

## **MEETING Corporate Parenting Board**

**Date 30th July 2019**

# **ITEM 08**



Derby City Council

Report sponsor: Andy Smith Strategic Director

Report author: Jasmine Nembhard-Francis

### **Children in Care – Protection from 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); evidence the links of CRE to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); the impact that this has on children in care and the work that has been undertaken over the last 12 months in Derby to raise awareness and safeguard children in care from exploitation

#### **Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 To note the ongoing work being undertaken in relation to CRE

#### **Reason(s)**

- 3.1 To ensure that children in care are supported to reduce the likelihood of them being exploited.

#### **Supporting information**

- 4.1 There is a growing number of research material held nationally which provides evidence of the links between CSE and CRE. CSE is a abuse and neither CSE nor CRE differentiate across race, ability, disability, sexual orientation, gender or class and it is clear that all children are vulnerable to exploitation.

A decision was made by Derby and Derbyshire Safeguarding Children's Board to write a joint strategy in recognition that CSE is no longer a single risk factor as research states that children are at risk of many different exploitative behaviours in modern day society. These include:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Female Genital Mutilation

- Forced marriage and Honor base Violence
- Trafficking and County Lines
- Cyber and off online abuse Gang related activity

However both these elements of exploitation target children and young people (CYP) who will have experienced some or all of the common risk factors below:

- A history of abuse
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Low self- esteem and poor confidence
- Lack positive friendship or support network from the same age group
- Being in care or leaving care

## 4.2 Summary for Children and Young people

It is very important that all children are protected from harm and exploitation and it is for this reason we have put in place safeguards which involve raising the awareness of CSE and CRE for **all** children in line with their age and understanding. Most of the children who are in care will have seen videos or had discussions in school (both primary and secondary) about CSE which tell you about the risks of CSE and how to recognise behaviors which make them feel uncomfortable and advise them to tell a trusted adult about this, for example a member of their family, a social worker or school teacher.

## 4.3 Support to Children In Care

Children in care benefit from stable and consistent allocated social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers who know them. They have regular looked after meetings –it is during these meetings where safeguarding concerns CSE or CRE risks are discussed and plans put in place to support these children.

Where CSE / CRE risks are identified a risk assessment is undertaken and if the risks are identified as medium or high the child or young person and their family attend a CRE meeting separate from their Looked after review. These have been beneficial as children have told us that they do not want too many people attending their meetings so it has been agreed that the LAC review and CSE/ CRE meeting will be chaired separately.

It is recognized that looked after children who go are more vulnerable to harm and for this reason there is now a clearer electronic link between the CRE risk assessments that are undertaken and the young people missing episodes. This makes it far easier for staff to ensure that they respond to children more quickly and assess additional risks they may be exposed to whilst they have not been in their placements.

Further work has also been undertaken with the Looked After Health Nurse who has continued to work closely with young people and link with residential staff to ensure that when young people are missing from care they are spoken

to quickly and any concerns regarding exploitation are discussed and addressed.

During this period the work commissioned by the Safeguarding Board's Vulnerable Young People's Sub Group in relation to increasing the participation of young people in their meetings was concluded by the task and finish group.

The group provided excellent feedback and a number of ideas of how participation in meetings could be improved. These ideas mirrored many discussed in the meetings with the Children in Care Council and The Voices in Action Group. They recommended the following:

1. Child friendly invites which are directly addressed to the child, not the parent.
2. A means of contact with the chair of the meeting to give feedback, that does not rely on them attending the meeting
3. They suggest that the child is allowed to enter the conference room before the professionals, so they do not feel so embarrassed walking in.
4. They are given the option of talking without a parent in the room, or on their own to the chair
5. Evaluation forms for young people to complete themselves after they have had time to think about the meeting and plan
6. Use of technology to inform young people about the meeting, that is interactive and has links to resources that raise awareness of the issues and has confidential support numbers, instead of leaflets about CSE

All the recommendations were acted upon barring point 6 as the use of technology within meetings remains a challenge for the local authority.

Derby now has a process in place which requires all licensed taxi drivers and the company escorts to undertake safeguarding training which raises awareness of the risks and identification of exploitation in children and young people some of which may use the taxi service. This training has delivered excellent impact and there have been examples of referrals being made to children social care when potential risks have been identified, these have led to children being safeguarded.

Children social care have consistently used strength based approaches when working with children and their families as we believe that for most children their needs can be met in their family with the right support from agencies. For children in care the people who are looking after them are equally important for them to thrive whilst being in care.

Over the next 12 months children social care and outside agencies will be developing a new model of intervention with children and their families which although is based on the strength based approach it also considers the vulnerabilities that children are exposed to as they become adolescence. This intervention is called Contextual Safeguarding – it evidences that

during teenage years young people can be heavily influenced by people outside of their immediate family and be exposed to significant risk. It is important that those working with these young people see the young person and the behavior in context and do not simply lay all the responsibility for all behaviors with parents. Whatever intervention and /or support which is offered must take in to account the whole family, network and community influences which impact on the young person.

Contextual Safeguarding is an exciting way of understanding children and their families and will be an addition to the various other models of support used within children social care. It not only identifies strengths within a family but also areas where additional support or protection maybe required.

### **Public/stakeholder engagement**

- 5.1 Work is being completed alongside key stakeholders including, police, education and health.

### **Other options**

- 6.1 N/A

### **Financial and value for money issues**

- 7.1 There are no financial implications

### **Legal implications**

- 8.1 There are no personnel implications

### **Other significant implications**

- 9.1 Unfortunately due to financial restriction the separate CSE/ CRE IT Pathway has been unable to be progressed. However this has not led to depletion in the quality of CSE/ CRE work across the local authority as the new procedures and risk assessment tool is now embedded in the procedures.

**This report has been approved by the following people:**

<b>Role</b>	<b>Name</b>	<b>Date of sign-off</b>
<b>Legal</b>		
<b>Finance</b>		
<b>Service Director(s)</b>	Suanne Lim	
<b>Report sponsor</b>		
<b>Other(s)</b>	Jasmine Nembhard-Francis	

<b>Background papers:</b>
<b>List of appendices:</b>