

**OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY MANAGEMENT BOARD
18th December, 2014**

Present:- Councillor Steele (in the Chair); Councillors Ahmed, Currie, J. Hamilton, Middleton, Parker, Read, Sansome, Sims, Vines, Watson and Wyatt.

Also in attendance were Councillors Reeder, Turner and M. Vines.

78. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest made at the meeting.

79. CALL-IN ISSUES - TO CONSIDER ANY ISSUES REFERRED FOR CALL-IN

There were no issues referred for call-in.

80. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

The member of the public did not wish to ask a question.

81. SCRUTINY OF ROTHERHAM'S PLANS TO TACKLE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The objectives of this session were:-

Session 1: Support to Victims and their Families

Objectives:-

- To understand the long term plans for support to victims and their families and to ensure they are fit for purpose
- To test out evidence from the previous session with advocate organisations and to understand how it is working in practice
- To determine whether universal services are working to support victims and their families

Representatives from the following agencies were in attendance: -

- Zlakha Ahmed, Apna Haq
- Hayley Fisher, Victim Support
- Karen Goddard, Barnados
- Steve Oversby, Barnados
- Bina Parmar, Safeguarding Lead, National Working Group
- Sue Greig, Public Health Consultant, RMBC
- Chrissy Wright, Strategic Commissioner, RMBC

Chrissy Wright, Strategic Commissioner, and Sue Greig, Public Health Consultant, gave the following powerpoint presentation on the commissioning of immediate and longer term post-abuse child sexual exploitation support:-

Background

- Post-Jay report the Leader of the Council announced funding of £120,000 for immediate commissioning of post-abuse Child Sexual Exploitation support. This was to fund services up to the end of March, 2015
- A Needs Analysis is in development to inform longer term commissioning

Immediate Support to June, 2015

RMBC

- GROW £20,000
- Women's Counselling/Pitstop for Men £42,000
- South Yorkshire Community Foundation £20,000
- Contingency £11,000
- Rotherham Women's Refuge £27,000
- Total £120,000 funding

Plus

- Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator £53,000 in Youth Start revenue funded

Immediate Support to March 2015

Partners

- Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group - Increased capacity in Child and Adult Mental Health Services - £200,000

Police and Crime Commissioner

- Funding of 2 additional IDVAs £80,000

Helpline

- Helpline commissioned from NSPCC
- Single number 24/7
- Confidential e-mail
- For victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation abuse
- For all ages
- Listening, supported and referral
- To June, 2015 £20,000

Child Sexual Exploitation Needs Analysis

- To understand the scale and nature of child sexual exploitation in Rotherham
- To understand the needs of victims (child and adult, current and historic)
- To understand the triggers, motivations and needs of perpetrators
- To make evidence based recommendations to inform the development, provision and commissioning of services and programmes to prevent and protect victims and to pursue perpetrators
- Phase 1 November-December, 2014: focus on post-abuse support

Gap analysis on modelled need vs current capacity

Evidence base on effective interventions

- Phase 2 December 2014-March, 2015: incorporate learning into complete Needs Analysis to support holistic 'prevent, protect and pursue' child sexual exploitation agenda
- From June, 2015 for 3 years

A co-ordinated commissioning approach jointly with partners Rotherham Council/Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group/Police and Crime Commissioner

Needs-led, outcomes focussed commissioning

Rotherham Council £180,000 per annum for 3 years

Includes helpline, post-abuse child sexual exploitation support, specialist counselling and advocacy

Voice of the Victim/Survivor for Longer Term Commissioning

- Existing commissioned services to capture the voice of Service users
- Co-ordinated plan in relation to wider consultation in development
- Acknowledged not easy to capture voices

Questions were asked by members of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board on the presentation and on the plans for support services to victims.

Councillor M. Vines – Do the services you offer give the victims the strength and confidence to go to the Police and report the people who have put them through this awful crime?

Hayley Fisher, Victim Support, stated that they had found that consistent support was key so as to build trust and a rapport with the victim/survivor. An enhanced service was now used, project managed by Hayley. The difference of this service was the time spent to build up the rapport and the commitment given to the individual which helped build up the trust.

This was often a difficulty with the victims in that they had been let down so many times before.

Karen Goddard, Barnados, reported that a lot of the children that came through to Barnados were actually not acknowledging that they were in an abusive relationship and not willing to work with statutory agencies (or any agencies) so workers could be working very hard to make contact with the young person. It had to be done in an informal and non-threatening way and when they do feel confident, start to broker meetings with the Police and break down the barriers. It was not just a case of getting a young person to see a worker once and they would start talking but a long process. There had been quite significant success over the last year with quite a few disclosures from young people in Rotherham that Barnados worked with.

Sue Greig, Public Health, stated that from the needs analysis work, being open and trusting seems to be the most important thing to get young people in to talk to someone. It may be years later that specialist therapeutic intervention is what people are seeking. It may take quite a bit of time and that just what heard so far from the various agencies that are working with survivors that there can be quite a pattern of contact and then go away and then come back. Just having an organisation that people know they could come back to that will listen was crucial and needed to be built upon.

Zlakha Ahmed, Apna Haq, reported that they offered support around domestic violence and with Asian young girls aged 16+ years. They did not work with anyone younger than 16 unless it was in conjunction with another organisation.

There were serious issues because in terms of Rotherham, it was the Pakistani community and the majority of Asian girls on the whole were not supposed to have boyfriends and dating and when there were those type of difficulties the young women did not feel they could share. On the few occasions females had come forward their parents had been involved and, because the response had not been really thought out, the parents had taken them back to Pakistan.

Bina Parmar, National Working Group, stated that there was clearly a lot of work taking place around therapeutic interventions and care of victims of CSE. She is working with a number of Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and a member of Rotherham LSCB CSE Sub-Group, so pleased to see a lot of work is taking place. Having read the Strategy and recently provided feedback on the need for therapeutic intervention and longer term is not really well reflected in the strategy. It would be useful to reflect that in the Strategy because doing ourselves an injustice.

It has previously been acknowledged that there is a need for longer term victim intervention for young people and adults that had been identified as victims of CSE. What is also being seen, is a gap between those who do

meet thresholds for intervention and those who do not. What we find is that victims of CSE are identified through indicators and often have to meet statutory thresholds

Something needs to be acknowledged when thinking about support and care for young people and victims of CSE. Those that do not meet those particular thresholds there is work to be done to minimise those risks from escalating into harm.

Risk assessments – might be talking about later on. Young people often categorised into different markers of risk – high, medium and low risk. We need to think how we work with young people who are rated low risk as well; because it gives an opportunity for intervention and prevent them from becoming victims of crime.

We need to allow professionals to make that professional judgement around that young person. We know that risks change rapidly due to chaotic lifestyles of those young people. There needs to be multi agency and a holistic risk assessment to understand the risks to the young person and their families.

Steve Oversby, Barnados, stated that Barnados was not commissioned by Rotherham but was a partner with Rotherham. We probably put about £75,000 of our own money into Rotherham to help around CSE. We have done that since September, 2013.

Risk assessment and professional judgement around the young people – it is about good quality sharing information around children and young people from all agencies and quite difficult thing to do sometimes. Sometimes it is soft information that comes from outside the CSE hub.

From Barnardo's perspective, our work in Rotherham is about early intervention and prevention and supporting young people that go through some of these difficult times. Probably worth pointing out that Barnados opened its first CSE Service in Bradford in 1994 so we have a long history on providing CSE services. An offer was made to visit its work in Bradford. Whilst Bradford it is not perfect because it is not an exact science, but it is an historic multi-agency project with a track record of change and development.

If you do not get the voice of the child you do not have a child centred approach to the work you are doing and you will probably fail and we have evidence from the work we have done. It has to be child centred. We have developed our services based on that.

Bina Parmar – It is really important to have the voice of the young person when thinking about plans for their future. It would be helpful for the voice of young people to be represented at strategic level as well and that has been considered as part of the sub-group. Not necessarily a young person themselves but ensure that there is representation listened to and

valued at that strategic level. None of us are experts in the field of CSE apart from the young person and need to learn from them.

Support for victims – think of all the stuff staff have to deal with as well as the victims themselves. They are dealing with very traumatic cases. Build some specialism in amongst the staff, not only case supervision but trauma supervision.

Councillor Middleton – Do any of you have any ideas how to prevent CSE as opposed to treating it once it had happened?

Steve Oversby – From our perspective when look at the work we do in Rotherham fundamentally we want to turn our attention to the 4a's assertion outreach. If you want to try and tackle this you need to get initial contact with children on their terms and on their turf. Go out to find the young people. We want to be out there and do early intervention with young people which not badged "CSE". That is where attention needs to be because that is where early intervention happens. That is where multi-agency groups need to work together and with the community groups; they are the ones that will help with the information.

Bina Parmar – the prosecution of offenders is number one for the Police and Crown Prosecution Service but also has to be a multi-agency response; Safeguarding is everyone's business. Need to be sharing that little bit of information that might form the bigger picture. For example, the Police need to be utilising the Legislation better and engaging with Licensing much better because there are disruption activities. There might not be enough evidence to prosecute but use disruption activities. When identify areas of concern scrutinise what is being done to disrupt activity in the area and the perpetrators.

Prevention – need to do more to build the confidence and resilience of young people to be able to identify risky situations. Need to be doing more training for professionals in identifying risk and building confidence of professionals to escalate concerns that are not meeting the thresholds. More intensive community engagement. There has been a great deal of work done in trying to raise the awareness in Rotherham and South Yorkshire, more than many other parts of the country. Need to build on that work. Communicate with parents and young people to build confidence and foster parents and in a residential setting. Lot more to do for prevention, education and awareness.

Scrutinise process and arrangements – more needs to be added to the Strategy. I think there needs to be a CSE Co-ordinator at strategic level driving the Strategy forward. I am not sure whether the CSE Co-ordinator is operational or strategic – the 2 are very different. There are lots of very committed and dedicated professionals but all have their day jobs and it needs to be driven forward by a strategic co-ordinator and not just on a time limited basis.

Chrissy Wright – There is, as part of the Safeguarding Group, a Gold Group and the Silver Group which is the operational group. There is a multi-agency body where hotspots are identified and information shared. We know in schools prevention and learning work is taking place through the CSE Teams. Disruptive activity is very high profile in Rotherham so just do not get somebody on CSE you can actually prosecute them on various things to disrupt their activities and lifestyles. Multi-agency work is in place.

Councillor Wyatt – It has been mentioned that young people with learning disabilities have been targeted by perpetrators of child sexual exploitation. This is an especially vulnerable group; what services are being commissioned to support/education/inform those with learning disabilities in the Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council area?

Sue Greig – We do know that there is an additional risk factor through the Needs Analysis. It is not jumping out as a high number at the moment but know from other evidence that there is likely to be an increased risk. On the prevention side of that work, is the programme of awareness raising across the Borough and will include special schools where will reach those young people. It is an area we need to develop further and need to develop intelligence on how much these children with learning developments are over represented in the cohort. We are looking to support and been exposed to these issues. Something people more aware of and working on.

Deputy Leader – This is why support for the victims and survivors is important and why we should look at it. If we manage to prevent it, it is a good outcome. However there are victims that been through it and we need to look how we can help those and action prosecution.

At the centre of this is the victim and what support they need to go through that process. There are a number of investigations and the National Crime Agency investigation starts today. Those victims will start to get increased commitments about these investigations. They will have numerous interviews to go to and may have to move house for safety. Support to victims is very important to get successful prosecution going forward.

The Needs Analysis has already highlighted a gap in that very practical support. A lot of money has gone into the therapeutic support but how can we offer that very practical support in attending interviews, access to benefits and moving house. Barnardos in Bradford have been very involved and they have a model that we should look at how to provide a “buddy” to help them get through and secure successful prosecutions. Strategic co-ordination has been identified as an issue with a CSE Strategic lead being appointed by the Council. I think it will be very welcome in bringing some of these issues together and ensuring all agencies are working together.

Councillor Parker – Identified 3 lots of funding which totals about £360,000 initially to get into the swing. Also stated that over the next 3 years about £180,000 per annum to spend on CSE in Rotherham. In your opinion do you consider that is enough? Have you identified funding from anywhere else post the 3 year term?

Disruption does concern me. I cannot see the point of doing it to stop something happening at a particular point in time, if, they will move somewhere else which puts the individual or other individuals still at jeopardy. What are you putting in place to assist the victims when you are disrupting to ensure that perpetrators just not going somewhere else?

Chrissy Wright – The funding of £360,000 is partnership funding across Health and the Police and Crime Commissioner. For Rotherham Council, we have identified a need for £180-£200,000 per year for the next 3 years. We have done what we call market testing and talked to providers and looking at the costs already it is a ratcheting up of the £120,000. We think it is enough but of course we will review this constantly over the 3 year period against the performance and value for money. The reason it is for 3 years, apart from the fact that at any point may be issue about termination, we can actually review it and recommission and seek to have another model or different provider etc. so we are able as service develops, we are able to understand better what the needs are and what will cost going forward. At this moment in time we feel it is right amount of money.

Disruption – What is found that perpetrators tend to have family base in a place closely connected to their community and them physically moving away from an area is uneasy to them and yes they would go and do it elsewhere but this is a national issue not just Rotherham and there is a very close sharing of information across the national region.

The perpetrators are profiled and followed and understood. Information is shared and sitting at the higher CSE group, I can witness the passion of the Police to stop this.

Sue Greig – Investigation and the importance of doing this in partnership not least with the voluntary and community sector. I think we need to remember that Rotherham Women's Counselling Services we can use that Service at the moment because of Lottery funding not just funding from local government, police etc. The voluntary and community sector have an important part to play in this.

Councillor Parker – That worries me what you just said. The Women's part of it saying Lottery funding to run it now that could run out straight away. My concern is regardless of that will you have enough money to run the Service properly?

Sue Greig – Really need to plan and keep coming back to Elected Members with the intelligence so are planning as a whole community.

Bina Parmar – Disruption – I agree I would love to lock the perpetrators up unfortunately Child Sexual Exploitation is not actually an offence in Legislation and quite difficult to prove as have to rely on other offences or have evidence that a sexual crime has been committed.

Unfortunately the Crime Prosecution Service's fundamental test has to be passed. There is a need for disruption activity to take place before sexual offences have been committed/proved.

Alongside disruption there has to be confidence building and resilience work with young people and build confidence amongst universal services to identify early signs and indicators so they can report any concerns before the crime has been committed.

There are a lot of things to be done with the Crown Prosecution Services about implementing the new Guidelines which were published last year which talks about have specialist prosecutors and training of prosecutors. South Yorkshire have had prosecuted a number of Child Sexual Exploitation cases and trafficking cases. I think there needs to be much more done in terms of works with the Crown Prosecution Service.

Steve Oversby – Disruption is good way to bring perpetrators but proving is difficult. Some of the young people will never get to Court unless support is given so that is where our history and experience comes in. One example at Bristol Court case recently the Judge said that about 50% of the young people and 50% perpetrators would never get to Court without the support of Barnados. Support has to be the key.

Councillor Ahmed –There may be some children who do not hit the radar in terms of Needs Analysis, however, may do with a bit of intelligence and information gathered from CAMHS for example. How are we working with other Services to gather that data because surely there is a pattern of behaviour? Will we be taking that into consideration?

How do we gather the voice of young people and their wishes and feelings? What services are involved (for example Victim Support?) Is the referral process and helpline aware of different cultural needs? Are we going to put a young person at risk if make a referral? Would they make a referral to a specialist service?

Sue Greig – In terms of how we are working with the Needs Analysis looking at early risk factors, yes we should very much look at that. We have a joint intelligence group we have pulled together to support the Needs Analysis from Health, Police, and Council. We have lot of input from a whole variety of voluntary and community sector organisations and draw on their intelligence, do quantitative work or presence in service and see issues such as self harm. Also we are trying to pull together the soft intelligence in terms of bringing some of this to life and looking to pull together case studies illustrating the different journeys people can take and how we need to pick them up early. This needs translating into more robust pathways looking at all different service areas which might pick up

risk and vulnerability at an early stage and map through someone presenting at A&E, mental health services etc., how would it track through to what lower level of support to pick up early intervention would be put in an earlier stage. Not all the pathways are connected at the moment and that work needs to be strengthened.

There is a huge awareness across the community. There was a really powerful event organised by the voluntary and community sector on 5th November with 150 people coming from a variety of voluntary and community sector organisations. They were asked at that point to pull together and feed through to commissioners the voice and influence information and that is still coming through. So organisations out there working with young people and parents are still in dialogue and feeding information through.

We are considering having some focus groups specifically targeted with victims and survivors that we cannot reach through the voluntary and community sector to pull through voice and influence work. We are also looking to commission specific work around Barnados and the ethnic minority aspect and the experience of child sexual exploitation and draw on evidence from elsewhere and in that the whole diversity of Barnardos and ethnic minority.

We know that some groups are over represented in our service and some under but there are still issues in those communities. We want to pull together the voice and influence work that has happened and still happening but more co-ordinated and will feed into the final report to inform what we commission.

At all levels we are listening to young people's voices. Also consideration could be given to peer support in this area. An approach that has been used in a number of areas where people that had those experiences support others and that was an area we would be interested to pursue and find out what other areas doing.

The victim and survivor voices at the strategic level and how build that in and respond to that.

Chrissy Wright – The helpline was 1 of the most important things. Anyone can ring it. In terms of referral, we have done a lot of work around those pathways to go through the helpline to the various different specialist services.

Zlakha Ahmed – In terms of our experience over the years we were supporting a number of adult women that had gone through child sexual exploitation at a younger age many which had not been in Rotherham. At other times we did awareness raising with Pakistani men abusing Pakistani girls. Also had Pakistani women that had been abused by white men.

One of the cases we were involved with was a 16 year old who disclosed at school about a boyfriend that was abusing her. It was referred to Social Services but initially, when had meeting with Social Services, they said to us as an organisation that they had not met with the girl because they felt we were the experts. In terms of the work, we want to do that work but we have to make sure we have the resources.

We need to make sure within agencies that they understand what the different issues are in terms of diversity and BME. They need to understand arranged marriages and domestic violence. We are having a day's training and talking about taking it into the Council about child sexual exploitation and diversity issues.

Survivors – It is important that agencies like us are worked with to ensure the BME voices that are missing at the moment are brought forward and that there is confidence building work in our communities to enable young girls to come forward.

Bina Parmar – We have been talking about girls and young women but need to remember the boys and young men are exploited and will always need services and may present in different ways. Need to think about different models, about grooming and exploitation, not just in Rotherham but wider as well. On line exploitation of women is needs reflecting in the Strategy. There are different communities and different groups of young people and we need to think about a more diverse workforce so young people can relate to the workers and disclose and feel trust in the workers.

Councillor C. Vines – It is nearly 4 months on from the Jay report. Just what has been achieved? Still have perpetrators at large. Seems all that has happened is produced a report. We need action and not talking shops. Why do we still have the perpetrators on the street? These girls meet them day in day out. I want to know if agencies are working together are they doing something and what action is being taken?

The Chairman – I think this is directed to the Crown Prosecution Service and Police.

Councillor C. Vines – Has there been an increase in the number of victims coming forward, if any since, since the publication of the Jay report?

Zlakha Ahmed – We have had a number of disclosures where young women have not given their names.

Deputy Leader – In terms of the Council response, those agencies, particularly the Women's Counselling Service, saw a large number of referrals. This was something we have to be aware of and there needs to be more work done on what the barriers are for BME women in coming forward.

Steve Oversby – We have not had an increase of referrals. From Barnardo's perspective, we have seen 47% increase in the numbers across the country and that has to be because we have put more resources in but not in every locality. There are support mechanisms in every locality. I can see in long term the number gone up.

Hayley Fisher – We did see an increase but not vast increase. It is instilling that confidence. For example historical sexual cases I know some agencies mentioned not just dealing with children but dealing with adults. For me as an organisation it is about not being precious. There are a lot of pressure on resources and so actually voice your boundaries and be really confident of what you can give. Duplicated services can be quite damaging as well and it is about working together and more than ever now.

We do work hand in hand with CPS and Police and have a very good relationship with the Witness Care Unit because we were still seeing children walking through Court doors with no support. The advanced and enhanced service is about time and backing up the referrals in advance and offering the support they need.

Councillor Currie – What resources are in existence currently, both universal and bespoke services?

How is the vulnerability of victims being addressed by services?

Do the services provide support for the families of the victims? If so how?

Do you have confidence that the links between the services and different needs are understood? Does the DSG contribute any resource to the commissioning process?

Chrissy Wright – A detailed answer on the different strands would be provided.

There is money for Prevent in schools. A member of the CSE team is based in schools. The prevent elements are financed from revenue budgets. The post-abuse support has been funded through other funding streams. has been a special pot of money.

Councillor J. Hamilton – What are the challenges to providing the correct support to victims and their families?

How do survivors who no longer live in Rotherham access support?

How do we know?

Chrissy Wright – Every council had to look within themselves with regard to this. Survivors that no longer live in Rotherham can come and access Rotherham support services but you would hope within their own locality there have been support measures put in place.

The national media is on it at the moment and should be services in place in every locality in the country.

Councillor Read - How are the voices of victims being heard and assisting with the commissioning process?

How are the advocates gathering and using evidence from victims to feed into the commissioning process?

Objectives:-

- Victims and survivors are not a single community, their needs are defined individually, how is this informing the commissioning arrangements?
- How effectively is this area of work reflected in the CSE Action Plan?

Councillor Sansome – Is the transition from Children’s to Adult Services being built into the commissioning of services?

Chrissy Wright – Yes the targets are more detail in that but work that we have commissioned in the immediate is from 0-25 years and beyond a Family Service. Yes the transition from Children to Adult is there but the range of some of the victims identified in Jay report are now adults so have to have the whole age range.

Councillor Parker – You said that the number of people coming forward at risk the Police looking at prosecuting 150-200 live cases at the moment. In your estimation, as the people dealing with the situation from voluntary sector, what kind of figures are you actually looking at and is that a reasonable assessment?

Steve Oversby – In Bradford it was 120-200. The Jay report statement of 1,400 did not surprise me.

I would suggest Rotherham is no different to other local authorities. The key is the work done in terms of prosecutions and disruption and bringing the perpetrators to Court. In terms of proactive work all that were are talking about today will take Rotherham forward. This is not short term; it is long term so there will be difficulties in funding and capacity but fundamentally important to embed on that Strategy. Everyone can write action plans but they have to be escalated.

Councillor Wyatt – You said about seeing children walking through doors of Court unsupported. That is not my experience of the Court as evidence can be given by video link etc.

Hayley Fisher – It is very rare but is still happening. It is to do with the Court listings. For me it is exploring the way work with the Crown Prosecution Service but the point I was really getting at was sometimes you do pick up referrals for children that go to Court not for child sexual exploitation but about sexual violence and had no support. As part of our role we do have a Witness Service and being the voice of children and young people and vulnerable children going to Court but there is still the assumption that under a certain age there will be video link. What we have done in South Yorkshire what was not happening that children who go to Court have a demonstration of the video and equipment before they give evidence so there are lot of constraints to me. The project was funded through the Police and Crime Commissioner and was a key element with children getting to Court without any support and did not

know what to expect and did not know that services could sit with them; sometimes an intermediary has not been identified. It is a very long journey from reporting to getting to Court but the Court case is such a big element to those young people and it can be difference between going to Court and going through to reporting. I do take on board what you are saying but it does still happen.

Bina Parmar – From a national perspective I would echo it does happen far too often. One young person said that the Court process was worse than the exploitation itself. More common for young people than children because they are not identified as vulnerable and in need of that support; especially those with learning difficulties and communication problems. The guidelines published last year does call for early consultation between the Police and the Crown Prosecution Service and identifies the needs of young people but that is not happening.

Chairman – Do you believe the project with Police and Crime Commissioner is covering that point? Do you think there are enough resources into that?

Hayley Fisher – I can only encourage what the voluntary sector is doing through the Witness Service. I have a team of individuals, myself and 3 workers, assigned to the project. Part of the need for the project put in place was to do with creating for children and young people and vulnerable young adults. We work with the Crown Prosecution Service. It was very individual to the South Yorkshire area so they can identify vulnerable people at a very early age and play the role they should be playing within the Courts. For example the Police do have a role to play because they should identify the vulnerability of the witness and drive the special measures through and sometimes that is not happening. It is getting to know these referrals in advance and can do homework before. I feel more confident and bringing back that voice of the witness and not assuming what that witness found because at a particular age should look at what they need. Had very good response around South Yorkshire with this.

Councillor C. Vines – What is the main source of your funding?

Steve Oversby – Our funding comes from public donations and all aspects of Barnados fund raising activities which allows us to decide what we want to do. 1 of our key strands over the last 10 years has been child sexual exploitation.

Local authorities fund Child Sexual Exploitation Services so in some parts I have funding from local authorities. We would match fund and put money into the local authority. We came to Rotherham and South Yorkshire because we felt there was a need here and put our resources there. So we do get some statutory income as well but most of free funding comes from the public.

Zlakha Ahmed – Currently our services are domestic violence and supporting people. Because we were aware of this issue we put a bid into

the Police and Crime Commissioner about awareness raising but we did not get it. 2 years previously we put bid into Rotherham United Football Club in terms of men and attitudes to women and sexual exploitation and again did not get funding. There is an issue in terms of voluntary sector.

Councillor Currie – How much funding comes from the Schools Forums and the Designated Schools Grant?

Chrissy Wright – None

Councillor Sims – What direct links do the voluntary sector have with the Crown Prosecution Services to report back issues raised about children and vulnerable young people not being identified and referred to the voluntary sector at an early stage?

Hayley Fisher – Our Divisional manager of South Yorkshire sites on the MOG and CPS Group which is across South Yorkshire and she feeds through all our concerns.

Because we have a Witness Service which based in all Courts around South Yorkshire we have a very good relationship with Court Managers.

I have had some feedback from the Crown Prosecution Service but not in relation to the direct concerns because that is still getting raised but we are gathering as much information as possible and do that at highest level. It has been fed through but have had no direct feedback to she is on their backs because we need answers and be confident that a young person turning up and chose not to have support not that they had not been given the option of support.

Councillor Currie – Is there a shared vision?.

I would like to see a political lead for CSE who will take it forward. I think need that accountability.

Deputy Leader – I think there is an issue around accountability but to all of us as Councillors without exception. We have a role and you as Scrutiny have a role. I think one of the issues around this is multi-agency and covers a range of issues so I think one person can lead but need all the people to take it up within their portfolios e.g. Housing. It's important that Services looks at how it can help victims. In terms of going forward a lot sits with Children Services. We have the CSE Strategic lead that has been put in place which is very welcome and in terms of lead members there is Children Services Member. Just in terms of commissioning and post-abuse commissioning, I will be political lead for that until March until in place then I think it sits with Adults and our Adults Member lead and Children Member lead have joint Member meetings. They have already had a meeting about child sexual exploitation and may pick up some of the issues around transitions. We have current victims that are children, some of the survivors are adults and responding to their needs which may be different to current victims who are children.

Councillor C. Vines – We had the Police last week and did ask them similar questions There is no legislation for CSE as such. Victims are seeing the perpetrators daily and need to get them off the streets. We need to go back to the Police and say why not look at all offences to get them off the street.

Steve Oversby – From a national perspective the NWG is doing a lot of work influencing the Government in terms of Legislation and changes for young people. It is very difficult for the Police in relation to the current law. Just taking child prostitution out of the Legislation would be a good starting point. There is a lot of training for the Police what we are doing in Rotherham to try to help them in relation to understanding the case and young people when being interviewed at an early stage because it can be quite daunting for the children. Agencies are working at a more local level with the Police and greater understanding for Police Officers to be skilled in relation to working in this area.

Bina Parmar – one of the issues in terms of building confidence, the Police are doing disruption activity and prosecuting cases where they can. But there is the lack of communication about that activity given to the agencies that are working with the young people so they can feed it back to the young people as to whether it led to prosecution or not. Unfortunately that is not happening at the moment.

Councillor J. Hamilton – Do most of your referrals come from the Police. What support do you give the victims when gone to Court and the prosecution has fallen down? How do you continue with the support?

Hayley Fisher – In the voluntary sector we do get the majority of referrals through an automatic data transfer but we are a referral organisation so can people can self-referral. We have a statutory line you can ring. We have branches in the community in every South Yorkshire area and Witness Services for all areas. We do receive referrals from a lot of other agencies like the NHS, our partner agencies such as Barnardos. The support that we offer the project that I manage at the moment offers is I so pre-trial support, support at the trial and post-support. We do have some commissioned services with the voluntary sector so can look at the counselling side. We work alongside Youthstart that offers the therapeutic side of the counselling etc. so our door never closes for a victim/survivor. If a need is still identified then signposting would come in.

Councillor J. Hamilton – What proportion that go through Court do you take forward?

Hayley Fisher – I would say a good 30% because some need less service because they are supported in Court. We do have our community services there so if need ongoing practice/emotional support that support continued through and when Court case is done that is a whole different level of support needed. Looking at resources in the community and see what the best organisation is for the victim's needs. It might not be the voluntary sector at that time but about working multi-agency and giving the victim/survivor what they need.

Councillor Parker – We now have a multi-agency hub in Riverside which is dealing with CSE. Are you involved in that as outside agencies? Do you think it would be advantageous in that hub and to be dealing with this?

Steve Oversby – We are involved in the hub. We have a worker and have done so since October, 2013. I think it is right we should not forget the agencies working outside the hub as well. I do think when we did our annual report back in October, 2013, before the Jay report, one of the key things we were saying the development of the hub and identifying a model was key to the success of the CSE Service.

Zlakha Ahmed – We looked at the hub but it was not practical because of the number of staff we have. We work quite closely and interact that way.

Councillor Wyatt – In terms of focus on the offender and the work of the organised crime group (OCG); is this being looked at?

Sue Greig – OCG use and work at national level, which Probation is involved in as well, about therapeutic responsibility of offenders. A lot of work is going on about tackling this and trying to bring into local work.

Bina Parmar – a local Police Officer within South Yorkshire is trying to explore this type of behaviour by going in and talking to them.

Councillor Ahmed – Support for staff, . Within the supervision are we ensuring we are gathering information and if there are additional training needs identified that will be put in place?

Sue Greig – It is a really important issue. I think it points to the need across the network support not only victims but it is sometimes small organisations that find themselves as the trusted organisation and they need that support. It was Social Care, Safeguarding but also about emotional health supervision. A lot of strengthening could be done for the local mental health services and local therapeutic interventions by workers who are the right people to provide it because they have the relationship but they themselves need that support because they are carrying real difficult and complex stuff. The Clinical Commissioning Group has commissioned a psychologist short term to work across Child and Adolescent Mental Health services specifically around CSE and what she found herself doing the support particularly in Adult Mental Health. Trained psychiatrist and psychologist clients doing more support to the workforce. Need to extend that more into the voluntary and community sector and range of networks because we know there is a need for that multiplicity and support to the workers and organisations.

Councillor Ahmed - Need to look at offering specialist provision and I hope can look at that for our staff and some of the services.

Bina Parmar – I actually said the need for therapeutic support and intervention and that longer term support was not reflected very well in the action plan. I took it upon myself to provide feedback to the sub-group and not reflected in the Strategy. I have fed that back and it has not been

acknowledged. A lot of activity is taking place and would be useful to reflect in the Strategy.

Summing Up

Bina Parmar – From a national perspective I think Rotherham is actually quite proactive in their response to child sexual exploitation and been under a lot of scrutiny and been under the spotlight and received a lot of criticism. From the short period I have been involved in the work of Rotherham I have seen a positive response and dedicated professionals working as hard as they can to improve the services for victims and those potentially at risk still. Lot of work to do and I will continue to be involved in trying to support that work from what I learn nationally. Acknowledge that been a lot of positive work taking place.

Steve Oversby – I think there has been work ongoing over the last number of months. I think there is a drive and strategy. On the ground we can see changes taking shape and helping to start provide good quality support to children and young people and encourage that pro activity will continue.

Hayley Fisher –The main focus for the voluntary sector is to continue to work together as an organisation with the multi-agency organisations and keep going forward and see what changes we can make and work hard at identifying that and being in the public eye in terms of making yourself aware of the services out there and not be precious but identify the needs of victims and awareness at an early stage.

Zlakha Ahmed – It has been mentioned that the Strategy does reflect the diversity strand. I have been invited today as expert. If look at the journey over the last 2 years it started with women survivors then children. Would still welcome the Strategy having a bit more focus on the BME strand.

Chrissy Wright – In terms of the work done, it has been done in a short period of time. I think it has been successful in getting the immediate post-abuse support set up, help line was a very positive step going forward and has heightened our national profile which is good for Rotherham and the victims and survivors in Rotherham.

Longer term commissioning is very important and has to be with the strands of prevent in there. Intend to get it as right as possibly can to improve the outcomes for victims and survivors. The voice of victims and survivors are very important.

Sue Greig – Child sexual exploitation is not my specialist area but my learning from this so far is the importance of partners working together and often the voluntary and community sector has the trust and credibility. The statutory partners have the duty and responsibility and goes back to the mention of a shared vision which will be so crucial to this

and if do not do it in partnership we will miss an opportunity to commission cost effective, sustainable and robust programmes for the future.

Deputy Leader – The immediate support had gone in very quickly and building on the good work of the voluntary and community sector organisation that are already out there working with victims and survivors. We have heard about the long term process and I think that is where our focus is now i.e. how get that process right, how bring it together and the fact that doing it in the absence of national framework. We are doing this as Rotherham and I think it is a really good pace but a process that will happen over the next few months and all have a role in how that goes forward.

A key point is the victims/survivors voice really at heart of that process going forward. I know it is very hard to hear their voice but it can be heard and prior to today I asked for feedback about victims/survivors in terms of support. I think Barnardos make a really interesting point around the approach to victims/survivors around their individuals and everybody's individual needs will be different and have different perspective and will be at different times in that journey so I do like their points to approach that everybody is individual. Holistic intensive and long term and I will take that back. Huge direct feedback I have from victim/survivors - there are positive stories, there are people accessing counselling support, and there is a support worker in Sarah Champion's office.

What we have heard is that there are gaps in the analysis: there is a need for practical support with advocate/buddy that still needs to be addressed and particularly as investigations progress, how we can support those survivors of the historic cases in particular. With very practical support 20 -30 have gone through the process. We do not always get it right and still got a long way to go. Probably question how reach out to survivors, how do we make survivors aware of the support available, how do we provide support when sometimes that individual does not know they have been a victim of the crime or sexual crime? I think in terms of being honest, there are still things not happening.

Coming from survivors their voice is important but they always have lot of input into this particularly in helping each other and peer support and helping current victims as well. I know some local authorities looked at peer support and put that in place. How use that in effective way and help other victims.

I think we have the immediate response now over the next few months how progress that and get long term solution and how get it right.

Session 2 – What Next?

The Chairman welcomed everyone back to the meeting for this second session of Day Two and outlined the objectives which were:-

- To explore the wider implications of the Jay report
- To test out the Council's direction of travel and pace of change to ensure it is appropriate and timely

The Chairman invited questions from this second session today and welcomed Dr. Anne Hollows, Principal Lecturer in Social Work from Sheffield Hallam University, and Mr. Joe Smeeton, Principal Lecturer in Social Work from Nottingham Trent University, who were experts in social care/social work.

Councillor C. Vines – From what has emerged from the Jay Report, what would be your advice and recommendation for Rotherham's best way forward?

Mr. Smeeton pointed out that the information arising from the Jay Report had been overwhelming and had been difficult coherent understanding of what had taken place. However, child sexual exploitation should not detract staff from other work that needed to still take place as this could lead to multiple disadvantages. The detail of the Jay Report in itself had helpful in that it had focused on one issue. However, the danger of all the focus being on this one issue could mean that once it had been tackled that other matters that have been neglected then emerge.

Social work was about understanding communities and understanding individuals and children and being able to respond to individual needs, whether this be in relation to child sexual exploitation, physical abuse, emotional harm or neglect.

What had been seen in the past was a performance management response to social work, which tied up some of the Social Worker's time filling in forms or entering data onto a computer. The child or young person must be the centre of the situation and this could only be achieved by freeing up the Social Worker to allow them to analyse the situation.

The Jay Report and the subsequent Action Plan addressed many complicated issues, but the worry was this was more task focus and not on the children themselves.

Councillor Currie - What are your reflections on the Jay Report and the implications for Social Work as a whole? For example on recruitment and retention, frontline practice, multi-agency working or learning and development?

Dr. Hollows expressed her concern and the moves in social work to change. In the current climate social work was about promoting 'relationship best practice' to get away from the tick box processes.

The biggest impact on any person's life was on relationship building with people and a Social Worker's role was to build a proper constructive relationship with professional boundaries.

Reference was made to a pilot project “Hope for Children and Families” funded by the Department for Education and the model which could be used with serious cases and meant collecting information in different ways.

Another initiative in Wakefield “Signs of Safety” allowed for social work to take place with families.

Dr. Hollows confirmed she had spoken to a few Social Workers in Rotherham who explained that they felt well supported by the Council, that good morale existed within teams, but that the public perception and opinion were such that some staff felt victimised.

Social Workers in Rotherham needed space to be able to do their day job and not just the “Jay Job”. Many of the staff in Rotherham had the capacity to be very good Social Workers, but needed the space with appropriately managed workloads to be able to build relationships with families with more complex difficulties.

In a supplementary question Councillor Watson pointed out that one of the concerns had been around the difficulty in recruiting staff in light of budget reductions and asked how the Council could make sure it recruited the right staff in Rotherham?

Dr. Hollows explained the Council needed to have clear strategies in place with clear lines of professional support, ongoing learning which would attract people which would lead to a stabilisation of the workforce

The Council needed to hang onto its more experienced staff and develop more student placements. The more the Council could offer the more people would wish to be recruited. The Council was in need of good Practice Teachers for its up and coming younger staff.

The social work framework was worth investing into and some good information was available which provided a coherent continuation of professional development strategies, which could be offered as part of the recruitment process.

Mr. Smeeton also reiterated that the situation in Rotherham had not a bad story to tell. Its workforce strategy was strong now it offered post qualification education. Since 2010 its workforce had stabilised and staff were being retained. This in itself was a good story to tell and should be promoted.

The myth of Local Authorities that there is a large number of highly qualified social workers was incorrect. The truth was that highly qualified social workers working in child protection burnt out so quickly and eight years appeared to be the average period when a person remained in such a post, with many leaving the profession and moving onto other employment.

The Council needed to look after the staff it had, nurture and train them. One of the risks is that there are vacancies in child protection work and some of the most inexperienced workers may be recruited to these posts. The newly qualified Social Workers were the least able to cope and were unable to sustain overburdened and over stretched workloads.

Councils could not avoid some of the more serious cases happening, however, professional staff could not be governed trying to avoid the one off difficult situations.

Councillor Sims – Clearly as Elected Members we are responsible for the allocation of scarce (and diminishing) resources in Social Care. Given that the work around child sexual exploitation is so resource intensive, in directing resources towards tackling this, how do we avoid overlooking other endemic and complex safeguarding issues for example neglect or domestic abuse?

Dr. Hollows pointed out that the Council could not avoid either. From research and experience domestic abuse had the most devastating effect on children's lives, which often lead to them to be victims or perpetrators in the future.

Neglect clearly had implications in the history of those involved in child sexual exploitation and it was not just the Council's responsibility to deal with the problems and the costs.

Citing recent research, this kind of situation affects both boys and girls; it had implications for policing and relationship education in schools and the prevention agenda as a whole.

More recently the media coverage on the Birmingham civil injunctions offered a window of opportunity to pause and think about operations.

The catching of criminals was the job of the Police not the Local Authority. The role of support to those at risk was a partnership approach with therapeutic intervention operating at two levels. There were nowhere near enough therapists available, but the funding of this was not the responsibility of the Local Authority, but the Health Service.

Mr. Smeeton confirmed that was a need for good planning and understanding the needs of children, who required a different response from the relevant team. Some needs were very complex which required attention from teams already overstretched.

Good social work was community based, with staff understanding needs and having local knowledge. Removing children was not only tragic, but very resource intensive and very intrusive when children were missing from home. Families required support and a good Social Worker would engage with the family and move towards reducing the high risk elements associated with the concerns by intervening earlier.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sims asked if a highly qualified Social Worker should be providing support on a 1:1 basis with a family.

Dr. Hollows pointed out that the role of the highly qualified Social Worker was in fact to connect with the family, be authoritative, offer them the care they required and work with them to achieve change.

There was a stigma attached to social work intervention and often when a Social Worker visited a family they could be hostile and on guard and the actual entering of a property or the parking of a car were often very stressful. It was the newly qualified Social Workers who were placed in this situation that found this very uncomfortable to start with and it was just not a case of learning the signs about child abuse.

Mr. Smeeton confirmed the skills of social work were such that often it was the more experienced staff that were required initially to identify the plans for moving forward. However, may not be the best person to deliver the service.

Councillor Read - We have been told that there is not a failsafe risk assessment tool and that good solid multi-agency practice has to be trusted to make professional judgements of levels of risk in relation to child sexual exploitation (and other safeguarding issues). What does good basic practice look like and how do we measure its effectiveness? What does this good practice look like across all the different agencies?

Mr. Smeeton explained that the answer had already been answered by Dr. Hollows, but pointed out that good practice relied on identifying signs of safety, for staff to have a good evidence base in order to balance their strengths and views. This systematic approach was well developed in places such as Derbyshire and the Hackney model was very strong.

Dr. Hollows explained that Social Workers needed to become somewhat sceptical so that they did not take everything at face value and be more able to make a judgement on how evidence fitted. The importance of making professional judgements was stressed with this being a staged process in determining what were the issues, what strategy was required to put it right and the method of evaluation.

Social Workers needed to be able to dig deeper in order to understand family dynamics more. Social work staff were under pressure with very few resources and often there was incorrect matching of resource, which was wasteful and not helpful.

In a supplementary question Councillor Read referred to the effectiveness of social work and suggested that there was a clear need for better understanding of good practice.

In a supplementary question Councillor Currie made reference to risk assessments and how these could be inadequate if they were not

reinforced by the Police and asked that these elements be social work driven.

Mr. Smeeton explained that risk must be measured when there was unmet needs and when problems were identified it was how these could be managed. Triaging cases could deflect a lot of referrals and this had been demonstrated at Oldham.

Dr Hollows cited an historic example that she was aware of the police using a new risk assessment tool to assess domestic abuse. Consequently there was a massive increase in referrals to the front desk that meant only the most serious were being dealt with. There are parallels to be drawn with how CSE is addressed.

There is an argument that the level of risk should be set very low; with a first tier which is not necessarily social care, to intervene. The Youth Service were invaluable and a powerful agent to sieve out those cases where child sexual exploitation was first suggested.

Getting to the real sources behind child sexual exploitation were resource and finance intensive. It was, therefore, suggested that a pilot project could work with a particular team to look at the options and work qualitatively to enable staff to get to the real detail. No true picture could be gained from simply relying on numbers.

Councillor J. Hamilton – In Rotherham, along with many other authorities, we have recently developed a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub with co-located teams of Police, Social Care staff, Health Workers etc. From your perspectives how do they work in practice?

Mr. Smeeton explained that collaborative working enabled agencies to communicate better and to avoid any gaps emerging in practice. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs did this well and were in a better position to triage relevant cases. Some Hubs still experienced some difficulties and whilst they were a very good tool, encasing Social Workers in a call centre situation needed to be avoided.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sansome asked how staff could be prevented from focusing on their own agendas or a silo situation?

Dr. Hollows pointed out that the investment had to focus on a shared agenda to avoid staff experiencing difficulties of sharing information in a multi-agency team. On a positive note working as part of a multi-agency team did take more effort, but provided ownership of particular cases. The quality of the shared information had massive advantages in what were very difficult circumstances and added value to the contributions of professional staff and allowed for the knowledge to fit together.

Councillor Steele - Much has been made of the changing trends of exploitation – increased use of technology etc. – how do we need to take to ensure that Social Care staff (across the board) are alert to these developments?

Dr. Hollows pointed out the need for constant information flows and one way of doing this was for one officer to be responsible for an information bulletin to all staff who could provide the relevant research and disseminate information.

Mr. Smeeton was in agreement that staff must be kept informed and kept abreast of any new developments.

Councillor Read – In the evidence we received last week, we heard about the unwillingness of victims to engage with statutory Social Care and how perhaps we need to consider more ‘creative approaches’. In your broad experience of working in Safeguarding and working with victims of sexual abuse how do you think this can be achieved and what needs to be changed to facilitate this?

Dr. Hollows explained that it is all about Social Workers having time and the skills to engage with young people and their families with assistance from the Youth Service, who may be in a better position to work alongside young people.

Shared skills were important because once a child reached the age of twelve from experience they became more difficult to communicate with, which was where the role of the Youth Worker came in. The majority of complaints from Social Workers were around how form filling, particularly around foster placements, and how this was taking up the majority of their time.

Councillor J. Hamilton – Moving forward, in your view how can agencies work together to best support victims and their families?

Dr. Hollows explained that nothing would be solved overnight. Support groups were excellent for families and young people and enabled them to engage with specialist provision. There would be no ill effects for the future if the signs were spotted quickly.

Sweden had done a lot of work with positive sexual re-education, especially around positive loving and respectful relationships and how best to avoid violent and abusive relationships.

Any specialist support had to be tailored to an individual's needs and carefully managed, especially for those involved also with drugs.

Cognitive behavioural therapy could assist before bigger problems were addressed. It was very important for a person in need to talk to experts, but there was no magic wand that could assist with every problem.

Mr. Smeeton reiterated that no single therapist could deal with all cases. Often difficulties were not just with children, but were within families and needed some form of re-adjustment.

Councillor Watson - The Jay Report highlights difficulties in engaging with minority communities. How can we support Social Care staff to undertake this work rigorously and appropriately? What are the implications for learning and development?

Dr. Hollows believed Social Workers had lost the art of working within communities and much of this work needed to be developed. Social Workers of Asian origin were in a better position to help shape the work within certain communities.

Social Workers in Rotherham were working really hard, especially in the Roma Community around the issue of sexual exploitation. There was some evidence of good cohesive work taking place in Sheffield within communities.

From an outsider looking in the events highlighted by the media in Rotherham were terrible and the antics of some politicians and activists were appalling. There was a need for a good media strategy to promote the good things taking place in Rotherham including in social work staff.

Mr. Smeeton also pointed out that social Workers needed to be accessible and have a proactive element to support with a clear steer of their roles. Staff wanted to work and see that they were doing a good job, which could be better achieved by them talking to communities and schools and not retreating to an office behind a desk.

In a supplementary question Councillor J. Hamilton asked when the transformation changed for Social Workers to be more introverted and whether this came about when child sexual exploitation was happening?

Mr. Smeeton believed the changes started to occur around the late 1990's when the inspection regimes meant that Local Authorities were heavily performance managed and judged on targets about quickly cases were dealt with. This culture meant that the quality of work undertaken was not measured, but quantity of work was. That's changed with the Working Together Guidance that has been recently issued. Rotherham had been inspected so many times in the past few years and had previously been judged to be performing well, but it was about meeting timescales but not necessarily quality of care for children and young people.

After commending social workers for the jobs they do; Councillor Parker asked a supplementary question: whilst social workers, council officers and police had to take their share of the blame for what had happened; did they think that there had been undue political influence at a national and local level which had contributed to the problem?

Dr. Hollows referred to the comments of Professor Nigel Darton which talked about politics of child protection; it mediates between the family and the state and provides the framework for legal intervention when there are concerns about child protection. However, when there are child deaths or other tragedies, the strength of anger and hostility by the public was often directed at social work staff; denying that society has a wider responsibility to protect its children

These were issues that Social Workers had to deal with on a daily basis and they were damned if they did and damned if they did not act. There are some social worker who are poor at what they do but the vast majority of Social Workers were very good at their job.

In terms of child sexual exploitation this was much bigger than any one individual and was happening not just in Rotherham, but nationwide.

Mr. Smeeton pointed out that this was like paralyzed anxiety about whether they would appear on the front page, held responsible for crimes someone else committed and very often politicians made tragedies more likely. As risk is that social workers revert to very process driven, risk averse practice.. There was a clear need for a different way of engagement with a need for more analytical and creative thinking.

Social Workers' time needed to be freed up to enable them to use their initiative and step outside the box. Social Workers needed to be able to use their own common sense and follow their instincts and not take people at face value.

In a supplementary question Councillor Parker asked about the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and if there was less chance of a concern being acted upon?

Dr. Hollows referred to thresholds and the potential for something to slip through the net, when one single person had not checked on a particular detail. There had been child deaths when the correct information had not been established, but however, if operating properly, a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub should minimise this risk.

In a supplementary question Councillor Currie asked about giving Social Workers the opportunities to get out into their communities; do with the Newly Qualified Social Workers shadowing their more experienced counterparts. Reference was made to the Hackney model and how Rotherham could benefit?

Dr. Hollows could pinpoint to a number of different models which could work in Rotherham and regardless which model was chosen there needed to be a coherent strategy and approach that the Local authority and partners signed up to.

Councillor Sims – Much has been written about the vulnerabilities of children in care and care leavers and the targeting of these groups by perpetrators. What can be done to increase the resilience of these young people to minimise risks?

How can we increase the awareness and understanding of residential care staff?

How can we increase the awareness and understanding of foster carers?

Mr. Smeeton could not give one answer that covered all the areas above and pointed out that looked after children were often a transient population with every attempt made to keep a young person out of care. When comparing the percentage of looked after children across other European countries, England's number was much smaller at 0.6%.

Very often the young people looked after by the Local Authority had more complex needs and not only were difficult to engage, but were also more vulnerable. These young people needed the right placement as soon as possible with the full aim of maintaining some kind of stability. Only a good assessment by a good worker would find them the right placement which would lead to a decrease in their vulnerability.

Research undertaken on looked after carer leavers indicated that those in a less stable environment found it difficult to form relationships and any level of trust. Those in a loving and well cared for environment were more likely to achieve.

When looking at budgets residential care was very expensive and the default option was often the cheapest. Only by improving the quality of care offered would those most in need improve: research shows that those in more settled placements were less vulnerable, which in itself was more cost effective.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sims asked about following rules and the appropriateness of their implementation.

Dr. Hollows explained about the legislation and guidelines that applied to foster care and referred to a new course being offered at Hallam University for Advanced Practice for Foster Carers and Looked After Children, which would enhance practice in any job role in this field.

Mr. Smeeton pointed out that these key people in the either the roles of foster carer or residential worker needed to be skilled and take over the parenting role by offering care and protection to vulnerable people. There was a need to unpack some of the more procedural information and get down to ground roots level and get working.

Those young people leaving care were often left feeling more vulnerable and very often were the victims of abuse as they were left isolated, rehoused into areas they were not familiar with and with little or no support.

Talk to the leaving care team; talk about what support networks are in place to reduce vulnerabilities of care leavers.

Councillor Middleton – How can we raise the awareness of these risks in social work training and ongoing professional development?

Mr. Smeeton referred to the need not to have a knee jerk reaction response to training on child sexual exploitation as this was not the only issue that would give rise to concern.

Social Workers needed to have an ongoing package of refresher knowledge and ensure they were given to right kind of support to ensure the job they trained for could be undertaken properly.

Councillor Sansome – the latest OFSTED report was critical of our “front door” and high number of inappropriate referrals which negatively impacts on the timeliness of decision making. In terms of developing good practice how can we shift this?

Dr. Hollows stated that only by having an Early Intervention Strategy could referrals be properly sieved and dealt with by the appropriate agency.

Mr. Smeeton pointed out that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub could deal with some issues by working together, especially with schools and teaching staff.

One area of good practice was for a Social Worker to be assigned to a school and visit on a regular basis and have informal conversations.

Dr. Hollows was aware of Learning Support Workers in schools picking up on all manner of things and referred to how in Europe many schools all had their own Social Workers to provide support and be more locally available for assistance.

In a supplementary question Councillor Sansome asked about the hierarchical structures and skills and how these could be increased?

Dr. Hollows explained that there was no coherent model in place in the U.K. and again referred to models in Sweden and the arrangement of having a School Nurse and a Social Worker in each school. There was also a school in Parsons Cross that had gone down the route of having a School Social Work Service, which was an interesting possibility.

Mr. Smeeton pointed out that certain models were difficult to sustain and resource as each Local Authority's makeup was different.

In a supplementary question Councillor Watson referred again to Ofsted and if measurements were taken of caseloads what was deemed as too big and whether there was a need for more social work staff.

Mr. Smeeton pointed out if the inappropriate referrals could be decreased or weeded out, then this would free up social work time and all for more community based work to be generated.

There were lots of systematic processes within different teams and often ruined relationships with families.

On referring again to the Hackney model comparisons could be drawn with how much time was spent referring, which would lead to improvements particularly in Rotherham around the workloads of newly qualified social work staff.

There was a need to retain good quality social work staff and they needed to learn to manage workloads. This placed at risk those cases that were not allocated and left the Authority in a no easy win situation. The role of allocating work should lie with the first line manager and have the ability to manage caseloads better. This would lead to good quality assessments, good planning and allow staff to be in a better position to close cases down.

Dr. Hollows referred to the expectation on social work experience progressions and the ability and benefits of seeing a case through to the end.

Mr. Smeeton advised that the process needed to be looked at systematically in order to meet the needs of a child and their family and for a consistent approach in often difficult circumstances.

It was also suggested that a further meeting take place involving a smaller Working Group of the Board to look at the draft report that would be produced.

Key issues that had emerged included:-

- Role of support to victims and the importance of support to secure prosecutions.
- Whether support in courts was working.
- Whether the voice and influence of survivors was being implemented.
- Risk assessments and intervention with Children and Young People's Services for those young people not at risk or low risk, effective pathways and the risk analysis process.
- Ongoing needs analysis.
- Long term commissioning process.
- Review of the Action Plan of Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Support for the workforce.

- Reaching out effectively.
- How Scrutiny could be effective going forward.
- Role of the Youth Service.
- Role of Schools.
- Performance management and measures of efficiency.
- Positive outcomes around management.
- Communications and key messages.
- Therapeutic work and accessibility.
- PSHE skills in schools.
- Availability of funds.
- Transition of leaving care to independent living and appropriate counselling.

The Chairman advised the Board that there was a need to consider how this piece of work by Scrutiny went forward with some concrete recommendations.

The Board suggested that consideration be given to visiting other Local Authorities to see how best practice was being implemented to increase knowledge and understanding.

Resolved:- (1) That everyone be thanked for their attendance today.

(2) That the Scrutiny Team be thanked for all their efforts in the arrangements and preparations for the two day sessions.

(3) That consideration be given to any further comments being passed to the Scrutiny Manager for inclusion up to and included the 6th January, 2015.

(4) That a draft report be produced and considered by a small working group prior to the report being finalised.

82. DATE AND TIME OF NEXT MEETING

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Management Board take place on Friday, 23rd January, 2015 at 9.00 a.m. at the Town Hall.