



NORTHAMPTON BOROUGH COUNCIL

SCRUTINY PANEL 1 Child Sexual Exploitation

10 November 2016

BRIEFING NOTE: BACKGROUND DATA

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 At its inaugural scoping meeting, Scrutiny Panel 1 (Child Sexual Exploitation) agreed that it would receive details of background research reports to inform its evidence base.

1.2 A number of published research papers were presented to the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 8 September 2016 for information.

1.3 The research papers for consideration by the Scrutiny Panel at its meeting on 10 November 2016 are:

Jay Report

1.3.1 The publication of independent review in 2014 by Professor Alexis Jay - [Jay Report into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham](#) highlighted a number of serious failings by key agencies in meeting their statutory responsibilities to protect vulnerable children from being sexually exploited. A series of similar high profile CSE cases around the country have led to increased awareness of this still hidden crime and prompted responses from national and local decision makers to look critically at what is being done to protect vulnerable children.

1.3.2 The Government published a detailed response to the findings of the Jay Report - Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (March 2015). The document makes reference to the overarching responsibilities of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The Scrutiny Panel was provided with details of this document at its meeting of 8 September 2016.

New system to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation

- 1.3.3 A report was published by the University of Bedfordshire into a new system for tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE) at root. In theory this should significantly reduce the risk of organised paedophilia across the country.
- 1.3.4 The system, called Families and Communities Against Sexual Exploitation (FCASE) is a multiagency approach led by the child welfare charity Barnardo's, in cooperation with amongst other agencies, the police and social services. Over 2500 people working with children were trained while the study was focused on three geographical areas and looked after over 250 vulnerable children.

Early intervention

- 1.3.5 The reported aim of FCASE is to prevention. Vulnerable children and families were identified and approached to keep them out of trouble.
- 1.3.6 A key factor in this was Barnardo's role. Its keyworkers were on the frontline in the project, talking to and relating with families. Families gained trust and good relations with the keyworkers – one mother said she felt as if she was talking to her best friend and that she could tell them anything.
- 1.3.7 Another family had a lot of distrust in the police, but in engaging with the system in this way began to feel that the police were on their side, and started talking to the police about their worries.
- 1.3.8 Children who had already been abused yet were on the verge of being abused again learned that the abuse wasn't their fault. Looking back 30 odd years to when it happened to me in the 1980's, I still have trouble believing that the sexual abuse I received wasn't my fault. Such early engagement can help heal lifelong wounds.

Family education and relations

- 1.3.9 Adolescents think they are adults as soon as their hormones kick in. If there are problems at home they will seek solace among their social circles. It is reported that this is where paedophiles lurk, both online and offline in the real world.
- 1.3.10 FCASE spends eight weeks working with adults and children in those troubled families, working on conflict resolution within those families, and showing both the teenagers and adults how to spot when a paedophile is grooming. In a number of cases, families didn't even realise that their child was being groomed even as it was happening.

This was a bit of a shock, and on spotting it the families took action to prevent anything serious happening.

- 1.3.11 The report suggested that monitoring children's online and social media presence is a key action all parents should do to avoid grooming from taking place. Regular check ins with their children at all times of the day is something the more troubled families didn't do, and this changed too.

Community events

- 1.3.12 57 community events were held to engage community groups and specific communities to help raise awareness of grooming and sexual exploitation. This included forced marriage within certain ethnic communities, but also got people thinking about children they knew.

Professionals' education

- 1.3.13 As part of the process, professionals who worked with children in healthcare, police, social care and a number of other disciplines were trained as well. By law any professional who worries for the welfare of the child in any way should report it. The training however taught them how to spot the signs of CSE, and gave them a specific set of resources for reporting it.

Conclusions

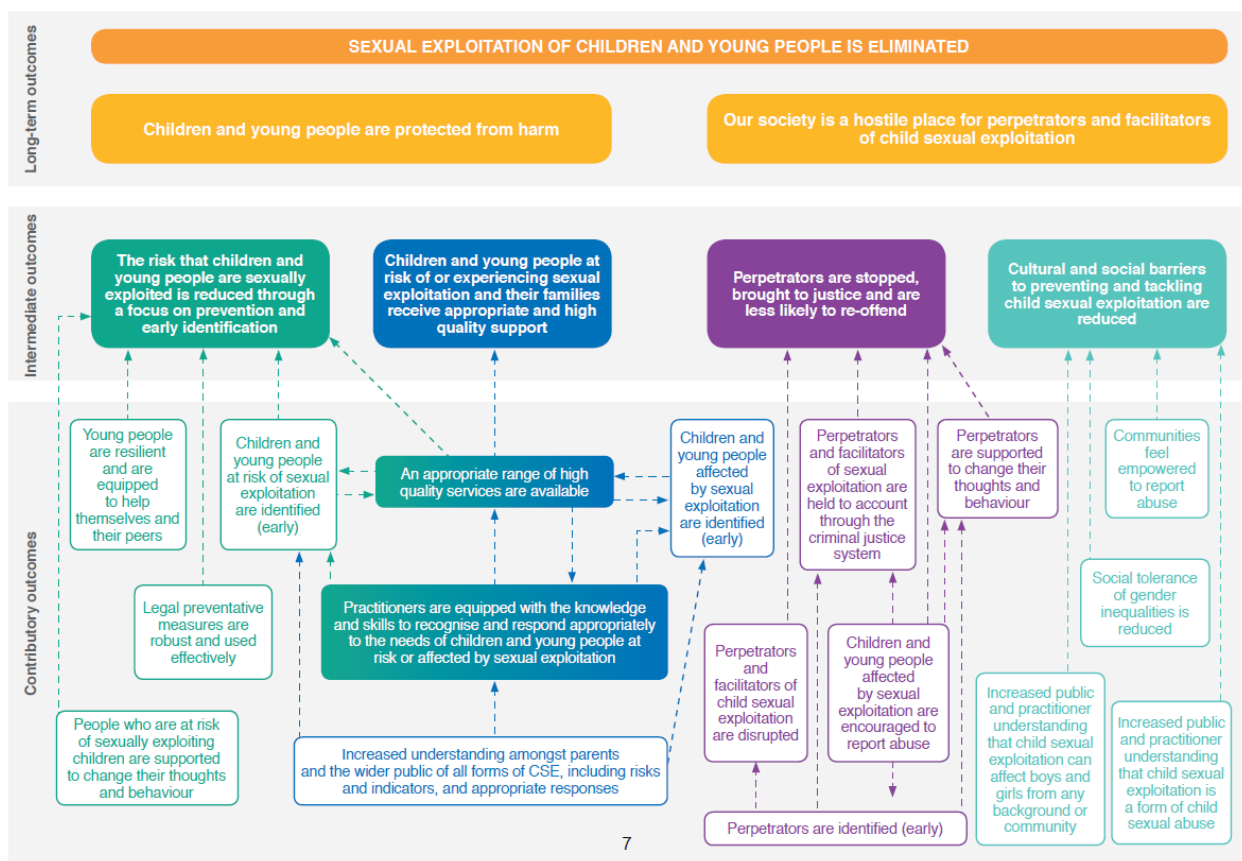
- 1.3.14 The report concluded that FCASE was a resounding success, and prevented a large number of children from being abused. Barnardo's CEO Javed Khan said of the pilot, "Keeping children safe and preventing abuse before it occurs has to be our overriding priority. Everyone has a role in achieving this and it is vital that families and communities are kept engaged and informed

National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Strategic approach

- 1.3.15 The report states that the Ministerial Working Group and National Sub-group have agreed the long term, intermediate and contributory outcomes which will achieve progress towards its aim of eliminating child sexual exploitation in Scotland.
- 1.3.16 The plan is structured around four intermediate outcomes:
- 1.3.17 The risk that children and young people are exploited is reduced through a focus on prevention and early identification.

- 1.3.18 Children and young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation and their families receive appropriate and high quality support.
- 1.3.19. Perpetrators are stopped, brought to justice and are less likely to re-offend. . Cultural and social barriers to preventing and tackling CSE are reduced.
- 1.3.20 It is reported that each section provides an update on work underway since the publication of the first national plan and set out key actions over the next 2-3 years which build on current activity. Outcomes at each level are inter-related and many of the actions contribute to achieving more than one outcome. We will develop a set of indicators to measure progress towards achieving the outcomes set out in the plan by December 2016:



What is being done:

- 1.3.21 Raising awareness amongst parents and the wider public
- Building the knowledge and resilience of young people
 - Helping young people understand their rights and stay safe online

- Improving protection and encouraging reporting in minority ethnic Communities
- Providing guidance and training to help equip practitioners to recognise and respond
- Raising awareness of legal preventative measures

What's next

1.3.22 Details of what's next are stated in the report and include:

- Continue to build the knowledge and resilience of young people
- Strengthen the local response
- Develop a framework for Child Protection Committees to facilitate a consistent and collaborative approach to preventing, identifying and responding to child sexual exploitation across Scotland.
- Develop guidance for practitioners and agencies which will identify best practice and resources to support the identification and assessment of child sexual exploitation, by September 2016.
- Deliver three child sexual exploitation regional workshops for practitioners during 2016-17 to share learning and best practice.
- Develop a better understanding of scale and nature and a more robust evidence base
- Develop guidance for medical practitioners
- Support night-time economy workers to recognise and report warning signs
- Continue to raise awareness and empower communities to identify risks and act to prevent abuse
- Reform the system of civil orders to better protect communities from those who may commit sexual offences

2 RECOMMENDATION

2.1 That the information provided in this briefing note informs the evidence base of this Scrutiny Review.

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