

Wiltshire Council

Cabinet

19 July 2016

Subject: Wiltshire Council CSE Action Plan Update

Cabinet member: Councillor Laura Mayes – Children’s Services

Key Decision: No

Executive Summary

Wiltshire’s approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has been focussed on three key themes which are set out in the Pan Wiltshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and Swindon Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy: Prevent Protect and Pursue. The WSCB is responsible for co-ordinating an effective multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation and for monitoring Wiltshire’s strategy.

This report will provide an update of (a) progress made against the CSE action plan since 15 March and (b), report on progress on the considerations of options for the development of electronic communications tools namely the Wiltshire App and council Website. Wiltshire Council contribution to multi agency strategy

Proposal(s)

That Cabinet notes progress on the Council’s CSE Action Plan with specific reference to the Wiltshire App and Website, as agreed in 15 March 2016 Cabinet meeting.

Reason for Proposal

In March 2015 the government announced that the sexual abuse of children is a National Threat.

Monitoring of the plan’s implementation needs to be at the most senior level to ensure that actions are effective in protecting and supporting children.

**Carolyn Godfrey
Corporate Director**

Wiltshire Council

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Key Decision: No

Purpose of Report

1. To provide Cabinet with a review of the Council’s CSE Action Plan with specific reference to the Wiltshire App and Website, as agreed at 15 March 2016 Cabinet meeting

Relevance to the Council’s Business Plan

2. The Wiltshire Council response to child sexual exploitation links to the Council's business plan 2013 to 2017 key priorities 4 and 5; ‘To protect those who are most vulnerable’.
 - 2.1. Provide opportunities for every child and young person to improve their attainment and skills so they can achieve their full potential
 - 2.2. Continue to improve our safeguarding services to protect the most vulnerable in our Communities
3. The objectives are stated in Outcome 6 of the Council’s Business Plan; to reduce levels of crime and to reduce the number of families with complex needs by ensuring prevention of abuse and protection of vulnerable children and young people

Main Considerations for the Council

4. In March 2015 the government announced that the sexual abuse of children is a National Threat. Failure to take comprehensive action to tackle CSE will leave children and young people at risk. Monitoring of the plan’s implementation needs to be at the most senior level to ensure that actions are effective in protecting and supporting children.

Background

5. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is child sexual abuse and it is a crime. . It involves children and young people being tricked, forced or manipulated into sexual activity (this can be physical and/or virtual abuse) in exchange for something. This may be money, alcohol, drugs, gifts or accommodation – or

less tangible goods such as affection or status. CSE can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition.

6. CSE is not new. However, a number of high-profile cases such as in Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxford and Bristol have focused the attention of the Government, the media and agencies involved in the safeguarding of children on CSE, and the need to do more to protect children and young people at risk.
7. Wiltshire Council's Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Action Plan was presented to Cabinet on 19th May 2015 and a progress report presented on 15 March 2016 where it was resolved:
 - a) To note the progress made against the CSE action plan since May 2015.
 - b) To ask officers to consider options for the development of electronic communication tools, and to report progress to the June meeting of Cabinet.
8. This report will provide an update of (a) progress made against the CSE action plan since 15 March and (b), report on progress on the considerations of options for the development of electronic communications tools namely the Wiltshire App and council Website.

Progress since May 2015

9. In relation to 7 (a) above, the report provided to Cabinet on 15 March 2016 detailed the activities and progress made against the CSE Action Plan; an update in relation the key themes is provided below.
10. Prevent (the abuse from happening)
 - 10.1. The majority of Area Boards have now received briefings about CSE. Blair Keltie, Service , is liaising with democratic services to arrange briefings for the 2 outstanding Area Boards by July 2016. CSE Presentations and Missing Children briefings have been delivered to a number of professional groups across the council and key stakeholder agencies and the WSCB has delivered CSE training to 145 professionals in the last financial year.
 - 10.2. All staff in the Special Educational Needs and Disability (SEND) service have received CSE Awareness Training focusing on the outcomes and recommendations of 'Unprotected, Overprotected: Meeting the needs of young people with learning disabilities who experience, or are at risk of, sexual exploitation' (Barnardos, 2015). The training highlights the particular vulnerabilities of children with SEND to CSE and includes include guidance on the use on of a CSE Screening Tool.
 - 10.3. The West of England CSE Victim Support Project offers Wiltshire Council 20 days advanced CSE practitioner training: working with parents of CSE victims, Legal Processes and SEND, provided by a Barnardos trainer. So far 7 training sessions have been run with 123 of professionals attending.

- 10.4. Discussions are underway with Schools to negotiate and secure funding for a further tour of Chelsea's Choice autumn 2016.
- 10.5. The 2016 Awareness Day on 18 March 2016 generated interest nationally and for local media which promoted further awareness in the community of the problem and the council's response with having a specialist CSE (Emerald) team.

11. Protect (young people who are victims or at risk of sexual exploitation)

- 11.1. During 2015 the recruitment of a specialist CSE team (known as Emerald Team within children's services has been completed. The Emerald Team has been operational from October 2015 working directly with victims of CSE and in an advisory capacity to support professionals working with children at risk of CSE.
- 11.2. Victims of of CSE are profoundly affected by the abuse, often in emotional/psychological trauma and require therapeutic support. A child's trauma is also a barrier for victims to disclose abuse. A Child & Adolescent Mental Health practitioner has been seconded to work with the Emerald and Looked After Children (LAC) Teams from 1 June 2016.
- 11.3. In the last financial year 1415 incidents of Missing/Absent children were referred by the police to the council. Re-deploying existing resources (therefore cost neutral – see finance section) a second Missing Children Coordinator has been appointed starting on 13 June 2016. This additional capacity requirement to meet demand demonstrates our success in highlighting to all agencies and parents/carers the need to report missing children to the Police as this is strong indicator of CSE. The Missing Children Coordinators follow up police reports with Return Interviews and safeguarding measures to reduce children's vulnerabilities/risks. Improvement planning is in place to increase the take up of Return Interviews (currently 31%) by children who have been reported missing.
- 11.4. At this time Emerald team is supporting 44 children affected by CSE. Of these 25 are victims of CSE and allocated a specialist Emerald Team CSE Worker providing direct work. The remaining 19 children are assessed as 'At Risk' requiring interventions to protect them from becoming victims.
- 11.5. Eleven cases have been closed since the last report. These are of two types. Firstly where specialist CSE intervention (and pursuing perpetrators) has removed the victim from the abuse and risks have reduced accordingly (9 cases). Secondly, 2 cases where risks have escalated acutely through online grooming leading to a contact offence, but due to protective factors such as vigilant/knowledgeable parents/carers, children have been protected from or removed from abuse and perpetrators pursued.
- 11.6. Positive feedback has been received on the work of the Emerald Team from the Senior Responsible Officer on the information recently submitted to the West of England CSE Victim Support Service 'This looks really positive; your processes in Wiltshire look like they are starting to have a positive effect in a very tangible way'.

12. Pursue (Perpetrator prosecution and disruption)

Currently nine male perpetrators are being disrupted with the following tactics:

- 5 arrested and on Police Conditional Bail These arrests have been as a direct consequence of victims being protected and given the confidence by the Emerald Team to disclose the abuse
- A Civil Injunction was successfully gained by Wiltshire Council and breaching of the injunction lead to the perpetrator being imprisoned.
- 2 perpetrators have a Civil Injunction gained by housing societies forbidding them having contact with children
- One perpetrator has a Sexual Risk Order
- All 9 perpetrators have Child Abduction Warning Notices serviced against them which makes them arrestable if found with children.

Options for the development of electronic communication tools

13. The Service Manager for CSE and Missing Children (Emerald Team) met with relevant officers to consider options and develop a project plan to progress electronic communications products and align this with a communication strategy.
14. My Wiltshire is a mobile app for reporting issues to Wiltshire Council. Information can be attached such as photos or videos to provide additional information and pinpoint exact locations using the mapping software. When a report is submitted it goes to Wiltshire Council's customer service team for processing and forwarding to the relevant service delivery team.
15. My Wiltshire app has a 'Report it' page to which a CSE concern could be added. However in reporting a concern an understanding of what CSE is would be required to ensure reports are relevant. Therefore a link to Wiltshire Council website CSE section with information suitable for the public could be created. The benefits are that the public, including children and young people, have ready access to information about CSE and the means to report a concern. However, careful consideration is required to ensure filters are in place so that only relevant reports can be made as there is a danger of 'report overload' which could detract from serious child protection concerns and create additional unnecessary work to research low level concerns.
16. Having considered the options available in My Wiltshire app the conclusion has been reached that this would be of great benefit in providing information about CSE and Missing Children to the public, as means to signpost to relevant section of the Wiltshire Council website, and provide guidance about how to report a concern by contacting the MASH. Further My Wiltshire app has a news and events sections which links to the council's news and communication section of the website. Any future CSE awareness raising such as the national CSE Awareness Day can promoted through the app.
17. Wiltshire Council website. It has been agreed that there will be a CSE microsite within the website uploaded to the new Wiltshire Website which will be launched in September 2016. Having researched a number of local authority's websites looking for exemplars it has been agreed that Wiltshire will adopt the layout and style of <http://www.itsnotokay.co.uk/> The site includes a child friendly home page with ready access to easy to understand

information sections on 'What is it?' 'Get Help'; sections for Parents, Professionals and Businesses. This promotes the message that all sections of Wiltshire community have a part to play in combating CSE as a 'Whole Wiltshire' approach.

18. The content will be adapted for Wiltshire and have relevant links to local agencies. The site also includes links to national agencies providing advice and support. Using our own content as relevant there are no copyright issues.
19. The anticipated launch of the new Wiltshire website is September 2016 and a communication strategy is in place which can be a springboard to highlight the new CSE micro site, sections in My Wiltshire app and promote a 'Whole Wiltshire' approach to tackle CSE.

Overview & Scrutiny Engagement

20. A scrutiny task group was formed in April 2015 to look at the CSE action plan.
 - 20.1. At its meeting on Tuesday 26 April the task group considered the implementation of the council's CSE action plan and is now engaging with other local authorities to benchmark their action plans.
 - 20.2. The task group is working towards presenting its final report to the Children's Select Committee on 26 July 2016.

Safeguarding Implications

21. Safeguarding children and young people is the purpose of the CSE Action Plan.
22. Failure to take comprehensive action to tackle CSE will leave children and young people at risk. Monitoring of the plan's implementation needs to be at the most senior level to ensure that actions are effective in protecting and supporting children.

Public Health Implications

23. The impact of child sexual exploitation can be devastating, often proving detrimental to victims' physical, psychological and emotional wellbeing. The signs are often hard to identify and vary from children going missing from their homes or care placements, to experiencing mental health problems, sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy, terminations, misuse of drugs or alcohol, physical injuries and coming into contact with the police.
24. Public Health is concerned with improving the health and wellbeing, including welfare of their local population and has a responsibility to tackle child sexual exploitation. Through commissioning of services which accurately reflect need, public health commissioners can provide services which are accessible, high quality and evidence-based. Ensuring services are delivered through staff that are well informed can contribute to the prevention and

identification of child sexual exploitation. Furthermore, they are able to provide a range of interventions and include signposting to specialist services who can provide longer term support and rehabilitation.

Procurement Implications

25. There may be procurement of training to deliver the strategy, which will be managed through normal procurement practices and governance arrangements.

Equalities Impact of the Proposal (detailing conclusions identified from Equality Analysis, sections 4 and 5)

26. Young people from the LGB&T community may need additional support – we may need to consider how they will be reached specifically. Race & Religion specific – we know that in some areas, (e.g. Rotherham), race has been a factor in CSE. However, overall it is accepted that CSE may affect people of any race or religion.

Environmental and Climate Change Considerations

27. There are no implications of the action plan on Environment and Climate Change

Risk Assessment

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision and related work is not taken

28. Without a council wide action plan on CSE that is sufficiently monitored, activity is more likely to be done in isolation, would be uncoordinated, may involve duplication of effort and may result in gaps in provision – putting children at risk. Corporate ownership would also be compromised.

Risks that may arise if the proposed decision is taken and actions that will be taken to manage these risks

29. There is a potential risk that the high profile of CSE may take attention away from other safeguarding issues. The WSCB has a sub group dedicated to CSE, but its wider strategic remit ensures that other forms of abuse and risks to children and young people remain priorities. Likewise, the Council has created a new specialist CSE team, but this sits within a structure where there is a strategic overview of all safeguarding issues.

Financial Implications

30. The CSE team comprises staff which are funded in part by base budget diverted from elsewhere within Childrens Services and in part by a two year home Office Innovation Fund.

31. In the third year, this external funding will cease and we would ideally look to apply for alternative external funding. If this was not available, we would look

to the placement strategy to fund. We would need to identify funding from Children's Services

	Year 1 (2015/16)	Year 2 (2016/17)	Year 3 (2017/18)
Estimate of CSE Team Costs	£0.226m	£0.228m	£0.230m
Local Authority Budget	£0.076m	£0.078m	£0.080m
Local Authority Match funding for Home Office Bid	£0.025m	£0.025m	
Home Office Funding	£0.125m	£0.125m	
Alternative External Funding or, funding from within Children's Services			£0.150m

Legal Implications

32. The Council has significant legal obligations for the protection of children, both generally and specifically in relation to CSE. The actions and proposals set out in this report will help the Council meet those obligations

Options Considered

33. See points 13 to 19

Conclusions

34. See points 13 to 19

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Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report:
None

Appendices : None