

CORPORATE PARENTING COMMITTEE	AGENDA ITEM No. 10
21 NOVEMBER 2018	PUBLIC REPORT

Report of:	Executive Director People and Communities	
Cabinet Member(s) responsible:	Councillor Sam Smith, Cabinet Member for Children's Services	
Contact Officer(s):	Jenny Goodes, Head of Service	Tel. 01480 379794

R E C O M M E N D A T I O N S	
FROM: Nicola Curley, Assistant Director Children's Services	Deadline date: N/A
<p>It is recommended that the Corporate Parenting Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> to note the update and information. 	

Missing and Child Exploitation Update

1. ORIGIN OF REPORT

This report is presented yearly to Corporate Parenting Committee.

2. PURPOSE AND REASON FOR REPORT

2.1 Report requested by Corporate Parenting Committee to update in respect of current situation around children and young people who go missing and children and young people who are vulnerable to Child Sexual Exploitation.

2.2 This report is being presented under the Corporate Parenting Committee Terms of Reference:

2.3 2.4.3.2 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.

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

3. TIMESCALES

Is this a Major Policy Item/Statutory Plan?	NO	If yes, date for Cabinet meeting	N/A
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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 is managed as part of the day to day safeguarding responsibility of the Local Authority. 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 exploitation.
- 4.3 At the time of writing this report within Peterborough there were 24 young people flagged as at risk of sexual exploitation. Of these 22 were female and 2 were male. Of the 24 cases flagged as at risk of CSE 9 were young people who were looked after, 11 were children in need and 4 were child protection. 15 of the young people identified as being at risk of CSE also have had episodes of going missing. The age range of those young people flagged on the system were in the age group 14- 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 multi-agency operational meeting MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) held on a monthly basis to share information across professions and review intelligence to ensure that those young people most at risk are identified and that clear plans are put in place to mitigate the risks. There is a joint Peterborough /Cambridge Strategic Exploitation meeting that meets every quarter and has the overview of the multi- agency Child Exploitation action plan.
- 4.6 **Missing**
- 4.6.1 Children who are missing from home, school or care are at greater risk of exploitation. Within Peterborough the Head of Service for the Integrated Front Door is the strategic lead for Missing and Child Exploitation and is supported operationally by the Group Manager Safeguarding. Children's Services are alerted to missing incidents by the police. The data is updated on a weekly basis with a dedicated missing co-ordinator who undertakes return home interviews within 72 hours.
- 4.6.2 For those young people in care who are placed outside of the LA boundary, the social worker and MASH are alerted by the care provider. NYAS (National Youth Advisory Service) undertake the Return Home Interviews with all young people in care. Since March 2015 there has been a dedicated Missing Case Worker in post who undertakes all Return Home Interviews with those young people that live at home who go missing.
- 4.6.3 A Return Interview should be held within 72 hours of the young person being located. If a young person is placed in Peterborough by another local authority the missing coordinator will notify them of the missing/found episodes and the responsible local authority will arrange the return interview.
- 4.6.4 During the reporting period April 2017 – March 2018 there were 568 missing episodes reported. This related to 302 children and young people. This is a decrease from the previous reporting period.
- 4.6.5 CLA missing episodes for 2017-18 is 309 incidents 54% this relates to (86 children)
CP missing episodes for 2017-18 is 78 incidents 14% this relates to (35 children)
CIN missing episodes for 2017-18 is 187 incidents 32% this relates to (61 children)
- 4.6.6 The profile of children and young people going missing for 2017-18 is that males

present as missing on more occasions than females with white British being the largest group of children and young people being recorded as being missing.

4.6.7 Analysis of the above data indicates that 182 children and young people were known to Children's Services at the time of the missing episode. Each of these children and young people will have an initial risk assessment completed to screen for any additional risk factors such as CSE or criminal exploitation. This information supports the development of a multi- agency response to safeguarding that child/ young person.

4.6.8 The largest cohort of children who went missing (120) were children who were not known to Children's Services and not those children who are Looked After, although they can be more vulnerable when they are missing. Children in care provided a variety of reasons for their missing episode from staying at a friend's home and not telling their carer where they were, wanting to see their family, falling out with carers, wanting to spend more time with friends to those who were actively being exploited and going missing as a result. All foster carers and residential homes are well trained in this area of safeguarding and are alert to the associated risks. This means that they report missing episodes promptly, work with police to put trigger plans in place for those most at risk and ensure that safety planning is updated and robust.

5. KEY ISSUES

5.1 The Ofsted Inspection in the summer identified the following:

5.1.1 "Responses to children who go missing or who are at risk of exploitation are timely and they are closely tracked by a lead manager and missing coordinator. When risks escalate, strategy meetings are held, with appropriate professionals in attendance."

5.1.2 Ofsted identified that "Children who go missing are now routinely offered an opportunity to speak to an independent person about their reasons for going missing. Most return interviews demonstrate detailed discussions with young people and they identify risk factors. This information is appropriately shared and used well to inform multi-agency planning. Ofsted did note that for those young people in care at high risk there was limited evidence of risk reduction due to the lack of success in engaging them in return home interviews.

5.1.3 They felt that "practice around the use of specialist risk assessments, was not yet consistent and some lacked meaningful analysis" and they felt that in a minority of cases that decisive action should have been taken sooner.

5.1.4 Further to this Ofsted confirmed that "recent practice to support children at high risk of sexual or criminal exploitation was resulting in effective interventions" which has "reduced their exposure to further harm".

5.1.5 In light of this feedback and in line with the desire to improve the effectiveness and consistency of the response to both children who go missing and children who are at risk of exploitation there are plans in place to move the responsibility of this work to the Met Hub which is located at Chord Park, Godmanchester under the line management of the Integrated Front Door.

6. CONSULTATION

6.1 N/A

7. ANTICIPATED OUTCOMES OR IMPACT

7.1 N/A

8. REASON FOR THE RECOMMENDATION

8.1 Corporate Parenting Committee members have a duty to review performance of Children's Social Care.

9. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

9.1 N/A

10. IMPLICATIONS

10.1 Financial Implications

There are no financial implications as this report is for noting only.

10.2 Legal Implications

There are no legal implications as this report is for noting only and provides factual information.

10.3 Equalities Implications

None

10.4 Other Implications

None

11. BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

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

11.1 N/A

12. APPENDICES

12.1 None