

OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD

Date and Time :- Friday 27 May 2022 at 10.00 a.m.
Venue:- Rotherham Town Hall, Moorgate Street, Rotherham.
Membership:- Councillors Clark (Chair), T Collingham (Vice-Chair), Baker-Rogers, Baum-Dixon, A Carter, Cooksey, Cowen, Elliott, Pitchley, Tinsley, Wyatt and Yasseen.

This meeting will be webcast live and will be available to view [via the Council's website](#). The items which will be discussed are described on the agenda below and there are reports attached which give more details.

Rotherham Council advocates openness and transparency as part of its democratic processes. Anyone wishing to record (film or audio) the public parts of the meeting should inform the Chair or Governance Advisor of their intentions prior to the meeting.

AGENDA

1. Apologies for Absence

To receive the apologies of any Member who is unable to attend the meeting.

2. Declarations of Interest

To receive declarations of interest from Members in respect of items listed on the agenda.

3. Questions from Members of the Public and the Press

To receive questions relating to items of business on the agenda from members of the public or press who are present at the meeting.

4. Exclusion of the Press and Public

To consider whether the press and public should be excluded from the meeting during consideration of any part of the agenda.

For Discussion/Decision:-

5. Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership - CSE Review Final Report (Pages 3 - 46)

To consider the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE Review Final Report.

6. Call-in Issues

To consider any issues referred for call-in from recent Cabinet meetings.

7. Urgent Business

To determine any item which the Chair is of the opinion should be considered as a matter of urgency.

8. Date and time of next meeting

The next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board will be held on 15 June 2022 at 10.00am at Rotherham Town Hall.

A handwritten signature in black ink, reading "Sharon Kemp". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

**SHARON KEMP,
Chief Executive.**

Public Report
Overview and Scrutiny Management Board

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Overview and Scrutiny Management Board – 27 May 2022

Report Title

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership – CSE Review Final Report

Is this a Key Decision and has it been included on the Forward Plan?

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Report Author(s)

Caroline Webb, Senior Governance Advisor
01709 822765 or caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

At the meeting held on 10 November 2021, Council considered a motion regarding *Ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham*. It resolved to ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership considers the issues detailed in the motion and reports back to councillors on any changes, amendments to its Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation or additional activities that may be appropriate.

The report of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership outlining its findings and suggested recommendations is attached as Appendix 1.

Recommendations

1. That the report of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership be noted.
2. That Overview and Scrutiny Management Board determines its response to the recommendations outlined in the report and forward these to the appropriate bodies for consideration.

List of Appendices Included

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| Appendix 1 - | Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership - CSE Review Final Report |
| Appendix 2 | Motion – Ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (as agreed by Council on November 10, 2021) |

Background Papers

None

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required.

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership - CSE Review Final Report

1. Background

- 1.1 Following a motion to the Council meeting held on 10 November 2021, *Ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham* it was resolved to ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) considers the issues outlined in the motion on any changes, amendments to its Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation or additional activities that may be appropriate.
- 1.2 Chief Officers from RMBC, South Yorkshire Police and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) commissioned the RSCP to undertake an independent review to examine the concerns raised in an objective and transparent way.
- 1.3 The RSCP's review team appointed to conduct the review were selected based on their extensive experience in child safeguarding across the voluntary and statutory sectors, public protection and social work practice. The review team are as follows:
 - **Jenny Myers – Independent Chair of RSCP.** Ms Myers is a lead reviewer for the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and has held the role of independent chair for RSCP since October 2019. She is a former independent chair of other safeguarding partnerships and led high-profile case reviews including around CSE.
 - **Matt Thompson – Police and Justice Lead.** Mr Thompson is a former Head of Public Protection for Derbyshire Police. He is currently Head of Direct Delivery of a UK charitable network who disseminate information, best practice and learning across voluntary and statutory services to inform, educate and prevent child exploitation and abuse.
 - **Jenny Coles – Independent Consultant.** Ms Coles is a registered social worker and is a former Strategic Director of Children. She was president of Association of Directors of Children Services. She is currently chair of the board of Trustees for What Works for Children's Social Care and a member of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

2. Key Issues

- 2.1 The RSCP report is attached as Appendix 1. There are two stages to the report:
 - Stage 1 - addressing the specific concerns raised by Rotherham Council's Conservative Group in their briefing paper; and
 - Stage 2- ensuring that the individual points raised by the Council motion are addressed, namely:

- the multi-disciplinary approach to CSE in Rotherham, including a clear Child Exploitation (CE) strategy and senior management oversight and accountability;
- the police and local authority's mechanisms for preventing and protecting children from exploitation;
- the strategy for multi-agency training for front line staff;
- RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE to ensure that it is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, and that the scrutiny was robust.

2.2 In respect of Stage 1 of the report, the review team concludes that the concerns raised by Councillors in their briefing paper have been taken seriously, acted upon and dealt with appropriately. It is assured that the response of the Rotherham Division of South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the Local Authority, regarding child sexual exploitation is effective and robust and that the specific allegations in the briefing paper are unfounded.

2.3 With regards to Stage 2 of the report, the review team further concludes that Rotherham has developed strong leadership, accountability and locally developed multi-agency relationships which takes a robust approach to tackling criminal exploitation, of which CSE is a part.

The review finds that the strategies and plans to tackle exploitation demonstrates a wide understanding of risk to children and reflects extensive partner agency relationships.

Each of the Council motion points appropriate to the RSCP has been addressed and explored.

2.4 Section 8 of the independent review identifies areas for improvement and learning. These are outlined in several suggested recommendations which cover the following areas:

- Induction and training of councillors
- Scrutiny
- Re-building trust and confidence
- Survivors
- Public awareness raising
- Keeping children and young people safe
- CE/CSE Strategy Review.

3. Options considered and recommended proposal

3.1 Members of Overview and Scrutiny Management Board are invited to consider the information herein; scrutinise the findings of the independent review and determine its recommendations in response to the issues raised.

Members of Improving Lives Select Commission have been invited to attend for consideration of this issue.

4. Consultation on proposal

4.1 All papers supporting this item are published on the Council's website.

4.2 There is no consultation required in respect of this item.

5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision

5.1 Any recommendations arising from this item would be forwarded to the relevant bodies for consideration and response.

6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications

6.1 There are no financial implications directly arising from this item. Any recommendations which may have financial or procurement implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

7. Legal Advice and Implications

7.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this item. Any recommendations which may have legal implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications

8.1 There are no human resource implications.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults

9.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have implications for children and young people and vulnerable adults will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications

10.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have direct equalities and human rights implications will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

11. Implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change

11.1 There are no implications for CO₂ Emissions and Climate Change.

12. Implications for Partners

12.1 Any recommendations emerging from this item which have implications for key partners will be forwarded to the relevant agency for consideration and response.

13. Risks and Mitigation

- 13.1 Should this meeting not take place, opportunities to scrutinise areas of learning and improvement may be missed.

Accountable Officer(s)

Jo Brown, Assistant Chief Executive

Emma Hill, Head of Democratic Services

Report Author: Caroline Webb, Senior Governance Advisor

01709 822765 or caroline.webb@rotherham.gov.uk

This report is published on the Council's [website](#).

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership

CSE Review Final Report

1. Background and Introduction

The Rotherham Conservative Council Group published a briefing paper on 3rd November 2021 into ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The briefing paper raised several significant concerns which suggest that CSE is a continuing problem in Rotherham and that neither the Police nor the Council are responding to CSE effectively enough. A motion in response to the briefing was approved by the Rotherham Council on the 10th of November 2021 (Appendix 1).

The Chief Officers from the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC), South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) who hold the responsibility for safeguarding children and young people are committed to supporting an objective and transparent review of the concerns raised around CSE in the briefing paper. As such, they asked the independent chair and scrutineer of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) to undertake an independent review.

The Terms of Reference for the review and methodology were agreed at the end of November 2021. These can be found in Appendix 2. The review was split into two stages.

Stage 1 of the review which was completed on the 14th March 2022, examined two aspects, firstly the **Police and Council's response to CSE concerns** and the actions taken by the responsible authorities on the information already passed to them by the Conservative Party Working Group between May 2021 to 31st October 2021 and secondly reports in the briefing paper that **Council staff** said their managers told them not to talk about CSE or make reports about CSE and told the Conservative working group that they are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out.

Stage 2 of the Review (included in this final report) and as agreed in the Council motion of 10 November 2021 asked the RSCP to consider the proposed actions in light of the current CSE/CE strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative group or others and reports back to councillors within three months on any changes amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity. This involved an examination of:

- **A comprehensive strategy for CSE and senior management accountability for its effective implementation.** To ensure that the policy and procedures for CSE in Rotherham are fit for purpose and that they are understood, adhered to, and accessed by RSCP front line staff.
- **The points laid out in the motion** as agreed at Council on 10th November 2021 and any changes or additional actions required.

Independent Review Project Team:

Name	Job Role/Title	Agency/Organisation
Jenny Myers	Independent chair of RSCP	Jenny Myers Consultancy Ltd
Matt Thompson	Police and Justice Lead	NWG Network
Jenny Coles	Independent consultant	JMC Consultancy Ltd

The project team have substantial child protection experience between them.

Jenny Myers is a registered social worker with almost 40 years' experience of working in both voluntary and statutory sectors on child safeguarding. She is a lead reviewer for the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel and has held the role of independent chair for Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership since October 2019. She has been an independent chair of two previous safeguarding partnerships, a Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and vice chair of an international charity and led a number of high-profile case reviews including around CSE.

Matt Thompson is a retired police officer, his last role being as Head of Public Protection for Derbyshire Constabulary. He is currently Head of Direct Delivery and Deputy CEO of NWG. NWG is a charitable organisation formed as a UK network of over 14,500 practitioners who disseminate information, best practice and learning through their respective service. They cover voluntary and statutory services working together to inform, educate and prevent child exploitation and abuse throughout the UK as well as inform and influence the development of national and local practice.

Jenny Coles is a registered social worker and recently retired after holding the role of Strategic Director of Children Services for Hertfordshire. She was also president of the ADCS (Association of Directors of Children Services) and has extensive senior leadership experience across Social

Care and Education, as well as in chairing strategic partnerships. Jenny is currently chair of the board of Trustees for What Works for Children's Social Care and a member of the Child Safeguarding Practice Review Panel.

Safeguarding Partnership Leads:

Name	Job Role/Title	Agency/Organisation
Suzanne Joyner	Strategic Director for Children and Young People Service (CYPS)	RMBC
Stephen Chapman	Chief Superintendent Rotherham District Commander	SYP
Samuel Blakemore	Detective Inspector	SYP
Sue Cassin	Chief Nurse	CCG
Phil Morris	Partnership Manager	RSCP
Jayne Watson	Business Support to the Project Team (PA to Chief Nurse)	CCG

2. Acknowledgments

The Review Team would like to express its sincere thanks to all those who have to date given up their time to support the review, the level of openness and transparency from all agencies, councillors and the enthusiasm to learn where possible. Special thanks to the project team without whom access to police processes and information would not have been possible.

3. Context and Background

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread for many years and it is widely acknowledged that it was largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police. Professor Alexis Jay's report was commissioned by the Council and

published in August 2014. Covering the period 1997 to 2013, it looked at how Rotherham's Children's Services dealt with child sexual exploitation cases. The report found evidence of sexual exploitation of at least 1,400 children in Rotherham in this period. Louise Casey was then appointed to carry out an inspection of Rotherham Council in relation to the exercise of its functions on governance, children and young people and taxi and private hire licensing. Louise Casey's report was published in February 2015 and found widespread failings across the council's culture and services.

Since 2014 progress has been made on many of the issues related to CSE including improvements in taxi licencing, work with hotels in the local area to improve awareness of indicators of CSE and Spot the Signs and other local campaigns. In addition, much has been done to drive better multi-agency partnership working, the development of a CSE strategy and access to both online and face to face training for practitioners and front-line staff.

However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham as in many other areas of the country and the model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CE) and online child abuse and grooming becoming more prevalent. Therefore, it is essential that Rotherham continue to hold themselves up to the highest scrutiny to ensure that their previous history can never be repeated.

4. Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) and CSE Assurance

The RSCP was established in 2019 in accordance with statutory guidance and legislation. The multi-agency safeguarding children's arrangements are independently chaired and consist of three key agencies NHS Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group, RMBC, and SYP and also includes all the agencies and organisations in the wider partnership providing services to children and families. The Rotherham Safeguarding Children arrangements and all partners named within them have a key role to play to ensure that children are kept safe and that all organisations work together effectively to promote their welfare.

RSCP are the leading body that drive the multi-agency strategy, action plan and partnership assurance for child exploitation, including child sexual exploitation. The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) is a key partner in supporting the work of the RSCP to achieve its CE strategy by increasing staff awareness, effective information sharing, targeted preventative measures and disrupting criminal activity in known hot spot locations. A CE delivery group and CE steering group

made up of representation across all key agencies including the voluntary sector sit under the structure of the RSCP and drive the work of CE strategy and partnership.

5. Executive Summary of Findings

The following is a brief summary of the findings from Stage 1 and 2 of the CSE review. A more detailed examination of both stages is provided in the body of this report.

The conclusion of Stage 1 demonstrated that the Review Team were assured that the response of the Rotherham Division of South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and the Local Authority to information provided by the Conservative Councillors (Cllrs) regarding child sexual exploitation (CSE) was effective and robust and that the specific allegations from the Briefing paper were not founded. The Review Team found that SYP in Rotherham had a strong multi-disciplinary partnership approach to CSE embedded over a number of years. This was evidenced through examination of the local police systems, process and its meetings structure that provide a robust and holistic framework of a cradle to grave approach, to not just intelligence management but also to how it monitors the standards of investigations. All the information provided by the Conservative Councillors was able to be tracked and where appropriate, action was taken.

The Review Team have been allowed complete access and are therefore able to provide reassurance that these processes are not simply paper-based but active, embedded and protecting children and young people in Rotherham.

In relation to Council Staff, the Conservative briefing paper suggested that council staff said their managers told them not to talk about CSE or make reports about CSE and told the Conservative working group that they are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out. The Review Team have not been provided with any evidence during the course of this review as yet to substantiate these claims. They were only told by the Councillors of one RMBC council worker outside of Children Services who expressed concern about a culture of fear and speaking out about CSE as referenced in the Briefing Paper. The Review Team have offered to speak to the person (or any other person/s) and support anonymity, but as yet the individual mentioned does not feel safe to do so. The Review Team were clear that the offer to speak with them in whatever form that is helpful continued to be open for the period of the review. In addition, the Review Team suggested other ways of speaking out via Ofsted, Local Government or the RMBC whistle blowing process.

Stage 2 ensured that the individual points raised by the Council motion were addressed. The Review Team has found no evidence that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as the past. A

multi-disciplinary approach to CSE in Rotherham, including a clear CE strategy and senior management oversight and accountability for its implementation has been developed and embedded over a number of years following the Jay and Casey reports. A key factor in this is seen as co-location of police, children's social care and health professionals working together in both the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and EVOLVE, a specialist commissioned CSE service, including consultation support from Community Adolescent Mental Health Services, (CAMHS).

The review examined the police and local authority's mechanisms for preventing and protecting children from exploitation. We have seen first-hand the police Child Exploitation Tasking Group (CETG) and the Council-led Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM) and how both complemented each other to both protect children from and disrupt Child Exploitation. The CETG is a weekly Intelligence led meeting chaired by SYP and covers all child exploitation matters, tracking between 12 and 20 young people at any one time where information has been received. Representatives from the SY Police Protecting Vulnerable People Unit (PVP), CSE teams, intelligence staff, neighbourhood policing team (NPT) inspectors), Children's Services, Evolve exploitation team staff and service manager, Housing, LA licensing, LA anti-social behaviour officers, Youth Offending Team (YOT) Barnardos. The groups meet to review all new intelligence submissions, try and understand the concerns, map, and put into place plans and actions to mitigate or eliminate the risk. Cases are kept on the schedule and actions issues and reviewed until the issue has been eliminated or there is more understanding.

There is a collegiate approach to full information sharing of full intelligence reports with all partners. Every piece of information is shared, considered, actions devised, followed up, and results recorded on an action schedule, all of which are retained and can be examined on request. All intelligence is discussed whether it relates to victims, perpetrators, locations, or vehicles.

We also saw the work of the Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG) that oversees the work of the RAM and CETG. The CEDG is Chaired by Rotherham's most senior police officer and justifiably calls itself multi-agency. The same can be said of the RAM and CETG in that the breadth of statutory and non-statutory agencies not only present but actively engaged was, to say the least, excellent. This is further evidenced with the close ties to Rotherham's Community Safety Partnership.

RSCP has a clear strategy for multi-agency training for front line staff and a learning prospectus. CSE and contextual safeguarding training is included and access to all of the resources is found

on the RSCP website. There has been a comprehensive range of training and information to members, including a focus on safeguarding and CSE for new members since May 2021.

The review examined RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE to ensure that it is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, and that the scrutiny was robust. The review does make some suggestions to further enhance the scrutiny of CSE/CE to ensure that the strong partnership approach to delivery of safeguarding services, sharing of information and assurance in Rotherham is evident to members, especially those new to the council and for timely face to face safeguarding induction of new council members.

6. A Comprehensive Strategy for CSE and Senior Management Accountability for Effective Implementation.

The review team member from the NWG undertook a benchmarking exercise to provide assurance that the current CSE/CE Strategy and policy and procedures of RSCP were fit for purpose, well managed and understood. While the format of the Conservative Group briefing paper separated the responses to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) by both Police and the Council it should be noted that both Working Together 2018 and the Wood Review expect and dictate that an area's response to the exploitation of children (which includes CSE) is a joint one between all agencies. This collective responsibility is discharged through the RSCP, its governance and policies.

A number of safeguards exist to check areas progress beyond any local scrutiny measures that may exist. HM Inspectorates, including OFSTED, undertake individual agency Inspections or they may and do come together, led by OFSTED, to conduct Joint Targeted Area Inspections (JTAI).

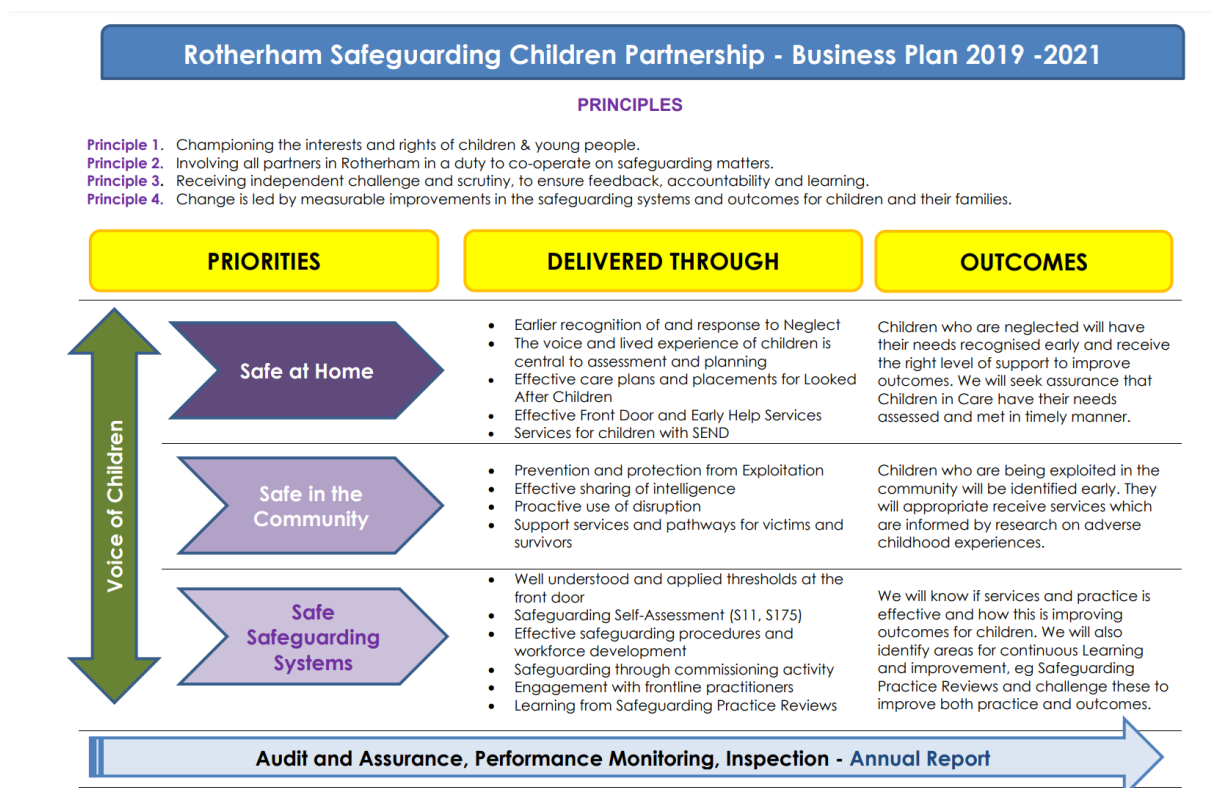
The day-to-day work of the NWG is the dissemination of best practise and the supporting of areas and professionals to develop and improve responses to CE. As a result, they are well placed to identify comparative areas against which to benchmark Rotherham and make a professional judgement regarding Rotherham's position and progress against a virtual national picture. To this end, the review selected four other areas for comparison that were known to the NWG and in which they have worked or continue to work with. Two of the areas are considered to be performing well in their response to CE as a result of either inspection or the development of best practise that is being widely adopted. Conversely the other two areas would be considered early in their journey to developing a comprehensive response to CE.

The benchmarking exercise undertook a critical look at the following:

- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership's Business Plan 2019-2021.
- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy to prevent child exploitation 2019-2022.
- Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Scrutiny Safeguards and Governance.
- Plans for the review and development of the above

Findings

The RSCP Business Plan 2019-2021 compares very favourably when set alongside those areas considered to be performing well in their response to CE. The document is strategic in nature and wider in scope than just CE. It is clear and easily accessible to the public via the RSCP website and is formatted in a way that the NWG often recommend i.e. a plan on a page. Lengthy business plans can lose sight of what they are intended to achieve. This plan identifies four principles that all agencies commit to and provides a clear journey from its priorities, how they will be delivered, and what outcomes will be sought to evidence that delivery.



The review finds that several key areas are addressed, such as, contextual safeguarding, the need to commission support services and identify pathways for survivors, the need to capture the voice of the child and of course the need to prevent and protect children from exploitation.

Stage 1 of the review has commented extensively regarding the police and local authority's mechanisms for preventing and protecting children from exploitation. We have seen first-hand the police Child Exploitation Tasking Group (CETG) and the Council-led Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM), renamed MACE (Multi Agency Child Exploitation) in March 2022 and how both complemented each other to both protect children from and disrupt CE. We also saw the work of the Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG) that oversees the work of the RAM and CETG. The CEDG is chaired by Rotherham's most senior police officer and in the view of the review is a group that justifiably calls itself multi-agency. The same can be said of the RAM and CETG in that the breadth of statutory and non-statutory agencies not only present but actively engaged was excellent. This is further evidenced with the close ties to Rotherham's Community Safety Partnership. Foreword thinking safeguarding partnerships have comprehensive strategies that identify the connections between gangs, serious youth violence and child exploitation. Recognising that community safety is a key partner to be involved in both prevention and disruption.

The CEDG is a subgroup of the RCSP Executive Group, made up of Chief Officer level staff from the statutory agencies. While this is not unique to Rotherham, this level of governance is essential to ensure that strategy is not only developed but translated to operational practice and that through scrutiny and audit the lives of children in Rotherham are improved. This is why the development, review, and implementation of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy to Prevent Child Exploitation 2019-2022 document is delegated to the CEDG to progress. It should be noted that the scrutiny and audit provided through the oversight of this Partnership is separate and different to that referred to within the Conservative Group Report and is addressed elsewhere in this report.

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership Strategy to prevent child exploitation 2019-2022 is similarly easily accessible via the RCSP website. The review has considered the content and approach in detail and spoken directly with the Chair of the CEDG. The review was also timely in that it established that the CEDG has organised a task and finish group to conduct an annual review of the document to set a new three-year commitment.

In considering the content and direction of the document the review has considered them against the four other areas identified and discussed above.

Overall, the review finds the document to be a very good example for the following reasons:

- The strategy does not shy away from the failings of the past in Rotherham and acknowledges this both in terms of recognising it as a learning opportunity as well as the chance to invest in local services to improve outcomes for children.
- The introduction on the website acknowledges the strategy to be a learning journey. A strategy that is considered to be a 'live' document is far more likely to be current and updated with improved practise and academic evidenced best practice.
- The introduction to the strategy is clear and recognises all forms of exploitation and a commitment to work with families to tackle extra-familiar risk, something that is not seen in other areas who have weaker strategies.
- The introduction sets out a vision that remains 'seeing the child first – not the behaviour'. This child centred approach is only seen within strong strategies
- The review was pleased to see reference to the risks relating to Transitional Safeguarding. This is where children reach the age of 18 years and access to services can end abruptly despite little change in the child's circumstances simply because they have reached a chronological age. The review has seen Adult Social care present within the RCSP and clear consideration of this issue. Weaker strategies do not address this risk.
- The use of the 5P approach to delivery is also evidence of a strong commitment to push strategy through to operational delivery. (*PREVENT CSE, PROTECT children, PURSUE perpetrators, PROVIDE support to victims – historical and recent and to ensure we hear their voices and PARTICIPATION*). Increasingly more and more areas are introducing this model. Rotherham having had this since at least 2019 is an area followed by others in this respect.

There were very few areas where the review considered the strategy could be tighter. The strongest strategies set out strong early ownership and responsibility for the document and its delivery. Moving the Governance section of the strategy from its current position to the beginning would assist with this. Increasingly the public facing 'CE Strategy' is also made more of an easy to access and read infographic or 'plan on a page' with delivery as an appendix.

It was also recommended that consideration to an aligned communications plan may result in improved public confidence, understanding, and engagement. Rotherham has been and continues to successfully prevent and disrupt exploitation and communities should see that.

There should also be a stronger focus on Equality and Diversity, this should include a whole system approach evident in the strategy from accurate offending profiling, access to services and reach, and feedback from victims and survivors and their families to inform the development of services.

These improvements were discussed at length when the reviewer met with key staff who will be involved in the updating of the CE/CSE strategy. This Review was reassured from that conversation that the task and finish group will seek a clear term of reference, linked to the partnerships Business Plan, and seek out best practice to further strengthen Rotherham's response to child exploitation.

7. Consideration of Council Motion Points of 10th November 2021

Many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already being addressed by the RSCP Child Exploitation Strategy 2019-2022. The Review Team have however, considered every one of the 13 points raised and the next section of the report will address those that sit within its remit and responsibility and where we have not commented earlier in the report.

- (1) **Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.**

The Review Team has found no evidence that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as the past. A multi-disciplinary approach to CSE in Rotherham, including a clear CE strategy and senior management oversight and accountability has been developed and embedded over a number of years following the Jay and Casey reports. A key factor in this is seen as co-location of police, children's social care and health professionals working together in both the MASH and EVOLVE service, including consultation support from CAMHS.

In particular, there is evidence of a structure that places CE/CSE resources at a local level, as opposed to it being a centralised and wider SYP resource.

- (2) **Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.**

RSCP has a clear strategy for multi-agency training for front line staff and a learning prospectus. CSE and contextual safeguarding training is included and access to all of the resources is found on the RSCP website. Training is normally (pre Covid) both face to face and online. Additional training has been provided over the last 12 months by the Children's

Society and Barnardos. There have also been sessions delivered by Rotherham and Doncaster and South Humberside (RDASH) around child exploitation online and Community Safety around online safety and sharing nude images. In addition, to the above specific sessions have been delivered to schools in the borough on CSE by the Trauma Resilience Service (TRS).

A Competency Framework has been developed to ensure that managers and practitioners who work with children and young people can access the appropriate safeguarding training at the right level. <http://www.rscp.org.uk/downloads/file/133/learning-development-prospectus-2021-22>

As part of this review consideration was given to the induction and safeguarding training provided by RMBC to support Councillors, firstly, in gaining understanding about safeguarding responsibilities and how the wider safeguarding processes and systems in place in Rotherham work and secondly being clear of expectations in terms of how their concerns will be dealt with and how they would know they were being addressed.

There has been a comprehensive range of training and information to members, including a focus on safeguarding and CSE for new members since May 2021. This has included:

- Introductory sessions on safeguarding and children's and young people's services as well as promotion of LGA seminars focusing on Children's Services held in May/June 2021.
- Circulation in Nov 2021 to all members of the RMBC, the Children's Safeguarding Referral & Escalation Protocol for Elected Members. This is a clear and concise document, detailing a three-stage protocol for members if they have concerns about how an issue is being responded to as well as including the referral process if a member is concerned a child is being harmed.
- The joint facilitation by the police and the Director of Children Services (DCS) in January 2022, of two 'in person' seminars. These were attended by 17 and 11 members and ran for 2.5 hours. The presentation had comprehensive information of national and the Rotherham Child Exploitation Strategy and how this is delivered by the RSCP and Safer Rotherham Partnerships, the role of the Children's Services and the Police, how children & families are supported and support services available including the specialist CSE teams and information on local campaigns e.g. Spot the Signs and Safeguarding Awareness week.

- Two follow up member seminars on safeguarding for children and families in March 2022 which covered a range of comprehensive information.
- Two dedicated briefings in Jan and March 2022 for Cllr Barley and Cllr Collingham on Safeguarding and Looked After Children & Care Leavers.
- Chief Executive Briefings and screen savers on CSE for Council Staff
- Provision of e-learning on CSE which is available for all RMBC staff.

It is important to provide members, particularly new members with broader, less detailed, information of how the safeguarding process and services operate in the local area before then holding more detailed presentations on more specific areas. The review found officers fully appreciate that for members in Rotherham opportunities to learn and discuss CSE and CE are an absolute priority and therefore wished to deliver the seminars in person rather than on a virtual basis. However, last year there was some time delay between induction and more in-depth training on CSE because of Covid-related issues.

Given the information being delivered the review would support having face to face training, though acknowledges that for some members who work full time or have other caring responsibilities in-person training is hard to commit to at times and maybe the seminars need to be recorded so others can access them as a more convenient time. It is also important that seminars for members continue to be delivered by the multi-agency partnership that delivers Safeguarding & CSE services.

(3) Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.

As part of this review the Review team met with lead officers from the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP) to scrutinise what recent activity there has been around public CSE information campaigns. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a priority under the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP). Data is provided by South Yorkshire Police (SYP) each quarter and monitored by the Board including CSE linked referrals and intelligence reports. Following a decline in referrals in 2019/20, the objective for the SRP was to drive an increase in referrals and intelligence reports through training and awareness raising, which was subsequently achieved.

The following outlines some of the key activities.

- **Raising Awareness - Spot the signs** - This was originally a campaign from 2014 which has been recently relaunched and updated. Additional Spot the Signs training was delivered by Evolve for Safeguarding Awareness Week to frontline staff.
- Video produced with Evolve/SYP – shared via social media channels for Community Safety/RMBC/SYP and available on YouTube
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wAPilHa0YXU>
- **Op Makesafe** – safeguarding in hospitality. A video developed in 2020 has been re-circulated to hotels with printable guide and poster to be displayed in staff areas followed by assurance visits made to selected hotels by SYP to assess the impact and identify areas for further development..
https://youtu.be/Tht_bpskXko
- Social media shared throughout February and March 2021 via Community Safety/RMBC/SYP – reached over 11,500 on RMBC corporate channels and resulted in additional traffic to relevant pages on RMBC website
- Social media also shared with links to <https://stop-ce.org/> and <https://www.youngminds.org.uk/>
- SYP alerts issued to around 8500 residents via text message
- Additional awareness raising on CSE Awareness Day (March 2021 and 2022) – included screensavers on all RMBC laptops and Chief Executive Officer (CEO) internal comms to staff via the Monday Briefing, relaunch of Spot the Signs. Plus, social media on Community Safety/RMBC/SYP reaching over 18000 people through RMBC posts and additional traffic to relevant pages on RMBC website, additional training for professionals from Evolve, RDASH and Community Safety covering child exploitation including online safety
- Sessions delivered to Elected Members (22 March 2021) covering the National Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021 and the work of the SRP, Evolve and SYP
- Information cards printed for frontline workers including signs of exploitation and contact numbers for reporting and support available – distribution began through RMBC Neighbourhoods and Neighbourhood Police Teams
- Advert in Rotherham United Football Club (RUFC) community magazine (July 2021) which is circulated via schools, Rotherham United Community Sports Trust, the RUFC shop and through corporate hospitality boxes

Staff interviewed as part of the review referred to a recent public consultation that has highlighted a preference for more printed awareness of CSE/CE on posters in prominent places, such as public noticeboards/bus station/doctors etc. Other plans include:

- Widening the reach of social media campaigns – encouraging wider sharing through partnership organisations through the Safer Rotherham Partnership Board (SRPB) and corporate comms teams.
- Promoting more positive outcomes to improve public confidence
- Ensuring public know how to make a report of any concern regarding CE/CSE.
- Continued training through Evolve on Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding and developing a short information session for frontline workers/partners/VCS/community which can be delivered in person to raise awareness of signs, promote reporting mechanisms and improve confidence
- Op Makesafe - Follow up work taking place with hotels exploring ways to further develop awareness in hospitality and training for other licensed premises around safeguarding responsibilities.

The Review Team suggest that any public information campaigns must take account of equality and diversity to ensure the widest possible reach especially to those communities where English is not their first language. In addition, consideration should be given to further work in schools and colleges with young people, perhaps using theatre groups, something that has been successful in the past. Further training and awareness must be provided that recognises the changing landscape of CE/CSE to more online abuse to ensure that all children and young people and adults at risk including those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are also provided with awareness that ensures they are given information that can help them keep safe.

Motion points (4-7) -these have been robustly addressed in depth in Stage 1 of the review and commented on earlier in this report. A brief response is provided below.

- (4) **Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.**

The Child Exploitation Tasking Group (CETG) is a Police-chaired multi agency meeting through which new police information is shared, discussed and where appropriate actions are allocated across the partner agencies. While primarily driven by police intelligence the benefit of the meeting is that this provokes wider agency sharing. The Review Team were provided with previous minutes of the weekly meeting, through which we were able to see the journey of the information provided by the Councillors. The minutes demonstrated the following:

- Tasks allocated to local policing units to both develop further intelligence and ensure local patrol strategies factored in the issues discussed.
- Intelligence sharing and joint discussions between police and social care to assess risk and progression to the Social Care led Risk Assessment Meeting (RAM)
- Discussions that not only considered single agency disruption but multi-agency opportunities, for example, where suitable other enforcement agencies such as Environmental Health and Licensing Teams were tasked. While tasking such teams is not uncommon in such meetings around the country, what was of particular interest to the author was that representatives from these wider agencies and team were present and active participants of the meeting.
- The actions of the previous meeting were reviewed, and updates discussed. Where those updates could be further progressed, they were, and when there were no longer opportunities to develop this, the matter closed to the meeting. It is important to state that this does not alter the fact the matter is recorded within police intelligence systems and where new information from any source is received the process starts again.

The NWG review team member also attended (virtually) a CETG meeting where he explored with the attendees their concept of escalation and timeliness. He was reassured that all staff knew what escalation routes were available and specifically to policing, that there was a pathway open to the Detective Inspector to progress significant intelligence that required a more immediate consideration of resources or specialist tactics.

The Review Team were pleased to see that the CETG meeting had also reviewed incidents of children reported missing over the previous period. This is good practice and clearly recognises the links between missing children and child exploitation.

In addition, members of the Review Team attended (virtually) two Risk Assessment (RAM) meetings. These meetings are Social Care chaired (by the Team Manager from the specialist CSE EVOLVE Team) with an equally well attended and diverse multi-agency membership. Its focus was on reviewing risk and interventions for individual children open to the meeting. There is a specific risk assessment tool used by social workers for CSE and systems in place to monitor quality and timeliness for completion. Of note to the author was the good practice of a representative from the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS).

The specialist social workers in EVOLVE co-work with social workers in locality social care teams to bring their expertise to working with families and young people. The Review Team saw evidence of service allocation at the Risk Assessment (RAM) meeting (now renamed MACE -multi agency child exploitation) and the CAMHS Trauma Pathway which is a positive practice. This review has seen strong evidence by SYP in Rotherham and RMBC not just of a robust performance framework and effective pathways for intelligence but also identified areas of good practice that the NWG Network will be happy to point to in its work with other police forces.

- (5) **Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.**

These points have been addressed in both Stage 1 and earlier in the report. The Children, Young People and Families Consortium (CYPF) considers itself to be well embedded within Rotherham safeguarding CE/CSE structures due to its Strategic Representation on the safeguarding boards and sub-groups by the Consortium Strategic Coordinator, Consortium Member organisations and Trustees. They sit on all key groups, including the RSCP CE delivery group, Stovewood bronze delivery group, and multi-agency child exploitation meetings.

- (6) **Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities' act.**

The Evolve service have a weekly multi-agency child exploitation meeting (MACE) which involves the assessment of children regarding their risk of exploitation. A maximum of three children are discussed and includes sexual and criminal exploitation. Attendees include the CSE team DS, Evolve social work manager (who chairs the meeting), Youth Offending Service, Education worker, sexual health nurse, Child mental health services (CAMHS), Barnardo's, DIVERT drugs and alcohol service and the children's locality social worker. In the meeting, the social worker will give details on the child, their background and the concerns, and the attendees have the opportunity to ask questions. A CSE assessment and tracker matrix is used as a framework to ask questions, assess risk and look at the trigger factors that would suggest the early indicators that a child is being exploited. Following the information gathering, each attendee is asked to give their opinion on whether the child is at high, medium, or low risk of exploitation, with different actions being

attributed to the risk e.g., medium and high are allocated an Evolve CSE social worker. Other actions are also suggested, such as sexual health nurse to work with the child/ren, referral to the Divert service, referral to CAMHS. This ensures that there is a pathway for practitioners who do have exploitation concerns for the children they work with. The criminal model for perpetrators continues to develop with more cases involving online grooming and abuse and agencies are having to revise and develop better ways of working to address changing risks.

The MACE provides a good example of proactive work that enables practitioners picking up on those early signs of CSE to jointly work with partners to solve issues for that child and gather information that might assist in criminal investigation or disruption.

(7) Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.

Rotherham police have an active child exploitation briefing site on Connect where updates around locations and individuals are regularly detailed for the knowledge of all officers. The site is actively updated by intelligence unit staff and there is active information published around high-risk nominals, priority patrol areas and locations, and overarching intelligence requirements. Through partner engagement at CETG the police have developed and continue to push partner information/intelligence submissions direct to the single point of entry (SPOE). With a dedicated form developed for this, they regularly refresh training to partners (last session delivered during CETG in October 2021) and request cascade training within their organisations and have provided them with training materials to support them in doing this with a view to driving information submission from partner agencies.

(8) Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.

EVOLVE undertake exit interviews for all children who have gone through their services, and their views are important feedback that informs future service development. The Council commission three separate voluntary sector services to provide post abuse support for children and adult survivors of CSE (Rotherham Rise, GROW and ROTHACS.) These services are scrutinised by Improving Lives and the Council receive regular updates on their effectiveness. In addition to this there is a quarterly meeting chaired by commissioning and with the Head of Service for Safeguarding for children and the three providers, to review the contract measures and

outcomes and capture any themes. This activity supports wider conversations around post abuse support offer and how this can be further developed.

- (9) **Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and consider improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistle blow to.**

Managers from RMBC Children Services that were interviewed by the Review team stated they considered there was an open culture where staff are encouraged to raise concerns. There are regular reminders where and how staff can raise concerns and the analysis of the Council staff survey from November 2021 is expected to be completed by the end of Spring 2022, so should provide further feedback. The Review Team have assessed current whistle blowing policies within RMBC which appear to be fit for purpose and in line with national guidance. There are also several other options for whistle blowing to independent bodies including Ofsted, the LGA, and NSPCC. These should be promoted to ensure that everyone feels able to report to someone if for whatever reason they don't feel safe to do so within the current council processes.

- (10) **Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.**

The review considered the following opportunities for members over the last two years to scrutinise the partnership response to CSE. This included information from:

- The range of reports presented to Improving Lives Scrutiny on CSE
- Other reports presented to members
- Training/seminars and briefings for members following the May 2021 election
- Meetings with Cllr Pitchley, chairperson of Improving Lives Scrutiny and Cllr Cusworth, Lead Member for Children's Services
- Discussion with Suzanne Joyner DCS and Stephen Chapman the Divisional Commander for Rotherham SYP on delivery of members' training and presentation of performance data.

It is important to acknowledge that in May 2021, 20 new councillors were elected, many whom had no experience of Council scrutiny processes or a wider understanding of CSE and the move towards a wider strategy around Criminal Exploitation (CE). The review team found in conversation that new councillors who authored the Briefing paper were not aware of the wider partnership responsibility for CE and the processes and systems that support the work including

the responsibilities of the RSCP to ensure children are kept safe and information is shared and acted upon appropriately. Whilst there were some CSE/CE briefings and training available to support new councillors, as discussed earlier, there was a time gap between initial induction and more in-depth training on CE/CSE. It is clear that not all councillors can attend the initial safeguarding sessions as they sit alongside a large amount of wider induction necessary for new councillors. However, the sessions were recorded and are available on the member website. The review team felt that key safeguarding training should be provided much earlier in the induction programme. There is also a need for existing councillors to attend refresher training.

In addition, changes were made to the chairing of Improving Lives and OMSB which changed some of the way in which scrutiny of CSE was tabled from May 2020-21. For new councillors the wider examination of CE may have resulted in it appearing that CSE had dropped off the agenda as it was not specifically included in the forward plan. Some of the performance reports have been too detailed making it hard for some members to quickly digest information and makes sense of the current picture.

However, a range of reports have been presented to members on CSE in the last year. In March 2021 the Leader chaired a meeting which gave an update on the Rotherham CSE Strategy alongside the launch of the national strategy. The outcome of the subgroup work into Support for Survivors was presented to the Improving Lives subgroup in December 2021. The report had been commissioned in March 2020 and had been delayed by the pandemic but was commissioned as some councillors wanted more evidence that the right services were being commissioned for survivors and that they were effective.

There have also been 2 confidential updates by the National Crime Agency on Operation Stovewood chaired by the Leader of the Council in August 2021 and March 2022. An update on the CSE Strategy and ongoing work is due to come to Improving Lives in June 2022. CSE is now on the forward plan and a specific spotlight on CSE is being planned for later in 2022.

The Improving Lives Scrutiny receives regular performance reports from Children's Services which include analysis of data and performance information which relate to vulnerable children e.g. children going missing. All members receive performance data in relation to children's services and the review understands there is currently work led by the DCS to present the data in a more focused way to support members' scrutiny of performance.

The RLSCP annual report is also presented to the committee by the RLSCP Independent Chairperson which includes a detailed section on CE assurance.

- (11) **Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.**

The review team does not feel able to comment on this other than to say in interview with the CEX and Leader of the Council, it understands and has seen written evidence of a considerable number of public apologies to survivors and their families made by the Council over the last few years. It would be trite to say an apology makes things better as it takes a whole range of actions, including a culture change and a trust and confidence that it can never happen again. Rotherham does continue to commission support services for survivors and demonstrate an ongoing commitment to ensure support is available.

- (12) **Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.**

The survivor voice must be at the heart of everything Rotherham does to respond and improve services and outcomes for those that have experienced harm. There is unlikely to be just one survivor voice; all those who were harmed have had very different experiences of post-abuse support and sadly for some that lack of trust and animosity will never go away.

The review felt that there could well be a difference between those who receive commissioned services now, and whose abuse was more recent and where there is good evidence of positive outcomes from the services they receive and those who are survivors of past historic abuse, many who rightly feel very let down. There are clearly some survivor services that sit outside of those commissioned by the Rotherham Council, and the join up of an offer to all those who have experienced harm could be better promoted and the contribution made by other voluntary sector services valued.

In discussion with the Children and Young People and Families (CYPF) Consortium for this review, it was suggested that the CYPF Consortium is in a strong position to add value to work around CSE due to its experience delivering the 2015 BASE Project funded by the Ministry of Justice. The

health commissioned Trauma and Resilience Service (TRS) also includes the three voluntary services as part of the TRS HUB wrap around services. The CYPF Consortium also has experience in delivering CSE awareness training to staff and public as commissioned by the Safer Rotherham Partnership, as well as conducting research and analysis into CSE support needs. A mapping of commissioned and non-commissioned support for CSE victims and survivors is recommended to complement and elaborate on the trauma pathway.

- (13) **Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.**

The review team found no new evidence that SYP in Rotherham currently deny that CSE is a continuing problem. The processes such as the CETG and RAM continue to show how the partnership, including SYP, takes every report they receive seriously and follows up on concerns alongside a proactive response to targeting known CSE locations and perpetrators. Stage 1 of the review looked in detail at a schedule of information that included details of dates and subjects of information which examined the journey of the information through the police's processes and systems. The material provided by the Councillors related to 17 documents from which 37 pieces of information were established. This was examined thoroughly and a separate matrix¹ developed that distilled every piece of information into separate strands of intelligence that the Review Team considered could and should be assessed by the Police.

In many cases, but not all, the information was non-specific in the sense that the information raised local concerns that child exploitation (CE) and or child sexual exploitation (CSE) was 'happening in Rotherham'. In other cases, the information was able to highlight individual names, locations and one piece of information provided the registration number of a vehicle. This is in no way a criticism of the sources of this information as most community intelligence is non-specific in nature. The work of the police and other agencies is to take that information, research any already known intelligence, and where possible task activity and develop the intelligence. The aim is to create a bigger picture where agencies can then plan disruption and or prevention activity.

¹ This matrix contains sensitive intelligence and personal details and in order to protect that is not attached as an appendix.

The briefing paper by the Conservative Group expressed a lack of confidence in the approach and response by agencies because of their experiences when sharing information. It was, therefore, key to this Review, having established the scale of the information shared, that the current processes were tested. The Review Team worked alongside the police to track and trace each of the 37 pieces of information from the point it was received by the police through to its conclusion. Each of the 37 intelligence items were found to have been received and more importantly recorded onto police intelligence systems. The Review Team were able to see how each item received an initial assessment and further research by experienced and trained staff. Where appropriate (and in this case the majority) they then progressed to a multi-agency meeting for discussion and action. Of the ones that did not progress the review team were satisfied that they would not have met the threshold for progression.

The following statement is taken from the Conservative Group briefing paper *"It was hoped that after thorough investigation, the working group could conclude that CSE was no longer a problem and that all possible steps were being taken by RMBC and SYP to tackle CSE..."*. This is of course correct; in that we all aspire to a time where CE including CSE are eradicated. However, sadly as we know we need to be cautious of any reduction in resource or focus on CSE/CE due to any unrealistic claims that, CSE could no longer be a problem. This review has seen strong evidence by SYP in Rotherham and RMBC not just of a robust performance framework and effective pathways for intelligence but also identified areas of good practice that the NWG Network will be happy to point to in its work with other police forces. In particular, it saw evidence of a structure that places CE/CSE resources at a local level, as opposed to it being a centralised and wider SYP resource. Local ownership with locally developed multi-agency relationships, and locally scrutinised, does in the opinion of the Review Team, show evidence of a robust multi agency partnership approach.

Any further judgement about the SYP's past approach and effectiveness to CSE will be made following their response to areas for improvement identified through inspection and their action plan following the publication of the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in the Operation Linden report Nov 2021 (<https://policeconduct>).

Summary and Conclusion

In November 2021 the Conservative working group published a briefing raising several significant concerns which suggested that CSE is a continuing problem in Rotherham and that neither the Police nor the Council were responding to it effectively enough.

The concerns were taken extremely seriously by senior leaders, and this independent review was commissioned to examine the points raised. For new opposition councillors coming into Rotherham, it was appropriate for them to want to understand more about the current situation around CSE in Rotherham. They had shared with the police a number of concerning bits of information and quite rightly wanted assurance that they had been acted upon.

Stage 1 of the review examined and tracked every one of the reports and found they had been acted upon and dealt with appropriately. There was evidence within the material of further contact by SYP, with the Councillors often asking if further information was available or if the source of the information was able to speak directly to the police. It is, however, difficult and resource intensive to provide updates for all information provided as to how it's been developed and what it has led to. However, for those Councillors making the reports it is a reasonable expectation they should have some brief acknowledgement that action has been taken and if this had been managed at the time, alongside some better induction and support into local safeguarding processes, it may have reduced a growing escalation and perception that CSE was not being managed effectively. The Councillors made it clear they do not expect operational updates to that level of detail, but some brief feedback and a more strategic and periodic framework of assurance would be welcome.

Stage 2 built on the findings of Stage 1 and has found that significant progress has been made in Rotherham in its response to CSE and that it has developed strong leadership, accountability and locally developed multi-agency relationships and scrutiny that does show in the opinion of the Review Team, evidence of a robust multi-agency partnership approach to criminal exploitation, of which CSE is one key part. In terms of its strategies and plans to tackle exploitation not only did the Review find what it would expect to see but additional content that displayed a wide understanding of risk to children and the need for wider than 'normal' partner agency relationships. Each of the Council motion points appropriate to the RSCP has been addressed and explored.

However, there is always some learning and areas for improvement. Whilst the review is not making any firm recommendations it does make some suggestions for improvements that the Council, RSCP and SYP may want to consider in order to form an action plan.

8. Suggested Recommendations

1) Induction and training of Councillors

Whilst there has been a good range of reports and safeguarding training provided to members over the last year (2021-22) more detailed training for Councillors on local safeguarding systems and processes and CE/CSE could have been provided earlier. It is acknowledged that the Covid pandemic did disrupt an already busy member-training programme, but new Councillors must quickly be given information as to how to make a report and share information with the police around CSE using the SYP information record or any other safeguarding concern to MASH in the most appropriate way. They also need to understand how to escalate their concerns if they don't feel assured that they have been dealt with. The review found that there was confusion by some councillors as to the difference between intelligence, information and what form to use when referring their concerns. The review suggests continuing to ensure any presentations, reports or training on CE/CSE are delivered to members by the RSCP/Safer Rotherham Partnership, but earlier in the induction programme. The chairpersons of both partnerships need to have oversight of the reports/presentations. A quick and updated '*what to do if sheet*', with links to the local services and forms should also be available and circulated to all members alongside a programme of refresher safeguarding training.

2) Scrutiny

The responsibility for CSE sits firmly with the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership and the Safer Rotherham Partnership, and as such any assurance reporting to Improving Lives should be from a partnership perspective. Traditionally assurance around CSE to members may have been seen as primarily the responsibility of Children's Services. The Review Team after discussion with key council members now recommends that all CSE assurance provided should be presented from the Partnership to include each partners contribution including specific updates from the police.

Since the May 2021 elections, there has been scrutiny of CE, but the chair of Improving Lives has indicated that CSE is now on the scrutiny forward plan and that a specific spotlight is to be held on it, led by a targeted subgroup who will examine CSE, reports, actions, outcomes and what constraints there are. It should also include some survivor's feedback.

Children's Services and the police with the RLSCP/SRP should consider how more meaningful data and performance information on CE/CSE is included in performance reporting for members.

3) Re-building public trust and confidence.

The Police and RMBC will need to work on this for a considerable time as the impact of Operation Stovewood on local families' and children's lives continues to be experienced as Operation Stovewood investigates historical allegations. The failings exposed following the Jay and Casey reports cannot be mended quickly and the public need to know that their concerns will be heard and that they will be kept safe if they report them. The review suggests that the mechanisms for public reporting of their concerns regarding CE/CSE are reviewed to ensure that they are effective and understood. In addition, building a more open dialogue with the public and local press about what is working well and what things are improving could help. The review suggest that a communication plan is developed in partnership with the RSCP and the SRP that actively promotes better public engagement both in CE/CSE awareness campaigns but also in good news or other stories on positive outcomes of investigations. The review suggest that any communication plan should take account of equality and diversity to ensure the widest possible reach especially to those communities where English is not their first language.

SYP's response to the recommendations by the Independent Office for Police Conduct (IOPC) in the Operation Linden report (Nov 2021) into non recent child sexual abuse reports (2013-2018) (<https://policeconduct>) are key to building more trust and confidence. In particular recommendations 8 and 11 which refer to the need for SYP to undertake a mapping exercise, *'that continues to engage with communities to strengthen and build trust and confidence in the police service to encourage a willingness to provide information/intelligence to help tackle local issues, and for SYP to consider how it can assess and demonstrate the impact of action taken to address issues in handling child sexual exploitation.'* This should include, *'how it understands whether actions have achieved the intended effect and considering how they inform the community of progress made to help improve public awareness and confidence.'*

4) Survivors-

The review team felt that whilst there is some good practice from Evolve working with children who have been victims of CSE, currently the voice of adult survivors is not fully heard or represented enough. Whilst acknowledging that this is difficult to achieve there should be a more concerted and joined-up effort to hear as many voices as possible, even those dissenting ones. The Review

Team suggests that RSCP and the Adult Safeguarding Board work with all local partners to support this work and develop a programme to achieve a regular and consistent way to collate views and feedback to inform future development and commissioning of services.

The recommendation following the Improving Lives Select Commission subgroup report into post CSE support for survivors (Dec 2021) should be implemented including the transfer of CSE services to Adult Social Care, Housing and Public Health directorate to enable the greater integration and co-ordination of support pathways for adult survivors of childhood CSE in Rotherham. In addition, there should be some further work on a mapping of commissioned and non-commissioned support for CSE victims and survivors. This is recommended to complement and elaborate on the TRS pathway and recognises that adults may choose to engage with a service outside of the Council until better trust and confidence is achieved.

5) Public awareness raising

There needs to be a continued programme of CE public awareness that recognises how the public like to receive information, not only in written form but in social media campaigns. The reach of these by the SRP should be widened to ensure that as many parts of the local diverse community and the voluntary agencies that support them are involved and engaged in their development, including parks and leisure, sport clubs, and housing. There should also be clearer information that explains not only signs and indicators but also the definitions of child exploitation and where CSE sits within this. The continued promotion of local campaigns such as Spot the Signs should be evaluated for its effectiveness to ensure that it is making a difference.

6) Keeping children and young people safe.

The Review Team suggest that consideration should be given to funding some further awareness work developing a rolling programme in schools and colleges with young people, perhaps using theatre groups. Further training and awareness must be provided that recognises the changing landscape of CE/CSE to more online abuse to ensure that all children and young people and adults at risk including those with Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) are also provided with awareness that ensures they are given information that can help them keep safe.

7) CE/CSE Strategy Review

This review has demonstrated that Rotherham's partnership approach to CE/CSE is well developed and that it compares very strongly when benchmarked against similar areas. The review of the

Rotherham CE strategy is underway and plans for a development day have been made. Suggestions for improvement include:

- Moving the Governance section of the strategy from its current position to the beginning.
- Developing a CE strategy as a plan on a page for easy reading and access, with delivery as an appendix.
- Developing an aligned communications plan with a stronger focus on Equality and Diversity, to include a whole system approach evident in the strategy from accurate offending profiling, access to services and reach, and feedback from victims and survivors and their families to inform the development of services.

Date of approval by RSCP Executive Group: 12/05/22

Signature of the RSCP Chair:

Jenny Myers MA CQSW

Date this Report submitted to the Council, South Yorkshire Police, the South Yorkshire Police & Crime Commissioner and NHS Rotherham CCG: 13/05/22

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

CAHMS	Child Adolescent Mental Health Service
CCG	Clinical Commissioning Group
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CETG	<p>Criminal Exploitation Tasking Group:</p> <p>This is a weekly Intelligence led meeting chaired by SYP and covers all child exploitation matters, tracking between 12 and 20 young people at any one time where information has been received. Representatives from the Police (PVP, CSE teams, intelligence staff, NPT inspectors), Children's Services, Evolve exploitation team staff and service manager, Housing, LA licensing, LA anti-social behaviour officers YOT, Barnardos etc., meet and review all new intelligence submissions, try and understand the concerns, map, and put into place plans and actions to mitigate or eliminate the risk. Cases are kept on the schedule and actions issues and reviewed until the issue has been eliminated or there is more understanding.</p> <p>This is a whole way of working, sharing full intelligence reports with all partners, a collegiate approach of full information sharing. Every piece of information is shared, considered, actions devised, followed up, and results recorded on an action schedule, all of which are retained and can be examined on request.</p>

	All intelligence is discussed whether it relates to victims, perpetrators, locations or vehicles.
CE	Child Exploitation (this includes Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitation, Radicalisation, Modern slavery, Human Trafficking and Honour Based Violence)
CYPF Consortium	Children, young people and families Consortium
EVOLVE	EVOLVE is a multi-agency team who work in Rotherham to ensure the safeguarding of children from CSE. It is a source of help and advice to practitioners, provides training and takes a lead role in case work with vulnerable children where it is needed.
IOPC	Independent office for police conduct
NPT	Neighbourhood Policing Team
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MACE	MACE - Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Meeting The purpose of MACE is to provide a clear and consistent identification and assessment of children at risk of child exploitation. The meeting promotes information sharing across a variety of agencies across the local area to highlight vulnerabilities, threats, and to establish and reduce risk by increasing safety around a child/young person.
Operation Linden	A report relating to complaints of police conduct during their investigations of non-recent child sexual abuse and exploitation in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013.
OMSB	Overview management scrutiny board
PVP	Protecting Vulnerable People. The combined responsibilities of the Domestic Abuse Unit, Child Protection Unit & Public Protection Unit.
RMBC	Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council
RAM	Risk Assessment Meeting
RSCP	Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership
SPOE	Single Point of Entry
SYP	South Yorkshire Police
TRS	Trauma and Resilience Service

APPENDIX 1:

APPROVED MOTION ROTHERHAM COUNCIL 10TH NOVEMBER 2021 ONGOING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM

This Council notes:

- For many years Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread, but largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police (SYP).
- Since 2014, progress has been made on many issues related to CSE, including improvements in taxi licensing.
- However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham, the model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and private vehicles being used.
- In the six months since the local elections, Councillors have passed community gathered intelligence to RMBC and SYP regarding possible grooming and CSE in numerous locations in the Borough, including Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Clifton, and Eastwood.
 - That many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already activities underway under the terms of Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation, which was considered by the Council's Cabinet in October 2019.

Therefore, we ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership considers the following proposed actions in light of the current strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative Group or others, and reports back to councillors within 3 months on any changes, amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate in order to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity:

1. Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.
2. Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.
3. Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.
4. Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.
5. Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.
6. Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities act.
7. Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.
8. Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.

9. Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and give consideration to improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistleblow to.
10. Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.
11. Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.
12. Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.
13. Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.

APPENDIX 2

Terms of Reference in response to CSE Briefing and Council Motion by the Conservative Group.

The Rotherham Conservative Council Group published a briefing report on the 3/11/2021 (Appendix 1) into ongoing Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The report raised several significant concerns which suggest that CSE is a continuing problem in Rotherham and that neither the Police nor the Council are responding to CSE effectively enough. A motion in response to the briefing was approved by the Rotherham Council on the 10th November 2021 (Appendix 2).

The Chief Officers from the Rotherham Metropolitan Council (RMBC), South Yorkshire Police (SYP) and Rotherham and Barnsley CCG who hold the responsibility for safeguarding children and young people are committed to supporting an objective and transparent review of the concerns raised around CSE in the briefing. As such they have asked the independent chair and scrutineer of the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) to undertake a review.

Scope

Stage One; This first stage of review will address two specific strands:

I. The Police and Council's response to CSE concerns

The actions taken by the Police and Council on the information already passed to them by the Conservative Party Working Group between May 2021 to 31st Oct 2021.

II. Council staff

Council staff said their managers told them not to talk about CSE or make reports about CSE and told the working group that they are afraid of losing their jobs if they speak out.

Methodology

Stage One

This stage of the review will be undertaken by:

1. A deep dive into the information reported by the Conservative Party Working Group to the Police and Council and whether the response of those authorities was effectively managed. Including whether policies, procedures were followed, intelligence shared, and best practice applied in line with local and national guidance, protocols, or expectations.

2. Quantifying and investigating the staff concerns provided to the Conservative Party Working Group and identify any actions that need to be taken. This will include a review of and confidence in the current whistle blowing processes. The review team would welcome meeting with or receiving any information from council staff to reassure them.

Stage Two

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership (RSCP) will from the findings of the Stage One review and any other relevant information, consider any changes or amendments required to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation.

In doing this, it will consider and respond to points laid out in the motion, as agreed at Council on 10th November making any recommendations to strengthen the partnership practice and identify any additional activities that may be appropriate in line with good practice to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection. (Appendix 2 Council Motion).

Stage Two will address two specific strands:

A comprehensive strategy for CSE and senior management accountability for its effective implementation. To ensure that the policy and procedures for CSE in Rotherham are fit for purpose and that they are understood, adhered to, and accessed by RSCP front line staff.

The points laid out in the motion as agreed at Council on 10th November 2021 and any changes or additional actions required.

This stage of the review will be undertaken by:

1. Consideration from the findings from Stage One to inform a desk top review of current local CSE strategy, policy, procedures, and other key documents.
2. Scrutiny of the current pathways to CSE, vulnerable children's meetings, the local problem profile, escalation process and intelligence data alongside the multi-agency processes, accountability, and implementation of the Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) /CSE strategy. To

also review the current training offers of the Police and Council and the information provided to scrutiny.

A report will be provided by the Safeguarding Partnership to the Council within 3 months.

Timescale

The review would hope to complete all the work and have a first draft of the report for chief officers by the end of March 2022. An initial report into Stage 1 of the review should be submitted by the end of January 2022.

Resources required.

The independent chair will require additional support with the review to ensure timescales are met and she has the appropriate additional and independent expertise.

Experienced consultants have been identified by the chair to work with her. One is an ex-police officer and previous head of public protection and one an experienced reviewer and academic with expert knowledge of conducting reviews into youth violence, CCE/CSE. In addition, a serving or ex Director of Children's Services with experience of developing strategies and actions to tackle child sexual exploitation will participate in the review.

The chair will require some dedicated admin support from chief officers to assist with organising meetings/focus groups, obtaining information, note taking and general support.

Limitations

There are some aspects of the review that will need to be met elsewhere or as part of Stage 2. These will be discussed and then agreed by Chief Officers and the Council. The timescale is tight and may be impacted on by Christmas leave, capacity, and availability of staff.

Estimated Budget

The estimated time for this review is up to 25 days (can be considered and revised based on above) to include the write up of a concise draft report. A budget of up to 20k has been reserved out of the existing RSCP budget.

Any additional costs will be negotiated with chief officers.

Jenny Myers MA CQSW -Independent Chair RSCP

1/12/2021

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APPENDIX 2

Item 16 – FINAL MOTION – ONGOING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM (as agreed by Council 10 November 2021)

This Council notes:

- For many years Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham was serious and widespread, but largely ignored by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and South Yorkshire Police (SYP).
- Since 2014, progress has been made on many issues related to CSE, including improvements in taxi licensing.
- However, children continue to be sexually exploited in Rotherham, the model used by organised criminals has changed, with CSE linking into Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), and private vehicles being used.
- In the six months since the local elections, Councillors have passed community gathered intelligence to RMBC and SYP regarding possible grooming and CSE in numerous locations in the Borough, including Wath, Rawmarsh, Greasbrough, Clifton, and Eastwood.
- That many of the actions requested by the Conservative Group are already activities underway under the terms of Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership's Strategy to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation, which was considered by the Council's Cabinet in October 2019.

Therefore, we ask that the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership considers the following proposed actions in light of the current strategy, and any further evidence provided by the Conservative Group or others, and reports back to councillors within 3 months on any changes, amendments to that strategy or additional activities that may be appropriate in order to maintain the highest quality of services and child protection activity:

- Acknowledges that the true scale of CSE in Rotherham is not and cannot be known at present due to reactive policies and under-reporting, and that CSE may be occurring on the same scale as in the past.
- Deliver, as a matter of urgency, proper, detailed, in-person training to Council staff and Council contractors who are in regular contact with members of the public or who work out in our communities, so that they can recognise grooming, and suspicious activities that may indicate CSE.
- Launch a comprehensive public information campaign to likewise help members of the public recognise behaviours, activities, and other signs which may indicate CSE.

- Review and improve internal procedures for handling reports and intelligence that may indicate CSE, with clear actions to be taken, deadlines for those actions, designated people responsible for taking them, and a clear escalation procedure.
- Gather and record intelligence that may or does indicate CSE in a joined-up way, including cross referencing reports to build a fuller picture, working with expert partners in the third sector to gather intelligence, and sharing all intelligence with the police.
- Takes a proactive approach to CSE, identifying and supporting children at risk and identifying people who may be perpetrators, whilst recognising that the criminal model used by perpetrators is likely to continue changing as the authorities act.
- Proactively target known and potential CSE hot spots, including but not limited to hotels, the night-time economy, parks, and gangs engaged in Child Criminal Exploitation and county lines drug dealing.
- Develop an 'exit strategy' to support children to leave CSE, and continually review the strategy to ensure that it is effective.
- Review the Council's whistleblowing policy and give consideration to improving protections for people who believe they are whistleblowing, protecting their jobs and pensions, and providing a specialist independent person to whistleblow to.
- Ensure that RMBC's and SYP's work on CSE is properly scrutinised through the appropriate committees of elected members, including regular, detailed updates and regular reviews of scrutiny arrangements to ensure that they are robust.
- Give a full and unreserved apology to survivors for Council failings that extended their abuse and continue to make their recoveries difficult.
- Look at ways to improve support for survivors of CSE, with the understanding that distrust and animosity towards the Council means that for many survivors, services that are as distant and as independent as possible from the Council would be most helpful, and that due to the life-long challenges many survivors face, support needs to be individualised and long-term.
- Put pressure on South Yorkshire Police to likewise recognise that CSE is a major and continuing problem in Rotherham and elsewhere in South Yorkshire, and likewise improve their response to reports and begin to proactively target known and potential perpetrators, locations, and victims.