

Report to:	Cabinet	Date of Meeting:	21 June 2018
Subject:	Safeguarding Children from Child Sexual and Criminal Exploitation and Children Reported as Missing		
Report of:	Director of Social Care and Health	Wards Affected:	(All Wards);
Portfolio:	Cabinet Member - Children, Schools and Safeguarding		
Is this a Key Decision:	No	Included in Forward Plan:	Yes /
Exempt / Confidential Report:	No		

Summary:

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

Recommendation(s):

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

Reasons for the Recommendation(s):

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

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected: (including any Risk Implications)

N/A

What will it cost and how will it be financed?

(A) Revenue Costs

N/A

(B) Capital Costs

N/A

Implications of the Proposals:

Resource Implications (Financial, IT, Staffing and Assets):

N/A

Legal Implications: N/A
Equality Implications: There are no equality implications.

Contribution to the Council’s Core Purpose:

Protect the most vulnerable: Protecting children and young people from criminal & sexual exploitation remains a key priority, ensuring our most vulnerable children are safeguarded.
Facilitate confident and resilient communities: Supporting communities to understand the indicators of criminal and sexual exploitation helps to keep children safe.
Commission, broker and provide core services: N/A
Place – leadership and influencer: N/A
Drivers of change and reform: N/A
Facilitate sustainable economic prosperity: N/A
Greater income for social investment: N/A
Cleaner Greener N/A

What consultations have taken place on the proposals and when?

(A) Internal Consultations

The Head of Corporate Resources (FD.5162/18 and Head of Corporate Legal Services (LD.4386/18) have been consulted and any comments have been incorporated into the report.

(B) External Consultations

Implementation Date for the Decision

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

Contact Officer:	Kara Haskayne
Telephone Number:	Tel: 0151 934 4637
Email Address:	kara.haskayne@sefton.gov.uk

Appendices:

There are no appendices to this report

Background Papers:

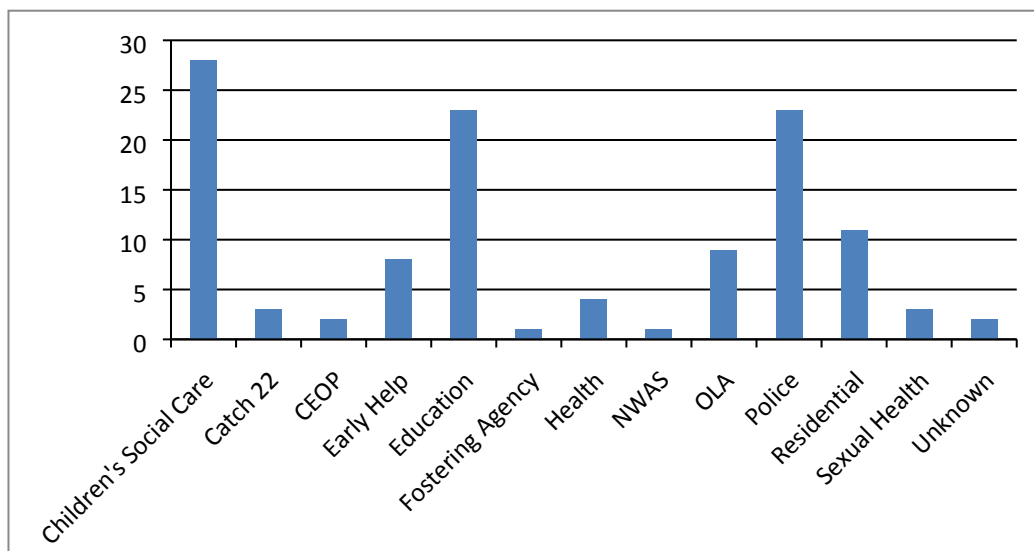
There are no background papers available for inspection.

1. Introduction/Background

- 1.1 This report assures Members that Sefton Council and partnership agencies are affectively working together to safeguard children who are at risk of being sexually and / or criminally exploited, and children and young people who are reported as missing from home / care. The data included within this report is also reported on a quarterly basis to the Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Exploitation Sub Group. Sefton's Director of Social Care and Health is Chair of this Sub Group.
- 1.2 Over the last 6 months Sefton have led a piece of work across Merseyside, involving Liverpool, St Helens, Sefton, Knowsley & Wirral Local Authorities, Merseyside Police, Catch 22 (commissioned by the Merseyside Police Crime Commissioner) and the NSPCC, to develop a PAN Merseyside Child Exploitation Procedure to safeguard children from sexual exploitation which now also includes child who have been criminally exploited by Organised Crime Groups.
- 1.3 The new PAN Merseyside Child Exploitation Protocol includes a revised Child Exploitation Referral Form, which agencies used to refer all children at risk of Sexual and /or Criminal Exploitation to each area's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs). A Child Exploitation Multi Agency Assessment Tool has also been included, which is used across Merseyside during Child Exploitation Strategy Meeting's and the Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE) Meetings, to assess how agencies can safeguard the child whilst also identifying, disrupting and prosecuting offenders who have abused and exploited the children. The PAN Merseyside Missing Children Protocol has also been updated. Each of the 5 Local Safeguarding Children Boards have approved the Protocols. Both Protocols are available via Sefton Local Safeguarding Board Website.
<https://seftonlscb.org.uk/lscb/child-sexual-exploitation/what-is-child-sexual-exploitation-cse>
- 1.4 The Protocols were launched at two PAN Merseyside Child Exploitation Launch Events on 1st May 2017 at Everton Football Club, opened by Sefton Council's Chief Executive and Merseyside Police Crime Commissioner. 397 Senior Leaders from across Merseyside attended the event and provided very positive feedback.
- 1.5 In line with the new PAN Merseyside Protocols Sefton's Child Sexual Exploitation Partnership Pathway has been updated. In January 2018, Sefton's previous Multi Agency Child Sexual Exploitation Multi Agency Panel and CARMAC (Sefton's previous Multi Agency Panel which discussed children at risk of Criminal Exploitation) were integrated, to become one MACE Panel (Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel).
- 1.6 Since January 2018 agencies have been using the new PAN Merseyside Child Exploitation 1 Referral Form, to refer any concerns that a child is at risk of, or a victim of, sexual and/or criminal exploitation to Sefton's MASH.

2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

2.1 Between 1st April 2017 and 31st March 2018 Sefton's MASH received 118 CSE referrals regarding 107 children. Some children had more than one referral made about them by different agencies. As explained in previous Cabinet reports, the CSE referral rate is not a reflection of the number of children at risk of CSE / a victim of CSE in Sefton, but does evidence the partnerships commitment to identifying any potential CSE risks at the earliest opportunity. The chart below shows the agencies who have made CSE referral to Sefton's MASH.



Key to acronyms stated in graph:

Catch 22 Police Crime Commissioner commissioned Pan Merseyside Child Exploitation Service

CEOP Child Exploitation Online Protection Centre

NWAS North West Ambulance Service

OLA Other Local Authority who have placed a looked after child in Sefton

2.2 47% of CSE involved technological devices, such as via Facebook or other apps, either on the children's mobile phone or iPad / laptop. These children had been approached by an individual trying to sexually exploit them in the 'virtual world'. Catch22 continue to be commissioned by Merseyside Police Crime Commissioner, and have continued to undertake work within Schools and Colleges, to ensure children are aware of the risks of individuals approaching them online and how they can safeguard themselves from not responding to such approaches.

2.3 The children who have been referred due to Sefton's MASH regarding potential CSE concerns were aged between 9 – 17 years old. The majority of CSE referrals received were regarding females aged between 11 – 17 years old. However a total of 24 referrals were also received regarding boys, many of which involved young people exploring their sexuality online.

- 2.4 On receiving a CSE referral the MASH continues to ensure that a Multi-Agency meeting is arranged as soon as possible. When there is concern that a child is at risk of, or, a victim of CSE, Children's Social Care commence an assessment with the child and their family / carer and Catch22, who co-located in the MASH, offer their support to the young person to develop their insight of CSE, how they can identify risk and what measures they can take to safeguard themselves. Where there is evidence that the child is being sexually exploited the Police commence a Police investigation with the partnerships support.
- 2.5 Since the integration of the Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation Pathways in January, the Pre-Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE) Meeting has been held on a weekly basis, due to the dynamic nature of risk involving Organised Crime Groups. These weekly meetings involve Merseyside Police MACE Co-Chair, Police CSE and Missing People Co-ordinators, Sefton Council's Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation Strategic Leads as MACE Co-Chairs, and the Child Exploitation Business Information Analyst. These meetings ensure that, along with the sharing of intelligence, children's cases that have, or have not, progressed to MACE Panel, are subject of further oversight by the MACE Chairs. This oversight analyses and quality assures the decisions made in the Child Exploitation strategy meetings/ case discussions and ensures any intelligence related to other children at risk of child exploitation / potential victims / perpetrators is identified and acted upon, in terms of both 'Protect' and 'Prosecute'.
- 2.6 The children and young people who are considered as high risk of being exploited, and those who are considered as currently being exploited, are referred for discussion at the monthly Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE). This Panel continues to be co-chaired by a Senior Officer from Merseyside Police and Service Manager responsible for Safeguarding Children as the CSE Strategic Lead, and is now jointly also chaired by the Child Criminal Exploitation Strategic Lead. The meetings continue to be well attended by the partnership Child Exploitation Single Points of Contact. Representatives from agencies working directly with the child also continue to be invited to MACE, to ensure the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Plan agreed is appropriate to other plan the child has in place, such as Child in Need Plan, Child Protection Plan or a Looked After Child Care Plan.
- 2.7 When 'looked after' children are placed by other Local Authorities with Independent Children's Homes within the Sefton area, and the child has been subject of a Child Exploitation Plan in another area, the child is discussed at Sefton MACE to ensure appropriate transfer of the previous plan.
- 2.8 During the year, 26% of Child Sexual Exploitation referrals received were regarding 'looked after' children, placed by another Local Authority in Children Homes in Sefton. There continues to be proactive work undertaken by the MACE Co-Chairs, Child Exploitation Police Officers, Child Exploitation Business Information Analyst, Missing Children Independent Return Interview staff and MACE Panel representatives, to ensure these children are safeguarded whilst in Sefton and that their care package and placement can safeguard them. A number of children's cases have been escalated to Assistant Directors or Director of Children's Services of the relevant other Local Authorities, due to serious concerns in relation to the children that they have placed in Sefton. When there

are concerns about Care Providers, these continue to be escalated to Ofsted Compliance Service, in their regulatory body capacity.

2.9 Sefton's Licensing/CSE Working Group met on numerous occasions to gather evidence and produced its [Final Report](#) with associated recommendations, which Cabinet approved at its meeting held on 5 October 2017. Amongst the recommendations approved by Cabinet were:-

- (1) Sefton's Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Home Secretary to strengthen the existing Regulations regarding personal licences to Include:-
 - a) A national data base of personal licences
 - b) A fit and proper persons test
 - c) In particular provision to allow a Council to defer determination of personal licence where the Individual is currently involved in a Police Child Sexual Exploitation investigation where a licenced premises is central to those investigations;
- (2) Sefton's Members of Parliament be requested to lobby the Secretary of State for Education to ensure that Care Providers who offer residential placements for 16 – 18 year old children and young people are inspected by a regulatory body;

There has been subsequent correspondence between MP Peter Dowd and the Parliamentary Under-Secretary of State for Children and Families regarding these recommendations.

2.10 LSCB Child Exploitation Workforce Briefings continue to be undertaken on a regular basis, with 275 individuals attended during the last year and have received extremely positive feedback via the Sefton LSCB twitter feed.

2.11 Catch22 has been commissioned since April 2015 to deliver a Pan Merseyside Child Exploitation service to work in partnership with all 5 Local Authorities across Merseyside to provide 1:1 support for those at risk of or confirmed victims of Child Exploitation; including Child Sexual Exploitation and Child Criminal Exploitation, deliver preventative Child Exploitation awareness session to children and young people in settings such as; education provision including alternative and Special Education Need settings, youth clubs, children's homes, specialist groups e.g. young carers and young parents, and additionally provide professionals and parents/carers with the knowledge to understand Child Exploitation, spot the signs and how to respond/reports concerns.

2.12 Catch22 have worked closely with Sefton's workforce since 2015 and the service has engaged and provided 1:1 long term support for 154 victims of Child Exploitation assisting the children to reduce risk, recover from the exploitation suffered and also supporting children prior, during and post Court proceedings. In partnership with Sefton's LSCB and Sefton Council a total of 4,495 children and young people have received child exploitation awareness sessions in the form of assemblies and group work, empowering them to recognise the signs of child exploitation and to understand the risks and who they can speak to raise concerns and receive the support required. In addition, by working closely with Sefton's LSCB and Sefton Council, a total of 2,276 professionals have been upskilled to spot the signs of child exploitation and how to report concerns ensuring children are appropriately safeguarded.

2.13 The Local Safeguarding Children Board has reviewed its Strategic Priorities and safeguarding children from Child Exploitation and those children that go missing continue to be a partnership priority for the Board. The Director of Social Care and Health (DCS) has continued to chair the LSCB Child Exploitation Sub Group and report assurances that agencies are safeguarding children from child exploitation to the LSCB Executive Group.

3. Children reported as missing from home / care

3.1 All missing episodes reported to the police or Council Emergency Duty team either directly by parents/carers or by other professionals supporting their care continue to be communicated to the MASH who identified if the child has an Early Help key worker or is known to Sefton Social Care or is a looked after child placed in Sefton by another Local Authority.

3.2 Over the year there were 1305 occasions when children were reported as missing from home / care, this is circa 100 episodes per month, as has been previously reported to Cabinet. Less than half of these occasions were regarding Sefton's looked after children (472 occasions = 36%).

3.3 All young people who are reported as missing from home / care continue to be notified to the Missing Children Independent Return Officers from the Early Help Service, who have been co-located in the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The Independent Return Officers are experienced youth work staff. They arrange an independent interview to explore with the young person the reasons for the missing episode. The interview notes are agreed with the young person and stored on the child's electronic record. A copy of these notes is also shared with the Police to support any investigation work. For young people supported by a plan the notes are also shared with their Lead Practitioner (or Social/Early Help worker). The Lead Practitioner can then use this feedback to review their plan, in order to reduce further missing episodes and increase their safety.

3.4 Over the year, of the 1305 occasions children were reported missing, 85% were offered an Independent Return Interview, with an average of 30% of Return Interviews being undertaken within 72 hours. Quality audits of children's records evidence that a number of actions are undertaken to try and engage children in Return Interviews by the Youth Workers and partnership agencies. Some children are reported missing again before the Return Interview can be undertaken, and the Return Interview subsequently undertaken discusses each of the missing occasions within the one Return Interview. It is recognised that Corporate Parenting Board have been made aware of the Return Interview performance data and the actions being undertaken to try and improve this performance, including the Making a Difference Group providing their views as to how the Return Interviews can be undertaken to engage the children and young people.

3.5 In addition Merseyside Police analyse the children who are Top 10 missing children, 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.

4. Conclusion

- 4.1 The Regulatory Bodies; Ofsted, CQC, HMIC and HMIP currently have a Joint Targeted Area Inspection Framework in place regarding child sexual and criminal exploitation and missing from home / education / care. A Sefton Self Evaluation has been undertaken against this framework, to reflect the work the partnership continue to undertake in Sefton to safeguard our children, and those placed by other Local Authorities in our area, from child exploitation.