CORPORATE DIRECTOR RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY REVIEW - CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE) IN CUMBRIA

1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1.1 The Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Board (CYPB) established a Sexual Exploitation Task Group in 2015.

1.2 This was identified as a review priority in the light of emerging findings from Rotherham and Oxfordshire about the extent of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and the role that Local Authorities had played in not tackling the problem well enough.

1.3 It was agreed that Scrutiny could play a part in assessing both the situation and the arrangements in Cumbria and subsequently inform Council and partner responses.

1.4 The Task Group sought to review the Council’s and partners’ approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation, and seek reassurances that Cumbria has a robust approach to tackling the issues from a whole systems perspective.

1.5 This report is presented in response to the recommendations that were contained in the Scrutiny Report following the review and should be read alongside the report.

2.0 STRATEGIC PLANNING AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

2.1 The Council Plan priorities states:

- To safeguard children, and ensure that Cumbria is a great place to be a child and grow up
- To enable communities to live safely and shape services locally
2.2 *Children’s Services’ Children and Families Service Plan for 2015-16* sets out the following priorities for Child Sexual Exploitation:

- Safeguard sexually exploited children;
- Develop environmentally focussed interventions with the police to disrupt perpetrators and locations rendering children more vulnerable;
- Promote the development of healthy sexual relations via influence in schools, and assisting the recovery from trauma and abuse in partnership with health and 3rd sector providers.

3.0 **RECOMMENDATION**

3.1 Cabinet is asked to note the responses to the recommendations in the Scrutiny report to ensure that the Council is exercising its obligations to this vulnerable group.

4.0 **BACKGROUND**

4.1 The sexual exploitation of children and young people has been identified across the United Kingdom as a fundamental issue, in both rural and urban areas. It affects boys and young men as well as girls and young women. It robs children of their childhood and can have a serious long-term impact on every aspect of their lives, including health and education. It damages the lives of families and carers and can lead to family break-ups. Sexual exploitation of children and young people is a crime.

4.2 The Council and its partners have been working together on CSE for a number of years, and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) established a Task and Finish Group to develop a strategy and procedures to help partners support children who are being exploited, as well as to set up systems for the identification of “hot-spots” and pockets of activity.

4.3 The Ofsted inspection in March 2015 made a number of recommendations to the Council and the LSCB with regard to the Sexual Exploitation of Children.

4.4 The Council’s Children’s Improvement Plan, submitted to Ofsted in July 2015, has actions that will address the Ofsted recommendations for Children’s services and its partners responses are contained in the LSCB Business Plan 2015-18.

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1 [Link to the Ofsted report](#)
2 [Link to Plan](#)
3 [Link to the LSCB Business Plan 2015-18](#)
4.5 **Recommendations**

4.6 **Recommendation 1:**

4.7 *That the revised Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy being developed by the Local Safeguarding Children’s Board is adopted by the Council, and fully addresses the recommendations made by Ofsted.*

4.8 There is a LSCB CSE Strategy and Implementation Plan that was developed across the partnership using the 2009 supplementary guidance and fully addresses the recommendations in the Ofsted Report focussed through the 4 key areas:

- Providing Leadership and Working in Partnership,
- Training and awareness raising,
- Identification and understanding risk and
- Engagement, intervention and supporting victims.

4.9 The implementation plan is updated and monitored at the LSCB CSE and Missing from Home Strategic sub group. Partners challenge and identify areas to join up. The Chair of the CSE sub group reports to the LSCB Business sub group on progress. The 2014-15 strategy, informed by this review and the Ofsted recommendations will be updated and presented to the LSCB in September.

4.10 Whilst the main strategic group retains a good overview of the plan and its implementation, there are two more operational groups that report through the Strategic Group: the Working Group that monitors the effectiveness of multi-agency working, including monitoring practices of agencies to ensure procedures are followed and an Oversight Group that provides Cumbria wide multi-agency tracking and oversight of individual young people and perpetrators where there are indicators of high going missing vulnerability and active CSE.

4.11 **Recommendation 2:**

4.12 *That the Corporate Director works with the LSCB to develop a single set of information on Child Sexual Exploitation that can be used by Council Committees and key partner decision making bodies.*

4.13 The CSE Working Group has developed a data set that was presented and accepted at the multi-agency CSE Development Day in July 2015.

4.14 The oversight group is responsible for sharing information to identify hot spots and enable disruption activity which is already being effective. Good practice examples will be produced by this group for wider learning and development.

4.15 Performance indicators that will be reported to the LSCB Performance Management and Quality Assurance Group and the CSE Subgroups are as follows:
4.16 Missing from home

- Number of missing incidents
- Number of children repeat missing
- Return to home interviews completed
- Number of return to home interviews completed in timescale
- Number of stage one meetings
- Number of stage 2 meetings

4.17 Child Sexual Exploitation

4.18 Prevent:

- Number of secondary schools providing regular education around healthy relationships
- The % of those in each agency trained in CSEE
- Number of CSE intelligence logs submitted
- Number of CSE related Early Help Plans

4.19 Protect:

- Number of risk assessments completed
- Number of follow up risk assessments showing decreased risk
- Number of children receiving a CSE related service

4.20 Pursue:

- Number of abduction warning notices
- Number of prosecutions
- Number of legal system positive outcomes
- Number of target profiles completed.

4.21 A subset of these indicators will be included in any reporting Scrutiny as detailed in recommendation 5 below – that will include analysis and actions to improve as required.

4.22 Recommendation 3:

4.23 That the Corporate Director liaises with the LSCB to consider the findings of this review, and in particular considers historic cases and risks relating to transportation and hotels as a potential site for Child Sexual Exploitation.
Police and district councils (as members of the LSCB) have worked with hoteliers and taxi drivers raising awareness ‘the more you know the more you see’ campaign.

Work with specific stakeholders will continue to take place as and when required (i.e. oversight group and or return to home interviews identify hot spots)

**Recommendation 4:**

*That Children’s Services strengthens its links with Local Authorities across the country where Cumbrian children are being placed in care and seeks assurances on Child Sexual Exploitation from Independent Fostering Agencies before placing a child.*

Cumbria’s CSE categories have been brought in to line with other authorities to enable improved cross border understanding and sharing of information. Hub police share intelligence with neighbouring authorities.

It is also crucial when other authorities are placing children in Cumbria who present as high risk that information is shared appropriately so that all partners involved in the care and oversight of their needs can respond accordingly. There has been concern over the lack of information passed to the police by those placing authorities. To this effect there is a representative of the “Forum for Independent Schools and Children’s Homes” (FISCH) on the Working and Oversight groups. Additionally, representations have been made to FISCH by the chair of the Oversight group to try and address this in a strategic manner.

When placing a child in another local authority Cumbria County Council Children’s Services notify them including any particular risks to the child, such as vulnerabilities in relation to CSE any placements outside of Cumbria have to be approved via a senior manager, or the Director (dependant on how far from Cumbria the placement is). Additional checks are made with the LA where the child is being placed in respect of independent providers, and locality risk assessments for residential homes.

The new Senior Manager with strategic responsibility for CSE will link through the North West ADCS to ensure Cumbria is informed of best practice.

**Recommendation 5:**

*That the Senior Manager with lead responsibility for Child Sexual Exploitation in Children’s Services presents a 6 monthly report to the Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Advisory Board on progress in tackling Child Sexual Exploitation across the partnerships in Cumbria.*

It is fully accepted that Members needs to be kept informed of progress in relation to CSE. However, given the partnership responsibility and work of the LSCB (of which CCC is a significant partner), it is proposed that the reporting to Members is by way of LSCB progress reports being shared with
the Scrutiny Board every six months. The first update will be presented in November 2015.

5.0 OPTIONS

5.1 Cabinet can:

5.1.1 accept the report in its entirety;
5.1.2 reject the report;
5.1.3 ask the Corporate Director to offer further assurances.

6.0 RESOURCE AND VALUE FOR MONEY IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Implementation of the recommendations outlined within this report would be undertaken within the Council’s existing resources. As such, there are no resource implications resulting from these recommendations.

7.0 LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report. Cabinet and Scrutiny will receive regular updates on the LSCB Business Plan and the Children’s Services Improvement Plan and related performance and quality measures.

8.0 CONCLUSION

8.1 Children’s services and its partners are working to ensure that the response the CSE in Cumbria is co-ordinated and targeted.

8.2 This review helps the LSCB and Children’s Services understand how progress is being made and where further work is required.

8.3 The additional monitoring and reporting through the Council governance will ensure the implementation of the recommendations as described, and that this remains a key priority for the coming year and beyond.

John Macilwraith
Corporate Director – Children’s Services

24 September 2015

APPENDICES

No appendices.
Executive Decision
Key Decision

If a Key Decision, is the proposal published in the current Forward Plan? [ ] N/A*

Is the decision exempt from call-in on grounds of urgency? [ ] No*

If exempt from call-in, has the agreement of the Chair of the relevant Overview and Scrutiny Committee been sought or obtained? [ ] N/A*

Has this matter been considered by Overview and Scrutiny? If so, give details below. [ ] Yes*

Has an environmental or sustainability impact assessment been undertaken? [ ] N/A*

Has an equality impact assessment been undertaken? [ ] N/A*

N.B. If an executive decision is made, then a decision cannot be implemented until the expiry of the eighth working day after the date of the meeting – unless the decision is urgent and exempt from call-in and the Corporate Director has obtained the necessary approvals.

PREVIOUS RELEVANT COUNCIL OR EXECUTIVE DECISIONS
[including Local Committees]

No previous relevant decisions.

CONSIDERATION BY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

Children and Young People’s Scrutiny Board 28th July 2015.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

No background papers

RESPONSIBLE CABINET MEMBER

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