

REPORT TO: Health and Wellbeing Board

DATE: 12 November 2014

REPORTING OFFICER: Operational Director – Children and Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Child Sexual Exploitation

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide a summary of the approach in Halton to addressing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in within the Borough.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That the Board note the response by Halton Council and its partners in the Local Safeguarding Children Board to Professor Jay's report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham.

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

- 3.1 In August 2014 Professor Alexis Jay OBE (previously Chief Social Work Adviser to the Scottish Government) published her report into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The report outlined the scale and seriousness of child sexual exploitation within the borough and the failures in effectively addressing the issue. Within the report she identified 15 key recommendations some of which related specifically to Rotherham others had a broader relevance.
- 3.2 Halton along with Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Warrington had already begun to focus on CSE prior to the Rotherham report following concerns in other areas such as Rochdale and Oxfordshire. Learning from these cases a range of actions had been taken which included:

Strategic Response

- An LSCB dedicated CSE, Missing and Trafficked Children Sub Group;
- LSCB active membership of the Pan Cheshire Strategic Group;
- A Local Operational Group which meets weekly to identify potential victims, perpetrators and localities, in order to promote protection, disruption and prosecution. This is in the process of migrating to become a co-located multi-agency CSE team;
- The Pan-Cheshire CSE Strategy informs the local delivery and ensures consistency and effective communication across agencies and localities; and

- A Pan-Cheshire CSE Communication Campaign co-ordinated by the Strategic Group

Awareness and Prevention:

- Training and awareness raising materials for all frontline staff across agencies;
- “Risking It All” theatre presentation to all Year 9 and 10 pupils in Halton, including children attending Alternative Provision and Children in Care; and
- Online training for parents, with live support by safeguarding practitioners.

Audit and Review:

- Audited CSE cases as part of the LSCB Multi-Agency Audit programme;
- Quarterly snapshot reports disseminated across partnership, including frontline staff;
- Triangulation of data from Police, Children’s Social Care and Education on CSE and children missing from home/care and education.

3.3 Following the publication of the Rotherham report a further review of Halton’s approach to CSE has been undertaken.

3.4 The Strategic Director for Children and Enterprise in Halton Chaired a high level meeting with the LSCB, Cheshire Police, NHS colleagues, Social Care, Youth Offending Service and Probation colleagues, to agree the terms of reference and scope of a review of CSE in Halton. This work will be lead and co-ordinated by the Halton LSCB.

3.5 The review will cover the following key areas:

- CSE or potential CSE cases during the timescales 1st August 2013 to 31st August 2014 in order to identify risks, issues and good practice;
- Processes and procedures in Halton in respect of CSE; and
- Address all of the generic recommendations of Professor Jay’s report including community engagement, regulatory services such as taxi licencing/take- aways and support services for victims of CSE.

3.6 An interim report will be produced at the end of October which will identify the immediate issues to be addressed to ensure that children and young people are safe. The final report will then be completed by December 2014 and will be presented to a private session of full Council. The LSCB will then publicise the findings and response. If any urgent action is identified the appropriate action will be taken immediately.

- 3.7 In parallel to this work, Halton is establishing a co-located multi-agency CSE team which will include colleagues from Cheshire Police and the NHS locally. This will test the efficiency, effectiveness and child focus of our approach before recommendations are made for a more permanent solution on how as agencies we collectively organise ourselves. The high level of partnership working in Child Protection in Halton over many years should mean that we are in a strong position to pilot this approach in Cheshire, building on lessons learned from Council areas nationally.
- 3.8 In addition, the four Cheshire LSCBs are working collaboratively with Cheshire Police and the PCC to share best practice and review the “high risk” factors identified in the Rotherham Report, on a wider Cheshire footprint.
- 3.9 A Z Card has been developed for all front line staff to help them identify the early indicators of potential CSE. All partners are asked to ensure that these cards are made available to the appropriate staff.

4.0 FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The local authority commissions services for missing children and child sexual Exploitation on behalf of the four Cheshire Authorities. The commissioned service is delivered by Catch 22. This commission will be extended for three months until 30th June 2015. This will give the local authorities the opportunity to confirm the direction which needs to be taken with regards to CSE teams. The commissioned service is delivered by Catch 22.

5.0 POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The effectiveness of Halton’s approach to CSE will be assessed by OFSTED during the inspection of services for children of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and reviews of Local Safeguarding Children Boards in line with the following criteria:

“children and young people who are missing from home, care or full time school education and those at risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking receive well-co-ordinated responses that reduce the harm or risk of harm to them. Risks are well understood and minimised.....”

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL’S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

Halton’s approach to CSE is aimed at improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by reducing the incidents of missing and risky behaviour.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills in Halton

Through the commissioned service we will ensure that children and young people that go missing from home or care; subject to or at risk of CSE are supported in their learning and future employment and skills development.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

Halton's approach to CSE aims to minimise reduce the risks of harm, and promote access relevant services to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The service provides support to vulnerable children, young people and families to assist them to access appropriate service provision within their local communities.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

- 7.1 Although the local authority commissions Catch 22 to provide services for missing children and child sexual exploitation for some young people who are assessed at high risk of sexual exploitation it is necessary for them to come into care.

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

- 8.1 The services specified within this report relate to the needs of individuals and families with protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013 Professor Alexis Jay OBE	2 nd Floor Rutland House	Ann McIntyre Operational Director Children and Enterprise