims of CSE, to provide services to young people at risk across the whole of Derbyshire. In this role they provide 1-1 support to young people and engage in prevention work and delivery of the professional training in the City. Safe and Sound have regular surgeries in Derby children's homes with young people and staff to discuss safety and risk.
- 4.3 CSE is a priority area for all agencies in the City and we work with many agencies to develop strong plans to safeguard children. This includes working alongside the police in order to protect children, identify those adults who exploit them and seek to prosecute offenders. Children's social care offer multi-agency support through CSE strategy meetings and there are different kinds of support based on the child's needs, from direct intervention from their allocated social workers to therapeutic support provided by Camhs or other health professionals.
- 4.4 CSE referrals come to children's social care via any agency or parent who are worried about a child. Girls and young women continue to make up the vast majority of CSE referrals, boys and young men make up a smaller number of referrals but this is increasing year on year, trend mirrored nationally.

- 4.5 In order to raise awareness about the risk of CSE there are over 200 CSE champions across the city. These include champions in every children's Home, within social work teams and in all local schools in the City. CSE Champions receive special support and training in related issues through the Derby Safeguarding Children Board training day's and specialised workshops on specific areas of risk.
- 4.6 Work has also been undertaken with adult services to develop a protocol to ensure that young people leaving care who are identified as at risk of ongoing abuse and exploitation are referred to adult services. This will ensure that they continue to receive safeguarding support, as what we know is that abuse does not stop simply because a young person has reached the age of 18, this support can continue till the young person is age 25 years.
- 4.7 Many children who are sexually exploited go missing from care and in order to prevent this and understand the reasons why they go missing there is a Police and Partners tasking group. This group is made up of the police, social care and other key agencies and focuses on high risk offenders and medium and high risk CSE victims. Further work is undertaken across county borders as there are rare occasions when children at risk of sexual exploitation are placed outside of the authority, there are strong regional arrangements between local authorities and the police, to ensure that safeguards for these children remain strong regardless of where they are placed.
- 4.8 There has been a significant increase in the number of child and young people sexting cases in the city and nationally and as a result Police have developed a policy on this to safeguard children from being recorded as offenders for low adolescent behaviours and those with aggravating factors can be dealt with swiftly. This is an issue central to the Department of Education, Safeguarding Children in Education Guidance (2018), under peer on peer abuse.
- 4.9 **Hearing the Voice of Children.** 100 young people have been spoken to in the Voices in Action Group – many of whom are children in care, as well as 27 young people from the Children in Care Council. The purpose of these sessions was to obtain children's views of how to update the CSE strategy, to identify any gaps in delivery and to ensure there is purposeful child participation in the CSE strategy meetings. Further, young people must have an active voice in the creation of the policies and strategies of the Derby Safeguarding Children Board.
- 4.10 A participation task and finish group is currently running with 6 young people 3 of which are children in care within internal children's homes and foster care. They are producing age appropriate invites to CSE strategy meetings that young people can relate to and updating leaflets to go out to all children and parents / carers before these meetings.
- 4.11 Young people have told us that they would also like to be CSE champions and this is something that we are looking in to as we think it is a great idea. The participation of children in strengthening the work undertaken by children social care in relation to CSE is very important and a small group has been created which includes young people to give us the best ideas of how we can encourage children to participate in meetings. To date this has been very successful and there have shared a number of good ideas which will be developed over the next 6 months. These include ensuring that there is useful information material to explain sexual exploitation and why adults

may be worried about them. There is also an ongoing campaign in the city called 'See Something Say Something', this campaign seeks to ensure that all of us take responsibility for protecting children from CSE by reporting negative and worrying behaviours to the authorities.

4.12 Derby has Vulnerable Young Peoples (VYP) subgroup which is made up of different partners across the local authority and health. The membership has been enhanced by the addition of a teenager who is representing young people's views on all priority strategies discussed within the VYP meeting. The inclusion of a young person ensures that the local authority is connected and challenged to maintain children at the forefront of its CSE plans.

4.13 Future Focus

- Consider and implement the recommendations from the participation task and finish group
- Consider the develop young people CSE champions for children in care
- Ensure that there are safeguarding resources which focus of the growing number of boys who are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Ensure there is co-ordinated analysis of all issues which place children at risk and consideration of additional priority areas where there are linked issues for example, Concordat, safeguarding children in education and youth offending

OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED

5.1 There are no other options to consider as safeguarding children in care from exploitation is a critical area of work.

This report has been approved by the following officers:

Legal officer	N/A
Financial officer	N/A
Human Resources officer	N/A
Estates/Property officer	N/A
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim
Other(s)	Jasmine Nembhard-Francis, HOS Quality Assurance

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Background papers:	None
List of appendices:	

IMPLICATIONS

Financial and Value for Money

- 1.1 There are no financial implications

Legal

- 2.1 There are no legal implications

Personnel

- 3.1 There are no personnel implications

IT

- 4.1 It is anticipated that in the autumn there will be a comprehensive CSE pathway on the children social care child recording system to capture the details of those children who are at risk of CSE or have been sexually exploited .

Equalities Impact

- 5.1 Children in care and care leavers are more vulnerable to exploitation by virtue of their circumstances. It is essential that proactive steps are taken to address these. The work undertaken and planned ensures all children and young people in care who are at risk of exploitation are appropriately safeguarding.

Health and Safety

- 6.1 There are no significant health and safety.

Environmental Sustainability

- 7.1 None arising from this report

Property and Asset Management

- 8.1 None arising from this report

Risk Management and Safeguarding

- 9.1 A risk assessment can be carried out by any agency concerned about a child who

they think may be at risk of sexual exploitation. If as a result of this assessment there is an outcome that the child may be at risk of sexual exploitation safeguarding services will be put in place based on the level of risk

Corporate objectives and priorities for change

10.1 Links to the Corporate plan are through:

- Protecting vulnerable children, young people, adults and older people.
- Making sure that the local authority take action to safeguard vulnerable adults and children that require higher levels of support including; our looked after children and vulnerable adults with learning disabilities. This will involve early intervention and prevention wherever possible.