

## APPENDIX 3

### Comments from Children and Families O&S Panel: Child Sexual Exploitation

The Children and Families O&S Panel has considered the issue of child sexual exploitation (CSE) at its last 3 meetings, specifically in relation to links with incidents of children reported missing, and the CSE Strategy and Action Plan 2015 – 2017 developed by WSCB. The following main comments were made:

- Work to identify any correlation between missing children and CSE is very important.
- Partnership working with schools is essential and the Panel welcomes the setting up by the WSCB of a headteacher group to develop age appropriate materials for use in schools. However, the Panel is concerned that the membership of this group is not widely known, particularly by Local Children's Trusts who may be best placed to support the work locally.
- The Panel is concerned that there is no reference to Local Children's Trusts (LCTs) in the action plan. LCTs bring together all relevant organisations locally and should be a key group in each area to support action at a local level.
- The Panel heard that action currently being taken in schools was quite variable and, although some schools in the County understood the issues well, all schools needed to follow a similar training programme in order to get a consistent approach. Although the Panel acknowledges that the Local Authority no longer issues standardised policies and procedures for all schools to follow, preferring instead to draw schools' attention to good practice and allow them to develop their own policy, Members feel that, with something as important as CSE, the Authority and its partners could perhaps take a more forceful approach.
- It is important to note that CSE is an issue at primary level as well as secondary. Some schools may need support in identifying which lesson to use for teaching the topic as it is not mandated within the National Curriculum.
- Parents are very important in promoting safety messages to children and it is important that they too are aware and well-educated about the dangers.
- Internet grooming is of particular concern.
- A public awareness campaign is needed to help people identify CSE, know where to make referrals, have the courage to make those referrals, and have confidence that the issue would be dealt with. The issue is everyone's responsibility.
- Consideration should be given to how best to involve the voluntary sector whether this is in supporting victims or in a prevention role. Specifically, those providing voluntary youth services, such as uniformed or church groups, need to be aware of the issues.
- The Panel noted that there is no single profile or way of identifying which children were more vulnerable to CSE. Children from all backgrounds could be victims.
- In order to identify CSE in Worcestershire it is essential to have knowledgeable eyes and ears out in the community and it was suggested that taxi drivers were well placed to play an important role. The Panel was concerned about the level of training of taxi drivers undertaken locally, having heard about best practice elsewhere in the country, where licensed taxi drivers were required to undergo training on CSE as a condition of their license.
- CSE is a complex and enormous issue and public awareness needs to be spread as wide as possible, starting with schools.

The Panel will consider CSE again in January 2016 to assess how implementation of the WSCB's Action Plan is progressing.