

<b>Report to:</b>	<b>RESILIENT COMMUNITIES AND CHILDREN'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE</b>
<b>Relevant Officer:</b>	Diane Booth, Director of Children's Services
<b>Date of Meeting</b>	8 February 2018

## CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND ABUSE

1.1 To inform Members of the ongoing work relating to Child Sexual Abuse.

### 2.0 Recommendation(s):

2.1 To note the information within the report, asking any questions and identifying any topics for further consideration.

### 3.0 Reasons for recommendation(s):

3.1 For Members of the Scrutiny Committee to be fully informed as to the ongoing work relating to the child sexual abuse agenda.

3.2a Is the recommendation contrary to a plan or strategy adopted or approved by the Council? No

3.2b Is the recommendation in accordance with the Council's approved budget? Yes

3.3 Other alternative options considered:  
None.

### 4.0 Council Priority:

4.1 The relevant Council Priority is: 'Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience'.

### 5.0 Background Information

5.1 Blackpool has a long established multi-agency operational response to child sexual exploitation (CSE), led by the Awaken Team which was established well over ten years ago. Governance is provided by Blackpool Safeguarding Children Board, with oversight of the operational response delegated to the CSE Sub-Group.

Wider co-ordination is provided by the pan-Lancashire CSE Strategic Group, which ensures that Blackpool's response is consistent with that of Lancashire colleagues. The terms of reference of the Sub-Group are due to be revised in forthcoming months to incorporate other forms of child exploitation for example, trafficking and modern day slavery.

While there are a number of types of CSE known nationally, in Blackpool, the predominant model is of a white male offending alone after a process of grooming a single victim, who is also most likely to be white. The most likely offence location is the offender's place of residence, although some public areas are also reported to be hotspots for CSE and are monitored accordingly. There remains no evidence of gang or taxi related offending.

The majority of victims are girls, although Blackpool has a significantly higher number of boys recorded as victims or considered to be at risk of CSE than is the case nationally or regionally. This is viewed as positive evidence that practitioners have the confidence to identify and report boys who are CSE victims. The predominant age of victims is between 13 and 15, although there is a trend for increasingly younger children being identified as at risk of CSE. Perpetrators tend to be less than five years older than their victim is, although some are much older. During 2016-2017, 431 Police referrals with a CSE element were made to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, although this may include cases of historic abuse. There will typically be around 60 children open to Awaken team social workers at any one point.

The local response to CSE is delivered in accordance with a pan-Lancashire Strategy (2015-2018) which contains the following strategic priorities:

1. Prevention: Public confidence and awareness
2. Protect: Protecting, supporting, safeguarding victims and managing risk
3. Pursue: identifying and bringing offenders to justice
4. Partnerships: co-location and co-working
5. Intelligence and performance monitoring
6. Leadership
7. Learning and Development

This framework is reflected in the Blackpool Action Plan (2016-2018), progress against which is summarised below.

- 5.1.1 Prevention:** awareness raising amongst the general public is centred on the annual CSE awareness week in November in which Lancashire Constabulary's successful "the more you know, the more you see" branding continues to be used. A concerted attempt has been made to raise the awareness of CSE amongst children and the BSCB now makes age appropriate material available to schools for children from year five upwards, together with material for parents.

The NSPCC “Pantysaurus” campaign has been promoted for use with younger children (and is relevant to intra-familial child sexual abuse). More recently, performances of the awareness raising plays, Chelsea’s Choice and Crashing, have been provided to three secondary schools through Elected Member’s ward funding.

BSCB has also sought to raise awareness of CSE amongst those parts of the economy that are likely to be able to identify children at risk of CSE. Training has consequently been provided to all existing taxi drivers and is now a standard part of the licencing process. Open awareness raising events have been provided for hotels and guesthouses, through the Pubwatch scheme and to specific businesses for example, Coral Island, the Sandcastle, Merlin Entertainments and Blackpool Transport. The Council has previously struggled to engage with McDonald’s, but has training scheduled for all their outlets in early 2018. However, the ongoing difficulty engaging with the Pleasure beach has recently been escalated to Cllr Cain (as the Elected Member representative on BSCB) who has since met with the Pleasure Beach with Neil Jack, Chief Executive and it is hopeful this will now progress. BSCB will continue to provide awareness raising to specific businesses and community groups, based on intelligence as to where children are likely to be exploited.

**5.1.2 Protect:** children who are victims or at risk of CSE will receive a response from the multi-agency Awaken team that is constituted of health, police, education and social care staff. Children are assigned a key worker, who will be the person that is most likely to be able to effectively work with them. BSCB monitors the work of the Awaken team, ensuring that practical problems are resolved and has sought reassurance that appropriate therapeutic provision is available to all victims. Work is now underway to enable us to better understand the experiences of children who are open to Awaken. More widely, CSE is included within the recently published Keeping Children Safe in Blackpool thresholds document and professionals making a referral in this respect are expected to complete a standard screening tool that is available on the BSCB website.

**5.1.3 Pursue:** work to tackle offenders is also co-ordinated through the Awaken team. Monthly Multi Agency CSE (MACSE) meetings review children at a high risk of being exploited, high-risk offenders and locations at which children are known to be targeted. This provides a means of sharing information with all agencies involved with an individual child or offender. Approximately 50% of children discussed at MACSE meetings are looked after children. (A similar approach is used in Missing From Home Panel meetings, which provides a means of identifying children who are potential at risk of CSE).

The efficacy of the Awaken team will be tested as part of a wider peer review scheduled for February 2018, while the NWG Network will review the MACSE meetings.

It is recognised that it may not always be possible to secure convictions against perpetrators of CSE and the Community Safety Partnership uses a number of disruption techniques, after liaison with the Police and Children's Services. This includes the use of Community Protection Warnings (CPW) and Notices (CPN) that are issued to adults who give a cause for concern and require them to stop specified activities that contribute to a CSE risk. Of the 105 CPW issued in 2015-2016, only nine were breached, resulting in the issue of a CPN, none of which were breached.

Suspected offenders may also be issued with Section 2 Abduction Warning Notice to prevent a child being taken to other premises, while measures have also been taken to disrupt venues where children are believed to be at risk of CSE. The Awaken team has active links to the Blackpool Council Licensing Enforcement team to share intelligence in respect of licensed premises where there are concerns in respect of CSE, thereby enabling licenses to be enforced and additional conditions implemented where appropriate.

- 5.1.4 Partnership:** multi-agency working is most evident in the work of the Awaken team, but is supported by the wider partnership through attendance at the CSE Sub-Group and MACSE meetings. Bespoke responses can be provided to support to particular agencies, for example to one school in order to help them respond more effectively to sexting.
- 5.1.5 Intelligence and Performance monitoring:** BSCB has developed a multi-agency CSE dataset to monitor CSE referrals, Awaken caseloads, Missing From Home Incidents, awareness raising and disruption activity. This is in a relatively early stage of development and more work will follow to understand what the data tells means. CSE forms part of the routine programme of BSCB multi-agency audits and while one has not been completed since late 2016 a further audit is due in 2018. It is understood that a series of Joint Targeted Area Inspections in respect of the multi-agency response to CSE are planned for early 2018. This will judge the local response to the Time to Listen thematic report from 2016. The CSE Sub-Group will benchmark Blackpool's current position against this report and seek to address any areas for improvement.
- 5.1.6 Learning and Development:** a significant number of practitioners attended CSE awareness raising or more in depth training during the 2014-2016 period. Demand has subsequently tapered, which would suggest that the majority of professionals who need the training have now attended. The Council is aware that the majority of partner agencies make some form of CSE training mandatory for relevant staff and monitor compliance rates through the section 11 audit programme. A total of 86% of Children's Services staff within Blackpool Council have completed either face-to-face or e-learning on CSE. BSCB ensures that CSE training delivered by partner agencies includes a consistent message and continues to offer a full day CSE, trafficking and missing from home training course that was attended by 89 practitioners in 2017.

Additionally, approximately 300 practitioners attended a Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking conference in March 2017.

- 5.1.7 Child Sexual Abuse;** It is acknowledged that the recent priority attached to CSE has resulted in less attention being paid to intra-familial child sexual abuse (CSA) at a strategic board level. The number of child protection plans in this respect is relatively small, with fewer than 20 being in place in October 2017. BSCB has recently sought to better understand the multi-agency response to CSA through a Quality Assurance workshop, which sought the experiences of professionals of all grades who work with children who are victims or at risk of CSA and through an audit of child protection plans in this respect.

A Quality Assurance workshop was held to discuss the response to CSA from the point of identification, through to referral into services and the subsequent response to both the victim and perpetrator. Strengths were identified in terms of the response to disclosures and information sharing between agencies at this point. The primary areas of weakness were considered to be the ability of all agencies to identify CSA, especially in terms of universal and third sector employees, who would rarely encounter the issue and the provision of therapeutic support to child victims, with the commissioned provider being based in Preston.

The recent CSA audit was of five children who were subject to child protection plans in respect of sexual abuse. The audit identified that child protection processes (e.g. function and attendance of conferences and core groups worked well), although there was some room for improvement in terms of the development of effective plans, which the launch of the risk sensible model should address. The multi-agency response to CSA was largely judged effective, with good evidence of links with HM Prison and Probation Service, providing a joined up response to perpetrators and victims. It was evident throughout the audits that practitioners do not always feel confident in identifying and working with CSA, which may well reflect the relative rarity of cases in this respect. Training has been recently provided to Children's Services staff and will start to be offered on a multi-agency basis through the BSCB training programme in early 2018.

- 6.0** Does the information submitted include any exempt information? No

- 7.0 List of Appendices:**

None

- 8.0 Legal considerations:**

8.1 None

**9.0 Human Resources considerations:**

9.1 None

**10.0 Equalities considerations:**

10.1 None

**11.0 Financial considerations:**

11.1 None

**12.0 Risk management considerations:**

12.1 None

**13.0 Ethical considerations:**

13.1 None

**14.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:**

14.1 None

**15.0 Background papers:**

15.1 None