

Holistic Report - Executive Summary

Introduction

What we wanted to achieve:

- Assurance
- CSCP Executive Member Knowledge
- Whole system examination of topic
- Include information from multiple sources: research, data, audit, young people's views, staff feedback.
- Confirmation of good practice and where there are areas for improvement

Process:

- New – first Holistic Report for Calderdale
- Feedback from multi-agency professionals
- Performance Management data and intelligence
- Audit Findings
- Feedback from Young People
- Feedback from Service Users
- Independently Scrutinised by the NWG (National Working Group)
- Learning disseminated, fed to The Children's Society for work in West Yorkshire and locally Calderdale are producing a Child Exploitation Action Plan following this Holistic Report.

Report written by Julia Caldwell, Safeguarding Partnerships Manager, Sophie Wrafter (nee Boyles) Quality Assurance Officer and Jacquie Hellowell, Performance Management Officer, in conjunction with experts and professionals across the multi-agency partnership in Calderdale.

Good Practice

The Holistic Report evidences good Child Exploitation (CE) practice in Calderdale, some of which is highlighted here. However, the report is not exhaustive, and the authors recognise that this does not list all the good joint working arrangements in Calderdale.

MACE: The Calderdale approach to CE through the Multi Agency Child Exploitation team (MACE) is an effective way to assess risk and support young people. The team has had external Peer-Review several times and has been highlighted as good practice through inspections. Other authorities have observed the team and their practice following positive praise and recognition.

Training: The CSCP has delivered 25 training sessions over the past two years to 285 practitioners. The MACE team have delivered an additional 35 sessions over the same period to schools,

universities, voluntary sector organisations, Foster Carers, Residential Home Staff, School Nurses, Children's Centres, Taxi Drivers and Hoteliers in Calderdale. In addition, Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE) have delivered 30 sessions to 721 staff, and 40 sessions to 870 parents. Evaluation and some impact is highlighted in this report.

Raising awareness and prevention through schools: An innovative animation, specifically designed to safeguard children in West Yorkshire from exploitation and abuse was delivered; called 'Mister Shapeshifter'. This animation uses a modern 'fairy tale' to depict how some adults can abuse children's trust. This animation followed the GW Theatre stage production which toured Calderdale schools from 2015. Awareness has been raised through Safeguarding Week and other community and public facing events throughout Calderdale.

Interventions: Systemic practice through relationship-based work with children & families is used and has had positive outcomes of children and young people. Child M Serious Case Review (SCR) and a more recent out of area SCR where the child was placed in Calderdale evidenced the impact of this positive multi-agency practice. Data shows swift response to referrals, concerns and assessment and allocation of workers within CE Team with regular meetings to review children and plans. Practitioners from across the partnership commented on the robust plans for children and families which include creativity and intense support.

Co-location: Co-located Children's Social Care, Police and PACE (voluntary commissioned service) has assisted greatly in communication and risk assessment. The work of PACE was praised by statutory services working with families as having a positive impact.

Consistency of staff: Experienced and consistent staff who can build relationships with young people over time was found in both the Independent Scrutiny Report following the Child M SCR. Experienced and consistent staff is not an accident, but is a result of well informed, supported staff who have access to effective safeguarding supervision, reflection and research informed training.

Disrupting Perpetrators: Child M SCR praised the victim and services in Calderdale for supporting the successful prosecution of perpetrators. [Criminal, Civil and Partnership Disruption Options for Perpetrators of Child and Adult Victims of Exploitation](#), Kay Wallace and Rachel Hopper, 2019, further empowers the workforce from all professions to be as creative as possible and to utilise all the opportunities available to them using the Disruption toolkit. Evidence and use of trafficking law to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators was apparent in Calderdale cases, and the parallel '[Early Action Hub](#)' process led by the police supporting young people who are at risk of criminal activity are producing positive results.

Assurance through COVID: Schools have been closed with reduced opportunities for professionals to see children or families. A positive development resulting from lockdown is that school staff in Calderdale have been active in contacting potentially vulnerable pupils who were assessed as having safeguarding risks before COVID; they have made contact with and continued undertaking welfare checks through lockdown. Similarly, the CE Team, Youth Services, Family Intervention Teams and Youth Justice officers have continued with both virtual and face to face contact as detailed in the analysis section below. This positive practice needs capturing to enhance and support our safeguarding response.

Areas for Further Consideration

Examining Child Exploitation interventions and practice in Calderdale highlighted the following areas for improvement: *NB: Some areas below were identified as good practice but noted that with further development; outcomes for children could be further improved.*

Multi-agency representation: The CE Team needs regular input from Education and Health professionals. From an Education perspective: The Safeguarding Practice Review Panel report: [It was hard to escape; children at risk from criminal exploitation](#) identified exclusions from school as a trigger for significant escalation of risk. Exclusion data and assurance about what happens when children and young people are excluded from all settings is needed to identify and build wrap around support to compensate for this lack of structure and rejection that exclusion can cause. Information to and from Colleges and further education providers also needs to be included in any approach. The case for including health professionals within multi-agency risk assessments, discussions and decisions is well evidenced in most safeguarding literature and research. A positive step would be to undertake a Risk Assessment prior to exclusion or fixed term suspension.

Intelligence: Better quality and more up to date problem profiles for Calderdale from increased intelligence is needed to tackle the perpetrators of this abuse. Improvements are needed in local data capture and analysis to identify gaps and disparities, and to influence priority setting, risk management, intervention, and communications. In addition, there is a need for more consistent comparator data across West Yorkshire and for the capture of ethnicity data of both victim and perpetrator; nationally BAME young men are more at risk of CE – we need to identify if this is the case in Calderdale. How we are capturing intelligence from the community, young people, and partner agencies.

Early Help and Intervention: Early Intervention support is offered even if cases are not deemed as high risk and when a referral is going to be closed. It would, however, be beneficial to review closed cases regularly to try to prevent reoccurrences and improve outcomes for families. It is recognised that evidencing impact or outcomes for children is difficult, however more work needs to be done to evidence that interventions are making a difference to people's lives. Recognition of good practice, positive outcomes and improvement needs to be captured – Serious Success Reviews would lend benefit this approach. See final page of this report for example of feedback from Young Person.

Referrals: The quality of referrals and information provided by partner agencies, was found, by those within the MACE team, to be lacking and in need of improvement. Where there are repeat concerns of children being discussed at MACE, or where children are low risk; they could be transferred to the Early Help Interventions for support and to prevent repeat referrals. If there are issues with info sharing –should this go to a specific process to ensure this gets resolved? A point for Notification of information sharing barrier.

Communication & Raising Awareness: Although West Yorkshire Police regularly produce campaigns and promote the awareness of risks round CE; the Young Advisors survey identified the need for improved parent/carer knowledge and awareness of CE. Practitioners also raised issues that different methods of communication, such as social media platforms, were needed to engage with children and their families and bespoke engagement was needed to engage with different

communities. Practitioners have fed back that parental take up of school-based awareness raising sessions were not well attended. Hull, East Riding, North Lincolnshire and North East have a website called '[Not In Our Community](#)' which is an example of engaging with the community.

Learning & Improvement: Although evidence of the breadth of people trained in CE was good, some practitioners thought training on CE should be extended for services more on the periphery of CE, including those working at night in private businesses, neighbourhood and community-based staff, faith-based organisations and voluntary services.

Risk Assessment: A difference of opinion from different practitioners and organisations about the risk assessment process needs exploring and resolving. Some practitioners and managers indicated the need for a shared multi-agency risk assessment across West Yorkshire. The differing view is that risk assessment should remain local and needs-led and to only be completed by those within the CE Team. Whichever process is agreed, it needs to support practice. Devon use a process called the Adolescent Safety Framework which enables the implementation of the extra familial nature of the contextual safeguarding approach. A review of process, assessment and procedure in Calderdale would ascertain if the current process is appropriate for contextual safeguarding.

Strategic Vision and Governance: Agreement of the strategy: '*Approach to Contextual Safeguarding and Child Exploitation*' is needed, which includes clarity about the strategic lead for the many different aspects of CE including: Trafficking, County Lines, Gangs, radicalisation, Online Grooming and Transition to Adulthood. [Counting Lives; responding to children who are criminally exploited](#), The Children's Society, July 2019 highlights children going missing as one of the indicators of potential exploitation. It should be apparent how the two different groups ('Missing' and 'Child Exploitation' Operational Groups) interact, share information, and intervene is not duplicating work and is streamlining services for families.

Escalation: The [First Annual Report 2018 to 2019: Patterns in practice, key messages, and 2020 work programme](#) from the Child Safeguarding Practice Review National Panel, points out that the people who might know the most about a child are often not those who have the statutory powers to investigate and assess (p19), and where serious disputes among professionals appear, that clear and effective arrangements for resolving professional disputes and escalation are in place. The Child M SCR highlighted escalation as an area for improvement; evidence has not yet been found as to whether this policy is known about, in use or effective.

Therapeutic Interventions: Through this holistic reporting process, therapeutic interventions and any impacts were not evident. Interventions should aim to be measurable, accountable and evidence positive outcomes for children and they should be recorded and reported on as to their effectiveness. Therapeutic support needs to be trauma responsive. Although practice in Calderdale is relationship based which is therapeutic, what is the teams' link to psychological services and what happens if a child is referred and not picked up? Recovery should be the focus of practice, can the team evidence this? Is our practice trauma informed?

Transition to Adulthood: Evidence was found that CE Workers supported young people long after they turned 18. In Child M SCR, the woman who had been involved in CSE was supported by her same Social Worker and Police Officer until after the trial, sentencing and still had contact to this

day. Practitioners spoke about being able and having managers support to help young adults' transition to adulthood, and in many cases the same children's workers were able to support young adults in adulthood. Are connections with relevant adult services and the Safeguarding Adults Board robust in this area?

The Impact of COVID

The 2020 Children's Commissioner report: [Teenagers falling through the gaps](#) – talks about already vulnerable teens and the impact of COVID, resulting in further falling into crime and criminal exploitation. These young people are at risk of becoming invisible to services and are easy prey for criminal gangs and abuse especially where services are not as visible or are not intervening in usual ways.

Performance management data shows that the number of children on the Matrix is low; this may not be truly reflective of exploitation within Calderdale. What is yet to be ascertained, because differing levels of lockdown are continuing as this report is being written; is what the impact of COVID and lockdown has been in Calderdale. Front line CE managers are continuing to work with the CSCP through the CE Operational Group to seek assurance about CE locally.

Next Steps

This report will be independently scrutinised by the NWG (National Working Group), who will provide observations and judgements from an expert point of view. Following this, the report and independent scrutiny findings will be presented to the CSCP Executive with a proposal that the Contextual Safeguarding Sub-Group and the CE Operational Group develop an action plan to address the areas highlighted as needing improvement and to share the good practice as examples of effective joint working arrangements.