

COMMUNITY OUTCOMES

SAFEGUARDING VULNERABLE PEOPLE

2 MAY 2017

SUBJECT: Child Sexual Abuse

Joint Report of the Chief Officer Team and Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner

PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1. This joint report outlines the Force's current position in relation to Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and outlines the work being undertaken by the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC) and West Yorkshire Police (WYP) to safeguard children and achieve the outcomes set out in the Police and Crime Plan.

RECOMMENDATION

2. That the Police and Crime Commissioner uses this report to scrutinise Force activity in respect of Child Sexual Abuse.

POLICE AND CRIME PLAN

3. In the Police and Crime Plan 2013 – 2018, CSA was recognised under 'safeguarding against violent and serious crimes' with CSA specifically recognised as one of the highest priorities for the police and other partners in West Yorkshire. This is an extremely important issue that cannot be tackled by the police alone and is rightly an important area of work that is subject to significant national scrutiny, guidance and policy.

Child sexual abuse including child sexual exploitation (CSE) remains a key priority in the Police and Crime Plan 2016 – 2021. There has been an increased focus on safeguarding the vulnerable which has led to significant increases in the number of investigations, successful convictions, and confidence in victims coming forward. Safeguarding people was considered the greatest priority by respondents to the consultation with 70% of people saying it was important to them.

KEY INFORMATION

4. The PCC appointed a dedicated Safeguarding Advisor to lead, deliver and advise on the PCC's strategy for a coordinated, cohesive and consistent response to Safeguarding, in particular to CSA, in West Yorkshire.

WYP were graded GOOD by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) for being effective, efficient and legitimate at keeping people safe and reducing crime. Inspectors were pleased with the improved response to newer threats such as child sexual exploitation.

20 projects tackling CSE have been awarded monies through the PCC's Safer Communities Fund totalling £103,096 since 2014

PARTNER CONTRIBUTION

5. As previously reported in September 2015 and March 2016, the PCC has been working in with partners to tackle CSE since his election in 2012. Including hosting meetings and campaigns dedicated to CSE with senior safeguarding stakeholders in West Yorkshire to establish how we can work better together.

A joint week of action was held in Safeguarding week (17 to 23 October), in partnership with West Yorkshire Police, the British Transport Police and the five local authorities to raise awareness of the signs associated with a young person who is being exploited and the ways in which it can be reported.



Chief Officer Team Briefing for PCC

Title: Child Sexual Abuse

CoT Sponsor: ACC Foster

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Summary

Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) which is a form of CSA is a key priority for the West Yorkshire Police and this is reflected in its significant position within the Police and Crime Plan.

In 2016 a comprehensive review of safeguarding structures governance and capability took place across the force and the resource and capacity of the Safeguarding Governance Unit was increased to reflect the commitment of the West Yorkshire Police (WYP) to all safeguarding including child sexual abuse. These changes were to support the delivery of:-

- Policy development
- Audit and compliance
- Performance and monitoring linked to Force Accountability Meetings
- Support District Safeguarding Units
- Domestic Homicide and Serious Case Reviews (DHR/SCR)

Headed by a Detective Superintendent and two Detective Chief Inspectors these changes have been embedded and working through the WYP Strategic Safeguarding Board chaired by an Assistant Chief Constable have positively developed the West Yorkshire Police's response to safeguarding including CSA and CSE.

This work has been recently recognised by Her Majesty's Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC) who have rated the force as GOOD in protecting the vulnerable and investigating crime in its latest HMIC assessment. That said this is a vitally important area and the West Yorkshire Police will not rest on its laurels and continue to work hard to maintain its GOOD rating but also seek to improve again to reach OUTSTANDING in future HMIC assessments.

This is being done through a rolling programme of detailed audits being carried out by the Safeguarding Governance Unit across all districts of West Yorkshire to measure and improve

districts safeguarding activity, sharing good practice and using the Force and Local Accountability meetings to embed evaluate and embed these improvements.

Working in partnership is not only a statutory requirement of “Working together to safeguard children 2015” but it is how West Yorkshire respond on a daily basis to tackling child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation.

In all cases of Child Sexual Abuse investigations take place with our key external partners for example Children’s Social Care. Each policing District has a co-located investigative team with these external partners and also Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs have been established in each district. These provide a real time exchange of information to ensure all children are properly safeguarded, risks can be more accurately assessed and managed and the most appropriate support and interventions can be agreed and implemented.

In October 2015 WYP implemented a CSE Minimum Standards of Recording to improve accuracy of data collated and to ensure that all cases of CSE were identified and appropriately responded to. A new national definition of CSE was introduced in February 2017, H.M. Government concluding that the previous definition was “unclear and out of date”. The new definition is:

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

West Yorkshire Police welcome this new definition for the clarity it brings and force policies/processes are currently under review to ensure the new definition is incorporated into these.

REPORT DETAILS

The most recent CSE Force Problem Profile identifies very little change in the overall profile of CSE offending from previous profiles.

The new national definition of CSE has been widely publicised within Force and has been absorbed into relevant policies and procedures.

Within the 12 month period 1/4/16 to 31/3/17 the Force recorded 792 sexual crimes against children which were internally identified as meeting the definition of CSE. Of significance is that 25% of these crimes are classed as “non-recent” which means that the report to the police has been made over 12 months after the crime occurred. These crimes receive the same level of investigation as all other such crimes with these allegations being dealt with by specialist officers and this high number is believed to reflect public confidence in the police to take all such reports seriously.

In October 2015 the Force instigated a new set of recording standards in respect of both children deemed at risk and suspects of CSE. This is not replicated anywhere else nationally

but deliberately sets a low threshold by which risk is flagged on a multi-agency basis and this decision is made based against the 14 national indicators of CSE. As of 31/3/17 a total of 606 such children were flagged as currently being at risk within the Force area and 460 suspects. This does not mean that all such children are victims of

CSE or that all suspects are actively committing such offence but simply that these persons are deemed as possessing a risk in relation to their specific risk category. This is a deliberate tactic to identify risk before a crime is committed and a child is abused and the existence of a flag allows the police and/or external partners to interject in such circumstances at an early stage.

Whilst the number of suspects flagged has remained largely static the numbers of children deemed at risk since December 2016 has decreased by 196 evidencing the quality of multi-agency work being undertaken to protect children in west Yorkshire.

The existence and risk levels attached to these flags are regularly reviewed internally on receipt of new information and the risk factors are not only available on internal West Yorkshire Police systems but also on the Police National Computer (PNC) allowing children and suspects to be identified in any area of the country.

West Yorkshire Police continues to strive to discharge its duties under Working Together more effectively in relation to our attendance at initial Child Protection Conferences with the attendance levels for March 2017 being at 88% of the 141 Conferences held that month compared with an attendance rate of 62% of 127 total Conferences in the same month in 2016.

The Safeguarding Central Governance Unit has delivered three training sessions to Ports Unit staff at Leeds Bradford Airport to ensure they are sighted on risks relating to Safeguarding including CSE regarding children and families that pass through this location

The Safeguarding Central Governance Unit has delivered an educational session to the West Yorkshire Police Explorers programme regarding CSE threat. This session reached approximately 200 children in the 15-17 year old range and was well received.

The welfare provision for suspects in all sexual cases (involving both child and adult victims) has been reviewed following the introduction of a new internal process ensuring our duty of care to individuals arrested for sexual offending or attending at police stations as suspects voluntarily for interview is maintained. This process also signposts suspects towards organisations who may be able to assist the individual with minimising the risk they pose.

The SCGU has, in consultation with Districts, revisited and revamped the Force Standard Operating Procedures regarding a number of safeguarding responsibilities including CSE, Sexual Offending and Serious Sexual Offending to ensure our internal processes remain effective

ONGOING WORK AND DEVELOPMENTS

The Safeguarding Central Governance Unit has, together with Education Leeds, developed a CSE Awareness input with the intention of this being delivered to Year 7 pupils (11-12 year olds) within all Leeds Schools by the police. This is in addition to existing work carried out with

older children. This is being seen as a “pilot” which if successful will be rolled out Forcewide. The “pilot” phase will run from September to December at the request of Education Leeds followed by an Evaluation period and will predominantly be delivered by Safe Schools Officers who are currently in the process of being briefed by Education Leeds as to the input.

The Integrated Offender Management department within Criminal Justice continue to develop a set of standards to be incorporated when managing the threat posed by suspects of CSE who may fall short of formal management via the Sex Offender Register. No such guidelines exist nationally and the Force is seeking advice from academics as to the best approach in measuring suspect risk and then combatting any threat posed.

Senior Officers from the Safeguarding Central Governance Unit and Protective Services Crime are currently visiting all west Yorkshire Police Districts to accurately measure the current threat from those cases classed as non-recent. This will allow for a review to take place of specialist staff engaged with such enquiries to ensure it is equitable and meets demand.

The SCGU are imminently to launch a CSE Toolkit to act as a reference point for all staff should they need guidance/advice regarding police powers/procedures in a multi-agency setting.

The Safeguarding Central Governance Unit are currently reviewing their internal Intranet site to ensure it is accurate in respect of advice and guidance available to all staff.

The Force is currently exploring ways in which the welfare of staff working in such a difficult area can be monitored with help for individuals being easily accessed when required.

STRATEGIC RISK IMPLICATIONS

The Force is keenly aware that not identifying CSE risk towards a child or from a suspect is far from acceptable and the Safeguarding Central Governance Unit works hard to ensure that such risk is properly assessed and recorded. A set of 6 monthly audits ensures compliance and understanding with training being delivered to Districts when required and monthly figures of the volume of each risk area being reported to the Safeguarding Central Governance Unit by the Force Principal Analyst on a monthly basis. This ensures that trends can be monitored in respect of volume and appropriate resources can then be identified to deal with any threat.

The volume of non-recent CSE being reported into Force is a threat in that resources must be maintained at an appropriate level to manage these investigations. . These cases are not only reported through traditional routes but also through the likes of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA) or under the National Child Sexual Abuse Referral Panel where victims can ask for a review of how a previous investigation occurring prior to June 2013 was carried out. The latter results in a police review of the initial investigation and any required additional investigation can then be completed. This process was introduced nationally in 2013 as a result of Government recognition that lower thresholds for police charging decisions are used today than was the case prior to June 2013 and some cases may benefit from review against this.

It is important that advice and guidance is easily available to frontline staff in order to ensure an effective response to CSA related crime. It is for this reason that the Safeguarding

Central Governance Unit are currently reviewing the contents on its internal central site to ensure all relevant information can be easily accessed.

Districts report that work levels within District Safeguarding teams show no sign of abating with welfare issues regarding staff being of constant concern.

EQUALITY, DIVERSITY AND HUMAN RIGHTS CONSIDERATIONS

It is vital that through increased and effective partnership working all agencies offer the appropriate prevention and proactive initiatives and support to all individuals, across all strands, most notably age, gender, race, religion, disability and sexual orientation.

SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

None



Police and Crime Commissioner Update:
Child sexual Abuse
Community Outcomes Meeting 2nd May 2017

Introduction.

The West Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Mark Burns-Williamson is committed to tackling Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) which is a form of CSA. CSA and specifically CSE remains a key priority in the Police and Crime Plan 2016 – 2021. There has been an increased focus on safeguarding the vulnerable which has led to significant increases in the number of investigations, successful convictions, and confidence in victims coming forward. Safeguarding people was considered the greatest priority by respondents to the consultation with 70% of people saying it was important to them.

This is an extremely important issue that cannot be tackled by the police alone and is rightly an important area of work that is subject to significant national scrutiny, guidance and policy. The West Yorkshire PCC recognises the importance of working in partnerships to tackle these abhorrent crimes and that these partnerships include statutory, non-statutory partners as well as communities, families and individuals. Working together is the accepted way of protecting all children and bring offenders to justice, the PCC is keen to promote this joint working in any way he can.

In support of this and to lead, deliver and advise on the PCC's strategy for a coordinated, cohesive and consistent response to Safeguarding, in particular to CSA, in West Yorkshire. The PCC appointed a dedicated safeguarding Adviser who is working across all districts, partnerships and communities to deliver on the aims of the Police and Crime Plan.

Key Information

- The PCC has previously made an extra £3.5 million to the police for increased capacity to deal with CSE, Human Trafficking and Cyber-Crime.
- Held two meetings dedicated to CSE with the senior safeguarding stakeholders of west Yorkshire to establish how we can all work together to better tackle CSE.
- Developed a proposal with the five district Directors of Children Services which focused on CSE. This has already delivered CSE awareness in schools across West Yorkshire, delivered additional locally provided support for CSE victims and sought to support and develop information collation and sharing within districts and across partnerships.
- This proposal is now moving to a second phase with further school awareness activities to be delivered, this is to be supported by the creation of new supporting materials to further raise awareness with parents and carers.

- The development of an online platform to ensure teachers and others working with children can access the best and most appropriate safeguarding materials to deliver to children and young persons.
- The development of a specialist CSE foster care programme to provide the best support to children at risk of CSE, improve cross border working and reduce the number of out of area placements and build resilience in the foster care network.
- The investment by the PCC in investigating non recent CSE cases by the West Yorkshire Police is paying dividends with an increased number of victims being supported and a large number of offenders now being brought to justice.
- The PCC held a joint event with Kirklees to raise awareness of the sexual abuse of children with learning disabilities who are a particularly vulnerable group. This was an event for the whole of West Yorkshire and gained attention and interest from other parts of the country.
- The PCC with the Chief Constable organised and hosted a 'Safeguarding Children in the Digital World' conference that had almost 300 delegates attending from across the county and representing many organisations. This event raised awareness and knowledge of the issues strengthen our joint response to this growing and challenging area that perpetrators exploit.
- The PCC hosts and supports the West Yorkshire CSE strategy group are network of key individuals who came together under an independent chair to identify and promote consistent and best practice across West Yorkshire.
- The West Yorkshire Police Safeguarding Governance Unit's Detective Superintendent and the PCC's Safeguarding Adviser chaired a peer challenge of all West Yorkshire districts in relation to CSE and missing. The PCC funded an evaluation of this work which has determined this was a very useful exercise that is changing and improving practice across al 5 districts.
- The OPCC support the West Yorkshire Safeguarding Communication Group which develops and delivers partnership safeguarding awareness campaigns, sending a joint message across West Yorkshire and helping to prevent abuse. Child sexual abuse and exploitation are a focus of the group and this has resulted in a number of campaigns.
- The OPCC has been key in encouraging the delivery the joint West Yorkshire Safeguarding Week held in October. Which in some areas so a marked increase in reports and intelligence relating to CSE and CSA. This was seen as such a success that it is being repeated in 2017.