

**Cabinet**  
**16 July 2015****4. PREVENTING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION STRATEGY 2015 - 2017****Relevant Cabinet Members**

Mr J P Campion, Mr M H Hart

**Relevant Officer**

Director of Children's Services

**Recommendation**

**1. The Cabinet Member with Responsibility for Children and Families recommends that Cabinet:**

**(a) notes the work led by the Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE);**

**(b) fully supports and accepts as its own principles the four points set out in paragraph 10 drawn from Louise Casey's report 'Reflections on Child Sexual Exploitation';**

**(c) endorses the definition adopted by Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board of CSE that is set out in paragraph 4 and commonly used nationally; and**

**(d) notes the Scrutiny comments at Appendix 3 and endorses the strategy and action plan available electronically as Appendices 1 and 2.**

**Background Information**

2. CSE emerged as a national issue through serious case reviews and court proceedings in a number of places including Oxfordshire, Telford and Wrekin, Rochdale, Barnsley, and more recently Rotherham. This was particularly highlighted by the Jay Inquiry Report that was commissioned by Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council and published in August 2014 which identified a number of themes that had contributed to approximately 1400 children being sexually exploited over a number of years with no apparent action being taken. A Thematic Inspection Report by Ofsted on how 8 Local Authority Areas deal with CSE was published in November 2014, followed by a report of the review into Rotherham led by Louise Casey in March 2015. As a result of this increased awareness, there has been an increasing expectation for Councils, partner agencies and Local Safeguarding Children Boards to prioritise CSE and ensure that the lessons identified in a range of reports are applied nationally.

## **Child Sexual Exploitation Definition**

3. The Cabinet and Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) is required to both be assured and to provide assurance that large scale and organised CSE is not present in Worcestershire and that the mechanisms are in place to identify, support and protect potential victims from further harm.

4. WSCB have adopted the definition of CSE that is commonly used nationally:

‘The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.’

## **CSE in Worcestershire**

5. To date, the evidence suggests that CSE exists in Worcestershire on a relatively small and generally individualised scale. Until recently there has been no evidence of a link to gangs, organised crime or any specific minority ethnic group. Within the last month there has been one reported incident of possible organised CSE activity in Worcestershire. The men were arrested and police enquiries are ongoing.

6. A great deal of work has been undertaken to develop the pathway for CSE referrals and whilst the numbers of identified victims is relatively low (as opposed to the numbers of children and young people about whom there have been concerns), we do not, however, know what we do not know as the identification of actual victims is not easy.

7. The WSCB Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group is working to incorporate a national and regionally accepted dataset within performance management data to capture and collate the existing CSE picture in Worcestershire.

8. Police routinely undertake a 'CSE Problem Profile' to interrogate police information where children have been flagged as potentially vulnerable to CSE. Work is then undertaken between social care and the police to ensure

## Strategic Principles

the data is fully reconciled with CSE referrals.

9. The data about children who go missing in Worcestershire is also cross-referenced with data about children who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. This is in its early stages and forms part of the CSE action plan to ensure any patterns are responded to for individual children or particular locations/communities.

10. The Cabinet is recommended to follow the actions of the WSCB in fully supporting and accepting as its own principles the four points set out in Louise Casey's report 'Reflections on Child Sexual Exploitation' (March 2015), these being:

- i. That CSE is child abuse and is a crime, and our efforts need to be directed towards perpetrators in order to detect, prevent and disrupt that abuse at the earliest stages as well as the prosecution of individual perpetrators.
- ii. That the victims are children, however they present themselves. They cannot consent to their abuse. There should be no scenarios in which victims are viewed as young women or as making choices.
- iii. That CSE is squarely a community safety issue and local government working with police and others need to make use of community safety tactics and action to keep children safe. The regulatory and enforcement functions of the local authority are vital in preventing and disrupting CSE and in building intelligence which can help with prosecutions. Those in upper tier authorities and district authorities where responsibilities for children's social care and community safety lie in different tiers, have additional partnership challenges, but these cannot be insurmountable.
- iv. That local government and the police should not fear seeking out and shining a light on sexual exploitation for fear they may be held to account for what they find. The failure is not in the existence of CSE but in not recognising it and taking appropriate action.

## Action Taken

11. In Worcestershire the main response to CSE has been led through the Safeguarding Children Board although individual agencies have also acted according to their own drivers.

12. WSCB launched the Child Sexual Exploitation Pathway in August 2013. This sets out a clear pathway for referrals

## CSE Strategy

and response to child specific concerns with operational oversight delivered through a monthly multi-agency panel.

13. The targeted training of staff to raise awareness and to ensure understanding of the pathway and procedures has also taken place. WSCB also makes available an e-learning module for all agencies.

14. Taking a broader view, it is clear that the focus of co-ordinated multi-agency activity has been predominantly on protection and that prevention and the pursuit of perpetrator activities are both also in need of development. The development of the strategy therefore focused on how the WSCB progresses this work with partner agencies.

15. The Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy is available electronically as Appendix 1. This has been developed by a strategic group of the WSCB, with links to the community safety partnership. There are four overarching priorities and a discrete number of target areas for action:

### 1. Prevention and Education

**Overarching priority:** Increasing knowledge and understanding of CSE, including the development of protective factors, across children and young people (to include victim focus), the children and young people's workforce and local communities

#### Key target areas:

- Undertake a public awareness campaign
- All schools to deliver a CSE awareness programme to children and young people, tailored to their age
- All staff to receive awareness training
- Develop a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the staff training programme

### 2. Recognition and Identification

**Overarching priority:** Providing information and tools to support the identification of potential indicators of CSE; providing and publishing agreed models of assessment; and agreed protocols for the effective sharing of information across the multi-agency partnership

#### Key target areas:

- Identify vulnerable children for potential sexual exploitation and develop a risk assessment framework and pathway to protect them
- Develop professional curiosity amongst front line staff to ensure they look for and act on signs of potential CSE (particularly social workers, Health

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>workers and school staff)</li> <li>• Identification of vulnerable children who have the potential to become perpetrators</li> <li>• Promote the crucial importance of effective information sharing</li> </ul>
	<p><b>3. Intervention and Support</b></p> <p><b>Overarching priority:</b> Drawing on models of recognised good practice to develop local responses ; tailoring intervention and support to individuals; and mapping and publicising a range of available intervention/support services</p> <p><b>Key target areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Develop different methods/casework suited to CSE</li> <li>• Develop victim and family specialised support</li> <li>• Develop community safety, regulatory and taxi licensing functions</li> </ul>
	<p><b>4. Pursue and Disrupt</b></p> <p><b>Overarching priority:</b> Being pro-active across multi agency partnerships to identify, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of child sexual exploitation through criminal or civil means</p> <p><b>Key target areas:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Align cross-border arrangements with neighbouring areas/regions</li> <li>• Develop an ongoing problem profile, mapping hot spots and keep relevant agencies informed</li> <li>• Use criminal and civil powers wherever possible</li> </ul>
<b>Overview and Scrutiny</b>	<p>16. The strategy and action plan have been considered by the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel and their comments have informed the development of the action plan. The Panel will consider CSE again in January 2016 to assess how implementation of the WSCB's Action Plan is progressing. Their comments are attached at Appendix 3.</p>
<b>Legal, Financial, HR and Equality Implications</b>	<p>17. There are no specific legal, financial, HR and equality implications.</p>
<b>Supporting Information</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Appendix 1 – CSE Strategy 2015-2017</li> <li>• Appendix 2 – WSCB Action Plan</li> <li>• Appendix 3 – Comments from the Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Panel</li> </ul>

Appendices 1 and 2 are available electronically. A hard copy will be made available at reception and in the Members' area at County Hall.

## **Contact Points**

### **County Council Contact Points**

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### **Specific Contact Points for this report**

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## **Background Papers**

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Director of Children's Services) there are no background papers relating to the subject matter of this report.