

MINUTES OF OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY TASK GROUP - CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

MEETING DATE Thursday, 29 September 2016

MEMBERS PRESENT: Councillor Roy Lees (Chair), and Councillors John Dalton, Hasina Khan, Margaret Lees, Sheila Long, Alistair Morwood, Kim Snape and Richard Toon

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

APOLOGIES: Councillor Mark Jarnell

16.CSE5 Minutes of meeting Tuesday, 2 August 2016 of Overview and Scrutiny Task Group - Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

That the minutes of the last meeting were confirmed as a correct record.

16.CSE6 Declarations of Any Interests

No declarations of interest were received on any of the agenda items.

16.CSE7 Scoping review

AGREED – That the scoping document be confirmed.

16.CSE8 Interview - DI Steve Ryder, Deter Team

The Chair welcomed, Detective Inspector Steve Ryder who headed up Lancashire Constabulary's Deter Team.

The Deter Team was committed to preventing child sexual exploitation, helping victims understand that they had been abused and bringing offenders to justice. The team were responsible for those cases involving children and young people under the age of 18, and not within a family environment.

Child sexual exploitation was a crime that could affect any child, regardless of their social or ethnic background. It involved offenders grooming young people and using their power to sexually abuse them. It would take many forms whether it occurred through a seemingly consensual relationship with an older person or a young person having sex in return for attention, gifts, alcohol etc.

Many young people who had been abused in this way did not consider themselves as being a victim of abuse. Some may think that they were a willing participant.

There were a number of signs that could indicated a young person was being sexual exploited –

- Unexplained money or gifts
- Using their mobile phone secretly
- Having significantly older friends
- Being picked up from home or school by someone they did not know
- Associating with other young people known to be vulnerable or involved in exploitation
- Playing truant from school or regularly going missing from home
- If they had suffered a sexually-transmitted infection
- Self-harming
- Change in their appearance/mood

It is recognised that a holistic approach was essential to be able to provide victims with the support they needed to rebuild their lives, which was why both a social worker and nurse were also employed within the Deter Team.

It was important that the Deter Team engage with all communities, however, it was acknowledged that more could be done. However, the Task Group were reassured that the victim's cultural background was respected at all times.

16.CSE9 Questions

What is the scale of the issues from a policing point of view across Lancashire and the south team?

Since April, the Deter Team had received 271 referrals. The referrals range from incidents of children posting naked pictures of themselves' on line to rape. It was noted that Chorley and Leyland had received a significantly higher amount of referrals when compared to Preston. The cause for this was unclear, but one explanation was the people in Chorley and Leyland may be more aware of child sexual exploitation than those residents living in Preston. It was clarified that all referrals would be investigated, but not all investigations would result in a prosecution as it was dependent on individual cases. The welfare of the young person was the team's main priority. If a child was in danger of abuse, the Deter Team would remove the child from that danger even if it compromised an investigation.

Can you provide examples of case studies.

The Task Group received disturbing (anonymised) examples of case studies that were under current investigation in Lancashire.

In each case, the young people involved did not consider themselves as victims. When this happens, the offender can be remanded in prison while further evidence is gathered and the victim given the support they needed to come to terms with what had happened and recognise it as abuse.

How does the police work with partners to raise awareness, prevent child sexual exploitation?

The police led a multi-agency response to prevent child sexual exploitation. Organisations from across all sectors met regularly to discuss cases and share intelligence about possible victims and offenders of abuse. It was important the support was offered by the most appropriate agency which could differ from case to case.

The Deter Team also work with other partners including Pace (Parents against Child Sexual Exploitation) as it was recognised families of those abused needed support during such a difficult time.

A trial had taken place with taxi drivers receiving literature on CSE and how to prevent it to keep and hand out. It was intended to roll out this trial to other licensee holders. In addition members of the Task Group were informed that over the last week, taxi drivers, as part of the application

process for a new or to renew a taxi driver's licences had to undertake CSE prevention training. It was intended that all taxi drivers applying for a new or to renew their license would have to undergo some CSE prevention training as part of their knowledge test in future.

The reporting of child sexual exploitation was everyone bodies' responsibility and education was key to prevention. The team go in to schools to speak to the young people; they also visit various sites where young people congregate to educate staff about what signs to look for and report.

How does the police tackle CSE from an enforcement point of view?

- All referrals are investigated.
- Gather intelligence about possible victims or offenders
- Offenders being included on the Sex Offenders Register
- Members of the Deter Team join partners such as Environmental Health on unannounced visits to suspected food establishments.
- Visits to swimming pools and the sites of other leisure activities to educate staff and surveillance purposes
- Facebook and other social media sites were scrutinised for signs of potential grooming.
- Issuing of Community Protection Warning (CPW)/Community Protection Notice (CPN) to those people who harbours children who may have absconded from home without the child's parents/guardians knowing.

What can elected members do to help support police work in this field?

The prevention of child sexual exploitation was everyone's responsibility; and the Task Group were asked if elected members could be encouraged to go out in to their community and highlight the dangers, and that it can affect any young person regards of background or ethnicity. Members are also asked to refer any suspicions they, or their constituents, have without hesitation to the Deter Team, even if they are proved unfounded.

Detective Inspector Ryder raised concern that some secondary schools were reluctant to let his team speak to their pupils, and members were asked if they could encourage the head teachers to change their mind. Members of the Task Group advised if the head teacher was reluctant to let the Deter Team address their pupils, what they should contact members of the school governors.

The Chair thanked Detective Inspector Ryder for attending the meeting and invited members of the Task Group to put forward suggestion as to who to interview next as part of the review.

AGREED – That representatives from the education sector be interviewed to establish what child sexual exploitation prevention work took place with in schools.

16.CSE10 Date of next meeting

The next meeting had been scheduled to take place on Thursday, 27 October 2016 at 4pm.

The final meeting scheduled to take place on 10 November was to be rescheduled until the Child Sexual Exploitation Member Learning Session took place on 14 November. The new date was to be confirmed.

Chair

Date