

IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION
Tuesday 30 January 2024

Present:- Councillor Pitchley (in the Chair); Councillors Cooksey, Atkin, Bacon, Baker-Rogers, Z. Collingham, Griffin, Haleem, Hughes, Khan, McNeely, Bennett-Sylvester, Wilson and Mills.

Apologies for absence:- Apologies were received from Councillor Monk.

The webcast of the Council Meeting can be viewed at:-
<https://rotherham.public-i.tv/core/portal/home>

143. MINUTES OF THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Resolved: - That the Minutes of the meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission, held on 5 December 2023, be approved as a correct record of proceedings.

144. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

145. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

There were no items of business on the agenda that required the exclusion of the press and public from the meeting.

146. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND THE PRESS

There were no questions from members of the public or press.

147. COMMUNICATIONS

The Chair advised that all the items regarding communication were covered on the agenda.

148. CORPORATE PARENTING PANEL - UPDATE

The Chair advised that the Corporate Parenting Panel met on 23 January 2024 and consideration was given to the following items during the meeting:

- An update on the Virtual School Annual Report 2021-2022.
- An update on Quality Assurance.
- An update from the Looked After Children's Council, which included an overview of its activities, including the Summer Festival, an international trip to Paris and the Remembrance Sunday Service.
- An update on the Corporate Parenting Strategy 2024-2027 and the

new proposed Terms of Reference for the Corporate Parenting Panel. The proposed Terms of Reference were agreed at Cabinet on the 22 January 2024 and as a result there would be a number of changes to the Panel which included the following:

- A change of name from the Corporate Parenting Panel to the Corporate Parenting Partnership Board, the Panel would also move from a public meeting to an internal board meeting.
- An increase in the number of meetings and membership levels.

The Chair advised that the next meeting would be held on 19th March 2024 and a further update would be provided to the Commission, at the first meeting of the new municipal year.

149. CHILD EXPLOITATION UPDATE

This agenda item provided a high-level update on Child Exploitation, which included a summary of key child exploitation activity, performance information and trends, awareness raising and safeguarding, undertaken in the year 2023.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Laura Gough, Head of Service for Children's and Young People's Services (CYPS) and Darren Downs, Independent Scrutineer for the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership.

The Chair invited Laura and Darren to introduce the report and lead on the presentation, during which the following was noted:

Introduction-

- The report was the second annual report on Child Exploitation in Rotherham presented to Improving Lives Select Commission and provided information on how the service was responding to child exploitation in Rotherham.
- The report demonstrated how the service ensured that children, both individually or in groups, who were at risk of, or experiencing child exploitation were identified, safeguarded, and supported, and that there was a partnership approach to raising awareness and preventing exploitation of children and young people in Rotherham.

The National Guidance-

- The Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy 2021 was the National Strategy and provided a clear definition for Child Sexual Exploitation, which was 'forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving violence, or whether the child is aware of what is happening'.
- Home Office Guidance defined Child Criminal Exploitation as 'where an individual or group coerce, control, manipulate or

deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 to take part in criminal activities, including but not exclusively County Lines. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual’.

The Law-

- The Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 (amendment in 2017) set out specific duties. Section 17 of the Children Act 1989 created a duty on the local authority to provide services to children in need in their area. Section 47 of the same act required local authorities to undertake enquiries if they believed a child had suffered or was likely to suffer significant harm.
- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023 was a guide to multi-agency working, that provided a framework for effective partnership arrangements for keeping children safe.

Rotherham’s Approach to Child Exploitation-

- Rotherham was one of only a small number of local authorities that continued to have a dedicated service focused on child exploitation.
- Ofsted evaluated in June 2022 that Rotherham’s Children and Young Peoples Services provided ‘Good’ services to children in need of help and protection. Ofsted stated, ‘the Evolve service works proactively with children to reduce risks associated with sexual and criminal exploitation’.

Key Documents-

- The Child Exploitation Strategy 2019-2022, which had concluded.
- In 2023, Rotherham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership published the Child Exploitation Priorities 2023-2028, this was a plan to tackle and prevent child exploitation in Rotherham. Priorities were focused on local key drivers such as, Prepare, Prevent, Protect, Pursue. These were derived from the National Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and from research into established use.
- The new strategy was in development and would be published in 2024.

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Structure-

- In 2023 a new scrutineer, Darren Downs was appointed. This role differed from the previous Independent Chair role in that it provided a greater focus on Scrutiny and holding the partnership to account.
- A new Strategic Director for Childrens Services, Nicola Curley was appointed, bringing a fresh approach to child focused practice.

The Child Exploitation Delivery Group (CEDG)-

- The CEDG was a strategic group, that reported directly to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children’s Partnership Board.
- In 2023 the group was refreshed and the Terms of Reference (ToR) were updated. Superintendent Andy Wright was appointed

as a new Chair and attendee roles were reviewed to ensure the right people were in attendance to drive progress.

- The group was responsible for the strategic overview of child exploitation priorities and strategies. The group had an action plan which contained specific leads for the following objectives:
- Objective One- Prepare
- Objective Two- Prevent
- Objective Three- Protect
- Objective Four- Pursue.

Responding to Child Exploitation-

- If there were any concerns about the safety of a child potentially at risk of child exploitation, a referral would be made to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). MASH would then screen the referral and identify the next steps.
- The specialist multi-agency team Evolve would also become involved, this team included statutory partners, such as the Police and Health.
- The Evolve Team worked directly with young people affected by child exploitation. They contributed to assessments, investigations, mapping activity, collating information, and analysing the prevalence of child exploitation in the Borough, in relation to children and young people, perpetrators, and locations. The team also supported professionals and partners such as schools, through providing guidance, advice, and a comprehensive training package.

Intelligence Meetings-

- The Child Exploitation Tactical Group (CETG) had a weekly meeting which was chaired by the Police and attended by CYPS. During the meetings intelligence was shared to provide a multi-agency response and next steps.
- Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings were held to respond to and discuss identified children and young people at high risk of child exploitation.
- The multi-agency operational Missing Meeting once established, would take place fortnightly, to identify ways to reduce the number of young people who went missing, focusing on those children considered high risk with repeated missing episodes.

Work with Children and Young People-

- During 2023, seventy-seven young people were referred to the Evolve Team.
- Seventy-three young people's cases were closed to the Evolve Team, following successful intervention and a reduction in risk of exploitation, to low.
- Evolve completed three hundred and forty-four child exploitation risk assessments in total in 2023.
- There was one hundred and forty-one identified risks in relation to

child criminal exploitation.

- There were one hundred and seven identified risks in relation to child sexual exploitation.
- There were fifty identified risks in relation to both criminal and sexual exploitation.
- There were forty-six identified as no risk, where the exploitation risk had reduced and there was no risk identified.
- Risk assessments were completed and then updated every twelve weeks.

Awareness Raising Activity and Campaigns-

- On the 21 February 2023, an annual workshop on Child Exploitation for Members took place. The session was a success and was attended by twenty-nine Members.
- Child Exploitation Awareness Day was held on the 18th of March. Information was shared, including how staff could access and complete the mandatory e-learning modules. Posters about the Awareness Day were circulated digitally to schools for display in staff areas. Councillors received a poster and Spot the Signs information cards via the Town Hall. Social media posts were also shared throughout the day, on community safety and corporate Rotherham Council channels.

County Lines Intensification Week-

- National County Lines Intensification Week 2023 took place from 27th February to 3rd March. This was a week of action addressing county lines and child criminal exploitation. This included The Spot the Signs Campaign and use of the Children's Society Look Closer Campaign, which was a national partnership campaign with the National County Lines Co-ordination Centre and Children's Society. The aim of this campaign was to raise awareness of child exploitation and abuse, with a particular focus on public spaces.
- Social media posts relating to both campaigns, reached over 5,700 people through Facebook and Instagram.

Operation Keepsafe-

- Operation Keepsafe was a well-established, multi-agency targeted activity, which focused on working on areas to engage with young people, to raise awareness of exploitation.
- To date, Keepsafe activities had engaged with over 1700 children and young people in the community since the start of April 2021. This had impacted positively on both individual and groups of children, and supported communities in keeping their children safe.

Spot the Signs-

- Awareness raising had continued through the Spot the Signs Campaign. This included sharing information on the Community Safety Teams social media, posters and the distribution of Spot the Signs Cards in 2023. 10,000 had been distributed to date, across

council employees, services, partners and businesses.

South Yorkshire Police Campaign-

- On the 17th of March 2023, South Yorkshire Police launched their new regional Child Exploitation Campaign, 'Even the Happiest Childhood Can be Destroyed by Exploitation'.

Training-

- The Evolve training had raised awareness through presentations to groups, child exploitation training to partners and the partnership and ad-hoc training when requested.

Police Staff Training and Development-

- The Police staff training programme focused on all officers that worked in safeguarding roles, to ensure they were qualified to a national standard, such as completing the Specialist Child Abuse Investigators Development Programme (SCAIDP) and the Specialist Sexual Offences Investigator Development Programme (SSAIDP), from the College of Policing. A significant number of officers had already completed this training.
- The police were also training all staff, to qualified College of Policing PIP2 Serious and Complex Investigation Standard. In 2023 many officers attended this training.
- Several initiatives including awareness raising, and targeted briefing sessions had taken place for 165 staff across CYPS and Housing in 2022-2023. These initiatives were on-going to continue to drive intelligence submissions.

Child Exploitation Stakeholder Event-

- On the 20 June 2023, twenty-seven delegates from across the partnership, social care, police, health, and the voluntary sector, attended a stakeholder event to look at Rotherham's journey through Child Exploitation.

The Chair thanked the relevant officers for the presentation and invited questions, this led to the following points being raised during discussions:

- There had been a reduction in the number of children reported missing (2.7.6 of the report). This was due to increased interventions that were put in place for a specific cohort of young people, who were repeatedly going missing. Missing advocates were now allocated to children who were repeatedly missing, to reduce the risks. In addition to this, multi-agency meetings had expanded membership to include more key professionals which had also had a positive impact.
- Child Exploitation, in relation to criminal activity and organised crime groups was the most prevalent form of child exploitation within the borough in recent figures and accounted for more than half of the current cases. Although organised crime groups did not always operate within boundaries, reassurance was provided that

the relationships between police forces, sub-regionally, nationally, and internationally was very good, specifically in relation to missing children. The Partnership worked closely with regionalised crime units and the National Crime Agency when required.

- The Evolve Team completed delayed feedback sessions after all training cohorts, to cross reference referral levels with training and to identify any improvements because of the training, or any identified gaps.
- The Probation Services were not a statutory partner, but they were a safeguarding partner, therefore they contributed funding to the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership and were also active members in delivery groups. The Partnership met regularly with Probation Services and there was a strong partnership in place.
- The Independent Scrutineer role differed to the previous Independent Chair role, as it provided further Scrutiny and challenge around data, performance and partnership working.
- The report (2.2.1) stated that the most recent Child Exploitation Strategy 2019-2022, concluded in 2022 and the new strategy would be published in 2024. There would be a gap of eighteen months without a strategy in place. This was because of the development of child exploitation, with most cases being in relation to child criminal exploitation and online exploitation. The Partnership wanted to ensure that there was sufficient time to work across the partnership, so that the future strategy would be fit for purpose. Re-assurance was provided, that there was a delivery plan in place, that was continuing the work from the previous strategy.
- A formal review of risk assessment plans was completed every twelve weeks, weekly meetings were held to manage the progress of the level of risk and activities undertaken. The formal review of risk assessment plans was completed at twelve weeks, to ensure sufficient time to assess whether completed work had an impact or if there was any change to the risk levels.
- The voice of the service user was captured through many feedback processes. When a child or young person left the Evolve Service, a feedback session was undertaken to discuss the activities completed, services provided, and the provision of support provided. The Partnership presented two case studies to every Child Exploitation Delivery Group meeting, alongside monthly audits which also contained service user feedback.
- There were detailed reporting mechanisms in place within the Partnership, this included detailed breakdowns of specific cohorts of children, such as Children in Need (CIN), Looked After Children (LAC) and children on Child Protection (CP) plans.
- If the Partnership believed that a child was at risk of exploitation, there would be no consent required for engagement. The service was responsible for engaging with the young person.
- In relation to the forty-six identified cases that were assessed as having no risk, this was a cohort of children and young people that

had entered the Evolve service as medium or high risk and were then assessed as no risk identified at a later stage. The service had a legal responsibility to hold records of these cases for seventy-five years.

Resolved:-

- 1) That the Improving Lives Select Commission note the activity undertaken with regards to Child Exploitation.
- 2) That further information to be provided to members, in relation to the proportion children and young people who are at risk of exploitation, that are Looked After Children and/or have Special Educational Needs and Disabilities.

150. NEGLECT STRATEGY UPDATE

This agenda item introduced the Neglect Strategy 2024-2026. The strategy was a partnership strategy and was governed by the Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (RSCP). It was owned by the Neglect Delivery Group, which reported directly to the RSCP Executive Partnership Group.

The Chair invited Laura and Darren to introduce the report and lead on the presentation, the following was noted:

- It was advised that the previous Neglect Strategy was successful and was developed and managed through the Rotherham Safety Partnership.
- The new Neglect Strategy identified the key statutory responsibilities that the partnership had in relation to neglect and there had been consultation work completed with all partners across the Partnership, which had informed the new Neglect Strategy.
- The strategy would be reviewed at every RSCP meeting and aimed to drive down the level of neglect in the borough. 40% of Child Protection Plans (CPP) in Rotherham were in relation to neglect, therefore the partnership was keen to focus on neglect and increase the Partnerships understanding of the causes of neglect, the challenges and awareness, to prevent and reduce neglect.
- It was advised that Rotherham is the 52nd most deprived district in England and neglect figures were higher than national and statistical averages (2.3.3). Although the number of Children subject to a CPP in Rotherham had reduced from 398 to 309.
- The Neglect Group was chaired by health partners and the group's main priorities were to ensure early identification of neglect and multi-agency co-ordination. The group was also developing an action plan to sit alongside of the strategy and provided regular updates to the RSCP.

The Chair thanked the relevant officers for the presentation and invited

questions, this led to the following points being raised during discussions:

- The Partnership were aspiring for the number of neglect cases to be in line with statistical neighbours and better than the national average (2.3.3).
- The RSCP were assessing data in relation to the differences between the locations and types of schools reporting into the RSCP, to determine whether there were any geographical areas that required further focus.
- In relation to the previous strategy, raising awareness of neglect as an equal partner to Child Exploitation and Domestic Abuse was positive. There was now a recognition that neglect was a significant issue for children in the borough.
- In relation to poverty and the cost-of-living-crisis, work was being completed by the partnership, to ensure help was provided to families, to prevent poverty leading to neglect. The Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) and local authority were both taking a lead on this.

Resolved:-

- 1) That the Improving Lives Select Commission note the Neglect Strategy 2024- 2026.
- 2) That Improving Lives Select Commission note the Local Authority involvement in the development and implementation of the Partnership Strategy Delivery Plan and the oversight of progress by; the Neglect Delivery Group, Rotherham Safeguarding Children's Partnership (RSCP) and Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC).

151. POST CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION SUPPORT SERVICES UPDATE

This agenda item provided an update on the Post Child Sexual Exploitation Support Services, following the transfer of the Post CSE Support Services from Children and Young People's Services (CYPS) to Adult Care, Housing and Public Health (ACH&PH) on the 1 December 2022.

The Chair welcomed to the meeting Scott Matthewman, Assistant Director of Strategic Commissioning, Anne Charlesworth, Head of Public Health Commissioning, Lisa Elliott, Strategic Commissioning Manager and Dr Janine Cherry- Swaine, Consultant Psychotherapist and Service Lead from Rotherham, Doncaster and South Humber NHS Foundation Trust (RDaSH).

The Chair invited Anne and Lisa to introduce the report and lead on the presentation, the following was noted:

The Background-

- The Post CSE Services were transferred from CYPS to ACH&PH in December 2022, following a Cabinet Decision.
- The Post CSE Support Services were provided by three local charities which were GROW, Rothacs and Rotherham Rise. The services were provided in collaboration with the Trauma Resilience Service (TRS). The Voluntary Community Sector (VCS) services also provided help to victims and/or survivors, to overcome the impact of the trauma.

Since the Transfer-

- Visits were completed to all providers and attending TRS Hubs.
- To provide stability to the providers, the contracts were extended for an additional two-year period via an officer decision. As a result, the contracts would end in December 2025.
- There had been updates to performance reporting systems and a Post CSE Project Board had been developed, to oversee a needs analysis which would inform recommissioning in the future. A Co-production Sub-Group was developed to oversee co-production, engage with key stakeholders and the provider market.
- The services had also established links with Dr Rebecca Hamer at Sheffield Hallam University, who would be commencing a second project linked to trauma in relation to child exploitation.

Service Performance and activity-

- Referrals
- Waiting Time
- Open Cases
- Leavers and Length of service
- Age and Gender
- Outcomes for leavers
- Service User Voice and Feedback.

Referrals in Service-

- In the period of 2022 to 2023, there were a total of 317 referrals across GROW, Rothacs and Rise.
- 38% of these were self-referrals (Rothacs only accepted self-referrals, with the exception of TRS HUB cases).
- 15% of referrals were from the Independent Sexual Violence Advocacy (ISVA) Team.
- 36% of referrals were from Social Services.
- 16% of referrals were from Mental Health Services.
- 13% of referrals were from Post CSE Support Services.

Waiting Times (as of January 2024)-

- Waiting times from services could fluctuate due to demand, caused by court proceedings and National Crime Agency proceedings. The waiting times provided in the report were the most recent from January 2024.

- Rotherham Rise CSE Counselling had a waiting time of up to two months. Rotherham Rise often allocated referrals for the Trauma Stabilisation and Focussed Support at the point of the referral being received, however there could sometimes be a short waiting time.
- Rothacs had a waiting time of nine days for CSE Counselling via the Trauma Resilience Service. The CSE general waiting time was eleven months, and a pre-therapy online package was offered to referrals straight away.
- GROW had a waiting time of one month for the Trauma Stabilisation for Stovewood cases. Non Stovewood cases had a longer waiting time.

Demographic Data-

- In relation to age, 13% of people accessing the service were under the age of 18, 36% of people accessing the service were aged 18-30, 36% of people accessing the service were aged 31-49 and 15% of people accessing the service were aged 50 years old and over.
- In relation to gender, 81% of people accessing the service were females, 16% of people accessing the service were males and 3% of people accessing the service were transgender.

Outcomes for Leavers-

- The three providers alongside CYPS commissioning worked together to create measurable outcomes of the Post CSE Support Services. In relation to the leavers where outcomes were recorded in Q1 and Q2:
 - 82% rated their mental health and wellbeing as maintained or improved.
 - 83% rated their feelings and thoughts about themselves as maintained or improved.
 - 88% rated the effect of their trauma as maintained or improved.
 - 72% rated their relationship with family and or social network as maintained or improved.
 - Case studies and service user feedback was collected on a regular basis from service users.

Next Steps and Timeline-

- The service would continue developing the Post CSE Project Board and Co Production Subgroup.
- The service would continue co-production in relation to the needs analysis. The needs analysis would be completed by July 2024.
- The service would continue to develop a set of proposals on the future commissioning of services, this would be reflected in a Cabinet Paper that was scheduled for Cabinet in September 2024 and would also include recommendations for the route to market.
- The current contracts would end in December 2025 and future

contracts would be ready to commence with the new service in place by January 2026.

The Chair thanked the relevant officers for the presentation and invited questions, this led to the following points being raised during discussions:

- In relation to the outcomes measured and the 80% people who were reporting positive outcomes when exiting the service, it was clarified that this data included maintained and improved outcomes. During the development of the outcomes, the providers felt that maintained outcomes should be recorded as a positive outcome, because when entering a course of counselling people could leave the course with re-surfaced trauma that was not identified before entering the course.
- There was a lived experience project that RDaSH was co-producing with the voluntary sector and survivors, in relation to outcome measures. The Project's aim was to use ordinary language to express improvement in outcomes or not, outcomes of the project would be reported back in future.
- The waiting times referenced in the report were in relation to waiting for the first initial appointment with a counsellor. Once the case was assessed as an active counselling case and the first appointment had been completed, there was no waiting times or delays in-between appointments. There were minimal waits for Stovewood cases.

Resolved:-

- That members of the Improving Lives Select Committee note the update on commissioned Post CSE Support Services, following the transition to Adult Care, Housing and Public Health.
- That members of the Improving Lives Select Committee note the proposed next steps in completing a revised needs analysis in collaboration with key partners.

152. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its Work Programme and the following was noted:

- The Carers Strategy Update had been rescheduled and would be presented at the meeting on the 5 March 2024.
- The Early Help Update would be rescheduled for the new municipal year, with the meeting date yet to be confirmed.
- In relation to the joint work with the Health Select Commission on the Child Adolescent Mental Health Update (CAMHS), this had been circulated to members of the Commission, as an off the agenda briefing.

Resolved: - That the Work Programme for 2022/2023 be approved.

153. IMPROVING LIVES SELECT COMMISSION - SUB AND PROJECT GROUP UPDATES

The Chair provided a progress report on sub and project group activity. It was advised that a spotlight review on Preparation for Adulthood (PfA), for young people with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) had been arranged for the 15th February 2024. It was noted that expressions of interest had been circulated to all members and further details would follow. Members were asked to register an interest with the Governance Advisor.

Resolved: - That the update be noted.

154. URGENT BUSINESS

There was no urgent business.

155. DATE AND TIME OF THE NEXT MEETING

The Chair advised that the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission would take place on 5 March 2024 commencing at 10am in Rotherham Town Hall.

Resolved:- That the next meeting of the Improving Lives Select Commission take place on 5 March 2024 commencing at 10am in Rotherham Town Hall.