

	<p align="center"><b>London Borough of Hammersmith &amp; Fulham</b></p> <p align="center"><b>CHILDREN AND EDUCATION POLICY AND ACCOUNTABILITY COMMITTEE</b></p> <p align="center"><b>18 NOVEMBER 2014</b></p>
<p align="center"><b>RESPONDING TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN HAMMERSMITH &amp; FULHAM</b></p>	
<p align="center"><b>Report of the Executive Director of Children’s Services</b></p>	
<p><b>Open Report</b></p>	
<p><b>Classification - For Review &amp; Comment</b></p>	
<p><b>Key Decision: No</b></p>	
<p><b>Wards Affected: All</b></p>	
<p><b>Accountable Executive Director:</b> Andrew Christie, Executive Director of Children’s Services</p>	
<p><b>Report Author:</b> Steve Miley, Director of Family Services.</p>	<p><b>Contact Details:</b> Tel: 0208 753 2300 E-mail: steve.miley@lbhf.gov.uk</p>

## **1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

- 1.1. This report provides an overview of the issue of child sexual exploitation in Hammersmith & Fulham following a series of high profile investigations in other parts of the country. It includes a summary of the national context and recent developments along with an indication of known levels of local need. The report also summarises current local multi-agency processes to identify and respond to the issue as well as strategies which are being implemented to raise awareness amongst a range of relevant people.

## **2. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 2.1. The Children and Education Policy and Accountability Committee is asked to consider and comment upon this report.

## **3. INTRODUCTION AND BACKGROUND**

- 3.1. In the light of the recently published “Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013”, this report provides a summary of the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Hammersmith & Fulham. The report covers work taking place with other agencies both at the local and Tri-borough level, and current levels of local need. It also summarises

actions being taken to raise awareness of professionals, parents and carers.

#### **4. WHAT IS CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION?**

- 4.1. CSE is a criminal act that has a devastating impact upon children and young people and has an increasing profile following significant investigations which have led to prosecutions. Recent reviews of its prevalence have concluded that there will be children and young people at risk and being abused in most local authority areas.
- 4.2. A nationally agreed definition of CSE is that it is 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 them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without 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. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability”<sup>1</sup>.
- 4.3. As well as young people who are exploited in these ways, there is another group who are exploited through threats and violence rather than receiving something. This is sometimes a feature of gang culture including initiation into gangs of both boys and girls.
- 4.4. Perpetrators and victims of CSE come from all age ranges and ethnic groups. Most sexually-exploited children live at home when their abuse begins.

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<sup>1</sup> From the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) 2008, referred to in *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation* Department for Children, Families and Schools, 2009.

## **5. THE INDEPENDENT INQUIRY INTO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN ROTHERHAM 1997-2013 (THE JAY REPORT)**

- 5.1. This report was published on 26 August 2014 to considerable media attention. It documented abuse suffered by young people in Rotherham and included substantial criticism of the local authority and other agencies. The report concluded that “the collective failures of political and officer leadership were blatant” and that at an operational level the police gave no priority to child sexual exploitation.
- 5.2. The local authority children’s social care services were criticised because thresholds were too high and risk assessment management was poor. Where children were looked after by the local authority, assessments and care planning were found to be good. However there was specific concern about overall functioning of the services over the period concerned as it was seen to be over-stretched, understaffed and struggling to cope with demand.
- 5.3. Concerns were identified about looked after children placed in children’s homes in the borough as staff were perceived as being unable to stop children from leaving the homes in the day and at night time. This had led to some children being placed out of borough including in secure settings. However there were particular problems when such children sought to return to Rotherham and to their abusers.

## **6. THE NATIONAL CONTEXT**

- 6.1. During the period covered by the Jay report, there have been significant changes at the national level regarding awareness of and responses to CSE. The issue is now seen as a specific problem which needs to be prevented and responded to on an interagency basis.
- 6.2. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) were required to take the lead in developing responses to CSE following statutory guidance in 2009. LSCBs were also encouraged to prioritise CSE, undertake risk assessments and map their local CSE profile to ensure an effective response from all agencies.
- 6.3. High profile investigations leading to prosecutions of gangs of men in a number of towns along with a number of significant national reports from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner<sup>2</sup>, University of Bedfordshire<sup>3</sup>

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<sup>2</sup> “If only someone had listened” Office of the Children’s Commissioner 2013

<sup>3</sup> “ It’s wrong... but you get used to it” University of Bedfordshire and the Office of the Children’s Commissioner 2013

and Barnardo's<sup>4</sup> have led to a clearer recognition of this form of abuse as distinct from wider definitions of sexual abuse. Most local authorities have recently developed a strategy and specific service response to protect such children.

## **7. LOCAL NEEDS**

- 7.1. Recent national reports have recommended that local authorities develop a "problem profile" to maintain an overview of the numbers of young people who had been identified at various different levels of concern regarding CSE.
- 7.2. The first local Problem Profile was produced in May 2014 and is mainly based on data collected by CSE advisers within Family Services for Hammersmith & Fulham, the Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council. It specifically covers the profiles of young people being referred to the Tri-borough Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation panel between January and May 2014. This profile is to be enhanced over time with more cross referencing of information held by other agencies. The aim is to increase the numbers in this profile as agencies in the borough become familiar with the framework and increase their knowledge in this area.

Based on the information available, for the period covered by the Tri-borough Problem Profile there was no evidence of:

- Specific geographical "hotspots" where CSE appears to be more prevalent or localities where young people who live there are more likely to be involved in CSE.
  - Networks or gangs of adult perpetrators who are linked and sexually exploiting children in a coordinated way.
  - Loose networks of young people who are signalling being at risk to one or more agencies or through contact from concerned parents or carers. This signalling of concern which was not responded to was a feature of many of the recent high-profile cases involving adult gangs in other parts of the country.
- 7.3. The Problem Profile will be refreshed at six monthly intervals and there is activity to engage partnership networks to identify victims and cross-reference with different cohorts of children, for example those who regularly go missing, to build a clearer picture. The intention is to constantly enhance our understanding of a problem which occurs in many areas but tends to remain hidden.
  - 7.4. While the current Problem Profile has identified only a small number of young people who are victims or at particular risk from CSE in Hammersmith & Fulham, as awareness of the issue increases and with

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<sup>4</sup> "Report of the Parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness of legislation for tackling child sexual exploitation and trafficking within the UK" Barnardo's 2014

improving local processes there is an emerging picture of more young people who are at risk and a better understanding of perpetrators of CSE. Therefore we should guard against complacency. Ongoing vigilance is required to ensure that victims of child sexual exploitation are identified and responded to swiftly and purposefully.

- 7.5. The Problem Profile was informed by details of 8 Hammersmith & Fulham young people who were at various stages of referral to the MASE meeting between January and May 2014. Across the three boroughs, there were a total of 14 such cases with the most frequent age of young person at risk being 15 and the young people concerned coming from a range of ethnic backgrounds. It should be pointed out that a significant number of Hammersmith & Fulham young people were being supported through preventative work during this period and their details are not reflected in the Problem Profile. A summary of these cases is included in paragraph 8.5.
- 7.6. For Hammersmith & Fulham, all of the cases in the Problem Profile were female. Half were either in care or had been in care in the past. Three lived at addresses outside of the borough. All but one were in education with three attending alternative provision in a range of settings. There were concerns about use of alcohol or drugs in three of the cases.
- 7.7. The Police also provided summary data towards the profile covering CSE cases they were involved in from May 2013 to March 2014. For Hammersmith & Fulham there were 11 cases in total with different levels of involvement. Three were classed as “suspicions” where there was no evidence of a substantiated or attempted offence. Seven “crimes” were recorded where there was an offence linked to CSE and there was one “detection” where there had been a judicial outcome (either a charge, caution or formal warning). It should be noted that this data refers to incidences within the borough but victims or offenders may not necessarily be borough residents. The Police have also advised of one significant “intervention” since March 2014 where their actions in response to a specific incident led to substantial actions by the local authority on a particular case.

## **8. LOCAL PROCESSES AND SERVICE OFFER**

- 8.1. In Hammersmith & Fulham, a specific service for CSE and supporting structures have been in place since 2008. This has included the commissioning of a specialist service from Barnardo’s and a multi-agency panel to oversee relevant cases.
- 8.2. There is a nominated CSE adviser who is also a Child Protection Adviser/Chair. As well as providing specialist advice on individual cases, the role includes chairing the CSE panel and attending other relevant panels such as the Gangs Partnership and the Youth Offending Service Deter panel. Attendance at such meetings facilitates the identification of potential victims and perpetrators through information sharing, develops a

better understanding of victim and perpetrator profiles and networks and also identifies hotspots. A partnership with the West London Centre for Sexual Health has also been recently developed which is expected to further enhance our work regarding the identification of and response to CSE.

- 8.3. The Adviser represents the local authority at Tri-borough meetings such as MASE (Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting – see 8.7). She has also developed a comprehensive guide to CSE including referral pathways for staff in the borough.
- 8.4. The CSE panel meets monthly and usually considers 5 cases including new referrals and reviews of actions on previous cases. Additional panels can be scheduled as required. The panel is attended by the local authority CSE adviser, a sexual health worker from the Family Support Localities Service, Barnardo's and the Anti-Social Behaviour Co-ordinator. The panel receives case presentations, assesses risks using an agreed tool and confirms plans.
- 8.5. From October 2012 to the end of September 2013, 25 cases were discussed by the CSE Panel Meetings. Of these, 6 were already working with the service, 10 met the criteria for direct work sessions and were offered the service. Two young people were offered support through small group prevention work at their schools. The other 7 cases were either referred to other specialist services for example psychiatric residential care or to a professional who was already working with that young person.
- 8.6. From October 2013 to the end of September 2014, 30 cases were discussed at the CSE panel meetings. Of these 11 were already working with the service. Fourteen have gone on to receive support either through direct work with Barnardo's, the specialist worker in Localities, group work sessions or other specialist services.
- 8.7. Mapping of victims and perpetrators has also been taking place at the borough level identifying linkages between individuals as well as names of young people which are frequently mentioned. Through good multi-agency working e.g. attendance at Youth Offending Service Deter and Gangs Partnership meetings, potential hotspots are being identified and local services are being proactive about responding to this. This activity will inform the next Problem Profile. The MASE will also be briefed about this mapping as it may be possible to identify wider links with activity in the other two boroughs.
- 8.8. More recently, Family Services have been involved with developments leading to a more co-ordinated response with the police, health services and other key agencies across Hammersmith & Fulham, Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was initiated in 2013 and has enhanced the information gathering for children where there are risk factors of CSE and other related concerns. The monthly Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meetings have

been taking place since January 2014. These forums provide an opportunity to look at individual cases, assess risk and agree a risk management plan for children. They also enable a more strategic overview of the problem, with the potential to identify “hotspots” of concerning activity and other emerging trends.

8.9. The Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy was approved by the LSCB in early 2014 and agreed to adopt the new Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol. The strategy sets out an approach which aims to:

- Take a shared and co-ordinated multi-agency approach to raise awareness of the problem
- Intervene early
- Provide targeted child-centred support and achieve good outcomes for those who are at risk of, or already victims of, exploitation
- Take a shared and co-ordinated multi-agency approach to deterring and disrupting child sexual exploitation and prosecuting potential and active perpetrators wherever possible.

8.10. While single borough processes had been established over time, the first priority of the strategy was to confirm shared processes (across agencies and boroughs) to refer, assess and respond to children who are being sexually exploited, as well as coordinating support for children who are at risk of exploitation and their families. Referral pathways have been agreed to MASH (which facilitates better information sharing between agencies about children who are vulnerable), along with a shared tool to assess risk and identify specific evidence of exploitation and criteria for referring to the MASE meeting.

## **9. AWARENESS RAISING**

9.1. A series of actions are also taking place to raise awareness of professionals and other adults in contact with children and young people to risk factors such as going missing, substance misuse or self-harm. Front line practitioners in all services need to be aware of how to identify and support such young people and the range of services available to them. In Hammersmith and Fulham, a range of awareness-raising activities and training is taking place and there is specialist advice available from the CSE adviser within Family Services.

9.2. The CSE adviser has provided “bite size” sessions for Family Services staff and is developing training for foster carers. The LSCB provides a range of courses available to all agencies including Barnardo’s *Be Wise to Sexual Exploitation* training, a *Girls, Gangs and Sexual Violence* course, a course entitled *Sexual Exploitation: identifying the needs and risks to children* and an *Advanced Skills Workshop for Supervisors on CSE*. Children’s Services also provides a range of specialist training courses.

- 9.3. A leaflet for professionals for all agencies is being developed in conjunction with the Police which will include key facts about CSE, how to prevent it, how to respond if it is suspected and how to report or refer it.
- 9.4. A page is being developed for the Council's website providing key information for parents and carers.
- 9.5. Consideration has been given as to how best communicate a range of key messages regarding safeguarding to schools and school children. CSE is one of a number of safeguarding issues which might best be brought to the attention of the majority of young people through schools. To this end a meeting was due to take place on 24 October with public health, safeguarding and education representatives to develop a more co-ordinated approach in respect of Personal Social Health and Economics (PSHE) education, the Healthy Schools programme and how agencies can best engage schools to promote a number of issues including CSE. In addition, two half day workshops are being planned for relevant school staff and representatives from other agencies in March 2015. These will focus raising awareness of what CSE is; how young people feel about CSE and how best to respond to their needs; how key agencies respond to CSE concerns. The workshops will also identify best practice. Delegates will be challenged to devise an action plan to improve practice within their teams.
- 9.6. A London-wide programme called Operation Makesafe has been developed and piloted by the Metropolitan Police and the LSCB has confirmed an intention to roll this out in Hammersmith & Fulham. This will involve presentations to relevant sectors of the business community such as hotels, bars and taxi companies to raise awareness of CSE and provide easily accessible advice and responses from the Police should any staff have concerns they wish to report. This programme will entail joint working with other Council departments which have a role in licensing such businesses.

## **10. CASE STUDY**

Z was referred to Barnardo's through the multi-agency forum following concerns of:

- Coming home late and episodes of going missing and reports of sexual activity when missing
- Being friends with a group of young people who were thought to be involved with sexual exploitation and gangs along with links with a male known to be involved in drug dealing and other criminal activity
- Relationship difficulties within the family home as well as parental ill health
- Regular changes of home and school
- Being found by the police in the home of individuals of concern.

Z engaged very well with Barnardo's from the onset meeting with her worker fortnightly with sessions mainly taking place at school although

some sessions were informal in the community. Her parent was supportive of involvement from the service while Z's school were also helped by providing a suitable room for the sessions to take place.

Work took place with Z to:

- Develop self-esteem, looking at personal strengths, skills and future goals
- Learn practical strategies for keeping safe
- Identify risk from individuals, groups and situations
- Consider the physical and emotional impact of case studies involving other young people
- Be aware of the grooming process
- Understand the role of power and control and what constitutes healthy and unhealthy relationships
- Provide her with sexual health information, advice and support
- Understand the law around sex and consent
- Develop appropriate behaviour and boundaries
- Ensure she attended health appointments.

Z was able to make very positive progress and ended work with the service due to the concerns of her being at risk having reduced. She was no longer going missing or spending time with the peer group who professionals were concerned about. She had a better relationship with her family and was settled at home. She had developed a particular interest in positive activities and was joining relevant clubs in relation to this. Z was making good progress at school, and was due to sit GCSEs shortly after the work finished.

## **11. PROPOSAL AND ISSUES**

- 11.1. This report summarises activity to date to address issues regarding CSE in Hammersmith & Fulham. While work has taken place to develop a better understanding of the problem and its level of prevalence, ongoing activity is planned to improve this further. As awareness increases it is likely that an increasing number of children of young people will be identified who are potentially at risk. It is therefore suggested that the Policy and Accountability Committee receives reports on developments in the future.

## **12. EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS**

- 12.1. The initial Tri-borough Problem Profile identified concerns about a number of girls and young women living in the borough. There were no cases involving young men or boys at that stage although national research suggests that CSE is an issue which affects both girls and boys. Systems set up are designed to address concerns about all children and young people and so ongoing monitoring should review the degree to which boys who are potential victims are identified and supported. However, the service is currently working with one boy.

12.2. The ethnic background of the young people identified in the Problem Profile was reviewed. No particular group appeared to be over-represented although the small numbers involved made it difficult to make firm conclusions. The ethnicity of victims and those at risk of CSE will continue to be monitored to ensure that the systems in place provide appropriate levels of support and intervention for children from all communities.

### **13. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

13.1. The Local Authority response to child sexual exploitation is consistent with the general duty under s17 of the Children Act 1989 to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need. Schedule 2 Part 1 goes on to describe in more specific terms that every Local Authority shall take reasonable steps, through to provision of services, to prevent children in their area suffering ill-treatment or neglect. The measures outlined in the report are therefore in accordance with the statutory duty.

13.2. Implications verified/completed by: Jade Monroe, Senior Solicitor, Social Care and Education, Bi-Borough Legal Services. Tel: 0208 753 2695.

### **14. FINANCIAL AND RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS**

14.1. There are no financial implications relating to the recommendations of this report.

14.2. Implications verified/completed by: Dave McNamara, Tri-borough Director of Finance & Resources, Children's Services. Tel: 020 8753 3404.

#### **LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 2000** **LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT**

<b>No.</b>	<b>Description of Background Papers</b>	<b>Name/Ext of holder of file/copy</b>	<b>Department/ Location</b>
1.	None		