

Public Report
Improving Lives Select Commission

Committee Name and Date of Committee Meeting

Improving Lives Select Commission – 30 January 2024

Report Title

Report on Child Exploitation

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

No

Strategic Director Approving Submission of the Report

Nicola Curley – Strategic Director, Children & Young Peoples Service

Report Author(s)

Laura Gough - Head of Service Safeguarding Quality and Learning
Laura.Gough@rotherham.gov.uk

Ward(s) Affected

Borough-Wide

Report Summary

This briefing provides a summary of key Child Exploitation activity including performance information and trends, awareness raising and safeguarding, undertaken in the year 2023.

Recommendations

That the activity undertaken with regards to Child Exploitation is noted.

List of Appendices Included

Appendix 1 Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy, 2021. National Strategy
Appendix 2 Working Together 2023
Appendix 3 Rotherham Child Exploitation Priorities
Appendix 4 Supporting Information

Background Papers

There are no background papers for consideration.

Consideration by any other Council Committee, Scrutiny or Advisory Panel

None

Council Approval Required

No

Exempt from the Press and Public

No

Report on Child Exploitation

1. Background

- 1.1 The National Strategy, Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021 defines Child Sexual Exploitation: forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, or whether 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.
- 1.2 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.
- 1.3 The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 set out specific duties: section 17 of the Children Act 1989 puts a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area. Section 47 of the same Act requires local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believe a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
- 1.4 Rotherham is one of only a small number of Local Authorities that continue to have a dedicated service focused on child exploitation. Ofsted stated 'the Evolve service works proactively with children to reduce risks associated with sexual and criminal exploitation. The co-location of partner agencies means there is effective sharing of information. Exploitation assessments and plans are live documents that are drawn together with the child, their family, and the multi-agency network. These are comprehensive and child-focused and ensure that the right safety plan is in place for children'.
- 1.5 Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Children and Young Peoples Services provide Good services to children in need of help and protection. (Ofsted June 2022). Quality assurance activity, performance data and external evaluation inform us Rotherham Children's Services and Partnership, and specifically the Evolve service continue to provide good and outstanding services to children at risk of exploitation.

2. Responding to Child Exploitation:

- 2.1 This report provides information on key activity in relation to Child Exploitation over the year 2023. The report demonstrates how we ensure that children, both individual and groups, that are at risk of or who are experiencing exploitation are identified, safeguarded, and supported. And

that there is a partnership approach to raising awareness and preventing exploitation of children and young people in Rotherham.

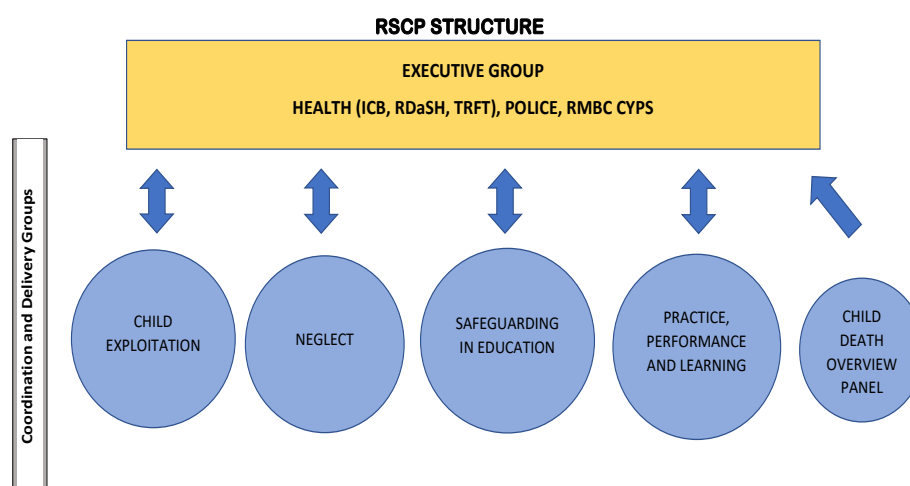
2.2 Key Document:

2.2.1 In 2023, Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership Child Exploitation Priorities 2023 - 2028, A Plan to Tackle and Prevent Child Exploitation in Rotherham was published. This followed the conclusion of the Child Exploitation Strategy 2019 – 2022. The priorities focus on local key drivers: **Prepare, Prevent, Protect, Pursue**, which are derived from the National Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and draws from research into established use.

2.2.2 It provides clarity on roles and responsibilities of key partner agencies, how they work together to deliver the key priorities and how success will be measured. The Strategy will be driven by the Child Exploitation Delivery Group and have strategic oversight from the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership. The governance arrangements can be seen in the diagram below.

2.3 Graph - Rotherham Safeguarding Children Partnership structure:

2.3.1



2.3.2 The priorities will support and underpin the new Child Exploitation Strategy, due to be published in 2024.

2.3.3 In 2023, a new scrutineer, Darren Downs was appointed. This role differed from the independent chair role in that it has a greater focus on scrutiny and holding the partnership to account. And a new Strategic Director for Children's Services, Nicola Curley was appointed bringing a fresh approach to child focused practice.

2.4 Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG):

- 2.4.1 The CEDG is a strategic group, reporting directly to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership and has a strong link to the Safer Rotherham Partnership (SRP).
- 2.4.2 In 2023 the group underwent a review. The Terms of Reference were updated, a new Chair was appointed, and attendee roles were reviewed and refreshed to ensure the right people are in attendance to effect change and drive progress. Attendees include workers and leaders from across the partnership, Social Care, Police, Health agencies, voluntary sector, and the meeting is chaired by Police - Chief Superintendent Andy Wright.
- 2.4.3 The group has the responsibility for the strategic overview of Child Exploitation, the Priorities, Strategy, and its development. It has an action plan with leads specific for:
- OBJECTIVE 1: PREPARE - Ensure we have in place effective early identification services and intervention embedded across the partnership and that the voice of the victims and survivors drives service improvement.
 - OBJECTIVE 2: PREVENT – Give children the best start in life; raising awareness amongst parents, carers, families, and partners to stop the problem at source and to prevent children being subjected to CE.
 - OBJECTIVE 3: PROTECT – To ensure that the processes and practices in place effectively protect children when Child Exploitation is suspected or confirmed, or where risk factors are present with local and national good practices being used to reduce the risk of CE in Rotherham
 - OBJECTIVE 4: PURSUE – There is relentless disruption and targeted action against those seeking to exploit children in Rotherham, led by intelligence utilising criminal justice and other outcomes to leave no safe spaces for offenders.
- 2.4.4 The leads for each objective have key responsibilities which ensure that intelligence is gathered, there is awareness raised and information shared with communities and partners, training made available, children at risk are identified and safeguarded, and perpetrators are brought to justice. Each meeting focuses on these objectives, offering support and holding to account the leads on progress. A significant activity in 2023 was the development of a partnership scorecard. This has allowed the group to collect data across Rotherham, to definitively focus on key areas, and aid the prioritisation of preventative activity.
- 2.4.5 The CEDG is responsible for the oversight of quality assurance, and the ongoing audit and quality assurance document (appendix 4) shows, there is an abundance of activity happening to ensure that the work undertaken is to the highest quality and is child focused, and that we know our business, areas we are successful in and areas we focus on.

- 2.4.6 This group oversees the development of the plan and will use it to ensure that we are focused on identification and reduction of Child Exploitation across the borough.

2.5 Child Exploitation Steering group:

- 2.5.1 The steering group reports to the Child Exploitation Delivery Group. This is an operational group, made up from operational staff from across the partnership and chaired by the Evolve Service Manager.
- 2.5.2 The group receives direction from the delivery group and undertakes activities such as providing assurance through audit and quality assurance activity, reporting on disruption activity, and leading on training, make safe and keep safe activities.

2.6 Evolve:

- 2.6.1 **Social Workers / Exploitation Worker Youth Justice Service and Evolve Family Support** take a lead role in working directly with young people affected by CE where this is identified during the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE, is a multi-agency case management forum coordinating support and interventions to reduce the risk of child exploitation), or strategy meeting (which discusses the child's welfare and determines a plan of rapid future action if there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm).
- 2.6.2 They contribute to the assessments for individual children and the investigation of CE related activity, including contributing to strategy discussions/meetings and section 47 (CA89) investigatory processes. They contribute to mapping activity, collating information, and analysing the prevalence of CE in the borough in relation to children & young people, perpetrators, and locations. They support professionals and partners such as schools, through providing guidance and advice and a comprehensive training package.
- 2.6.3 **Police Officers** contribute to the completion and updating of Multi-Agency Risk Assessments in individual children's cases. They take a lead role in the investigation of incidents of CE in the borough, by way of collection of intelligence, formal investigation, disruption, and prosecution of offenders. They contribute to plans to keep children safe, by way of protection and disruption activity, including working together to obtain a legal resolution considering all available means.
- 2.6.4 The **Child Exploitation Nurse** contributes to the completion and updating of the Multi Agency Risk Assessment in individual children's cases. They provide links to the broader health community by way of information sharing, liaison and awareness raising. They identify the most appropriate person to undertake direct work with young people where health implications arise from risks of CSE, in line with broader multi-agency plans for intervention. They provide a health-related service directly to children who have suffered, or are at risk of suffering, CSE in the borough.

2.6.5 **Missing Advocates** undertake Return Home Interviews within 72 hours, advocate the wishes and feelings of children to try and reduce the missing episodes, and develop missing safety strategies with the child. They share immediate safeguarding concerns, attend strategy meetings and input on the Find Me plans, and undertake group work to educate and reduce risks.

2.6.6 Collectively they work together as one service to identify, and they protect children and reduce risk across the borough. In 2023, the Evolve Service won a regional award, in recognition by the police force for their commitment to keeping children safe from exploitation.

2.7 Work with Children and Young People:

2.7.1 During 2023, 77 young people were referred and opened to the Evolve service. This was following them being assessed as medium or high risk of Child Exploitation at either at a Multi-Agency Child Exploitation meeting (MACE) or strategy meeting. In comparison, 73 young people closed to the Evolve service following a successful intervention with Evolve and reduction in risk of exploitation to low.

2.7.2 These numbers demonstrate a consistent throughput of young people into the service and evidences the dynamic flow of young people being opened and then the risk reducing because of Evolve intervention.

2.7.3 Evolve have completed 344 child exploitation risk assessments in total in 2023. Please note these are assessments and not a count of children, some children and young people will have received more than one assessment as part of the monitoring of intervention planning and success. A breakdown of assessments show:

141 identified risks in relation to child criminal exploitation.

107 identified risks in relation to child sexual exploitation.

50 identified risks in relation to both criminal and sexual exploitation.

46 identified no risk (this is for the young people where the exploitation risk has reduced and there is no identified risk).

2.7.4 Risk assessments are completed and then updated every 12 weeks to ensure that progress is recorded, risks addressed, and the plan is up to date in terms of need and level of risk.

2.7.5 Missing children can be an indicator of risk of child exploitation. In Rotherham we have dedicated missing advocates who undertake interviews with children that go missing. Additionally, they are co-allocated to children that are high risk, persistently missing and open to the Evolve service to support the safety planning for that child. Most young people are located within the same 24-hour period. However, some children do go missing for longer periods. Find me plans are activated in these circumstances and a strategy meeting is held with the police to ensure that these young people are located as soon as possible.

- 2.7.6 There has been a reduction in the number of children reported missing since 2020/21. Q1, (2023/24) was the lowest Q1 since recording. See Appendix 1.
- 2.7.7 The multi-agency operational Missing meeting takes place fortnightly to identify ways to reduce the number of young people who go missing. This meeting focuses on the most regularly missing young people. Preventative work is undertaken with these children on 1:1 basis to safeguard, provide intervention, build a relationship, and look at diversion activities. We continue to monitor this, and review trends quarterly and yearly.
- 2.7.8 Throughout 2023 the Evolve team have been collecting feedback and producing appreciative enquiries. See appendix 4. This helps us to identify successes and what works and learn as part of ongoing development.

2.8 Intelligence Gathering:

2.8.1 Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE)

MACE meetings are held to provide a clear and consistent identification and assessment of children at risk of child exploitation. Individual Children /young people are discussed at the meeting for 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. The meeting will discuss concerns about child and young people who may be at risk from child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, gang related crime, and human trafficking.

- 2.8.2 There are three initial MACE meetings held each week to consider new referrals and level of risk to individual children, and three to four review MACE meetings held each week to review safety for children open to the service where there are new or increased concerns and safety planning.

2.8.3 Child Exploitation tactical group (CETG)

CEDG is a weekly multi-agency group that is police led, which brings key partners together including the police, social care, and key health colleagues to agree on response and next steps to concerns of intelligence around CE.

- 2.8.4 The police bring on average 6 to 8 new pieces of intelligence to each meeting. This is then reviewed and cross referenced via an intelligence log each week until partners are satisfied that all aspects of disruption and investigation have been considered and they can be discharged. Actions can include:

- police investigation
- neighbourhood police undertaking community work, visits to specific areas
- Child Abduction Orders
- Warrants
- Operation Keepsafe activity
- phone works, including checking of contacts, calls and texts messaging, locked social media and online activity

- car stop and searches
- intelligence building and research
- Referring children to Children's Social Care

2.9 **Police Exploitation intelligence, and Offences:**

2.9.1 **SY Police**

The number of intelligence reports for criminal exploitation has continued to increase significantly above previous years. Staff across the partnership are reminded through the Child Exploitation Tactical Group meeting to continue prioritising the submission of intelligence reports and these are then discussed at the meeting. This increase also coincides with the increase in awareness raising (Spot the Signs, CE awareness day, Any Childhood police campaign) and children at risk of criminal exploitation being viewed as children at risk of harm. In 2023 the number of linked offences to criminal exploitation (where a crime is being committed (theft offences for example) and there are concerns that there may also be a child exploitation element increased and then declined. This in part can be explained by the increase in intelligence reports and the disruption activity taking place to prevent exploitation.

2.9.2 The number of intelligence reports for sexual exploitation has fluctuated since 2020 to the present. Staff across the partnership are reminded through the Child Exploitation Tactical Group meeting to continue prioritising the submission of intelligence reports and these are then discussed at the meeting.

2.9.3 **NCA Operation Stovewood**

In 2024, operation Stovewood will cease to accept new referrals, and instead will focus on the ongoing investigations and prosecutions which are expected to conclude in 2027. All new cases will be referred to SY Police going forward.

2.9.4 **Operation Morph Charlie**

Operation Morph Charlie is a non-recent child sexual exploitation investigation being conducted by South Yorkshire police in Rotherham. The enquiry has been ongoing throughout 2023 and resulted from a referral from West Yorkshire Police after disclosures were made to them.

2.9.5 The Crown Prosecution Service are now in the process of completing reviews of case submissions and have revised their initial view of the scope of charges that are possible in this case. A final charging decision is awaited.

2.9.6 **Operation Keepsafe**

Operation Keepsafe is well established multi-agency targeted activity, which focus on working areas to engage with young people to raise awareness of exploitation.

2.9.7 To date, keep safe activity has engaged in with over 1700 children and young people in the community since the start of April 2021. This has potentially impacted positively on both individual and groups of children and

supported communities in keeping their children safe. Keepsafe is delivered to groups of children in the 18:00-22:00pm engagement frame, and 22:00 – 2:00am tends to work with safeguarding individual children and young people and is more focused on the CE element and general safety / risk issues.

2.9.8 Examples of safety work includes returning children home and speaking with parents when children are found out late at night. Groups of children have been engaged with in the community to talk about safety, and sessions also run at weekends following any national and local concerns. Going forward, the CEDG will use data and intelligence information to inform Keepsafe targeted activity and have a structured approach.

2.9.9 Moving into 2024 the Child Exploitation delivery group has requested a Keepsafe task and finish group. This group will lead on booking in regular Keepsafe activity, and closer to the time identify the areas that would benefit from Keepsafe activity. This includes areas identified by the Child Exploitation Tactical group, and other forms of intelligence. They will also ensure that other local community resources and groups are linked in for awareness raising and community support.

2.10 Awareness raising activity and campaigns:

2.10.1 Members Session

On the 21 February, the Annual Workshop on Child Exploitation for members took place. Councillor Cusworth introduced the session, with presentations from the Police, District Commander Kosciwicz, Detective Inspector Blakemore, Children's Services Heads of Service Laura Gough and Kelly White, and Assistant Director for Safer Communities Sam Barstow.

2.10.2 The session, **Introduction to Child Exploitation, tackling it Together in Rotherham**, focused on the strength of partnership working, awareness, training and early interventions, response from each service and organisation and pathways. And the different meetings that are held operationally and strategically to tackle Child Exploitation.

2.10.3 The session was a success, lots of questions were asked throughout and at the end. In total it was attended by 29 Members (11 in person and 18 virtually).

2.10.4 Child Exploitation Awareness Day, 18th March.

Information was shared throughout the Council via the Monday Briefing and through the Chief Executives Friday Briefing. This included how staff can access and complete the mandatory e-learning modules, **Safeguarding is Everyone's Business (General Awareness)** and **Keep Them Safe**. Screensavers were also used on all council laptops and posters were circulated digitally to schools for display in staff areas. All Councillors received a poster and Spot the Signs information cards via the Town Hall and social media posts were shared throughout the day on Community

Safety and corporate RMBC channels. This was an ambitious endeavour and considered successful thanks to its reach across a large workforce.

- 2.10.5 A series of posts were produced aimed at the public and focusing on the signs people may see in their everyday lives. Posts included a link to further information and local and national reporting mechanisms as well as a link to the YouTube Spot the Signs awareness session (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SI8iYn-HE6M>). The presentation has been recorded and is available on YouTube. This is a 15-minute presentation aimed at people who do not necessarily work directly with children and young people but may come into contact with them. The session provides an overview of child exploitation and the signs that people may see in different situations and environments. The session also contains information on how to report concerns and it is hoped it will increase confidence in reporting. So far, the presentation has been viewed over 700 times. All social media was posted on the Community Safety channels which saw increased reach and engagement and shared via RMBC corporate channels.
- 2.10.6 The link to the video was circulated via email to colleagues and partners and through social media for the public, including in the lead up to and on Child Exploitation Day on the 18th March.
- 2.10.7 Throughout the week leading up to Child Exploitation Day, social media posts, and screensavers showed images such as those below demonstrating how anyone and everyone can spot the signs and be the person that reports concerns.
- 2.10.8 **Spot the Signs**
Awareness raising has continued the potential signs of exploitation through Spot the Signs on Community Safety social media and shared a week of focused social media posts to promote the Children's Society 'Look Closer' campaign and to coincide with County Lines Intensification Week in March. These posts reached over 5,700 people through Facebook and Instagram with most followers being women in Rotherham and the surrounding areas. These posts are also shared through corporate social media channels to reach a wider audience.

2.10.9



2.10.10



2.10.11 County Lines Intensification week

National County Lines Intensification week for 2023 took place from 27th February to 3rd March, this was a week of action specifically addressing county lines and child criminal exploitation including: 'Spot the Signs' campaign and use of the Children's Society 'Look Closer' campaign. Look Closer is a national partnership campaign with the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre and Children's Society, aiming to raise awareness of child exploitation and abuse, with a particular focus on public spaces. The campaign also sought to challenge assumptions and stereotypes of victimhood and highlighted that child exploitation can happen anywhere, and any young person can be a victim, and focused on educating staff, partners, and members of the public about what county lines is and the signs to look out for. The week also involved specific enforcement and disruption

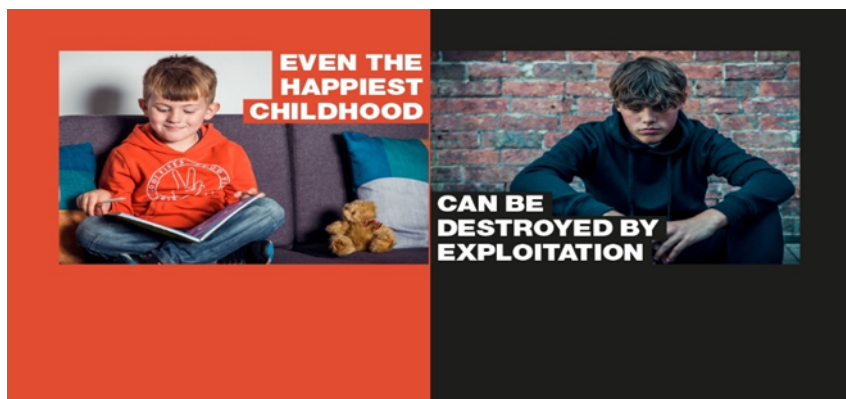
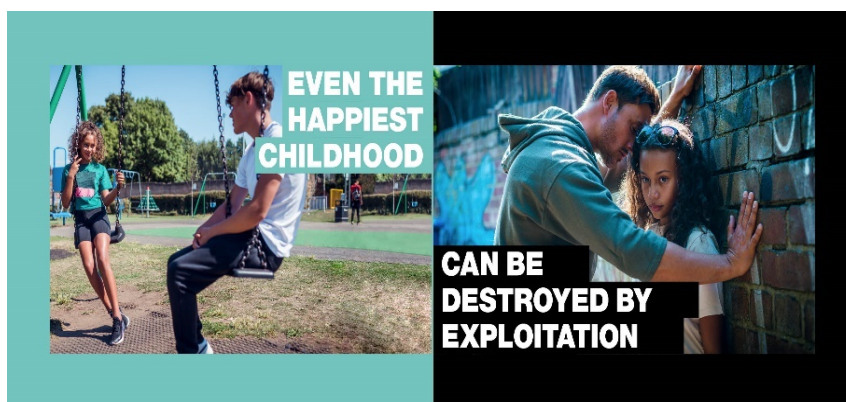
work targeted at the activities of those involved in county lines/child criminal exploitation, including several warrants carried out which resulted in 5 arrests for drugs supply and money laundering offences. Large quantities of drugs and various weapons included two firearms and £50,000 in cash were recovered because of targeted police activities.

2.10.12 Specific activities included:

- Neighbourhoods and police to identify areas that would benefit from Keepsafe activity
- Missing Advocates are delivering early intervention/preventative work with a group of vulnerable children at a primary school.
- Throughout the month of March Family Support Workers visited both primary and secondary schools delivering early intervention and preventative work around Child Exploitation.
- A week of focused social media posts for Child Exploitation were shared to promote the Children's Society 'Look Closer' campaign and to coincide with County Lines Intensification Week.

2.10.13 SY Police Campaign

On the 17th of March SY Police launched their new regional child exploitation campaign, Even the Happiest Childhood Can be Destroyed by Exploitation. Following this the campaign was then launched across various SYP channels. Below are two of the images that have been produced to support the campaign which focuses on all aspects of Child Exploitation.



2.10.14 **Child Exploitation Stakeholder Event**

On the 20 June 2023 27 delegates from across the partnership, Social Care, Police, NCA, Health, and the Voluntary sector attended a stakeholder event to look at Rotherham's journey through Child Exploitation.

2.10.15 MASH Head of Service Kelly White and Detective Chief Inspector Sam Blakemore provided a presentation on Rotherham's journey, 2014 to present day. The group were then set two tasks:

- Task 1. key achievements within their organisations and across the partnership 2014 – 2023. A timeline of key events was provided to aid discussion.
- Task 2. What do we do differently, how do we know we are keeping children safe compared to 2014.

2.10.16 The information gathered will supported the development of the priorities and will support the Child Exploitation strategy.



2.10.17 Feedback on the day was immensely powerful, with newer and long-term workers commenting on how the event provided an outlet to explore the impact of Stovewood on staff as well as service delivery, and that they would welcome further events to explore the issues in the lead up to 10 years after the Jay report.

2.11 **Training:**

2.11.1 **Evolve training awareness raising activity.**

The Evolve service raises awareness through attending meetings and events, delivering training and presentations. This includes presenting at the Child Exploitation delivery group, attending Operation Fortify meeting, attending the CCE Tracker meetings with Police, Social Care, Health, Early Help, YOS and Barnardo's, attending the weekly CETG intelligence

meeting. The manager also attends the Elective Home Education governance group.

- 2.11.2 In addition, they provide Child Exploitation training every three months. These are multi-agency sessions. Attendance at these sessions is positive, with on average 20 delegates attending each session. Requests for training increases usually after an awareness raising event such as Safeguarding Awareness Week, and Child Exploitation Day.
- 2.11.3 Additional training is provided as when requested, for example the RMBC safeguarding champions. These are staff from across the council with an additional responsibility for sharing information to their colleagues and supporting safeguarding activity. The meeting is chaired by the Safeguarding Heads of Service, Laura Gough, and Andrew Wells.
- 2.11.4 **Police Staff Training and Development**
There has been a renewed focus on ensuring officers working in safeguarding roles including the child exploitation investigation team are qualified to a national standard by undergoing training and assessment on the Specialist Child Abuse Investigators Development Programme (SCAIDP) and the Specialist Sexual Offences Investigator Development Programme (SSAIDP) from the College of Policing.
- 2.11.5 A proportion of officers have undergone this training programme already and more training courses are being held this year with plans for a rolling programme of training across the organisation to ensure skills are maintained and new staff are trained to this standard. Both these qualifications also require annual reaccreditation.
- 2.11.6 The police are training all their staff to qualified College of Policing PIP2 serious and complex investigation standard, this is an intensive training and development programme that includes seven weeks of classroom training, and a 1-year structured assessment programme requiring portfolio accreditation to be signed off as competent.
- 2.11.7 **Police Briefing Sessions**
Several initiatives including awareness raising, and targeted briefing sessions have taken place for 165 staff across CYPS and Housing in 2022/23. These initiatives are ongoing both internally to SYP and to partners to continue to drive intelligence submissions, these include:
- Creation of training package and partners' intelligence submission form which is covered quarterly at the Criminal Exploitation Tactical Group meeting with the intention that representatives from partner agencies cascade this training to their staff.
 - Inputs from Child Exploitation DI and DS at Sergeants away days to drive importance of submissions.
 - Revamped briefing site giving details of hotspot locations, children at risk.
 - Plans for new weekly email around the above information to go out to district supervisors to drive intelligence gathering from frontline staff.

- Hotspots, children at risk, and regular exploitation related missing child episodes are also discussed fortnightly with all district inspectors as a standing agenda item at the fortnightly district Threat, Harm & Risk meeting.

2.11.8 The feedback has been that 97% of attendees feel they understand more and are likely to submit more intelligence submissions in the future.

2.11.9 This is a real success story and provides direct evidence of how awareness raising and briefings targeting specific staff has affected the system leading to a response directly safeguarding children from CCE and CSE.

2.11.10 **Online Safety**

The training around online safety continues to be delivered, and developed as this issue becomes more prevalent.

2.11.11 Training continues to be delivered virtually to parents and carers across the borough. The training was developed and delivered by Community Safety and South Yorkshire Police and covers the risks to young people online, how parents/carers can help minimise these risks and how to access support or report concerns. The training dates available throughout the academic year have been advertised across the borough through Primary Schools. Training in 2024 will be delivered to specific schools at their request, or offered via Community Safety and Education Safeguarding Lead if a need is identified. This training will be shared at the Schools Forum meetings. In addition, for Safer Internet Day Safer Communities Partnership will be presenting to all Education Safeguarding Leads at the Forum on online bullying.

2.11.12 A video is being produced to promote online safety for young people by Remedi through a Restorative Action Project (RAP). This focused on image sharing and the risks to young people aged 7 to 18 years using social media and the focus for younger children around the use of mobile phones. The project is being led by the Reparation Supervisor for Youth Justice collaborating with young people so they can include their own experiences and concerns.

2.12 **Conclusion Summary:**

2.12.1 This report demonstrates the ongoing focus on child exploitation in Rotherham.

2.12.2 Rotherham continues to be one of only a small number of authorities to have a dedicated child exploitation service. The commitment by partners to this issue is evident in the continued multi agency approach to tackling this issue.

2.12.3 The Ofsted inspection further highlighted how far Rotherham has come over the last ten years, with a second solid 'Good' rating, evidencing safeguarding practice in Rotherham is effective, child focused and with embedded partnership working arrangements in place.

- 2.12.4 There is a keen eye on quality assurance through several mechanisms, by members, the Partnership boards and arrangements, and the delivery groups. Scrutiny is intense, part of the business, and welcomed by all involved.
 - 2.12.5 Awareness raising continues to deliver results, with increases in intelligence, and increases in positive outcomes for children, and outcomes for the police.
 - 2.12.6 There are plans in place to continue this work, and increase activity, through the new strategy, through the scrutiny of the new partnership arrangements and scrutineer, and the ongoing safeguarding activity that is demonstrating effectiveness.
- 3. Options considered and recommended proposal:**
- 3.1 This report is for information and to provide feedback on the progress made to date.
- 4. Consultation on proposal:**
- 4.1 There are no specific proposals as the report is for information purposes.
- 5. Timetable and Accountability for Implementing this Decision:**
- 5.1 There are no specific timetables as the report is for information purposes.
- 6. Financial and Procurement Advice and Implications:**
- 6.1 There are no specific financial or procurement implications arising from this report.
- 7. Legal Advice and Implications:**
- 7.1 The relevant legal framework for the considerations set out in this paper is the Children Act 1989 which highlights the duty the Local Authority has to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in its area. Section 17 relates to the provision of services to achieve this. In addition, the recent statutory guidance dated December 2023, "Working Together to Safeguard children 2023", which is a guide to multi- agency working to help, protect and promote the welfare of children emphasises this need and is issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970. This is to be complied with unless exceptional circumstances arise. This is relevant to this report as the recent Working Together guidance strengthens the shared responsibility that successful outcomes "depend on strong multi-agency partnership working across the system of help, support, and protection". Such partnership working has been explained in this report and therefore there are no legal implications that arise from this update and progress made.

8. Human Resources Advice and Implications:

8.1 There are no HR implications arising from this report.

9. Implications for Children and Young People and Vulnerable Adults:

9.1 This report details the activities undertaken with regards to identification and safeguarding of children and young people from child exploitation 2023. It details our ongoing responses and commitments to providing a robust system within the council and across the partnership from the statutory, Health, Education, Police, and Voluntary sectors to keeping children safe.

10. Equalities and Human Rights Advice and Implications:

10.1 There are no Equalities and Human Rights implications arising from this report.

11. Implications for CO2 Emissions and Climate Change:

11.1 There are no Implications for CO² Emissions or Climate Change

12. Implications for Partners:

12.1. Working together 2023, National and Local Priorities places statutory responsibility on organisations to work together to keep children safe. Whilst this report identifies activities undertaken by the Council, we are committed to working together across all organisations to keeping children safe.

13. Risks and Mitigation

13.1 Any deterioration in the commitment to the strategy both internally and the wider partnership including the delivery group, could lead to a deterioration on the robust arrangements for keeping children at risk of CE safe.

14. Accountable Officers

Laura Gough - Head of Service Safeguarding Quality and Learning

Report Author: Laura Gough, Head of Service Safeguarding, Quality and Learning. Laura.Gough@Rotherham.Gov.UK

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