

# NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

## OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY



### SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

#### CORE QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS

The Scrutiny Panel is currently undertaking a review that is investigating Northampton Borough Council (NBC) plays an active role in tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

##### **Key Lines of Enquiry**

- To gain an understanding of the work currently being undertaken by partnerships, statutory and voluntary organisations, and the Police to address these issues
- To investigate how NBC contributes to the above work
- To raise awareness of CSE, human trafficking and domestic slavery of children in Northampton
- To explore best practice elsewhere in identifying and providing support to victims of CSE
- To understand what NBC is doing outside the Scrutiny process in relation to human trafficking and domestic slavery of children

The expected outcomes of this Scrutiny Review are:

- To make evidence based recommendations to improve the role that NBC has in tackling CSE
- To make recommendations, as appropriate, regarding partnership working in tackling CSE

## **Response covering Community Safety, including Anti-Social Behaviour Unit**

### **CORE QUESTIONS:**

A series of key questions have been put together to inform the evidence base of the Scrutiny Panel:

1. Please provide details of the work currently being undertaken by your organisation to address child sexual exploitation (CSE)

**CSE affects all communities; neither victims nor perpetrators come solely from any particular social, economic, ethnic or faith background. Therefore, it is important that a joined up approach is taken across all agencies. This has been recognised within Northampton Borough Council and also the Northampton Community Safety Partnership (NCSP).**

**A multi-agency countywide approach has been established to respond to and address issues of CSE. In response to this NBC Community Safety and NCSP has undertaken the following action:**

- **CSE Training has been provided to:**
  - **Frontline officers**
  - **Councillors**
  - **Housing Officers**
  - **Taxi drivers (also included in the Taxi driver induction course for new drivers)**
- **Established as a Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priority, under Violent Crime and Vulnerable people.**
- **CSE established as a separate agenda item on CSP Board and Officer Group meetings and sub groups.**
- **Community Safety representation on relevant countywide groups.**
- **Community Safety are picking up on actions within the countywide CSE action plan**

2. Is there a clear and robust multi-agency strategy for information sharing, preventing and managing CSE?

**There is an established multi-agency Countywide Information Sharing Agreements covering community safety (which would include CSE) in**

place. In support of this there are also more robust ISA's for specific areas such as Anti-Social behaviour and Housing; these too, would also enable information on CSE to be shared.

In addition to this Section 115 of the Crime & Disorder Act 1998 (revised 2005) enables any person to disclose information for the purposes of any provision of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to a relevant authority, or to a person acting on behalf of such an authority.

3. What other multi-Agency forums exist to facilitate joint working?

Partnership working is well established within Northampton and NBC has a long history of working in this way. The following forums in Northampton and Northamptonshire enable joined up working to take place effectively:

- Community Safety Partnership Board
- Community Safety Officers Group
- Northampton Town Centre Task Group
- Northampton Anti-Social Behaviour Action Group
- Northampton Street Community Group
- Countywide Community Safety Managers Group
- Countywide Interpersonal Violence Group
- Countywide Child Sexual Exploitation sub group

4. What is the extent and profile of CSE in Northampton? How do we know this?

Main information for Child Sexual Exploitation sits with the Police. Data is not shared routinely with CSP's. However, information is shared with NBC and the more specifically the CSP on a need to know basis to inform partnership working and enable response.

5. How effective has NBC, its partners and the Police, been in engaging with the local community and other organisations in raising awareness of CSE?

Over the past 12 months Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire County Council have led on a joint countywide CSE campaign to raise awareness within organisations and with local communities. This approach saw the following activities taking place:

- Countywide Multi-Agency CSE Conference
- NBC CSE Conference led by head of Housing & Wellbeing
- Establishment of Countywide CSE sub group
- 2 x countywide media campaigns

- **Information leaflets and posters distributed within NBC and to other local organisations on CSE**
- **Training undertaken as detailed in question 1**
- **Information leaflets available through NCSP 'Weeks of Action'**

**As NBC and NCSP form part of a wider countywide approach it is difficult to establish how effective we have been. However, referrals into the Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) team have increased significantly over the year, and this could be attributed to the higher levels of awareness raising undertaken within organisations and with communities.**

6. **How can awareness be raised further of CSE, human trafficking and domestic slavery of children in Northampton?**

- **Establish CSE Awareness as part of Core Induction Programme for staff and councillors. This could be undertaken either through face to face training or an e-learning module.**
- **Continue supporting the countywide awareness raising campaigns led by Northants Police and NCC. Ensure key messages are cascaded within NBC and through our Communications team.**
- **Communicate through established groups such as Forums, Weeks of Action, CSP sub groups, One Stop Shop message board, community and NBC events, Community Centre management teams**
- **Work with business communities, contacts that we can have influence with such as licensed premises, taxis, public transport (Northgate Bus Station), hotels, Town Centre BID, Brackmills, BID, Pubwatch.**
- **Engage with Local Safeguarding Children's Board and Northamptonshire Inter Personal Violence Group**

7. **How is CSE incorporated into local training programmes, and who is able to access this training?**

**Training is currently provided on identified need or demand – initial training has been undertaken with front-line officers, housing officers, councillors and taxi drivers.**

**CSE awareness training should be established as part of NBC's core induction programme for staff and councillors. Nominated officers trained to deliver face to face training and an e-learning module should be developed. Ideally refresher training should be undertaken every 2 years by staff. This could be monitored through the annual appraisal process.**

8. What support is available to current, potential and historic victims of CSE?

**NBC would not deal directly with potential or historic victims as they require a specialist support service. Therefore, if we became aware of a victim a Safeguarding referral would be made via the RISE Team, who would then pick up on this. The RISE team is made up of a range of agencies that have the skills to provide support, such as social workers, family support, specialist police staff, drug & alcohol worker and specialist nurse.**

**In addition to this there is also specialist support available through VOICE (victim support services), Northamptonshire Rape Crisis Centre, Serenity (sexual assault referral centre) and Women's Aid**

9. Do you have further information regarding the role of NBC in tackling CSE?

**Good partnership working with the Police, NCC and other relevant agencies is key to ensuring a joined up and effective response to CSE. This is taking place through established working relationships and meeting structures.**

**On behalf of:**

**Julie Seddon  
Director of Customers & Communities**

**Cllr Mike Hallam  
Cabinet Member for Community Safety**