

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM NO. 9
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Report of the Executive Director of Children’s Services

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Missing and Child Sexual Exploitation Update

1. PURPOSE

- 1.1 Report requested by Corporate Parenting Committee to update in respect of current situation in respect of children and young people who go missing and children and young people who are vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation.
- 1.2 This report is being presented under the Corporate Parenting Committee Terms of Reference:
 - 3.2 To receive statutory reports in relation to the adoption, fostering, commissioning, looked after children (LAC) services and children’s homes with a view to recommending any changes.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 For Members of the Corporate Parenting Committee to note the information.

3. LINK TO THE CHILDREN IN CARE PLEDGE

- 3.1 This report links in with all aspects of the Children in Care Pledge.

4. BACKGROUND

- 4.1 Child sexual exploitation can have a devastating impact on the social integration, economic well-being and life chances of young people. Difficulties faced by victims of child sexual exploitation include isolation from family and friends, teenage parenthood, failing examinations or dropping out of education altogether, unemployment, mental health problems, suicide attempts, alcohol and drug addiction, aggressive behaviour and criminal activity. Child sexual exploitation can also have a profoundly damaging effect on families and communities.
- 4.2 Within Peterborough Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is managed as part of the day to day safeguarding responsibility of the Local Authority and there is no longer a dedicated CSE team. This means that all staff have the opportunity to develop their skills, knowledge and experience in this area and ensures that there is ownership of the wider issues that contribute to children and young people being vulnerable to CSE and other forms of exploitation.
- 4.3 At the time of writing this report within Peterborough there were 23 young people flagged as at risk of sexual exploitation. Of this number there were 22 females and 1 male, 31% were from a white British background and 30% from an Eastern European background, with other ethnicities making up 39%. Of the 23 cases flagged as at risk of CSE 6 (26%) were young people who were looked after and 1 case is currently in proceedings. The majority of those young people flagged on the system were in the age group 13- 17 year old.

- 4.4 Each of these cases are allocated to a qualified social worker and work is undertaken to enable the young person and their family to engage with services that will help to reduce their vulnerability to being exploited. Building a relationship with these young people can take time and it is important that there is the capacity to be available at times when they need help or are willing to share what may be happening.
- 4.5 There is a dedicated police CSE team based at Godmanchester and Childrens Services meet on a monthly basis at the CSE and Missing Operational Meeting to review intelligence and to ensure that those young people most at risk are identified and that clear plans are put in place to manage the risks. There is a joint Peterborough /Cambridge Strategic CSE meeting that meets every quarter and has the overview of the multi- agency CSE action plan.

Missing

- 4.6 Children who are missing from home, school or care are at greater risk of sexual exploitation. Within Peterborough the Head of Service for First Response is the strategic lead for Missing and CSE. Children's Services are alerted to missing incidents by the police and for those young people in care who are placed outside of the LA boundary, the social worker and contact centre are alerted by the care provider.
- 4.7 Since March 2015 there has been a dedicated Missing Case Worker in post. This worker undertakes all Return Interviews with those young people that live at home who go missing. A Return Interview should be held within 72 hours of the young person being located. For our Children in Care National Youth Advocacy Service (NYAS) are commissioned to complete these interviews.
- 4.8 Last year there were 466 missing episodes reported involving 286 individual young people. Of these 286 individuals 34 had 3 or more missing episodes. There were 155 young people open to Childrens Services at the time they went missing and 75 (48%) young people were Children in Care.
- 4.9 This year starting April 2016 there have been 156 missing episodes reported involving 116 individual young people. This is an increase to previous year and may in part be due to improved recording and monitoring within Childrens Services Integrated Children's System better reporting by parents and carers, the impact of the removal of the absent category and the impact of a more effective response through completion of Return Interviews which has raised the need to report profile.
- 4.10 Of the 116 young people who have gone missing to date 10 had been missing on more than 3 occasions. The majority of missing episodes are less than 24 hours in duration, to date 92 of the 156 missing episodes fall into this category. However it is noted that since April 15 young people had a missing episode that lasted for more than 3 days. During the time that any young person is missing there is active intervention from all agencies to work with parents, wider family, friends and the community to locate the missing young person to ensure that they are safe and well and to return them to their home or care establishment. The completion of a return Interviews is crucial in trying to understand the "push" and "pull" factors that contributed to the missing episode so that plans can be put in place to reduce and mitigate future risks of going missing and the risks from exploitation.
- 4.11 From the data collected we are able to see that 70 (60%) of the young people are male and 46 (40%) are female and that the majority of young people that go missing are within the 13 – 17 year old age band which is in line with previous year's trend.
- 4.12 Of the 116 young people who have gone missing since April 77 are White British (66%), 11 are White European (9.5%), 12 were Asian (10%), 5 were from a mixed heritage background (4.3%) and 5 were from a black background (4.3%) with the remaining 6 having no identity recorded at the time of the missing episode.

- 4.13 Prior analysis shows that there is a high correlation between those young people that are known to Children's Social Care and missing episodes. The data shows that of the 116 young people who went missing since April 67 were open to Children's Services. This can be broken down further so that we can see that 35 (52%) of the young people were Children in Care, 2 (3%) were on Child Protection Plans and 30 (45%) were open as Child In Need cases.

5. KEY ISSUES

- 5.1 Importance of continuing work with Peterborough Safeguarding Children's Board re awareness raising with agencies and identifying training needs. Chelsea's Choice will be run in schools in the new school term starting September and there will be a dedicated session for parents and carers to raise awareness.
- 5.2 Risk assessments are undertaken in respect of all young people who go missing but work needs to continue on ensuring that care plans are more robust in addressing the safety planning needs of Children in Care who go missing on a frequent basis.
- 5.3 Work needs to continue on analysing the patterns and intelligence in respect of all aspects of exploitation in respect of young people within Peterborough to ensure that there is a multi-agency response to safeguarding and that there is clear proactive planning to reduce and disrupt opportunities for exploitation of our most vulnerable citizens.

6. IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 None

7. CONSULTATION

- 7.1 N/A

8. NEXT STEPS

- 8.1 This report is for information only.

9. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Used to prepare this report, in accordance with the Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985

- 9.1 None

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 None

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