

Ofsted Report – June 2016
Inspection dates: 11 April to 5 May 2016

Overview of paragraphs from the Ofsted Report whereby specific feedback in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation & Missing Children was given:

Executive Summary - Strategic responses and practice when children go missing from home, care or education or are at risk of sexual exploitation are very good and, in some instances, highly innovative.

Summary for Children & Young People - Arrangements to support children missing education are good and children who go missing from home and care or are at risk of sexual exploitation get very good advice and support, which helps them to keep safe.

The experiences and progress of children who need help and protection Summary -

Good work is undertaken with children and young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation. This includes highly effective activity to ensure the safety of young people who are placed in Sefton by other local authorities. Children who go missing are promptly identified, and return interviews are of good quality.

The experiences and progress of children looked after and achieving permanence Summary - Responses to children and young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and/or who go missing from care or from education are timely and effective.

Leadership, management and governance Summary - Although the local authority has taken action to improve services since the last inspection, progress has been erratic and has not yet resulted in consistently good services for children, with some recommendations still not addressed. A highly effective multi-agency strategy in relation to children at risk of child sexual exploitation has resulted in some innovative practice, and some good practice was also seen in other areas.

LSCB Executive Summary - The SSCB has undertaken good work with health partners to ensure that they remain integral to safeguarding. Effective links with schools are leading to improved awareness of issues such as bullying and e-safety. Under the board's strategic leadership, responses to address child sexual exploitation are strong. Actions to safeguard children looked after inappropriately placed in Sefton by other authorities demonstrate outstanding rigour and effectiveness.

The following paragraph references are stated in bold number below:

- 28.** Clear, holistic and effective partnership working is evident for children at risk of child sexual exploitation and who go missing. A clear pathway ensures timely referral and access to services through the MASH. The missing and child sexual exploitation group (MACSE) ensures timely information sharing, case planning and risk management at an individual case level when children are identified as at risk. Creative direct work that engages young people was evident from case sampling and was seen to be making a positive difference for some children. Sefton has developed an innovative approach to ensuring risk management

for children looked after who are placed in Sefton from other local authorities. Return interviews for children who go missing are tenaciously pursued and comprehensively completed by the 'developing choices' team. Information is shared appropriately among agencies and subsequent actions are undertaken in line with identified risk and need.

- 29.** The local authority has established effective links and prompt information sharing with education partners. A multi-agency monitoring placement group meets fortnightly to ensure that the whereabouts of all children are confirmed and appropriate actions taken if they are not. The children missing education (CME) coordinator is part of the MACSE, ensuring that additional vulnerabilities as a result of children missing education are fully considered.
- 39.** The local authority has a clear strategy on using preventative services to reduce the number of children becoming looked after. The multi-agency CAS was established in July 2015. The service works with children and young people who may be on 'the edge of care' due to a variety of reasons. For example, they may be at risk of or involved in offending behaviour, including gang membership and gun crime, at risk of child sexual exploitation or domestic abuse, or may not be in education employment or training (NEET). Although the service is quite new, there are already good indications that it is having a positive impact, especially for children and young people involved in offending or risk-taking behaviours.
- 59.** Well-coordinated systems and procedures for children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and/or who go missing ensure timely and effective responses. When children and young people are reported missing from care, prompt action is taken. The 'developing choices' team persists in contacting children to undertake return home interviews. These are not always completed or completed within timescales. This is not because of a lack of capacity within the team, but because of refusals and difficulties in engaging young people. When children go missing on a regular basis, appropriate action is taken, including strategy discussions and, when necessary, referrals are made to the child sexual exploitation team for review and action.
- 60.** Sefton has well-established and comprehensive arrangements to report, track and locate any children missing from education. A children missing education coordinator works effectively across all groups and the MASH for those missing, including children missing from care, to ensure prompt communication and effective action across agencies and the MASH. This means that the vast majority of children missing education are located and that they remain on the school roll until they are found.
- 109.** Clear strategic arrangements provide strong and effective oversight of children at risk of child sexual exploitation and those who go missing from home, care or education. These arrangements underpin information and intelligence sharing and support proactive work on the ground. The DCS maintains a clear understanding of need and risk in this area through chairing the SSCB child sexual exploitation and missing subgroup. The provision of services for children who are at risk of child sexual exploitation or who go missing are effective overall. Partners and senior and political leaders work well together to understand the prevalence of child sexual exploitation and to establish effective ways of overseeing and reducing local need and risk.

- 130.** The SSCB has an established programme of multi-agency themed audits and those completed to date include neglect, child sexual exploitation, vulnerable children and substance misuse. The methodology has been good, with cases looked at in great detail by a wide selection of other agency representatives. However, none of the audits has clear conclusions and action plans. Audit activity has not concentrated specifically on frontline child protection work. Learning from auditing has not been collated or disseminated to enable the SSCB to advise all agencies on ways to improve. The data dashboard used by the board is comprehensive, with performance management provided from the partner agencies. However, this has been insufficiently analysed. The SSCB has acknowledged the weakness of its performance management and its inability to progress actions to improve practice, based on learning from its audit activity. Prior to this inspection, plans were underway to launch a new subgroup to focus on improvements
- 132.** Despite the significant structural weaknesses of the SSCB, the board has provided strong leadership in some areas in Sefton. Good strategic work underpinned by strong partnership working with other agencies, such as police and health, has resulted in a whole-systems approach to child sexual exploitation. This includes a multi-agency child sexual exploitation SSCB subgroup chaired by the DCS, a public health ongoing child sexual exploitation health needs assessment, the child sexual exploitation victim/offender location map and analysis, and the child sexual exploitation awareness day, which involved a number of events and 300 students from Southport College. Some of the outstanding operational work in relation to prevention of child sexual exploitation seen in this inspection has clearly benefited from the strategic management of the board.
- 133.** The SSCB has maintained a clear oversight of the needs of over 200 children looked after placed by other authorities in Sefton. Due to the mixed and sometimes poor quality of services, this is a priority for the SSCB this year. Work has included the involvement of the providers of children's homes in training, work with Ofsted to address poor-quality residential provision and visits to the children's homes by a commissioned service to raise awareness of the dangers of child sexual exploitation. The links with independent fostering agencies, however, are not as strong and they do not benefit from the same level of scrutiny or support offered to the independent children's homes.
- 137.** The SSCB commissions and provides a wide range of training courses. Last year, 964 individuals attended 16 different courses and this is good. Most attendees were from Sefton council (27%). However, probation and the police only formed 6% of attendees. The training programme was developed following a workforce analysis conducted across the statutory and voluntary sectors. Courses include effective engagement with families, safer recruitment, managing allegations against adults, e-safety for schools and issues about child sexual exploitation. Further work by the board is needed to evaluate the quality of the courses and the impact of the training on improving practice (Recommendation).
- 139.** Learning is widely disseminated through '7-minute briefings'. So far, these have included briefings on child sexual exploitation, missing children and young people and safe sleeping. Following the briefings, referrals from some agencies increased, for example sexual health staff and general practitioners.