

# Key Messages

Supporting young people to stay safe  
on-line: Messages from Bradford SCR

# Background

Jack, a teenage boy - sexually abused by multiple adult males

Abuse commenced at 13 years old after he came out as gay.

Agencies first became aware of the risk of sexual abuse in August 2010.

2 separate police investigations resulted in 36 adult male suspects being identified, 20 of whom convicted of various sexual offences and grooming offences against Jack.

Despite significant multi-agency support for Jack, services were not effective in keeping him safe from abuse.

# What went well?

- School provided a safe space
- GP's exhibited excellent awareness of safeguarding issues
- BLAST provided consistently good service to Jack and his family
- A number of agencies provided consistent levels of support including Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services; Child Line; Sexual support services; School Nursing service
- Good communication between agencies
- The emergency department were able to access accurate records showing Jack was engaged with services

# What didn't go well

- Police failed to deal with referral from ChildLine in August 2010
- The police failed to record initial crimes and begin a criminal investigation in February 2011
- Children's social care had received referrals in February 2011 but did not follow child protection procedures
- The police investigation conducted between February 2011 and April 2012 was poorly managed
- The police and children's social care's initial response to Jack's intention to abscond to London with a 25-year-old male was poorly dealt with
- The failure to conduct an initial child protection conference in March 2011 and the subsequent reliance on the use of CSE strategy meetings
- The incident in January 2013 when Jack met an offender outside his school was badly dealt with.

# Child's voice

- Many people were listening to Jack and trying to help and support him
- The police and children's social care had some difficulties in hearing Jack's voice - attitudinal or lack of time.
- Victim blaming blocked the voice being heard.

# What needs to happen?

- CSE must be recognised at the earliest opportunity and always risk assessed subject to child protection procedures.
- Partners need to be clear about their roles and responsibilities and act appropriately according to government guidance and local safeguarding children procedures
- Police need to recognise child sexual exploitation and apply criminal processes appropriately
- Multi agency meetings must be conducted according to the local safeguarding children procedures and have purpose, focus and actions with accountability.

# Listen to the child/young person

- Need to establish what life is like for the child/young person (use 'A Day in the Life' tool)
- How is the child managing? How are they feeling?
- How are the parents managing?
- Need to see the whole picture – compile a Multi-Agency Chronology to see patterns, themes and triggers etc.

# It's a crime

- Know the legislation relating to the exploitation of children (on-line and in person).
- Sexual Offences Act 2003
- Serious Crime Act 2015
- Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014
- Notify the Police if a crime is being committed
- Share 'intelligence' with the Police

# It's a Safeguarding Issue

- Refer to the West Yorkshire Interagency Procedures
- Complete the CSE risk assessment if concerned and refer to CSE Hub
- If the child is 'at significant risk' use child protection processes
- Challenge the need for ICPC if appropriate

'An Initial Child Protection Conference must be convened when it is believed that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer Significant Harm.... Where a senior manager from another agency requests that an Initial Child Protection Conference is convened, this request will be given serious consideration by the relevant Children's Social Care Services Manager and a response will be given in writing. Where any issue of professional difference is not resolved, see Resolving Professional Disagreements and Escalation Procedure.'

# Be Decisive

- Early intervention and prevention is vital
- Be proactive, demonstrating professional curiosity, challenging anything that doesn't seem right (with the child, parents, colleagues)
- The issue may not fit neatly into usual categories of 'safeguarding' or 'abuse' but use existing processes and procedures to safeguard the child or young person

# Prevention is better than Reaction

“ ...you do not take a child to the beach and show them children having fun in the sea and then leave them alone with a warning that they shouldn't go in the water, or if they do it can only be to their ankles. Instead you teach them to swim and explain the dangers and to some extent you then rely on trust.”

Stephen Ashley BSCB SCR Overview Report 'Jack' 2017