

Children in Care – Children at Risk of Exploitation

Purpose

- 1.1 To provide an update and information to the Corporate Parenting Committee on Children at Risk of Exploitation (CRE). The report will provide detail on the number of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) cases referred to the local authority and the percentage of those who are children looked after. The document also considers the wider impact of the partnership work over the last 6 months to raise awareness and safeguard children in Derby from exploitation.

Recommendation(s)

- 2.1 Embed the partnership work of the wider child exploitation strategy and procedures with children in care and with their carers.

Reason(s)

- 3.1 To ensure the corporate duty to protect children in care is understood and supported to reduce the likelihood of exploitation.

Supporting information

CRE Offer

- 4.1 This report documents those children who are looked after and reviewed for risks related to criminal or sexual exploitation. Children are offered a range of support and interventions from the partnership (including support from Education, Police, Health Trusts and commissioned Specialist Services. Work is enhanced by partners in the Voluntary sector, and all partners work diligently to safeguard children from exploitation and to educate them about emerging risks.

Standard Offer

Every child referred to the local authority with concern about sexual or criminal exploitation is assessed using a standard CRE Risk Assessment.

This supports an understanding of level of risk and threshold met and actions required to safeguard. The CRE Offer is a guide to what support can be provided at the earliest opportunity. The offer has been in place since 2012 and is regularly updated. It incorporates support, policy requirement and specialist input to the child. Consideration is also given to support for wider family and disruption of any person or place identified as a risk to the child. The CRE offer is embedded for review. Support is structured within a Low, Medium or High-risk framework of assessment and all interventions are proportionate to the threshold met.



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For Professionals

- Research and good practice updates are regularly provided to all managers with linked tools to educate them about any emerging trends and existing issues of exploitation. These updates regularly include new tools and resources to share with children, parents and workforce.
- The updated CRE Risk Assessment has been embedded within child protection IT systems, which allows the authority to track contacts, record activity and the progress of a child. The update has incorporated the recommendations from a wide range of regional and national research to ensure good practice. This includes the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) and a range of government, policing and centre of excellence reports and guidance related to criminal and sexual exploitation. These documents support understanding of existing and emerging concerns and provide disruption tactics, including legal updates to improve protection and responses to victims. For example, the Online Safety Bill (2022), incorporates new offences linked to children being safe in online platforms such as 'Tik Tok', Twitter and Instagram to monitor and censor activity on their sites.
- The regional CRE group have an agreed set of standards which are aligned with government plans under the 5P's strategy; Prevention, Protection, Pursue, Provision and Partnership. Meetings are used to share information about new and emerging risks specific to our region and to liaise with wider national campaign strategies such as the Look Closer Campaign (<https://www.childrensociety.org.uk/what-we-do/our-work/child-criminal-exploitation-and-county-lines/spotting-signs>).
- The partnership is committed to safeguarding children and families, ensuring effective governance and information sharing in our communities. There is oversight of the regional group by Association of Directors of Childrens Services (ADCS).
- Updated research and trends are then considered within workforce learning training updates to partners and monitored through child protection, child in need

plans and Looked After Children plans. CRE training has recently been updated with partners and has been delivered to a range of professionals. This training has evaluated positively by all participants for content, delivery and usefulness. Further training and workshops are planned between December 22 and April 23.

- The Derby and Derbyshire Modern Slavery Partnership is in the process of refreshing its Strategic Assessment on modern slavery, which will be informed by a series of surveys on various types of modern slavery exploitation. The findings from the surveys will assist the Partnership with a more proactive and informed approach in identifying and tackling Modern Slavery / Human Trafficking across Derbyshire. In turn this will provide focussed and directed support for potential victims and a comparison against national reporting / trends, issues and systems in place. The National Referral Mechanism is the reporting system used. Further information will be available when the Modern Slavery Partnership have concluded and analysed the surveys.

- 4.2 Missing is a key indicator of exploitation, therefore the missing team review all reports of missing and return interviews are timely. Return interviews incorporate the CRE Risk Assessment and referrals are made as appropriate. Looked after children's data in this report includes children placed in Derby from other local authorities. They are often identified through missing episodes or incidents of concern, reciprocal arrangements for review and oversight of these children are in place across the region.
- 4.3 There is a clear forward strategy to ensure an effective operational, strategic and governance approach to information sharing via the partnership CRE tasking group. The focus of CRE tasking meetings was changed recently to capture emerging risks and places, businesses or persons of concern. Plans are then agreed for immediate or covert actions to safeguard children. The tasking group implement disruption strategies and support police and social care to gather information and to prosecute offenders. The structure was developed in August 2022, to include three levels of oversight. This includes an operational group involving front line workers, a strategic group with strategy leads and service managers and a governance group, made up of directors of services. The structure is aligned to similar policing strategies, such as Bronze, Silver and Gold Group, to ensure effective governance and oversight of the CRE tasking group and priorities.
- 4.4 Children in care continue to benefit from a wide range of partnership work and they are reviewed through professionals' meetings when exploitation risks occur. These are chaired by child protection managers if high risk and service managers if medium risk of exploitation. A new schools charter has been agreed with Heads in Derby schools to reduce exclusions and therefore prevent access to children at risk during school hours. As a new venture, this has excellent sign up, but it is early days, I hope to have further information on numbers of exclusions prevented for the next corporate parenting meeting.

Children and parents are always invited to child in need and child protection meetings because participation and engagement of families is rightly, fundamental to the success of the CRE strategy. Where children or parents do not engage, workers are encouraged to use creative means of sharing information and obtaining their feedback, i.e., with children via diversionary activities or through sharing national reports with parents to help them understand the risk to their child. Children are the experts by experience and it is therefore important to obtain their views at or for every meeting.

4.5 **CRE Looked After Children Data**

This is provided via a separate presentation for discussion at the meeting. Analysis of thematic data from early help and social care meetings where exploitation is a risk, will give an overview of the extent and type of referrals made to social care. The data also provides a breakdown of the child's diversity needs, gender, age, status etc. and is divided into three categories: child criminal (CCE) or sexual exploitation (CSE) or both.

- 4.6 The governing group for children at risk of exploitation is the Exploitation and Vulnerable Young People (EVYP) Subgroup of the Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Partnership. Child exploitation is a key priority for this partnership and the work to safeguard children from exploitation is aligned to all other key priorities. The partnership reporting structure to this group has recently changed therefore, CRE leads do not report at every meeting, instead an overview of other partnership work is provided in line with priority themes, set out

Public/stakeholder engagement

- 5.1 As noted above, there continues to be excellent stakeholder engagement from statutory, education, health and voluntary sector agencies. Parents and children are asked to complete evaluation forms after every LAC, Child in Need and Child Protection meeting. Further, specialist services Derbyshire Cares assess and obtain evaluations at the early stages of work, after 6 weeks and at regular intervals throughout support and at closure.

Overall, the work of the local authority and its partners supports a better understanding of risk to children, it tackles emerging trends at the soonest opportunity and encourages participation of children, parents and partners to combat exploitation.

Other options

- 6.1 None.

Financial and value for money issues

7.1 None directly arising from this report

Legal implications

8.1 None directly arising from this report.

Climate implications

9.1 None directly arising from this report.

Other significant implications

10. None directly arising from this report.

This report has been approved by the following people:

Role	Name	Date of sign-off
Legal	Olu Idowu	
Finance	Janice Hadfield	
Service Director(s)	Suanne Lim, Director of Early Help and Children's Social Care	14 October 2022
Report sponsor		
Other(s)		