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| **Report to:** | **CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEE** |
| **Relevant Officer:** | Jeanette Richards, Assistant Director – Children's Services |
| **Date of Meeting:** | 7 October 2021 |

## CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE IMPROVEMENT – CONTEXTUAL SAFEGUARDING PILOT UPDATE

**1.0      Purpose of the report:**

1.1      To receive further information and initial results from the contextual safeguarding pilot introduced in May 2021.

**2.0      Recommendation:**

2.1      To challenge the update provided and identify any areas for further scrutiny.

**3.0      Reasons for recommendation:**

3.1      To ensure robust scrutiny of Children's Social Care improvement.

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

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

**4.0      Other alternative options to be considered:**

4.1      None.

**5.0      Council priority:**

5.1      The relevant Council priority is:
- Communities: Creating stronger communities and increasing resilience.

**6.0      Background information**

6.1      **Awaken (contextual safeguarding) out of hours intervention pilot:**

Contextual safeguarding and missing from home is a concern that requires a multi-agency response in order to safeguard children and young people from the risks of harm posed from

within the community and within varying contexts. Many services and agencies, including the Awaken team, operate during daytime hours when it is known that most activity involving young people occurs at weekends and evenings.

6.2    With this in mind and with the use of funding providing from Public Health, this new pilot initiative focused on out of hours contextual safeguarding, with three key component parts, identification, diversion and disruption. The pilot included a visible presence in areas and locations of concern, engaging with young people and raising awareness within communities and within the night time economy.

6.3    Blackpool's Public Protection Officers from the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Team along with the Housing Enforcement Team have an established and collaborative working relationship with Blackpool Neighbourhood Policing Teams and have been engaged in night time operations focusing on intervention, prevention and disruption to safeguard vulnerable children and adults within the community.

6.4    Disruption and targeting of addresses, takeaways and hot spot areas features heavily in the work they undertake often out of hours. This includes the serving of Closure Notices/Orders, Civil Injunctions, Community Protection Warnings and/or notices on individuals and addresses of concern including utilising creatively the powers of partner agencies such as licensing, trading standards and food hygiene.

6.5    As the CSP have the framework  already in place  to support out of hours work, alongside good working relationships with neighbouring policing (NHP) and other agencies, discussions have taken place to explore how this can be extended to identify and disrupt contextual safeguarding concerns  and work in collaboration with the Awaken Service. It was agreed that work around the disruption of exploitation could be further developed to include a member of the Awaken team who has the experience, skills and knowledge of child exploitation to deploy out of hours with colleagues from CSP and NHP. Practitioners from Awaken have a working knowledge of those young people most at risk in terms of missing from home and child exploitation and the intel and information surrounding locations and associates of concern.  This knowledge and awareness is essential in order to support and strengthen targeting and disruption whilst having a visible and direct presence within the community. This collaboration enabled the identification of hotspots (areas of particular concern in relation to exploitation) and individuals of concerns and thus the risk to this cohort of young people. The visible presence of the team also provided the opportunity for earlier identification of vulnerable children and young people who may be on the periphery of exploitation/anti-social behaviour to ensure support is provided at the earliest opportunity. Building up links in the community and raising awareness will also contribute to the identification, prevention and response to criminal exploitation.

6.6    **Proposal for out of hours intervention**

The focus of the out of hours work was predominantly driven from actions set at the daily

missing and exploitation meeting (DEM), considering daily intelligence and Protecting Vulnerable People (PVP) information to include worries that are shared from across the workforce and partnership with the aim of safeguarding young people from the risks posed within the community.

6.7    The following will be key areas of focus:
- Disruption of problem people harbouring young people that are at risk of child exploitation (CE) or missing from home (MFH).
- Disruption of problem places interacting young people that are at risk of CE or MFH.
- To have a visible presence and interaction with others within the community in heightened locations of interest.
- Early identification and prevention of young people who may be on the periphery
- Working with wider partners including third sector providers to ensure earliest opportunity to share info and intelligence from outreach activity.
- To identify and interact with those young people known and open to Awaken to gather further information.
- To be proactive in identifying and locating those young people reported as missing.
- To gather intelligence from out of hours working to be fed back into the DEM to assist with targeting, disruption and mapping.
- To gather information to assist with problem profiling.
- To assist partner colleagues in undertaking actions set from the DEM to include the serving of Community Protection Warnings (CPW)/Community Protection Notices (CPN)/injunctions.
- Target hardening – supplying and installing dummy CCTV cameras and stickers, Ring door bells, door viewers, window locks, security chains, security lights and sash and hasp locks.
- Visible presence, getting to know local young people in the area, picking up any concerns that may begin to emerge, understanding cohorts of young people informing service delivery of activities, diversion strategies etc.
- Visible presence in town centre, arcades, parks, stations etc.

6.8    The continuation of the Awaken staff will contribute to the effectiveness of the evening operations as follows:

- Experienced, knowledgeable and skilled practitioners in respect of exploitation and safeguarding.
- Skilled in engaging young people and building trusted relationships. Understanding of the lived experience of this cohort of young people.
- Working knowledge of those young people exploited or at risk of exploitation and mispers (already known to services).
- Able to link up information/intelligence from day services with relevant info/intel available out of hours.

- Ability to Map.
- Knowledge and awareness of potential hotspots, persons of concern who may pose a risk to young people.
- Ability to identity and respond to indicators of potential CE – early identification and prevention.
- Knowledge and experience of disruption tactics including serving of CPW/CPNs and Civil Injunctions.
- Visible presence in the community, building community relationships, raising awareness.
- Linking in with Youth Offending Services and Early Help Service and the wider partnership including third sector providers.

6.9 **Awaken outreach pilot  three month evaluation**

The outreach pilot has been operational since 19 May 2021, which was the County Lines intensification week. Over 25 outreach sessions have taken place with colleagues from the Community Safety Partnership Team and on occasion with officers from NHP, licensing and housing enforcement colleagues. Outreach currently takes place two evenings a week.

6.10 **Problem Analysis Triangle**

The problem analysis triangle (sometimes referred to as the crime triangle) provides a way of tackling recurring problems of crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour (ASB). This idea assumes that crime or disorder results when (1) likely offenders and (2) suitable targets come together in (3) time and space, in the absence of capable guardians for that target. A simple version of a problem analysis triangle looks like this:



6.11 Offenders can sometimes be controlled by other people - those people are known as handlers. Targets and victims can sometimes be protected by other people as well - those people are known as guardians. Places are usually controlled by someone - those people are known as managers. Thus, effective problem-solving requires understanding how offenders and their victims come together in places and understanding how those offenders, victims and places are or are not effectively controlled. Understanding the weaknesses in the problem analysis triangle in the context of a particular problem will point the way to new

interventions.

6.12    A complete problem analysis triangle looks like this:

6.13    Problems can be understood and described in a variety of ways. No one way is definitive. They should be described in whichever way is most likely to lead to an improved understanding of the problem and effective interventions. Generally, incidents cluster in four ways:

- *Behaviour*. Certain behaviours are common to the incidents. For example, grooming, exploiting, dealing/running drugs and stealing cars. There are many different behaviours that might constitute problems.
- *Place*. Certain places can be common to incidents. Incidents involving one or more problem behaviours may occur at, for example, a house, a business, a park, a neighbourhood, or a school. Some incidents occur in abstract places such as cyberspace, on the telephone, or through other information networks.
- *Persons*. Certain individuals or groups of people can be common to incidents. These people could be either offenders or victims. Incidents involving one or more behaviours, occurring in one or more places may be attributed to, for example, a youth gang, a lone person, a group/collective, or a property owner. Or incidents may be causing harm to, for example, residents of a neighbourhood, a group of adults, young children, or a lone individual.
- *Time*. Certain times can be common to incidents. Incidents involving one or more behaviours, in one or more places, caused by or affecting one or more people may happen at, for example, traffic rush hour, bar closing time, the holiday shopping season, or during an annual festival.

6.14    There is growing evidence that, in fact, crime and disorder does cluster in these ways. It is not evenly distributed across time, place, or people. Increasingly, police and researchers are recognizing some of these clusters as:

- Repeat offenders attacking different targets at different places.
- Repeat victims repeatedly attacked by different offenders at different places.
- Repeat places (or hot spots) involving different offenders and different targets interacting at the same place.

6.15    The Problem Analysis Triangle was derived from the routine activity approach to explaining how and why crime occurs. This theory argues that when a crime occurs, three things happen at the same time and in the same space:

- A suitable target is available.
- There is the lack of a suitable guardian to prevent the crime from happening.
- A motivated offender is present.

6.16    Outreach activity is shaped by actions set in the DEM (daily missing and exploitation missing) but also provides an opportunity for a more proactive approach in raising awareness with communities, identifying those young people not already known to services, building trusted relationships and providing a preventative and early help response when there are indicators of low level concern in respect of contextual safeguarding. Using the methodology above, the team aims to protect vulnerable children and disrupt problem people and problem places.

6.17    In terms of problem places, outreach targeted the night time economy (NTE), hotels/Bed and Breakfasts, Airbnbs, 'party' houses, taxi firms, off licenses and take-away shops in which young people are vulnerable to exploitation. Creating a visible presence, raising awareness and forming relationships with staff, proprietors and young people. These businesses can be the eyes and ears in deprived neighbourhoods and are ideally located to potentially identify concerns regarding child exploitation. This work is ongoing and will continue to be a feature of outreach work.

6.18    **Strengths of the pilot:**
- Creating a visibility in the community and raising awareness of contextual safeguarding concerns.
- Identifying cohorts of children and young people and mapping of friendships/associates - intelligence gathering.
- Building trusted relationships to illicit the wishes and views of young people.
- Targeting of problem areas ensuring timely response.
- Early identification of vulnerable children and young people.
- Disruption of hot spot areas and businesses/addresses of concern.
- Multi agency collaboration – sharing of information at the earliest opportunity and working together to improve outcomes for children and the community in which they live.

6.19    **Using legal tools and powers to disrupt**

Commonly used tools within the Anti-social behaviour and Policing Act 2014 are employed amongst other Public Protection powers. Since the start of the pilot we have used the following:

Community Protection Warnings                     x 19

Community Protection Notices                      x 5

Closure Orders (2 x brothels/1 x crack house)    x 3

Civil Injunctions (exploiting vulnerable children)  x 3

Criminal Behaviour Orders                         x 2

License Review                                    x 1

Disruption visits (Inc. Section 239's)            x 87

Welfare visits                                    x 27

Home safety checks/target hardening               x 22

6.20    **Examples of Outreach work and impact:**

The initial focus of the outreach activities focussed on meeting with children and young people in areas that had been highlighted as having relatively large numbers seemingly not engaging in the activities already provided in their area. The concern was that children and young people not engaging in positive activities particularly over the summer holidays could be more vulnerable to exploitation and become involved in criminal activity. Three areas were targeted for outreach activity – Grange, Brunswick and Claremont. Practitioners engaged with the children and young people in these wards to ascertain why they were not engaging in the existing provision and what type of activities they would like to see provided. With funding from The Violence Reduction Network (VRN) and support from a range of partners the team was able to consider supporting the provision of extra activities.

6.21    Outreach identified a harder to reach cohort of children and young people, some already known to Awaken, who were not engaging in the third sector activities within the community and citing the main issue as being boredom. Building trust was essential to eliciting their views which then informed delivery of some current activities but also development of new activities. The children and young people expressed that they would engage in activities they were interested in and quickly identified boxing as an interest. In partnership with our Leisure Services, boxing keep fit was offered on Wednesday and Thursday evenings. Two sessions were arranged, one for the younger element 8-11 years and one for the older element. This activity was also supported with extra outreach from the Boys and Girls Club as well as

Awaken and Youth Justice Practitioners. The Boxing has proven popular with sessions well attended and with VRN funding this activity has been extended until the end of October 2021 when it will be subject to review.

6.22 Having visibility in the community has enabled the identification of children not previously known to Awaken but where there exist indicators of exploitation concerns. This has resulted in timely referrals to the Awaken service and with support one young person was able to make positive change to their behaviour which led the courts to dismissing applications for Criminal Behaviour Orders.

6.23 Communicating with individuals that work in hot spot areas such as Queen Street has assisted in intelligence gathering and led to the identification of a number of young people that were out in the early hours of the morning but not reported missing. There was a physical altercation of which was evidenced in video footage and retrieved by the outreach workers and the team was able to generate missing from home return interviews on those identified to gather further information and identify the other individuals.

6.24 One of the main benefits of outreach is how daily business and information shared via the DEM is responded to in a timely manner and offers structure to the evening. This allows for earlier identification of children and young people along with a swift response to the targeting and disruption of individuals/business premises and hot spot areas. Targeting and disruption features heavily within the outreach, which benefits from the information shared within the DEM. In addition, information obtained from the outreach is filtered back into the DEM allowing for further tasking/development and information sharing across partner agencies.

6.25 The outreach is beginning to gain momentum as partner agencies have increased awareness of the activities that take place. This is leading to an increase in information sharing along with an increase in identification and mapping of young people allowing for support and intervention at the earliest opportunity. Relationships have strengthened and developed between Awaken and partner agencies to include greater joined up working with the Youth Offending Team and third sector agencies to support and improve the outcomes for young people

6.26 Outreach activity has increased around a number of takeaways following intel of young girls potentially being groomed. CCTV footage has been retrieved from one of the takeaways in order to identify the females and discussions have been had with the owner/manager regarding our worries. The information obtained from outreach has led to target hardening by the Community Safety Team and Police and an action plan in place for further disruption in order to safeguard young people.

6.27 A number of food establishments have been served with Community Protection Warnings (CPW) due to worries around either their behaviour or behaviours taking place on the

premises. One food establishment was reportedly employing young girls who were sexually harassed by the manager and his friends. This led to joined up working with the employment officer as no work permits had been requested. Outreach led to identifying a number of young girls who were subsequently visited by Awaken police and the food establishment was served with a CPW and a warning letter will be issued by the employment officer.

6.28    We identified two parents who were involved in drug dealing and were able to share this information with the professionals involved to include photographic evidence that was shared by the community safety team.

Window locks have been fitted at a number of addresses to prevent young people from going missing and securing the premises.

6.29    Outreach activity has enabled practitioners to have a better understanding of the cohorts of young people in Blackpool and how they link. The intelligence generated is crucial in working with children and young people at risk of or who are being exploited. For example we have been able to identify a number of young people who have begun to associate with peers where serious concerns of exploitation exist. Having this knowledge has enabled a preventative and early help response before problems around exploitation escalate.

6.30    **Engagement**

Outreach has provided an excellent method of engaging with young people of concern, as well as build relationships with them. A good example is the work done with the Talbot and Brunswick (TAB) cohort and the diversionary activities put in place on the back of the consultation with them.

6.31    This also allowed early intervention to ensure that the young people's vulnerability is reduced, as well as ensuring that services are made available to them. The impact of this work can be demonstrated by over 30 young people engaging with the Friday night 'Kicks' programme. The DEM informs both disruption activity as well as where to focus positive activity.

6.32    **Emerging trends identified from outreach and focus**

- Queen Street/night time economy. As the season in Blackpool continues and lockdown restrictions have lifted, Queen Street has seen an increase in young people frequenting the area, som of whom appear to relate to the TAB/ Claremont cohorts.
- Card-tricking. There are reports that card-tricking has resumed within the town centre.
- Identified drug dealing at some hotels; drug criminality and underage young people purchasing rooms. Discussions are ongoing around 'Challenge 25' and how this can be implemented.
- Takeaways giving free food, cannabis and cigarettes.

6.33    **Going forward**
- More outreach sessions over weekends to be explored.
- Awaken police staff to have extended hours enabling a contribution to outreach activity.
- Collaboration with missing from home prevention officers to explore out of hours response.
- Further alignment in the integration of third sector out of hours provision.

6.34    **Structure and Governance**

There are structures in place across the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership footprint that are designed to ensure the partners' safeguarding arrangements in this area of business are effective. These structures are laid out below:

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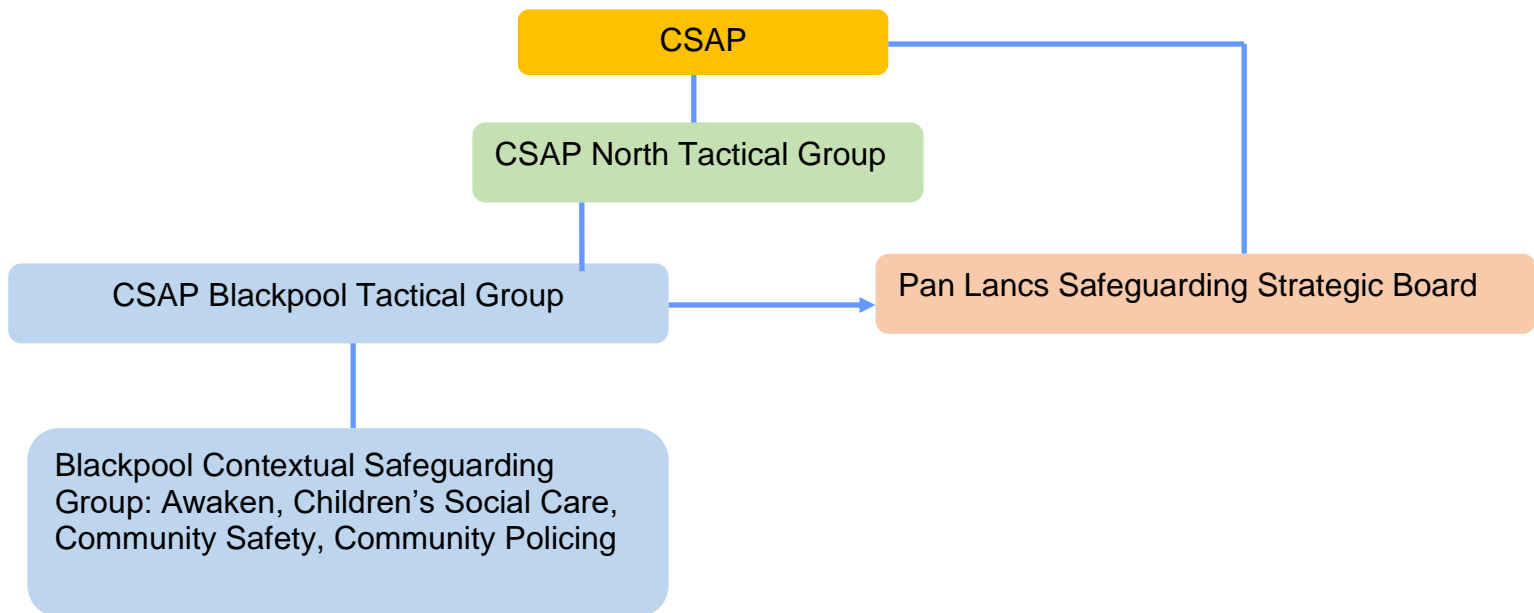
6.35    The Safeguarding Partners have agreed this structure which includes the use of a Strategic Board and oversees the work across the whole of the partnership footprint. There are no current plans to change this structure.

There are Operational Groups in each of the Tactical Group areas that report into the Strategic Board, but also use the Children's Safeguarding Assurance Partnership (CSAP) reporting process to submit reports to the Tactical Groups. Blackpool's Awaken Service reports directly to the Operational group to ensure oversight of practice and improvement and the progression of the action plan in place.

6.36    Does the information submitted include any exempt information?                    No

**7.0      List of Appendices:**

7.1      None.

**8.0      Financial considerations:**

8.1      Additional funding was secured via Project Young ADDER (Addiction, Diversion, Disruption, Enforcement and Recovery) a Home Office funded project aiming to move young people away from drug addiction and reduce the level of drug related offending via a trusted relationship approach and a multidisciplinary team. The funding of £40,000 is being utilised for Awaken sessional work (evenings and weekend) to disrupt and reduce young people who are frequently missing from home and at risk of exploitation.

**9.0      Legal considerations:**

9.1      None.

**10.0     Risk management considerations:**

10.1     None.

**11.0     Equalities considerations:**

11.1     None.

**12.0     Sustainability, climate change and environmental considerations:**

12.1     None.

**13.0     Internal/external consultation undertaken:**

13.1     None.

**14.0     Background papers:**

14.1     None.