

ROTHERHAM BOROUGH COUNCIL – REPORT TO AUDIT COMMITTEE

1. Meeting:	Audit Committee
2. Date:	19 th November 2014
3. Title:	Risks and Issues arising from the Jay Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 - 2013
4. Directorate:	Environment and Development Services

5. Summary.

This report identifies how risks and issues arising from the Jay Report into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 – 2013 are being addressed by the Council, and how the Audit Committee can obtain assurance that effective responses are being made to the risks and issues raised.

The main responsibilities for the Audit Committee involve ensuring recommendations are appropriately progressed, ensuring there is appropriate risk assessment and management, and receiving reports arising from Internal Audit work in specific areas.

6. Recommendations.

The Audit Committee is asked

- to note the implications of the Jay Report, recent Ofsted inspections and other related reviews on the work of Internal Audit and the Audit Committee
- to agree to receive further regular reports on progress in relation to the work identified.

7. Proposals and Details.

The Jay Report details the findings of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. The inquiry, which was undertaken at the Council's request, was completed by Alexis Jay and published in August 2014.

It highlights a number of factors that need improving to strengthen the care provided to vulnerable Children, including:

- Better strategic approach
- Assurance over core standards of practice
- Better care risk assessments
- Assessment & care planning
- Children's homes & residential units
- Training & awareness
- Reaching out to community groups
- Earlier and better prevention
- Performance monitoring and management
- Information systems
- Resources.

In the first instance it will be for management and the Executive to implement recommendations made. Scrutiny will look into any matters to test out the effectiveness of new arrangements. The Safeguarding Board will continue to have a lead role in monitoring CSE and the Corporate Improvement Board will include CSE as one of its priorities.

The report relating to the recent Ofsted inspections is due to be published on 19 November and will doubtless make reference to these issues and recommendations for their improvement.

Also to be incorporated into the Council's actions will be (1) the 'Summary of Recommendations for All Agencies' which was produced by the National Working Group Network on Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and (2) recommendations from earlier reports collated by the Safeguarding Board, which are set out in full at Appendix 5 to the Jay Report.

The Audit Committee will, as usual, receive regular updates on progress against inspection recommendations. This will enable the Committee to fulfil its terms of reference with regard to the Council's response to the risks and issues raised. It will also enable the Committee to ask for further information in any particular areas, particularly where progress might not be as required.

The Jay Report makes 15 recommendations. Again, these are mostly for Executive decision making and professional practice, although there are some assurances the Audit Committee could look for to confirm the risks (of failing

to adopt and apply appropriate arrangements) are being managed. Comments are included below:

	Recommendation	Comment regarding Audit / Audit Committee assurance
1	Senior managers should ensure that there are up-to-date risk assessments on all children affected by CSE. These should be of consistently high quality and clearly recorded on the child's file.	Ensure there is an effective professional audit and quality assurance of risk assessments.
2	The numeric scoring tool should be kept under review. Professional judgements about risk should be clearly recorded where these are not adequately captured by the numeric tool.	As above
3	Managers should develop a more strategic approach to protecting looked after children who are sexually exploited. This must include the use of out-of-area placements. The Borough should work with other authorities to minimise the risks of sexual exploitation to all children, including those living in placements where they may become exposed to CSE. The strategy should include improved arrangements for supporting children in out-of-area placements when they require leaving care services.	Ensure risk management arrangements are comprehensive and highlight the risks involved and their mitigation. Ensure there are regular reports on progress and risk
4	The Council should make every effort to make help reach out to victims of CSE who are not yet in touch with services. In particular, it should make every effort to restore open access and outreach work with children affected by CSE to the level previously provided by Risky Business.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
5	The remit and responsibilities of the joint CSE team should be urgently decided and communicated to all concerned in a way that leaves no room for doubt.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
6	Agencies should commit to introducing a single manager for the multi-agency CSE team. This should be implemented as quickly as possible.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
7	The Council, together with the Police, should review the social care resources available to the CSE team, and make sure these are consistent with the need and demand for services.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.

	Recommendation	Comment regarding Audit / Audit Committee assurance
8	Wider children's social care, the CSE team and integrated youth and support services should work better together to ensure that children affected by CSE are well supported and offered an appropriate range of preventive services.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
9	All services should recognise that once a child is affected by CSE, he or she is likely to require support and therapeutic intervention for an extended period of time. Children should not be offered short-term intervention only, and cases should not be closed prematurely.	Ensure audit and quality assurance checks consider the period of support provided to Children.
10	The Safeguarding Board, through the CSE Sub-group, should work with local agencies, including health, to secure the delivery of post-abuse support services.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
11	All agencies should continue to resource, and strengthen, the quality assurance work currently underway under the auspices of the Safeguarding Board.	Ensure there is an effective professional audit and quality assurance of risk assessments.
12	There should be more direct and more frequent engagement by the Council and also the Safeguarding Board with women and men from minority ethnic communities on the issue of CSE and other forms of abuse.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
13	The Safeguarding Board should address the under-reporting of sexual exploitation and abuse in minority ethnic communities.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
14	The issue of race should be tackled as an absolute priority if it is a significant factor in the criminal activity of organised child sexual abuse in the Borough.	Monitor progress on implementation of the recommendation.
15	We recommend to the Department of Education that the guiding principle on redactions in Serious Case Reviews must be that the welfare of any children involved is paramount.	This is a recommendation for the Department For Education

It is proposed to bring an update on these activities to the Audit Committee alongside the regular reports received on progress against inspections

recommendations (i.e twice yearly). Any specific issues requiring more immediate attention will be presented as required.

The Audit Committee will also receive regular updates with regard to the management of risks.

There are some other specific issues raised by the Jay Report where Internal Audit would be qualified to look into and comment on arrangements. These are:

- Taxi licensing arrangements
- Home to school transport
- Data protection & security
- Review of the whistle blowing process - adequacy and effectiveness of arrangements for and the management of the policy and procedures for the whistle blowing process
- Adequacy of performance management arrangements including monitoring, supervision and the provision of sound information systems.

Internal Audit has already commenced a review of the Council's Home to School Transport arrangements.

8. Finance

The risks and issues arising from the CSE inquiry require ongoing management action. In some cases additional resources may be necessary to implement the relevant actions or mitigate risks. Any additional costs associated with the risks should be reported to the SLT and Members for consideration on a case by case basis.

9. Risks and Uncertainties

Failure to address the risks and issues arising from the CSE inquiry and other external reviews of the Council's services would perpetuate the delivery of unacceptable services and standards to vulnerable Children. It could also result in significant financial pressures, reputation damage and imposed intervention.

10. Policy and Performance Agenda Implications

The protection of vulnerable Children is a key priority for the Council.

11. Background Papers and Consultation

Alexis Jay Report.

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