

# Children's Sports & Leisure Policy and Scrutiny Committee

**Date:** 24/02/2016

**Classification:** General Release / Confidential

**Title:** Child Sexual Exploitation

**Report of:** Alex Handford – CSE Lead Officer

**Cabinet Member Portfolio:** Portfolio (as listed at [www.westminster.gov.uk/cabinet](http://www.westminster.gov.uk/cabinet))

**Wards Involved:** All / Specific

**Policy Context:** City for Choice / Heritage / Aspiration

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## 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Include here a brief summary of the purpose of the report  
This report provides an overview of arrangements and developments in Westminster City Council Children's Services to address Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE).

## 2. Key Matters for the Committee's Consideration

- 2.1 We have no direct questions for the panel the purpose of attending was to give an update regarding practice and developments within this area.

**3. Background – purpose to provide information to Committee Members on the approach that is taken to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) within Westminster City Council**

- 3.1 Tackling CSE is a priority of the Council and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB).
- 3.2 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is one of the most challenging areas of safeguarding children and it cannot be seen in isolation. It cannot be addressed by any one agency and requires a strong multi agency approach: we have this in Westminster, both within the Council but also with multi agency partners (police, health, education).
- 3.3 There are three strands to the strategic plan to tackle CSE – Protect, Prevent and Prosecute.
- 3.4 Young people who are at risk of CSE are often subject to interrelated risks such as missing from education, association with serious youth violence. What makes this aspect of child protection so challenging is young people frequently do not realise that they are being abused or see themselves as victims. We work with young people who are also perpetrators and/ or at risk of becoming perpetrators. This is particularly complex and an area for development.
- 3.5 There is a Tri Borough Strategy and Action Plan in relation to CSE and we adhere to the Pan London CSE Operating Protocol and London Child Protection Procedures.
- 3.6 CSE can take many different forms. There have been a number of high profile cases nationally (for example – Oxford and Rotherham) where the pattern of abuse is organised, and involves a number of young women being abused by organised groups of adult male perpetrators often linked to transport hubs. Whilst we are very aware of this type of abuse and the learning from the Serious Case Reviews we have not found this pattern of abuse within Westminster to date. That is not to say it might not be happening here and we remain alert to this pattern of abuse. Being a central London Borough we are also very mindful young people may be brought to Westminster from other areas to be abused.
- 3.7 The nature of the Child Sexual Exploitation ranges between posting online images, links to older young men/gang activity, vulnerability to CSE from other young people with whom they are associating with. 'Peer on Peer' abuse is the most typical type of abuse we have identified which is consistent with the picture of CSE across London.
- 3.8 We know that both young women and young men are at risk of CSE and that it affects children from differing backgrounds (class, ethnicity, economic, educational). However, we know that particular young people are more vulnerable to being victims, such as those children who are in the care of the

Local Authority and children with additional needs. This highlights that young men are harder to identify and therefore to protect.

- 3.9 Whilst in Westminster we are not presenting large numbers of young people who are at risk of CSE, in all cases we take a robust, multi-agency approach and aim to intervene at the earliest opportunity. This is consistent with our strategic aim to prevent CSE.
- 3.10 A relatively new development (since October 2015) that has been very successful is that now all CSE victims identified as category 1 are dealt with by the police team within the MASH (multi agency safeguarding hub). This means that we have a very robust response to those lower risk young people and further enhances multi agency partnerships.
- 3.11 We are committed to preventing CSE and intervening at the earliest opportunity. To assist us in our data collection in addition to the three police risk categories (Category 1, 2, 3 –please see appendix 1 for details of categories) we have developed a blue category.
- 3.12 Through training we have increased social workers awareness of CSE Blue cases; these are cases that fall below the threshold for CSE Category 1 (which warrants police involvement). We have also increased our monitoring of the numbers of these cases and whether these cases escalate to category 1 or deescalate and concerns and risk resolves, through monthly CSE data meetings. There has been increased emphasis for social workers to work preventatively with these cases.
- 3.13 We carefully monitor all Looked After Children who are placed outside of Westminster and maintain strong multi agency links with professionals working with these children in order to detect any signs of CSE or potential for such. Our Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel will communicate with other MASE panels around the country in respect of young people from other boroughs placed in or visiting Westminster where there are CSE concerns. Other MASE Panels report any WESTMINSTER children outside of the borough to our MASE where there are CSE concerns as an additional safeguard to the statutory LAC procedures we follow.
- 3.14 We have participated in Operation Makesafe which has been led by the police. This is a project which has involved educating local business which could be used inappropriately for CSE such as hotels, hostels, pubs, taxi firms about CSE. The CSE Strategic Lead Officer has been involved in delivering this training programme. To date we have not received any referrals from these businesses in relation to CSE concerns involving adults or any organised crime of this nature. This supports the other information we have to suggest our demographic primarily has issues of peer on peer abuse.
- 3.15 There is a Child Protection Advisor who is part of the Safeguarding Team who has oversight of all young people who are at risk of CSE and takes a lead on CSE within Westminster. This officer provides advice, guidance and challenge on all situations where a young person may be at risk of CSE.

There is a Tri Borough Officer who is responsible for children who go missing and this role is key in identifying vulnerabilities, risks, patterns etc. Children who go missing are a priority to officers as we know they are some of the most vulnerable and the clear link to CSE.

- 3.16 We have a Strategic Lead for CSE who is working across the three boroughs to develop and further enhance practice both within the Council but also with partner agencies and harder to reach communities.
- 3.17 We have a Tri Borough Officer who is responsible for safeguarding in schools and education, this role is integral to preventing CSE and identifying vulnerable young people.

### **Data**

1. Please see attached document (Appendix 1) which shows the categories of risk and provides data on numbers of young people, age and gender. Data is collated across the three boroughs and is included to provide some level of comparison.

### **MASE Developments**

1. There is a Tri Borough Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE); this is a multi-agency panel that is held monthly. The MASE panel has been in operation since January 2014. This is the strategic forum for addressing CSE. In preparation for this a meeting also takes place monthly to ensure that there is consistency of threshold across the three boroughs and that the police and children's services data is consistent.
2. The focus of the MASE panel is upon victims, perpetrators and locations of concern. It has the overview of the Tri Borough picture in relation to CSE but would as necessary focus on any particular local issues.
3. This panel is chaired by police DI Iain Keating and Alex Handford (CSE Lead Officer). There are standing members from a number of different agencies across the three boroughs, including police, health, education, Integrated Gangs Unit, sexual health, community safety.
4. This panel reports to the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) Subgroup Missing/Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub/CSE and then the LSCB.
5. As necessary bespoke meetings are convened to look at particular issue or cohort of young people, these meetings are called 'extraordinary' MASE meetings.
6. The MASE panel also has a quality assurance role.

## **New Developments**

1. Our understanding of CSE is developing all the time and our work to address is progressing alongside this.
2. We have an action plan in place which is overseen by the LSCB Sub Group (MASH/Missing/CSE). The focus of the work in the coming months is going to be focusing on developing and assuring awareness raising in community groups, the development of a new CSE risk assessment tool for practitioners to use, how to consult young people and families in relation to CSE and further and more in-depth analysis of patterns, referrals and any gaps and how we can aggregate data and intelligence.
3. The verbal feedback from the recent Ofsted inspection was very positive in how we are addressing CSE. We will await the final report and address any recommendations and are action plans accordingly.

**If you have any queries about this Report or wish to inspect any of the Background Papers please contact Alex Handford ph 02075984638, [alexandra.handford@rbkc.gov.uk](mailto:alexandra.handford@rbkc.gov.uk) or Miranda Gittos x 7793, [mgittos@westminster.gov.uk](mailto:mgittos@westminster.gov.uk)**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

CSE Data Report

Overview of Tri Borough CSE Operational Arrangements Dec 2015.