

REPORT FOR: OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Date of Meeting: 9th December 2014

Subject: Child Sexual Exploitation

Responsible Officer: Chris Spencer – Director of Children and Families
Chris Hogan – Independent Chair
Harrow Safeguarding Children Board

Scrutiny Lead Member area: Cllr Simon Brown
Children and Families

Exempt: No

Wards affected: All Wards in Harrow.

Enclosures: No additional papers attached

Section 1 – Summary and Recommendations

This report sets out an overview of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) – providing background information on the national context, providing information about CSE in Harrow, what activity has taken place in Harrow to respond to the risk of CSE.

Recommendations:

To note the contents of the report; and endorse strategic direction for the development of comprehensive partnership action plan in response to the risk of CSE in Harrow. The outcome of the CSE Peer Review commissioned by the London Association of Directors of Children’s Services to be concluded in December 2014 will be reported to Overview and Scrutiny Committee early in 2015.

Section 2 – Report

Introductory paragraph

1. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) has been a matter of focus for the Local Authority and the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) for some time, together with the broader agenda of support to vulnerable young people, risks regarding local gang activity and serious youth violence, children going missing, and domestic and sexual violence. The Department of Education issued statutory guidance “Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation” in 2009. This was supplementary to Working Together 2006. Statutory guidance was further refined through Working Together 2013. The LSCB has a statutory duty to coordinate partnership interventions in relation to CSE (Working Together 2013). Originally, the Local Authority and LSCB based their understanding of the related aspects of CSE upon research carried out by a range of national organisations such as the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England in July 2012.
2. This report will outline the current Local Authority and LSCB response to CSE in Harrow, and the proposed developments for the multi-agency partnership in Harrow based on information provided locally from partner agencies. This report will demonstrate how the many work streams around vulnerable young people are organised, feedback analysis of young people’s views about keeping safe in Harrow, and point to possible future trends in reporting and intervention.

Background

1. High profile CSE cases in Rochdale, Derby, Oxford, and Buckinghamshire have provided ample testimony that CSE is far from a new phenomenon. More recently, Professor Alexis Jay’s report into sexual exploitation in Rotherham gave even greater impetus to the need for every professional working in the field of child protection to increase our understanding and improve our work in this area. Professor Jay’s report has been further supplemented by reports from Manchester, and a recent OFSTED thematic review on local authorities’ current effectiveness in responding to CSE. It is clear that the previously under-identified scale of this particular form of sexual abuse is now emerging. Nationally it would also appear that in many areas, the disclosed pattern of CSE abuse has involved predominantly White British girls as victims, and groups of predominantly Asian heritage men as perpetrators.

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

1. CSE is a form of sexual abuse that involves the manipulation and /or coercion of young people under the age of 18 into sexual activity in exchange for things such as money, gifts, accommodation, affection or status. The “grooming” process involves befriending children, gaining their trust, often encouraging them to drink alcohol and take drugs, sometimes over a long period of time, before the abuse begins. This abusive relationship involves an imbalance of power which leaves child or young person feeling that they have limited options. It is a form of

abuse which is often misunderstood by victims, and historically has been considered by some professionals to be “consensual”. Although it is true that the child victim can be tricked and manipulated into believing they are in a loving relationship, no child or young person can ever consent to being abused or exploited.

2. CSE can manifest itself in different ways. It can involve an older perpetrator exercising financial, emotional or physical control (threatened or actual violence). It can involve peers manipulating or forcing victims into sexual activity, sometimes in gangs or gang-affected neighbourhoods. Exploitation can also involve opportunistic or organised networks of perpetrators who may profit financially from trafficking young victims between different locations to engage in sexual activity with multiple men (Barnardo’s 2011).
3. The abuse categorised by CSE often involves violent and degrading sexual assaults and rape. Exploitation can also occur without physical contact when children are persuaded or forced to post indecent images of themselves online, participate in non-contact sexual activities via a webcam or smart-phone, or engage in sexual conversations on a mobile phone (DfE 2011).
4. Technology is widely used by perpetrators as a method of grooming and coercing victims, often through social networking sites and mobile devices (Jago et al 2011) this form of abuse usually occurs in private or semi-private places such as parks, and areas where young people are known to congregate. National research indicates that it is increasingly occurring at “parties” organised by perpetrators in private houses and hotels organised by perpetrators for the purposes of giving victims drugs and alcohol before sexually abusing them (Barnardo’s 2012).

What are the signs and symptoms of CSE?

1. Grooming and sexual exploitation can be very difficult to identify. Warning signs can easily be mistaken for “normal” teenage behaviour / development as young people will often push and test the limits of parental expectations and “rules”. It is of vital importance that professionals working with children and their family understand the range of vulnerabilities that can impact on children. It is also important that professionals are mindful that it is likely that risks escalate when there are a greater number of risk indicators relevant to an individual child’s circumstances. Parents, carers, and all agencies delivering services to/for young people need to be alert to the following signs and symptoms:
 - Underage sexual activity
 - Going to hotels or unusual locations to meet “friends”
 - Going missing from home or care
 - Truancy or opting out of education altogether
 - Changes in the way they dress, and having unexplained amounts of money
 - Having older male and female friends
 - Getting in and out of cars driven by unknown adults

- Receiving gifts from unknown sources
- Having multiple mobile phones and worrying about losing contact via mobile
- Mood swings, volatile behaviour, emotional distress, self-harm or thoughts of suicide
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Getting involved in crime
- Suffering physical injuries or sexually transmitted infections
- Unwanted pregnancies
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour
- Associating with young people involved in sexual exploitation
- Recruiting other young people to exploitative situations

(Barnardo's 2011; CEOP 2011, Berelowitz et al 2012)

Who is likely to be sexually exploited?

1. Sexual Exploitation can happen to any young person. It can happen in urban and rural locations. It can happen to children from a range of ages, both male and female, and from any ethnic background. Victims have been identified from heterosexual, gay, lesbian, and bisexual orientations. CSE can happen in secure and loving families, although it will come as no surprise children with additional vulnerabilities are likely to be at increased risk of CSE.
2. CEOP's thematic assessment analysed over 2,000 known victims of CSE. The vast majority were female, although in 31% of cases the gender was unknown. It is recognised that additional difficulties in reporting / recognising sexual exploitation in boys is likely to have led to an under-representation of male victims. Victims most commonly become known to statutory and non-statutory agencies at the age of 14 and 15, although victims as young as 9 years old were identified. 61% of victims were white, 33% were of unknown ethnicity, 3% were classified as Asian, and 1% of victims were recorded as being black. It is recognised that children from minority ethnic backgrounds may face additional barriers in reporting and accessing services which could result in their under-representation in this research.
3. Researchers recognise that children who go missing and/or are in care are at heightened risk of CSE. CEOP's assessment found that in 1,014 cases where this information was recorded, 842 (83%) were also reported missing on at least 1 occasion. This data was not able to pinpoint if the missing episode preceded, or coincided with, or followed the period of sexual exploitation. Of the 896 victims whose living situation was recorded, 211 (23.5%) were already in care when they began to be exploited, and a further 43 (5%) were moved into care following intervention (CEOP 2011).
4. A University College London study of 552 children sexually exploited found that nearly 40% had a history of criminal behaviour. Male victims (55%) were significantly more likely to offend than female victims (35%). Although there is a correlation between criminal activity and

sexual exploitation, the data in this study did not suggest that the abuse causes offending, in some cases the children's criminal behaviour began around the time of the exploitation, and in other cases offending and CSE were both features of the victim's "generally chaotic lifestyle" (Cockbain and Brayley 2012).

5. In the Children's Commissioner's study, the features of children's background experiences that are likely to make them more vulnerable to the risk of CSE are:
 - Living in chaotic and dysfunctional households (with features of parental substance misuse, domestic abuse, parental mental health, and parental criminality)
 - History of abuse (sexual, physical, emotional and neglect)
 - Recent bereavement of loss
 - Gang associations either through relatives or relationships
 - Attending education settings with children already sexually exploited
 - Learning disability
 - Unsure of sexual orientation
 - Friendships with children being sexually exploited
 - Homeless
 - Living in neighbourhoods affected by gang activity
 - Low self esteem
 - Young Carer
 - Living in care/Hostel/Foyer

What are the causes of CSE?

1. It has been suggested that offenders who sexually exploit children do it not only for the opportunity to commit sexual offences, but also for the satisfaction of manipulating and controlling someone who is perceived as vulnerable. In this respect, perpetrators of CSE have been compared to perpetrators of domestic abuse. Further research would be needed to fully establish this link, and explore fully the psychological motivation of these offenders (CEOP 2011).
2. A study of gang associated sexual exploitation also observed that the abuse was a method for young men to exert power and control over young women. Other causes of this specific form of abuse include;
 - Using sex as a means of initiating young people into a gang
 - Sexual activity exchanged for status and protection
 - Girls used to entrap rival gang members
 - Sexual assault as a weapon in gang conflict
 - Sexual assault used as a means of punishment for both female and male gang members, and their wider family associations
3. This study also found that girls in this culture who are perceived to engage in casual sex, forfeit the basic individual right to say "no" and are frequently forced by gang members to engage in sexual activity. Previous experiences of sexual violence also increase a victim's vulnerability to further abuse (H. Beckett et al 2012, "If Only Someone

Had Listened” Office of Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups 2013).

Who are the perpetrators?

1. According to the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry, there is a great deal that we do not currently know about the perpetrators of CSE. This is partly because agencies rarely record data on perpetrators, and when they do, it is incomplete and inconsistent. Frequently victims only know their abusers by aliases and nicknames, or they can only provide physical descriptions. Furthermore, often the circumstances in which children are abused often make it difficult to identify their abusers. Children are often heavily intoxicated by drugs and alcohol, and abused by multiple men. Often children are moved from location to location. For these reasons, many abusers remain unidentified, and the actual number of abusers is likely to be far higher than those reported (Berelowitz et al 2012).
2. Of the identified perpetrators, the vast majority are men and boys. The Children’s Commissioner’s study found that 72% were male, 10% female, and 19% gender was undisclosed. The age range was from 12 to 75 years. The largest group of perpetrators were loosely recorded as “Asian”. Perpetrators are often described as highly manipulative individuals who either create or exacerbate their victims’ vulnerabilities such as isolation from family and friends, disengagement from services, and encouraging criminal behaviour. This they do in order to gain, and maintain control over their victims, and distance them from the people who may be able to protect them (CEOP 2011).

What is the prevalence of CSE?

1. It is not possible to say exactly how many young people are victims of CSE for a number of reasons. It is described as a “hidden” form of abuse which leaves victims confused, frightened, and reluctant to make any disclosures. Some children do not even recognise that they are experiencing abuse as the perpetrator has manipulated them into believing they are in a loving relationship, or they are dependent upon the abuser for protection (N. Sharp 2011, Cockbain and Bailey 2012, (CEOP 2011). There is also no distinct category of abuse for CSE in National and London procedures and data relating to CSE is therefore partial, incomplete, concealed in other categories of data, or simply unrecorded (CEOP 2012). In addition, when perpetrators are convicted for involvement in CSE cases, there is no specific crime of child sexual exploitation, and therefore it is not possible to obtain data from police statistics of sexual offences (Berelowitz et al 2012).
2. A UK wide survey estimated that in 2009-10 there were over 3,000 young people accessing services because they were affected by CSE. In a thematic assessment, CEOP received over 2,000 reports of victims from local authorities and police forces. The Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into CSE by groups and gangs confirmed 2,049 reported victims from August 2010 – October 2011. Furthermore, the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry estimated from

the evidence that 16,500 children in the UK were at risk of CSE. Owing to the reasons above, figures of reported victims is likely to be an underestimate of the true prevalence of CSE in the UK.

What is the impact of CSE?

1. CSE can have a devastating impact on a victim's physical and mental health, happiness and development. It can also have profound long-term effects on a young person's social integration, economic well-being, and is likely to adversely affect their long term life chances. Some of the difficulties faced by victims' include:

- Isolation from family members
- Teenage pregnancy/parenthood
- Failing examinations or dropping out of education
- Unemployment
- Mental Health problems extending in adulthood
- Suicide attempts
- Alcohol and drug dependency
- Aggressive behaviour
- Criminal Activity

(PACE 2013; Safe and Sound; Berelowitz 2012)

2. It is likely that victims may need intensive multi-agency support to mitigate the long term damage inflicted by CSE.

How can we prevent CSE?

1. Preventative work focuses on raising awareness amongst young people, parents/carers, and the professional network working with children, and those adult facing agencies working with adults / parents living in chaotic and dysfunctional households referenced earlier in this report. It is particularly important that young people are aware of the features of CSE, and the link between drug and alcohol use and the risk of CSE. Education settings have an important role to play in supporting young people to make positive and informed choices that will reduce the risk of entering into abusive relationships. Media campaigns, both national and local aim to prevent young people becoming victims and perpetrators of abusive behaviour in relationships (OFSTED 2013, DfE 2011).
2. Children going missing regularly can be both a cause and an effect of CSE. Action taken to reduce the number of children going missing will reduce incidents of CSE. Such actions includes schools intervening quickly to establish reasons for children frequently missing school; relevant agencies / practitioners interviewing children after a "missing episode" to understand why they go missing, and planning preventative strategies to reduce the likelihood of them going missing in the future. It is important that agencies work together to implement appropriate interventions to engage with vulnerable young people who may find it hard to trust adults. Providing timely advice and support to young people and their family, particularly during times where these

family's are facing difficult times is clearly the most effective route to reducing the risk and incidents of CSE (Home Office 2011).

3. Young people leaving care are potentially at increased risk of sexual exploitation, and therefore, the right package of support during their transition into independence is vital in protecting them from harm (DfE 2012).
4. The Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013 indicated that a conservative estimate that approximately 1,400 children were sexually exploited during the 6 year period of the review. In just over a third of cases, children sexually exploited were previously known to services because of child protection and neglect. The collective failures that led to the problem being underplayed and information being suppressed by senior managers and political leaders. At an operation level, the police gave no priority to CSE. The Rotherham LSCB oversaw the development of good inter-agency policies and procedures applicable to CSE. However, the weakness in the LSCB approach was that it did not sufficiently check whether they were being applied, and were working effectively. In May 2014, the caseload of the specialist CSE multi-agency team operating in Rotherham was 51, with more CSE cases being held by other children's social care teams. There were 16 looked after children identified as being at serious risk of CSE. In 2013, Rotherham police received 157 reports concerning CSE in the borough.
5. The recommendations of the Rotherham Inquiry were made as a result of several reviews, reports and inspections over the last 2 years. As a result they provide a good blueprint for local authorities and its partners to strategically, and operationally respond to the risk of CSE in the local area. These recommendations are as follows:-
 - **Risk Assessment.** 1. Senior Managers should ensure that there are up-to-date risk assessments on all children affected by CSE, that are of high quality, and clearly recorded on the child's file. 2. The numeric scoring tool should be kept under review, and professional judgements about risk should be clearly recorded where they are not adequately captured by the numeric tool.
 - **Looked After Children.** 3. Managers should develop a more strategic approach to protecting looked after children who are sexually exploited. This must include the use of out-of-area placements. The borough should work with other authorities to minimise the risks of CSE, including those living in placements where they may become exposed to CSE. The strategy should include improved arrangements for supporting children in out-of-area placements when they required leaving care services
 - **Outreach and accessibility.** 4. The Council should make every effort to make help reach out to victims of CSE who are not yet in touch with services. In particular, it should make every effort to restore open access and outreach work with children affected by CSE to the level previously provided by Risk Business.
 - **Joint CSE team.** 6. The remit and responsibilities of the joint CSE team should be urgently decided and communicated to all concerned

in a way that leaves no room for doubt. 7. Agencies should commit to introducing a single manager for the multi-agency CSE team. This should be implemented as quickly as possible. 8. The Council, together with the Police, should review the social care resources available to the CSE Team, and make sure these are consistent with the need and demand for services.

- **Collaboration within CYPS.** 9. All services should recognise that once a child is affected by CSE, he or she is likely to require support and therapeutic intervention for an extended period of time. Children should not be offered short-term intervention only, and cases should not be closed prematurely.
 - **Ongoing work with victims.** 10. The LSCB, through the CSE sub-group, should work with local agencies, including health, to secure the delivery of post-abuse support services.
 - **Quality Assurance.** 11. All agencies should continue to resource, and strengthen, the quality assurance work currently underway under the auspices of the LSCB
 - **Minority Ethnic Communities.** 12. There should be a more direct and more frequent engagement by the Council and also the LSCB with women and men from minority ethnic communities of CSE and other forms of abuse. 13. The LSCB should address the under-reporting of CSE and abuse in minority ethnic communities.
 - **The issue of race.** 14. The issue of race should be tackled as an absolute priority if it is a significant factor in the criminal activity of organised child sexual abuse in the borough
 - **Serious Case Reviews.** 15. We recommend to the Department of Education that the guiding principle on redactions in serious case reviews must be that the welfare of any children involved is paramount.
6. Clearly, the expectations of these recommendations require a significant priority for the organisation, and resources required to deliver, particularly across Children's Social Care, Health, and the Police.
7. In November 2014 OFSTED published a thematic inspection drawing on evidence from 8 local authorities. The head lines of the report are broadly similar to those found in the Rotherham Inquiry, and the strategic and operational weaknesses highlighted over the last 6 years. OFSTED noted that organisations have yet to act decisively and consistently to ensure that this type of sexual abuse is dealt with more effectively. Key findings recommend further improvements in: strategic management with strategy not linking up with other local planning priorities, performance management data not being consistently collected and shared, screening/assessment tools not being consistently applied, and CSE investigations/assessments not always being managed through child protection procedures, where specialist CSE teams operate there is more evidence that children are better supported, not all police and local authorities are using their full range of powers to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators, missing children procedures are not consistently followed, local authorities and its' partners are successfully using a range of methods to raise awareness of CSE.

Current situation in Harrow

1. CSE has been a matter of focus in the LSCB Business plan for some time, together with the broader agenda of support to vulnerable young people, around gangs and serious youth violence, children going missing, and domestic and sexual violence. These many strands create a complex challenge to strategically coordinate an effective response to manage the interface between these risks to young people. This work started in Harrow in January 2012; it was a slow start which gained some momentum during 2013-14. A brief summary of the key issues and activity is set out below.
2. In 2012, the LSCB Chair, Deborah Lightfoot, raised the need for a revised domestic and sexual violence strategy, and gangs' strategy in Harrow. Two gangs' coordination meetings were organised and chaired by the LSCB IN 2013, by the Deborah Lightfoot, and DCI Peter Stride, LSCB vice Chair.
3. As part of developing a common understanding of CSE across the LSCB, the LSCB Executive Board Member Development Day focussed on CSE in June 2013, with action learning from a national Serious Case Review involving CSE and many local agencies. This made a significant impression on Board Members as evidenced in their self-evaluation forms.
4. Meetings of LSCB partners to map areas' of vulnerability for young people took place in February and July 2013. As a result the LSCB Missing Person Protocol was completed in 2013, and up-dated following changes to guidance in spring 2014.
5. The LSCB recognised that the multi-agency operational group required to identify and ensure good practice with vulnerable teenagers was required, and set up a multi-operational working group (The Vulnerable Young People's Panel – VYPP) in August 2013 to oversee the support to the young people identified – looking at risk of CSE, missing children, those facing gang involvement, honour based violence or self-harm. This operational group was chaired by the Targeted Services Manager for MASH/S47 Service. The ethos of the panel is in line with early help and prevention, and the development of a multi-agency plan to reduce risk and share intelligence. The focus on prevention and early help underpinning this group was identified as good practice during the OFSTED thematic inspection of early help in January 2014.
6. The LSCB published a local CSE strategy which was accepted by all partner agencies in October 2013. In February 2014 the Pan-London CSE Operating Protocol was published by the Pan-London Safeguarding Children Board. This required London Borough's to establish a MASE (Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting) to be led by the Police. The lead officer DCI Peter Stride set up the MASE panel, and the first meeting took place in July 2014. MASE meeting are implemented on a monthly basis, and multi-agency attendance and practice is beginning to be embedded across the partnership. So far 19

young people have been identified to be at some level of risk of CSE since July. As soon as MASE was in place, it was recognised that there was a possibility to duplicate discussions on individual children, so that the VYPP merged with the MASE in the autumn of 2014. It has been agreed in November 2014 that the MASE agenda would benefit from developing 2 additional standard agenda items: Missing Children, and Partner Agency Intelligence/Mapping information, that will inform future CSE disruption activity.

7. The LSCB reviewed its CSE work in March 2014. In the spring of 2014 Safer Harrow agreed to oversee and implement the Harrow Gangs Strategy in April 2014. The Safer Harrow Partnership has commissioned work specifically directed at preventing CSE and sexual violence through education of children in Harrow schools. Using MOPAC funding the WISH Centre in Harrow provides education about CSE and other forms of sexual violence through schools in Harrow. This work, called the "Harrow Shield" aims to reach 22,000 children.
8. In light of this work on behalf of partners on the LSCB Operational Group, in June 2014, Deborah Lightfoot, LSCB Chair, requested Safer Harrow coordinate work with vulnerable young people, as part of their reviewed Domestic and Sexual Violence Strategy and their new Gangs' Strategy, This was agreed by Safer Harrow in July 2014. This will be a strand of work for the Safer Harrow Vulnerable Young People's sub-group overseen by Mike Howes.
9. The ability of agencies to map missing children was noted as a concern to the LSCB in the autumn of 2013. Work overseen by the LSCB QA sub-group completed in May 2014 developed more accurate data on identifying an accurate cohort of missing children. In June 2014 the QA sub-group scrutinised the return home interviews conducted on behalf of Harrow by a voluntary agency commissioned to undertake this area of work for children that go missing. Improvements in the service were identified and changes made to the referral process as a result.
10. The MASH Service Manager has been working with the Police Community Safety Unit to enhance the reporting and management of missing children. This has led to improved scrutiny of data, which has been overseen by the LSCB Operational Group and the streamlining of the process. In addition Early Identification Services (EIS) have set up a role for a Young People's Domestic Violence Advocate, where children are tracked in relation to early risk of exploitation and domestic abuse in peer relationships.
11. The LSCB has sought to engage with the Licensing Team for some time and in August 2014, the Licensing Team agreed to training re: Safeguarding Children, sharing awareness of CSE with local licensees (betting shops, pubs, hotels) and begin multi-agency licensing training and regular meetings to consider local applications.
12. The work in Harrow has shown the importance of a coordinated approach to CSE and the real possibility that different groups will be discussing similar issues / identifying similar cohorts of young people in

different forums. The LSCB observed the EIP (Early Identification Panel), MASE, ASB (Anti-Social Behavioural) operational and strategic groups in July 2014. The LSCB Chair, Deborah Lightfoot, wrote to the Head of Paid Service Paul Najsarek, encouraging better coordination and review of the many groups that meet in Harrow. In September 2014, the Chair of the LSCB proposal to the Safer Harrow Partnership was accepted that the LSCB should take responsibility for the strategic planning and delivery of a multi-agency response to CSE in Harrow. The aim of this proposal was to improve both the speed, and breadth of partnership response to CSE in Harrow that had been achieved so far over the last 2 years. This proposal was to be taken forward when the new LSCB Chair and Advisor were in post in November 2014. In the LSCB Operational Group held in November 2014 with the new LSCB team in place it was broad terms and reference for this working stream of the LSCB were agreed, and there was consensus that this would be amongst the key priorities for the LSCB over the next 12 months, as a surge of activity would be required to ensure there was a comprehensive response across the partnership with regard to CSE.

13. During 2013/14 there were on average 17 reports relating to sexual violence per month in Harrow. 50% of victims were aged 10-24 years, and 955 were female. 35% of suspects were aged 15-29 years, and 955 were male. In 2013, Police have experienced a 1% increase in sexual offences, dealing with 76 rapes and 138 other sexual offences.
14. In line with the national picture, despite regular attempts to share information locally, it has been difficult to establish an accurate picture of the prevalence of trafficking and sexual exploitation in Harrow, as there have been low levels of reporting. Our best estimate is that for the 4 years, January 2010-14 Harrow Police saw 4 cases of sexual exploitation and 4 cases of trafficking (for sexual exploitation). In 2013, 3 girls who went missing over 24 hours were known to be at risk of sexual exploitation. Between July 2011 and 2013, 5 referrals were made to the NRM (National Referral Mechanism) in relation to the trafficking of young people aged less than 18 years old.
15. The LSCB strategy has been to raise awareness of the CSE issues with the professional network through training, as well as communication tools such as the regular LSCB newsletter, and letters from the LSCB chair to key agencies. For example, signs of CSE were specifically identified in the regular LSCB newsletter which goes to all partner agencies in the statutory and voluntary sectors in June, July, and December 2013. The LSCB website contains information about CSE, and is very well accessed, with a trajectory of increasing hits.
16. The Voluntary Sector outreach programme is also key in alerting and educating local communities. For the past 18 months the LSCB has commissioned a faith and voluntary sector worker to engage with local provision. This project aims to improve take up of safeguarding training, and good practice, which includes CSE as part of its awareness raising agenda.

17. Over the past 15 months Harrow LSCB VCS project has made significant progress in engaging small and large Harrow groups (24 individual groups). This has laid solid foundations for an active VCS Children, Young People and Families Network engaged in training and safeguarding events.
18. The LSCB has developed CSE training course, which has so far been delivered to staff from Northwick Park Hospital, local schools, social care teams, and the LADO. Feedback from practitioners has been positive. Unfortunately a CSE course in June 2014 was postponed owing to low take up, but is rescheduled in 2014. The recent agreement for an LSCB £20,000 CSE training budget from Health Commissioners delivering substance misuse services in Harrow, will significantly augment the local LSCB CSE training provision.

Next Steps

1. In October 2014 under the auspices of the London Association of Directors of Children's Services, Harrow has jointly commissioned an independent peer review with Enfield and Hounslow of the response to CSE in the Local Authority and LSCB. The review will follow OFSTED key lines of enquiry, and will go some way to confirming the strategic and operational developments to fully address the risks of CSE occurring in Harrow. This review will include case file audit, practitioner interviews, observation of the operation of MASE, and a desk top review of policy, procedure, and performance. The review is well underway, and will be concluded in mid-December. The findings of the review will inform London wide developments, but also local LSCB and Local Authority planning.

Conclusion

2. For the Local Authority and LSCB, domestic and sexual violence has had a high profile for several years. CSE is clearly a key issue when considering how local resources are required to coalesce to ensure that there is sufficient strategic planning, driven from the very top of the organisation, to drive and maintain focus and meeting the challenge posed by this serious type of sexual abuse.
3. Although the Local Authority and LSCB can show some progress in addressing CSE from May 2012, there remain considerable areas to progress drawing together the diverse strands of policy and operational work, in order to develop an improved focussed strategic local response.
4. In March 2013, the national definition of domestic and sexual abuse changed to include victims aged 16 and 17 years. This is leading to a rise in MARAC referrals. The increased focus from the Harrow Shield intervention, together with more targeted and effective identification across the LSCB partnership through operational work of the MASE, could well lead to a further rise in preventative, risk and rehabilitative CSE work.

5. Looking forward, we may expect a rise in local children also requiring high threshold, and intensive packages of multi-agency support, including the provision of tier 2/3 CAMHS provision.

Section 3 - Statutory Officer Clearance

Not Required

Ward Councillors notified:

YES/ NO

** Delete as appropriate.*

Section 4 - Contact Details and Background Papers

Contact: Neil Harris, Service Manager Quality Assurance