

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION STRATEGY

Relevant Portfolio Holder	Councillor Margaret Sherrey, Portfolio Holder for Community Safety
Portfolio Holder Consulted	Yes
Relevant Head of Service	Judith Willis, Head of Community Services
Wards Affected	All
Ward Councillor Consulted	N/A
Key Decision	

1. SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

To endorse the County- wide Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy 2015–2017, and to consider how the Council can contribute to its achievement.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Worcestershire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-2017 and the Council's contribution as outlined in section 3.12 is endorsed.

3. KEY ISSUES

Financial Implications

- 3.1 There are no financial implications arising directly from this report. The Council's contribution to the Strategy will be met within existing budget provisions.

Legal Implications

- 3.2 There is a duty on local authorities under Section 10 of the Children Act 2004 to make arrangements to promote co-operation to improve the wellbeing of all children in the authority's area.
- 3.3 A range of individual organisations and professionals working with children and families have specific statutory duties to promote the welfare of children and ensure they are protected from harm. In addition Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on District Councils that provide children's and other types of services including housing, sport, culture and leisure services, licensing authorities and youth services.

- 3.4 Safeguarding people is everyone's responsibility and as a District Council we have a duty to ensure that all children and young people are safeguarded from all types of harm and this clearly includes CSE.
- 3.5 In respect of the role of Worcestershire Regulatory Services and in particular around licensed premises and taxi licencing, the Strategy is to be presented to a meeting of their Joint Committee.

Service / Operational Implications

- 3.6 In Worcestershire the main response to CSE has been led through the Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and individual agencies have also acted according to their service responsibilities.
- 3.7 CSE is defined in the Strategy as:

'The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.'

- 3.8 By endorsing the Strategy the Council supports and accepts as its own principles the four points set out in Louise Casey's report 'Reflections on CSE (March 2015). These are set out in full in section 5 of the Strategy and in summary are **that CSE: is child abuse and is a crime; the victims are children; it is squarely a community safety issue; and the failure is not in the existence of CSE but in not recognising it and taking appropriate action.**
- 3.9 To date, the evidence suggests that CSE exists in Worcestershire on a relatively small and generally individualised scale, and until recently there was no evidence of a link to gangs, organised crime or any specific minority ethnic group. Within the last couple of months there has been one reported incident of possible organised CSE activity in Worcestershire. The men were arrested and police enquiries are ongoing. There is also no indication that disclosures or reporting have been ignored as was the case in Rotherham.

- 3.10 The WCSB has undertaken a great deal of work to develop the pathway for CSE referrals. The pathway is unique in that it allows for non-child specific concerns to be logged with the Access Centre e.g. Concerns about a commercial premises.
- 3.11 The Worcestershire Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, which incorporates a multi-agency action plan, is attached as Appendix 1. This has been developed by the WCSB and there are four overarching priorities against which key target areas for action have been identified:
- 1. Prevention and Education.**
 - 2. Recognition and Identification**
 - 3. Intervention and Support**
 - 4. Pursue and Disrupt**
- 3.12 As with any safeguarding matter, the Council has a duty to contribute to preventing and responding to CSE. To help fulfil this duty the following work is being undertaken/proposed:
1. District Council Officer Representation at the WCSB, the CSE Strategy Group and the CSE Panel (representation is via the Chief Executive and the Head of Community Services).
 2. A Lead Professional for CSE has been identified as the Head of Community Services with the Head of Leisure & Cultural Services as Deputy Lead.
 3. Training on identifying low level non-child specific concerns and training on CSE and use of the Worcestershire Screen Tool to be provided to identified teams within the Council. This work has commenced and will be completed by the end of 2015.
 4. From May 2015 Members safeguarding training has incorporated a section on CSE. In addition Licensing Committee Members are to receive additional training in respect of their role in safeguarding against CSE in determining licences.
 5. The Council's Safeguarding Policy has been updated to include CSE.
 6. CSE Raising Awareness to all staff via internal communications, including team brief and posters and support provided to the WCSB publicity campaigns.
 7. Through the Bromsgrove Partnership CSE awareness raising with partner agencies, including the voluntary sector.
 8. Through the North Worcestershire Community Safety Partnership and Tasking Group, to receive CSE intelligence and implement a partnership response to identified 'hot spots'.
 9. The annual Community Safety Partnership Plan has been updated to incorporate CSE responsibilities.
 10. To support WRS in undertaking a CSE awareness raising campaign with licenced premises via the Community Safety Tasking Group.

11. To assist the Worcestershire Strategic Housing Partnership in developing and implementing CSE guidance for bed and breakfast providers, hostels and HMO licencing.

Customer / Equalities and Diversity Implications

- 3.13 Endorsement of the Strategy and the proposed proactive contribution by the Council as detailed in the report, will support that children and young people are kept safe.

4. RISK MANAGEMENT

Endorsement of the Strategy and the proposed proactive contribution by the Council as detailed in the report, will enable the Council to achieve its statutory duties in respect of safeguarding.

5. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – WCSB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-2017

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Children Act 2004

AUTHOR OF REPORT

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