

## ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO MEMBERS

1.	<b>Meeting:</b>	<b>Cabinet</b>
2.	<b>Date:</b>	<b>5<sup>th</sup> February 2014</b>
3.	<b>Title:</b>	<b>A review of the response to Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (all wards)</b>
4.	<b>Directorate:</b>	<b>Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board</b>

### 5. Summary

The attached report details the findings and recommendations of a review into the response to Child Sexual Exploitation(CSE) in Rotherham. It provides a balanced and accurate picture of how CSE is being tackled in Rotherham and was published in January 2014.

### 6. Recommendations

That Members receive the report.

## 7. Proposals and Details

- 7.1 The purpose of this review was to reassure the Independent Chair of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, appointed in September 2013, and the public, that Rotherham is moving forward and protecting children from sexual exploitation and that leaders are delivering improvement and not just talking about it.
- 7.2 Child Sexual Exploitation has a serious long term and lasting impact on every aspect of a child or young person's life including their health, physical and emotional wellbeing, educational attainment, personal safety, relationships, and future life opportunities.
- 7.3 Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation effectively requires a coordinated multi-agency response. The work of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB) and its constituent members is key to ensuring the protection of children and young people and achieving prosecution of offenders. The RLSCB's CSE Strategy and Action Plan "PREVENT PROTECT PURSUE" is the framework through which the local implementation of the response to CSE is delivered in Rotherham.
- 7.4 The report acknowledges that in the past, Rotherham could, and should have done more to protect children from CSE; In September 2013 the Local Authority announced its own inquiry into its historical response to CSE. However, from 2010 there has been a significant amount of transformational work undertaken to improve the multi-agency responses to this form of child abuse.
- 7.5 The LSCB CSE Strategy and Delivery Plan had already been refreshed in 2013 incorporating the relevant Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) recommendations. Since then, a number of other reports have been commissioned specifically looking into Rotherham's and the South Yorkshire Police response to CSE as well as the final national report from the Office of the the Children's Commissioner. These are:
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) South Yorkshire Police's Response to Child Sexual Exploitation – Findings of an inspection commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner (Published Nov 2013):
  - Barnardo's Rotherham Practice Review Report (Published October 2013)
  - "If only someone had listened" Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (Published November 2013)
- 7.6 This review concludes that the findings are, in the main, positive but it does highlight areas that need further development work; reflecting that this is a

dynamic and fast changing area of safeguarding children for all of the organisations involved. There is clear evidence that CSE is a high priority and that this is reflected in its status at senior strategic meetings and Cabinet level within the Council. There is a clear strategy to tackle CSE with an associated action plan that is based on national best practice. There has been a significant financial commitment to a multi-agency CSE team, which is staffed with committed and hardworking staff, and it is undertaking much good work and is making a difference.

7.7 The review makes three recommendations and a number of areas for particular attention to ensure that improvements are continuous. The three recommendations are:

1. The role and structure of the Child Sexual Exploitation Team and the CSE delivery plan should be reviewed as part of an ongoing process for future strategic development. In particular, consideration should be given to the structure, location and long term aims and objectives of the team, to ensure clarity of purpose and adequate and appropriate resourcing.
2. The performance management and governance structures around CSE management requires greater clarity. A mapping exercise of current structures, together with a more proactive and intrusive performance management regime, should be considered by all agencies and in particular RLSCB.
3. Future plans should be communicated to both victims and professionals so that there is no doubt about the seriousness with which CSE is taken. Professionals should be provided with the tools to ensure they are able to support victims in an appropriate and timely manner.

RLSCB partner members are working to embed the actions needed from the relevant reviews into the Rotherham CSE Delivery Plan.

## **8. Finance**

The findings and recommendations from this report will require further exploration by the RLSCB and partners in relation to any cost, risks and benefits of their implementation.

## **9. Risks and Uncertainties**

This review highlights areas for further development work across the safeguarding children partnership. The Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board and Council committees will have a continued role in giving oversight and challenge to

agencies to ensure that these improvements are delivered and children and young people safeguarded.

## **10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications**

Ofsted Inspection Framework 2013

RMBC Corporate Plan (2013-16)

- Protecting our most vulnerable people and families, enabling them to maximise their independence
  - we will protect children and young people, vulnerable people and families from all forms of abuse, violence and neglect
  - we will identify need and support children, young people and their families at the earliest possible stage

## **11. Background Papers and Consultation**

Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board, Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy & Action Plan "PREVENT PROTECT PURSUE"

Also as outlined in 7.5

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