

**IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION  
22nd January, 2014**

Present:- Councillor G. A. Russell (in the Chair); Councillors Astbury, Buckley, Burton, Clark, Dodson, J. Hamilton, Kaye, Pitchley, Read, Roddison and Sharman.

Councillors Dalton, Hoddinott, P. A. Russell, Havenhand, Wallis, Sims, Roche, Beaumont, Godfrey, Ellis, Currie, Pickering, Beck and Whelbourn were also in attendance.

Agencies represented: - J. Thacker (Children and Young People's Services), Councillor P. Lakin (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families' Services), S. Ashley (Rotherham LSCB), Chief Supt J. Harwin, K. Goddard (Barnardos), D. Johnson (CYPS Performance), J. Abbott (Public Health), S. Parry (Neighbourhood and Adult Services Directorate), C. Edgar (Team Manager, Sexual Exploitation Unit), K. White (Duty and Early Help), S. Gittins (School Nurse Partnership).

Apologies were received from Councillors Ali and Falvey and Co-opted Members Mrs. A. Clough (ROPES), Mrs. J. Jones (GROW) and Mr. M. Smith (Safe@Last).

**44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST.**

No Declarations of Interest were made.

**45. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS.**

No members of the public or the press were in attendance.

**46. COMMUNICATIONS.**

Nothing was raised under this item.

**47. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING HELD ON 18TH DECEMBER, 2013**

The minutes of the previous meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission held on 18<sup>th</sup> December, 2013, were considered.

Resolved: - That the minutes of the previous meeting be agreed as a correct record.

**48. SCRUTINY OF CURRENT ARRANGEMENTS TO COUNTER CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM.**

The Chairperson of the Improving Lives Select Commission welcomed all representatives of Rotherham's agencies working to counter Child Sexual Exploitation in the Borough.

Members of the Improving Lives Select Commission, along with the members of the Select Commissions, had read a number of documents that outlined previous and continuing work to counter Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The documents had been circulated with the agenda and included: -

- A précis of recent CSE reviews and inspection reports and a summary of their recommendations;
- The review of the response to CSE in Rotherham conducted by Steve Ashley, Independent Chair of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Board;
- Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary South Yorkshire Police's response to CSE – findings of an inspection commissioned by the Police and Crime Commissioner;
- Barnardo's Rotherham Practice Report;
- "If only someone had listened" Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups;
- The report to Rotherham's Cabinet outlining the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Board CSE Action Plan – Six-month progress report.

The Strategic Director for Children and Young People's Services gave a presentation that provided an overview on how all agencies were working together to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

The presentation covered: -

- **National Context: -**
  - Recognised as one of the most important challenges;
  - Intelligence and practice was continuing to develop and local differences in approach existed;
  - There was currently no national performance measures for benchmarking purposes available;
  - The presentation outlined the large number of national reports and reviews that had taken place/been published in the past few years;
  - **All of the documents had been fed into the development of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board's Action Plan, the forthcoming document refresh would take account of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups' Final Report.**
- **Definition and summary of CSE: -**
  - Was found in the 'Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation' document, 2009;
  - The range of the different types of CSE were considered;
  - The networks and different types of CSE structure/organisations was also considered;

- Common CSE myths were shared.
- **The Local Profile: -**
  - Data for 2012/2013 and 2013/2014 (to December) showed that, of the total contacts to social services, the number of contacts, and the relative overall percentage, relating to reports of CSE was relatively low;
  - The local profile of CSE reports in Rotherham was shared, along with the most common model of CSE seen;
  - This data was informing the targeting of services to geographical hotspots to prevent future exploitation, disrupt potential risky behaviours and identify and pursue offenders.
- **The CSE Team and Partnership: -**
  - The organisation of Rotherham's Countering CSE team was shown. The team was made up of Social Care professionals, Police and other partners, including Barnardos, GROW, nurse practitioners and Safe@Last;
  - An additional detective was due to join the team to further increase capacity;
  - External funding had been secured for some aspects of the Partners' work to 2016;
  - The wide-range of agencies within the CSE partnership included many professionals and organisations;
  - Leadership structure of the CSE Team and Partnership was the role of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board's Sub-group (known as Gold), for strategic leadership, and the Multi-agency Operational Managers' Group (known as Silver), for operational leadership. Other regional and national structures were in place. Rotherham's Children, Young People and Families' Partnership also monitored this.
- **CSE Strategy in summary: -**
  - Overarching priorities: - Prevent, Protect and Pursue;
  - Seven strategic actions: -
    1. Governance and leadership;
    2. Training and awareness;
    3. Communication;
    4. Protection of children;
    5. Protection and support for victims;
    6. Disrupting and stopping CSE-linked activity;
    7. Bringing perpetrators to justice and preventing re-offending.
  - A named person was linked to each of the seven strategic actions;
  - The Performance and Quality Team was providing regular updates.

- **Key achievements of the CSE Strategy (Leadership and Governance, Prevent, Protect and Pursue themes), and**
- **Achievements and progress in 2013/2014 to counter CSE: -**
  - 2,800 staff, Councillors, young people and members of the public attended a training or awareness event between April, 2012, - December, 2013;
  - All secondary schools were engaged with CSE prevention;
  - In 2012/2013 911 pupils had participated in workshops, in 2013/2014 to date it was 1150 pupils;
  - 1587 informal curriculum sessions had been delivered by the Integrated Youth Support Services on CSE related topics;
  - 'Train the Trainer' programme being rolled out across the Partnership;
  - Communication strategy in place to include communications with the public, local communities, faith groups, LGBT groups and migrant families;
  - Leaflets for parents/carers and young people had been developed and were widely available;
  - Event held for local hoteliers to raise awareness;
  - The launch of the 'See Something, Say Something' campaign would take place in February, 2014;
  - Funding bids were continuing to further develop this work;
  - The CSE Team had been expanded to include members from the Voluntary and Community and Health Sectors;
  - The regional CSE risk assessment tool was being utilised;
  - Licensing Services was engaged;
  - Social Care cases being led by the CSE team was increasing, along with other social care teams' support;
  - Joint investigations had increased from 2012-2013 to 2013-2014;
  - Safe@Last were receiving referrals for support following runaway incidents;
  - A new initiative had been launched to provide confidential services to young witnesses and victims of crime. This was continuing to imbed;
  - Increased disruption activity was taking place. At November, 2013, there had been seven attrition activities, compared to 3 during 2012-2013;
  - Abduction Notices were being continuing to increase compared to previous years;
  - One successful conviction and a number of cases were awaiting court;
  - Local and Regional Operations were taking place;
  - Perpetrators in custody and in the community under the supervision of probation had robust Risk Management Plans in place;
  - A CSE Police Analyst had been recruited;
  - Changes to the Crown Prosecution Service had been initiated;

- Changing practices were being explored to seek prosecution without victim co-operation.
- **Areas for improvement: -**
  - The Action Plan would be refreshed and refined to ensure that it incorporated recommendations from the Reviews and the OCC report. This was planned for February, 2014;
  - The location and organisation of teams to create a full Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in Riverside House;
  - Review of pathways between health services and CSE Teams (following the recruitment of a nurse practitioner);
  - Improved analysis of intelligence.

Questions followed from the Strategic Director's presentation and the following issues were raised that followed a number of themes/areas of the documents: -

- **Prevent: education and training interventions and their efficacy, engagement by all partners and community groups, engaging with young people, understanding and analysis of intelligence and hot spots, reporting mechanisms and communication and media strategies: -**
  - Were all agencies prioritising training?;
  - Was there equity of coverage for all schools? Were all schools engaging in the information and training support available?;
  - Was Personal, Social and Health Education within the curriculum being 'swamped', and was it given sufficient teaching time? How is this issue being addressed in schools?.
- **Protect: risk assessment tools, information sharing between partners, referral pathways and staffing: -**
  - Were staffing resources adequate to respond to the Action Plans?;
  - Frontline workers were a key arm to countering and eradicating CSE, were they being adequately supported and did they have manageable caseloads?;
  - What role could school governors play in countering CSE, given their training, knowledge and local intelligence?;
  - Was the risk assessment tool in use the most relevant and did it allow information sharing with other authorities/responsible bodies;
  - The Multi-Agency Support Hub (MASH) would be a positive development and enable information sharing to take place;
  - Operational Manager for the multi-agency team – were they able to ensure that different agencies' had shared priorities?;
  - Did silo working take place amongst the agencies' working relationships. If so, what strategies were in place to address

- these?;
- Who was in overall control of what information was shared? Different agencies operated different thresholds for sharing information. What work was taking place to ensure consistency?.
  - **Pursue: including support for victims, learning lessons, offender management and prosecutions: -**
    - Was enough being done to ensure that the voice of the child was being represented in the Action Plans and the work of all partners?;
    - Given the focus on CSE nationally, how is learning shared across other Local Authorities and agencies?;
    - What was being done to challenge the attitudes that existed amongst perpetrators that CSE was acceptable?;
    - How do you ensure that resources across social care were directed proportionately to ensure that issues such as domestic abuse or neglect remain a high priority?;
    - Current police priorities had a focus on acquisitive crime; how do agencies ensure that countering CSE remains a priority?;
    - Working with victims and winning their trust and confidence – was enough being done to support the victims?.
  - **General areas: including leadership, location, culture, information sharing within Rotherham and beyond, resources and Governance: -**
    - Were there tight timescales around all of the Action Plans responding to CSE issues for when reviews would take place?;
    - Were there clear lines of accountability relating to the Action Plans' action points?;
    - Were all Partners operationally involved and did all Partners have the same strategic buy-in?;
    - Public confidence in the public sector agencies;
    - Gender profiles of victims and perpetrators, were all vulnerable groups supported?;
    - Cultural messages given via the media relating to body image pressure, the sexualisation of childhood and the availability of pornography – how do these impact on the prevalence of CSE and attitudes towards it?.

The Chairperson thanked all agencies for attending, and all of the Elected Members in attendance for the questions that they had asked and the thoughts that they had shared.

The Chairperson stated her belief that Rotherham was moving forward in terms of countering CSE and actively delivering child protection. The Improving Lives Select Commission would continue to monitor this area. There was clear evidence that commitment to multi-agency working

existed and this was something that all Partners shared and that the Local Safeguarding Children Board also prioritised and expected. The Chairperson was also mindful of the context of decreasing resources and urged that the best use be made of the available budgets and resources. Children's safeguarding remained everyone's business and all agencies needed to ensure that they worked to the best of their ability to ensure this was done.

Resolved: - (1) That the information shared be noted.

(2) That an update be provided to the Improving Lives Select Commission in one year's time to follow-up the progress of the Action Plan.

**49. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING: -**

Resolved: - That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on Wednesday 12<sup>th</sup> March, 2014, to start at 1.30 p.m. in the Rotherham Town Hall.