

Child Exploitation Annual Report

April 2021 - March 2022



Overview

Summary of activity undertaken to keep
Children and Young People safe from
exploitation

Definition

- ❖ The 2021 National Strategy – ***Tackling Child Sexual Abuse*** – defines Child Sexual Exploitation: forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, or whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, and may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse. Sexual abuse can take place online, and technology can be used to facilitate offline abuse
- ❖ Home Office Guidance defines Child Criminal Exploitation as: where an individual or group coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 to take part in criminal activities, including but not exclusively County Lines. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology

National Strategy – Tackling Child Sexual Abuse

The National strategy was published on 22nd January 2021 It has three key objectives:

1. Tackle all forms of Child Sexual Abuse and bringing Offenders to Justice
2. Preventing Offending and Re-offending
3. Protecting and Safeguarding Children and Young People and Supporting All Victims and Survivors

Rotherham's Child Exploitation Strategy 2019/2022

- Commissioned by the CEDG (Child Exploitation Delivery Group), which sits with the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership but also feeds into the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP)
- Published in 2019 by the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership, Safer Rotherham Partnership, and Safer Rotherham Adults Partnership. Due for renewal 2023
- Follows the National Objectives

Responding to Child Exploitation

- Referrals to Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)
Where there are concerns about the safety of a child potentially at risk of CE, a referral is made to the MASH where screening is undertaken to identify next steps.
- Specialist Multi-Agency team EVOLVE
We remain one of a small number of authorities in the country to retain a specialist multi-agency team
- Direct work with Children and Young people
 - Allocation - Evolve are working with an average of 90 children
 - Assessment - In 2021/2022 there were 470 risk assessments completed for 213 individual children and young people

Intelligence Meetings

- **Child Exploitation Tactical group (CETG)**, a weekly meeting chaired by the police and attended by CYPS, and where intelligence is shared to provide a multi-agency response and next steps
- **Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE)**. MACE meetings are held to respond to and discuss identified Children and young people at high risk of CE
- **The multi-agency operational Missing** meeting takes place fortnightly to identify ways to reduce the number of young people who go missing, focusing on those children considered high risk with repeated missing episodes

Post Abuse Support Commissioned Services for victims and survivors

- Three providers, Rotherham Rise, Grow and Rotherham Abuse Counselling Service (known as Rothacs), commissioned to provide post abuse services to victims and survivors
- The three providers have agreed a common set of KPIs to track throughput and activity. Joint performance meetings, with all 3 providers and the council take place quarterly.
- Using the Trauma and Resilience Service pathway professionals can refer individuals into these services, and TRS will allocate cases to the specific service above according to available capacity and specialisms.

Awareness Raising and Training

- **Members Session** - Introduction to Child Exploitation, tackling it in Rotherham. Presenters included representation from Children and Young People Services (CYPS), Children's Community Safety and Rotherham South Yorkshire Police. There were 29 Cllrs in attendance across both sessions. This was a positive event, Cllrs were engaged, and asked lots of questions.
- **Safeguarding Awareness Week (SAW)**, There were 31 events available to book onto with 615 staff across Rotherham registered attending. Presentations included Child Exploitation and County Lines from SYP, Exploring the challenges of working with adults who self-neglect and/or hoard from Susan Benbow – SAR author, and Transitional Safeguarding: from rhetoric to reality' presented by Dez Holmes – RIPFA.

Awareness Raising and Training

- Child Exploitation Awareness Day on 18th March. Information was shared throughout the Council, via the Monday Briefing and through the Chief Executives Friday Briefing. Screensavers were used on all council laptops and posters were circulated digitally to schools for display in staff areas. Social media posts were shared throughout the day on Community Safety and corporate RMBC channels

The Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP)

- Preventing CSE is a priority for the Safer Rotherham Partnership under Protecting Vulnerable Children, quarterly reports are presented to the SRP to provide oversight and address any concerns
- The objective under this priority is:
Monitor and drive an increase in intelligence reports and referrals through training and awareness raising with partners and the public

Through this SRP have led on a number of initiatives

Spot the Signs

- Awareness raising Campaign launched in February 2021 on social media, through SYP alerts and via a press release
- This is a wide reaching initiative that has included posters and cards with Spot the Signs message, screensavers included on all RMBC laptops awareness raising in schools and various organisations, and a targeted approach in Safeguarding awareness week that reached over 18,000 people, and saw the weblink hit over 400 times in that week alone



Operation Keepsake

- A multi-agency initiative, led by Early Help and South Yorkshire Police, enabling a direct response to safeguard children and young people in communities. Between April 2021 and March 2022 over 1602 children and young people were engaged with in the community, including activity for young people using street based, outreach and centre based group sessions

Operation Makesafe

- An initiative that takes place throughout the year to raise awareness and equip hospitality industry staff with the knowledge and skills to recognise potentially exploitative situation and take positive action. This includes posters shared with Hotels for display in staff rooms on signs to be aware of.
- Assurance visits were made to Hotels during Safeguarding Awareness Week, highlighted gaps in training, and support guidance provided in feedback

Training and Support Provided by Evolve

Each Social Care team and Early Help team have an identified CE Champion who attends bimonthly meetings with Evolve so any relevant information can be shared across the services and to provide a discussion forum for any exploitation related issues

Training is provided on a quarterly basis to professionals from social care, Early Help Schools, with 150 in attendance, and resulting in increases in advice sort and provided after each session

Evolve have delivered training to the post 16 education providers in Rotherham and to the Head teachers of the Secondary Schools in Rotherham

Training Provided by Evolve

Evolve have completed a University lecture with Social Work students at Sheffield Hallam University

One day Child Exploitation and Contextual Safeguarding training is provided Every other month, through the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership

Additional training has been provided at the request of partner agencies for example in secondary schools and colleges.

Victim/Survivor Engagement Project

In 2021 94 recorded crimes with the CSE keyword and where no conviction was achieved were viewed by SYP. This activity provided assurances in terms of the investigation. It also highlighted there was little understanding of how victims / survivors experienced the investigation

REMEDI were commissioned to undertake a consultation with a small group of survivors / victims, and of the those contacted 8 agreed to take part

Consultation was undertaken in February and March this year. This was a positive activity with general themes include:

A Robust System for Identification Prevention Safeguarding and Post Abuse Support

Rotherham has a robust system for safeguarding children and young people at risk of exploitation

- Driven by the National and Local Strategy steering the Child Exploitation Delivery Group action plan
- Robust systems in place to respond to Child Exploitation Concerns for individual children and groups
- Intelligence sharing, operational and tactical meetings for managing risk to specific children groups and communities
- Evidence of impact, a reduction in missing and repeated missing high risk children, and children stepping down from high risk to medium the low
- Awareness raising and training
- Post abuse support
- Seeking out and listening to the voices of survivors to inform practice

