

Report to:	RESILIENT COMMUNITIES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
Relevant Officer:	Del Curtis, Director of People.
Date of Meeting	17 March 2016

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

1.0 Purpose of the report:

1.1 To update the Committee on progress made since Child Sexual Exploitation was last considered by the Committee to allow effective scrutiny.

2.0 Recommendation:

2.1 To consider progress made to date and identify any issues for further scrutiny.

3.0 Reasons for recommendation:

3.1 To ensure that robust scrutiny is given to Child Sexual Exploitation processes in Blackpool.

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? N/A

3.3 Other alternative options to be 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 The Resilient Communities Scrutiny Committee considered a thematic report on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in September 2015. This report provides an update on progress made since that last thematic discussion. Also attached is the relevant

updated Safeguarding Board Action Plan for the Committee's consideration.

Update since last Scrutiny

- 5.2 The Child Sexual Exploitation specific strategy and planning has historically been police led and on a Lancashire wide footprint. Although the Awaken Team has been in place for ten years and there is evidence of very positive practice on the ground, Child Sexual Exploitation has relatively recently become an identifiable element of the Blackpool Local Children's Safeguarding Board approach with a (police led) sub-group. There is more to be done to shape strategy and delivery.

Action taken since the 12 area project

The CSE plan has been refreshed and is in place (see appendix A) and the Safeguarding Board Sub Group is now chaired by Health Safeguarding Lead. The Awaken team has also appointed an additional social worker and social work assistant.

- 5.3 In January 2015, internal recommendations were made to the Corporate Leadership Team to commission work on the voice of the child, to develop the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub to incorporate Child Sexual Exploitation referrals, to develop a Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) approach, to present timely updates to children's scrutiny, to review staff training across the borough including elected member training and to strengthen links across licensing, enforcement, and housing and legal services.

Action taken since the 12 area project

Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub has not yet incorporated CSE referrals as firstly more work is needed to embed phase 1 of MASH.

MASE meetings are now in place

Additional member training has been put in place

Stronger links with licensing, enforcement and housing and legal services for example taxi drivers now have mandatory training as part of their licencing.

- 5.4 There is an expectation that professionals build practice in ways that reflect the views of the child. The longstanding Awaken Team has a clear child emphasis on the need to listen to the child. There was less clarity about wider mechanisms to secure the voice of victims on practice. The work of the Children's Society has been visible in supporting victims to engage but this again is largely on a pan- Lancashire basis in conjunction with the police and less visible within the Blackpool programme.

Action taken since the 12 area project

A meeting has taken place with the Children's Society to look at options for

expanding the voice of the child work into Blackpool

- 5.5 The Awaken Team includes health, police, social care, education and a missing from home co-ordinator. Referrals are worked by the most appropriate member of the team and support is provided to mainstream staff where cases are held there. The role of team nurse role was valued - we were told that disclosures were often made in the health context.

The 2014 Ofsted report noted that “Those who may go missing and who also may be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation are identified well, assisted by the location of the ‘missing’ coordinator in the Child Sexual Exploitation ‘Awaken’ team and well established information-sharing practices. Monthly meetings between senior police officers and managers in the local authority maximise awareness of ‘high risk’ cases, issues, and the location of ‘hot spots’. This supports strategic oversight of operational activity and ensures that the service is responsive to changing demands.”

Action taken since the 12 area project

Revision and improvement of missing from home data and weekly multi agency meetings in place.

- 5.6 The assertive outreach approach to identifying children at risk is concentrated on the patrolling of hotspots described below. There is a programme of Child Sexual Exploitation training and awareness for professional staff. There was evidence of a positive culture of staff engagement in the council but also that Blackpool has an ongoing challenge in the recruitment and retention of social workers. This leading to a problem in sustaining experienced and confident staff.

Action taken since the 12 area project

The team has been expanded and has permanent staff in place.

- 5.7 Representatives of schools and the college in Blackpool reported good internal systems in schools to identify and address the needs of children at risk including nonteaching staff working with individual children. They described broader Personal Health and Social Education (PHSE) activity including theatre productions but also concluded there was limited time available. They spoke well of the external support services including the school improvement offer and the “WISH” team offering sexual health services, this was commissioned by Public Health. The chair of the LSCB, however, was keen to ensure that the Academies were more closely linked to the work of the board and had initiated a programme of “Twilight” discussions to take

forward the discussion.

Action taken since the 12 area project

Deputy Director attends school Twilight meetings.

PHSE offer expanded.

- 5.8 Blackpool has a very high proportion of Looked After Children (LAC) and a large number of children are placed there by other authorities. It was reported that the practice of authorities placing children in the area was not always helpful both in notifying Blackpool of arrivals or in assessing risk prior to placement. There is a view that receiving authorities have insufficient room to escalate poor practice when it occurs. On the other hand, the management of Child Sexual Exploitation and its place in relation to children's homes appeared to be positive. The health service presented evidence that the children were well known to the service and engaged with health assessments and support.

Action taken since the 12 area project

All providers have been contacted to ensure we are aware of children placed within Blackpool.

- 5.9 The Ofsted report noted that "There are plans to undertake Child Sexual Exploitation awareness-raising work with local businesses, such as amusement arcades and taxi firms. However, given the long-established nature of this team, and the unique characteristics of Blackpool, it is surprising that this is not at a more advanced stage of development"

Action taken since the 12 area project

Comprehensive awareness raising programme in place – detailed in the actions plan.

- 5.10 There is an appetite in Blackpool for a wider community campaign and engagement. There has been local support for the "say something if you see something" campaign and there is space for this to be a more fundamental strand of the strategy. The local view was that they would welcome a national campaign within which to operate.

Action taken since the 12 area project

Community Campaign in place and awareness week happened in February.

- 5.11 The hotspots of Blackpool are heavily patrolled and there is a proactive approach to enforcing licensing requirements and addressing other offences. This is in part a response to need to manage the night economy of Blackpool, which on some nights means that there are large numbers of people using alcohol and drugs

inappropriately. Within that, police and other staff are tasked to act in relation to specific suspects and children at risk in order to gain intelligence and disrupt Child Sexual Exploitation and other activity. This has included entering premises and taking action against specific businesses and individuals.

There is a selective licensing scheme which is systematically using the requirements placed on landlords to enter HMOs to inspect property and to speak to tenants. This work has dual objectives: first to address the poor housing conditions as part of a wider goal of attempting to change the dysfunctional housing market; and second there is a welfare goal of directing the residents towards support and employment. However, the work is also activity in which it is possible to identify both suspects and children at risk and it is therefore described as part of the intelligence gathering needed to protect children from Child Sexual Exploitation.

There is very positive engagement from health services in the management of Child Sexual Exploitation and support for victims. However, Ofsted indicate that “access to Children and Adolescents Mental Health Services (CAMHS) is too variable to be confident that all children will receive the help they need...” As a result, the local authority is forced to source and fund independent packages of support for some young people.”

Action taken since the 12 area project

Access to CAMHS has been raised at Safeguarding Board, Children and Young People’s Partnership and Continuous improvement Board. A remodelled service launched with a single point of access in April 2015.

- 5.12 As with many places there is a case for a comprehensive needs based Child Sexual Exploitation commissioning strategy crossing NHS and local government and the police addressing the spectrum from informal community based support “on their terms” and to a more therapeutic offer when appropriate.

Action taken since the 12 area project

Commissioning Strategy has been refreshed.

There is clear acceptance of the challenge in Blackpool and some practice that is very positive. Areas for development include:

- Collaborative self-assessment – completed as part of the commissioning strategy refresh

- Blackpool specific refresh of governance, strategy and planning for Child Sexual Exploitation – revised plan and sub group in place.

Does the information submitted include any exempt information?

No

List of Appendices:

Appendix 7(a): Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan

6.0 Legal considerations:

6.1 None.

7.0 Human Resources considerations:

7.1 None.

8.0 Equalities considerations:

8.1 None.

9.0 Financial considerations:

9.1 None.

10.0 Risk management considerations:

10.1 None.

11.0 Ethical considerations:

11.1 None.

12.0 Internal/ External Consultation undertaken:

12.1 None.

13.0 Background papers:

13.1 None.