
Report to: Cabinet **Date of Meeting:** 10 March 2016

Subject: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) & Missing Children **Wards Affected:** All Wards

Report of: Director of Social Care and Health

Is this a Key Decision? No **Is it included in the Forward Plan?** Yes

Exempt/Confidential No

Purpose/Summary

The report informs Members of the work agencies have undertaken to safeguard children from child sexual exploitation and children who have been reported as missing from home / care / education.

Recommendation(s)

To note the work taking place in Sefton regarding Child Sexual Exploitation and safeguarding children who have been reported as missing from home / care / education.

How does the decision contribute to the Council's Corporate Objectives?

	<u>Corporate Objective</u>	<u>Positive Impact</u>	<u>Neutral Impact</u>	<u>Negative Impact</u>
1	Creating a Learning Community	x		
2	Jobs and Prosperity	x		
3	Environmental Sustainability		x	
4	Health and Well-Being	x		
5	Children and Young People	x		
6	Creating Safe Communities	x		
7	Creating Inclusive Communities	x		
8	Improving the Quality of Council Services and Strengthening Local Democracy		x	

Reasons for the Recommendation:

To ensure Cabinet members are aware of the partnership activity undertaken to safeguard children from child sexual exploitation in Sefton and when they have been reported as missing, in respect of their duties under the Children Act 1989 the general duty of every local authority to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

N/A

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications:

The following implications of this proposal have been considered and where there are specific implications, these are set out below:

Financial		
Legal		
Human Resources		
Equality		
1.	No Equality Implication	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
2.	Equality Implications identified and mitigated	<input type="checkbox"/>
3.	Equality Implication identified and risk remains	<input type="checkbox"/>

Impact of the Proposals on Service Delivery:

N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

The Chief Finance Officer (FD.4034/16) and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD.3317/16) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

Implementation Date for the Decision

Following the expiry of the “call-in” period for the Minutes of the Cabinet Meeting

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Background Papers:

None

1. Introduction

- 1.1 CSE referrals continue to be sent by agencies to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). During Q1 (2015-16) Sefton MASH received 61 CSE referrals. During Q2 77 CSE referrals, regarding 51 children and young people, were received by the MASH. During Quarter 3 (2015-16) 70 CSE referrals, regarding 57 children, were received by the MASH; some children had more than one referral made about them by different agencies. The procedure undertaken to ascertain if the child referred is considered to be at risk of CSE, or a victim of CSE has been explained in previous Cabinet reports. The CSE referral rate is not reflective of the number of children at risk of CSE in Sefton, but does evidence the partnerships commitment to identifying any potential CSE risks at the earliest opportunity.
- 1.2 All children referred due to potential concerns about CSE are analysed to see if they have previously been reported missing. The data below outlines those reported re: CSE concerns during Quarter 3.

No reported Missing Episode(s)	25
Reported Missing Episode(s) Sefton child	34
Reported Missing Episode(s) (child placed in Sefton by another local authority)	11
Total	70

- 1.3 As at 31st Dec 2015 17 children were subject of a Multi-Agency CSE (MACSE) Plan to safeguard them from being sexually exploited. The MACSE Panel ensures that children who are at risk of CSE, and those who are victims of CSE, have a multi-agency plan to safeguard them and disrupt and prosecute offenders.

2. Work undertaken by agencies to safeguard children and young people from CSE

- 2.1 Commissioning Contracts are being reviewed to put clauses in place to ensure commissioned providers working with children are aware of the CSE Pathway, how to make a CSE referral, attend CSE training, attend Multi-Agency CSE meetings and provide information and evidence to inform Police investigations: for example the Liverpool Community Health (LCH) novated contract has had the additional CSE clauses integrated.
- 2.2 Additional training has been undertaken with Pharmacists to ensure they can spot signs of potential sexual exploitation. The CSE referral form has been uploaded onto Pharmacists' electronic systems so the referral pathway is easily accessible to them when any potential concerns arise.
- 2.3 Referrals continue to be made to the Police Crime Commissioner funded voluntary organisation Catch 22. Catch 22 undertake 1:1 work with children to raise their awareness of child sexual exploitation and group work regarding internet safety

with children in school, and alternative curriculum educational settings. RASA (Rape and Sexual Assault Service) have also undertaken sessions within schools to develop young people's understanding of healthy relationships and signs of when a child may be sexually exploited.

- 2.4 A review has been undertaken of who undertakes the 'Responsible Authority' function in relation to the Licensing Act 2003 in the capacity as "the body responsible for the protection of children from harm". The Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) agreed on 2nd Dec 2015 that this responsibility should move from the LSCB to the Safeguarding Children Unit, to ensure intelligence from CSE referrals, children being reported as missing and information about children's homes informs Licensing decisions. This proposal has since been made to the Sefton Safer Communities Partnership (21st Jan 2016) who has also agreed this proposition.
- 2.5 The Local Safeguarding Children Board CSE Pathway has been updated to include discussions between the Co-Chairs of the Multi Agency CSE Panel and the Licensing CSE Single Point of Contact if a licensed property or individual has been raised as a potential concern.
- 2.6 Sefton Service Manager for Safeguarding has been requested by Pan Merseyside CSE GOLD Group to facilitate Pan Merseyside CSE Development Meetings on a quarterly basis. Elements of the Sefton CSE partnership Pathways are now in process of being implemented across Merseyside, so as to develop a common set of principles when working with a child considered at risk of CSE; for example MACSE Panel plan documents and Police and Safeguarding Children MACSE Co-Chair arrangements. Two Pan Merseyside CSE Development sessions have taken place to date and the Pan Merseyside CSE Protocol is in the process of being updated as a result.
- 2.7 Sefton Safeguarding Manager has proposed that a Pan Merseyside CSE Transfer Procedure is implemented when a child who is subject of a multi-agency CSE Plan moves from one area to another, to ensure that all information known in the original area is effectively and timely communicated to the area to which the child has moved. This has been agreed and has been implemented when a child who has been subject of a MACSE Plan in Sefton has moved to another area. There is also evidence of this being undertaken by other local authorities. This proposal was raised by Sefton at an Association of Directors Services (ADCS) Sexual Exploitation of Vulnerable People Workshop in Dec 2015 and many other local authorities requested this proposal so as to assist them to develop this within their areas.
- 2.8 Sefton LSCB CSE Protocol has been updated to evidence the developments undertaken regarding Sefton CSE Partnership Pathway and has been ratified by LSCB in Dec 2015. The revised Procedure is available on the LSCB website <http://www.seftonlscb.co.uk/media/10343/Section-16-CSE-Procedure-Dec-2015.pdf> and the Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care 2014 can be accessed via <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care>

3. Work to safeguard children who have been reported as missing from home or care

- 3.1 Going missing is a dangerous activity. A child or young person who goes missing just once faces the same immediate risks as those faced by a child or young person who regularly goes missing. However, children who go missing when they are young, and/or more frequently are more likely to face longer-term problems.
- 3.2 A Multi-agency strategy has been agreed to provide a joined up response to children and young people who are missing or have gone missing from home and care this is monitored by the LSCB via its CSE sub group. The definition is:

- **missing:** anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another; and
- **absent:** a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

NB the details in this report do not include School non-attendance. SMBC has agreed an attendance strategy with its partners which have separately been reported to Cabinet.

The LSCB Missing Procedure is clear that with regard to children who are 'looked after' a child may not be 'missing' and may be deemed to be 'absent' but they may still be placing themselves at risk because of where they are. For example, they may choose to stay at the house of friends where the carer has concerns about the risk of child sexual exploitation or misusing substances, or, they may be staying with family members from whose care they have previously been removed, or have made contact as an adopted child with their birth family. If a child is 'absent from their placement' and their whereabouts are of concern, discussions take place with agencies involved in the child's Care Plan, via a Care Planning Meeting, Looked After Child Review Meeting, or a Strategy Meeting if there are safeguarding concerns, to analyse risks associated with a child being 'absent' and their location is known but there are still risks involved.

Children who have been missing for more than 72 hours, or, 3 occasions within a 30 day period should be discussed at a Strategy Meeting. A performance management framework is under development to analyse if this is consistently undertaken. The Police analyse the children who are Top 10 missing and the Children's Homes from which children predominantly go missing. These individuals and Children's Homes are discussed at Police operational briefing meetings. Intelligence regarding where children have been found, or they have stated where they have been when missing is communicated and recorded on the children's police missing people's records. If there are ongoing concerns a visit is undertaken to the children's home by a Senior Police Officer or a Neighbourhood Inspector to discuss risk assessment and action plan.

- 3.3 All missing episodes are reported to the police either directly by parents/carers or by other professionals supporting their care. The MASH receive a notification directly from the Police reporting system. Once a notification has been received research re previous incidents, school attendance and reason for missing episode

is undertaken and the Lead Practitioner/Social Worker is contacted, details of the current episode are also shared at this point. Once completed a copy of the return interview notes is shared with the Lead Practitioner/Social Worker and Merseyside Police to support any investigation and review of the child's plan.

As part of the preparation for the return interview the child's education attendance and programme is checked. The school will be informed and the child's attendance will be monitored closely.

3.4 In Quarter three (October to December 2015) 120 children went missing, which accounted for 236 episodes in total, two thirds of the children have only one missing episode within this period. Of the 41 children who went missing more than once 13 were placed here from other areas. 46% were missing for less than 24hrs and a further 50% returned home in less than 48hrs and 95% of the children returned home of their own accord.

3.5 61% of the children took up the offer of a return interview to discuss their reasons for going missing. The main reasons given for going missing were:

- Returning to their home area and the risks which other Local authorities had sought to protect them from by placing them out of the area
- Placements not feeling like home
- Unrealistic expectations eg time to return home
- Unclear boundaries and expectations
- Adults and children not listening/understanding each other leading to arguments and then missing episodes
- Not enjoying school leading to truanting – a number of missing episodes were linked to shopping in Liverpool One, mostly still wearing school uniforms.

3.6 There was some evidence from Children's Social Care Audit of young people who have reduced their missing episodes as a result of the interventions provided by multi-agency partnership.

"Young person has been assisted to reduce risk taking behaviour and risk of CSE is very much reduced, this is closely linked to the fact that she has ceased to go missing, with no missing episodes for 6 months. Young person is more emotionally stable and has productive relationships with professionals" (Auditor, Nov 15 Audit)

"The child has had a lot of support in place to help him to improve his outcomes. He has remained in school and has future aspirations for education and career. The child has reduced his risk taking behaviour. He attends the gym and is currently attending a course which he enjoys. The child maintains close links with his family and his culture and identity are promoted. There has been a limited missing period during the time he has been in care and he appears to work well with agencies". (Auditor, Nov 15)

4. Future planned developments

4.1 Three large scale events are planned to take place during Quarter 4, to further raise awareness of CSE and ensure the workforce, including hotel, Bed & Breakfast owners and Leisure Centre staff and the local community are aware of how they can raise any potential concern and what the multi-agency response is to safeguard children. These will be delivered by the Co-Chairs of Sefton Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Panel (MACSE), Service Manager Safeguarding Children and Detective Inspector for the Vulnerable Persons Unit, Merseyside Police and Catch 22, the Police Crime commissioned voluntary service who works with children at risk of CSE. Events took place and are taking place on the following dates:

- 4th February 1-3pm Professional Development Centre, Ainsdale
- 24th February 1-3pm Crosby Lakeside Adventure Centre
- 8th March 1-3pm Southport Town Hall

4.2 Members of Sefton Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation are due to present evidence of their partnership work at the National Working Group CSE Conference on 18th and 19th April 2016. This opportunity will be used to discuss the links made between Sefton's Procedures regarding CSE, Missing Children, Children's Home of Concern, Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) and notifications of 'looked after' children being placed by other local authorities, to inform other national areas of partnership working developments. The Pan Merseyside CSE Transfer Procedure, regarding children subject of a multi-agency CSE Plan moving from one area to another, will also be highlighted at this event, to ascertain if this can be supported by the CSE National Working Group (NWG).

4.3 Further work will be undertaken with the Association of Directors of Children's Services (ADCS) to develop the national CSE Transfer Protocol becoming implemented nationally and request that this become a Statutory Responsibility.

4.4 The Director of Children's Social Care has requested an audit of missing interviews to analyse whether there are any patterns or themes emerging from the information which may assist in further protecting children and making changes to systems.

5. Conclusion

5.1 As a result of the work outlined within this report the number of CSE referrals may increase over time, but this referral rate evidences that agencies in Sefton are committed to ensuring that any possible sign of CSE is further analysed at the very earliest opportunity, to ensure we can identify when a child is at risk, or is a victim of CSE, and timely and effectively protect them via a multi-agency response as well as prosecuting offenders.