

NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

MINUTES OF SCRUTINY PANEL 1 - CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Thursday, 5 January 2017

COUNCILLORS PRESENT: Councillor Dennis Meredith (Chair), Councillor James Hill (Deputy Chair); Councillors Rufia Ashraf, Muna Cali, Janice Duffy, Cathrine Russell, Brian Sargeant, Zoe Smith and Danielle Stone

Witnesses Lesley Hagger, Director, Children's Services, NCC
Inspector Rich Tompkins, Rise Team
Simon Ashton, E Safety Officer, NCC
Jodie Low, Director, Free2Talk

Councillor M Aziz

Officers Phil Harris, Head of Housing and Wellbeing
Tracy Tiff, Scrutiny Officer

1. APOLOGIES

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Graham Walker.

2. DEPUTATIONS AND PUBLIC ADDRESSES

There were none.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST (INCLUDING WHIPPING)

There were none.

4. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 10 November 2016 were signed by the Chair as a true and accurate record.

At this point the Chair advised that the full video of Kayleigh's Love Story was now available and should members of the Panel want to view this; the Scrutiny Officer could provide the hyperlink.

5. WITNESS EVIDENCE

(A) DIRECTOR, CHILDREN'S SERVICES, NCC

Lesley Hagger, Director of Children's Services, Northamptonshire County Council, and Inspector Rich Tompkins, RISE Team, Northants Police, addressed the Scrutiny Panel; advising that Kayleigh's Love Story is now being shown nationally. Kayleigh had lived in Leicestershire.

People that work with young people and children are being liaised with regarding using the Internet safely so that they are more knowledgeable and have a better understanding.

The assumption is that children are groomed over a long period but Kayleigh was groomed over a short period of a few weeks and thousands of text messages were sent prior to the event that led to her murder. There is a need to ascertain how we can become a vigilant community.

Lesley Hagger highlighted that there is a strong partnership within Northamptonshire with good team working. Materials such as training and toolkits are available. It is important that there is good communication on how to keep children safe.

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions, made comment and heard:

- In response to a comment that it is important for all schools, including academies, to receive the training; Lesley Hagger advised that she has no authority to instruct them to train/show videos but can advise. Good planning is needed and pupils need to be prepared prior to watching the video. Conversations take place both before and after the video showing. Lesley Hagger encouraged Panel Members, if they have the opportunity, to encourage academies to show the video. It is a short 5½ minute film.
- Rich Tompkins advised that Chelsea's Choice was shown to the majority of schools last year; a couple could not facilitate it. Officers from the RISE Team will go into schools when the films are shown.
- The Scrutiny Panel heard that following the showings of Chelsea's Choice, a lot of disclosures came out. This led to the unravelling of a paedophile network. Young people are able to identify to the characters in the film.
- The Scrutiny Panel acknowledged that schools have a captive audience.
- The Scrutiny Panel suggested that there needs to be education on healthy relationships and sex education within schools. Peer education is a powerful tool; it would be useful for peer mentors to get the messages across.
- In response to a query regarding protection for children who are home taught or taught in the mosques within the town; Lesley Hagger assured the Panel that access to such groups is required and the primary duty is to protect.
- All teachers undergo safeguarding training
- Rich Tompkins advised that two thirds of all child abuse is committed in the home; a lot of CSE is reported by parents.
- The Panel was reminded that it had already been provided (at an earlier meeting) with the national definition of CSE
- The Panel raised concerns regarding incoming children and asylum seeking children that some had gone missing. The numbers of missing children are quite low.
- There are a number of brothels in Northampton, intelligence is being gathered and the Safeguarding Team are involved. In response to a question, the Panel heard that should there be children in brothels, they can (and have been) be closed down.
- The Panel heard that boys make up 10% of children who have been sexually abused. Blast, a charity, looks at boys and CSE.

- It is not just men who sexually exploit children. An example was given of a young boy who had been sexually exploited by a woman in her 30s.
- Lesley Hagger emphasised the important role of the Borough Council, as the Licensing Authority, which is crucial in terms of CSE.
- The Panel conveyed concern regarding exploitation on the Internet and will look at a potential recommendation around this, based on evidence provided by expert advisors.

Lesley Hagger and Rich Tompkins were thanked for attending the meeting.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

(B) E SAFETY OFFICER, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Simon Aston, E Safety Officer, Northamptonshire County Council, addressed the Scrutiny Panel; highlighting the salient points contained within his briefing paper by way of a short presentation:

- “Stranger danger” becomes blurred on the Internet
- Parents do not always engage on E Safety sessions offered by schools. Boundaries can lapse by year 4.
- Education has to happen at home.
- It takes just 25 minutes for a young person to be groomed online. Further examples were given.
- Key messages regarding Internet safety need to be given to schools
- Young children need to be provided with the right safety tools to navigate the Internet.
- Grooming can take place on any site that comprises a messaging service.
- The E Safety Strategy is working on:
 - Embed
 - Embrace
 - Empower
- UKCCIS is an excellent example about sexting
- The average age for young people seeing pornography on the Internet is 9-11.
- 88% of images are passed onto other websites.
- 77% of children in Northamptonshire have no limits on the Internet at home.
- Should a child spent three hours a day online it can impact on their health and mental health.
- Simon Ashton advised of two excellent apps in respect of e-safety:
 - Internetmatters.org
 - Netaware

The Scrutiny Panel asked questions, made comment and heard:

- Most apps have an age limit of 13, Whatsapp is 16
- Social media is very difficult to regulate
- Safer Internet Day is scheduled for 7 February 2017
- Education is key to healthy relationships and referred to a year 10 case.

- Sixth-formers advise that they get a lot of their behaviours from the Internet and it is normalised behaviour to chat to a stranger on line
- The Scrutiny Panel suggested a potential recommendation for inclusion within its report: "E Safety training for all borough Councillors is included with the Councillor Development Programme 2017/2018."
- Parental controls can be put on PCs.
- The Scrutiny Panel recognised that it is key for there to be training and the right behaviour.
- The Panel had been impressed by the safeguarding training that was offered to Councillors, delivered by the RISE Team

Simon Aston was thanked for attending the meeting.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

(C) CHAIR, NORTHANTS HEALTHCARE NHS FOUNDATION TRUST

A response to the core questions was not provided.

(D) CHIEF OFFICER, NORTHAMPTONSHIRE VOICE

The written response was noted.

(E) CHIEF OFFICER, LOWDOWN CENTRE

The Chair advised that a representative from the Lowdown Centre would not be in attendance.

(F) MANAGER, FREE TO TALK

Jodie Low, Director, Free2Talk, highlighted the salient points contained within her briefing note. She also gave the Scrutiny Panel background to Free2Talk.

Jodie Low highlighted:

- Within the 12 week programme offered by Free2Talk, young people want Internet access
- Staff from Free2Talk always work in pairs online. There are robust safeguarding procedures in place
- Free2Talk sees more vulnerable people seeking out how they can satisfy their self-esteem etc.
- Funding is an issue for Free2Talk
- There needs to be more support for young women in disadvantaged areas
- The E-Safety training Toolkit is excellent

The Scrutiny Panel made comment, asked questions and heard:

- Funding is Free2Talk's biggest challenge so that they can train and maintain the team. The Scrutiny Panel commented that funding should not be a barrier for training.

- The Community Development Strategy is important. Activities and groups outside the home for children is very important.
- The Scrutiny Panel suggested a potential recommendation for inclusion within its final report “consideration is given to how the Borough Council can build the infrastructure for youth.”
- It was noted that NBC, NPH works with organisations such as Free2Talk, the Lowdown Centre to lever in money.
- Children’s health and wellbeing is a borough issue.
- In response to a query regarding disclosures, Jodie Low explained the process.
- The Scrutiny Panel suggested a further potential recommendation for inclusion within its final report “That the national best practice for practitioners on-line is used by the Borough Council.”

Jodie Low was thanked for attending the meeting.

AGREED: That the information provided informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

(G) MANAGER, SERVICE SIX

Documents provided by Service Six were noted. Representations from Service Six would attend the next meeting to provide further information.

(H) CHIEF OFFICER, NORTHANTS RAPE AND CRISIS CENTRE

The Chair suggested that the Chief Officer, Northants Rape and Crisis Centre be invited to provide a written briefing note to the next meeting.

6. SITE VISITS

The Scrutiny Panel noted the briefing note about the site visits that had recently taken place.

The meeting concluded at 8:00 pm