

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

MEETING DATE Thursday, 27 October 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Roy Lees (Chair), Councillor (Vice-Chair) and Councillors John Dalton, Mark Jarnell, Margaret Lees, Hasina Khan, Sheila Long, Alistair Morwood and Kim Snape

OFFICERS: Louise Elo (Head of Early Intervention) and Cathryn Filbin (Democratic and Member Services Officer)

APOLOGIES: Councillor Richard Toon

16.CSE11 Minutes of meeting Thursday, 29 September 2016 of Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

AGREED – That the minutes of the meeting held on 29 September 2016 were approved for the signature of the Chair.

16.CSE12 Declarations of Any Interests

There were no declarations of interest.

16.CSE13 Interview - Children's Society

Hayley Bentley, Rebecca Gardiner and Sarah Ainsworth attended the meeting and gave an overview of the work that The Children's Society carried out to support young people who had been subject to child sexual exploitation (CSE).

When the society was originally founded in 1881, its focus was to provide children's homes. Since then, the focus of the organisation had changed towards advocacy work, supporting young people and championing changes in legislation. It was reported that the society identified issues relating to CSE over 13 years ago; this was a long time before any other organisation recognised it as being a problem.

Street Safe was a pilot project set up by the Children's Society aimed at delivering help and support to those young people who had been subjected to CSE between the ages of 16 to 18. This age group was targeted specifically as they were not protected by children safeguarding laws as they was over the age of consent, but not yet considered an adult.

The Street Safe initiative included –

- 1-2-1 direct work
- Group work
- Targeted work
- Awareness raising and training

- Participation
- Consultancy

Street safe consisted of six case workers, and a manager. The society had charitable status and was funded by donations and grants. Two case workers represented the society on each of the three specialist CSE multi-agency teams across Lancashire Constabulary (Awaken/Deter/Engage). The purpose of the teams was to share information on high risk cases.

The 1-2-1 direct work which was a service available as part of the project, offered young people the support they needed for as long it was required. The timescale span from the initial referral, support for court hearings, and beyond. Each case worker was able to support young people in all aspects of their life and not just focus on CSE support. At the first meeting the young person would be advised that if a safeguarding issue was disclosed, the relevant agency would need to be informed, otherwise the service was completely confidential.

The direct work was extremely time intensive, and to this end each case worker usually dealt with a maximum of 12 cases at any one time, with meetings taking place wherever the young person felt most comfortable.

The pathway for the young person's referral to the Street Safe project was via a variety of different means included -

- Police
- Social workers
- Teachers
- Parents
- Self-referrals

Members of the Task Group raised a number of issues throughout the presentation from which discussions ensued. Those discussions included –

- Different ways of connecting with young people
- The difficulties of building a relationship with a young person and gaining their trust
- Working with other charities that support families
- Challenging the attitudes of others and other organisations
- Pressure from other agencies to disclose confidential information
- Dealing with the emotional pressures of the role
- Education and prevention work

The Chair thanked Hayley, Rebecca and Sarah for attending the meeting and their informative presentation.

16.CSE14 Interview - education sector

The Chair informed the task group that due to schools half term holidays, no representative from the education sector was available to attend this meeting. To allow for the presentation it was confirmed that the meeting on 10 November be reinstated.

16.CSE15 Task Group - the way forward

Due to the last item not being presented, that Chair took the opportunity to have a discussion on how the review was taking shape and discuss possible recommendations.

The task group discussed various issues included –

- DBS checks for members
- Reviewing the recommendations of a recent safeguarding audit which included CSE actions
- What evidence in terms of policies and procedures were in place to ensure the Council was doing as much as it could to prevent CSE.

- Annual mandatory training for members either a Member Learning Session or as part of an e-learning package
- Supporting the next National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Week in 2016 and 2017.

AGREED – It was agreed, at the next meeting, that the Task Group would consider -

- 1. A report on the viability of DBS checks for elected members**
- 2. Audit recommendation in relation to the prevention of CSE be reported at the next meeting.**

16.CSE16 Member Learning Session - CSE

The Chair reminded members of the Task Group about the CSE training on 14 November and asked if possible, for all members to attend.

Chair

Date