

Executive Summary:

An Assessment of CSE Services in Sheffield: Overview Report

November 2014

Alexis Jay's *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham* published in August 2014, further highlighted the need to scrutinise all aspects of governance and practice in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). In light of the Jay report findings, Sheffield City's full Council passed a motion on 3 September 2014 requesting an assessment of agencies' responses to CSE in the city.

In response, this CSE assessment, commissioned by Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB), looked at how effective their partners were in achieving Sheffield's strategic aims in tackling CSE, including the operation of the multi-agency Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service (SSES) established in 2001. SSCB is responsible for agreeing with the relevant organisations in Sheffield, how they should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, ensuring that in relation to this they provide an effective service. Information about the structure and membership of SSCB Executive and Operational Boards is available on SSCB's website. SSCB's Independent Chair, Sue Fiennes, chaired the overseeing panel for this CSE assessment and was also interviewed as part of the programme of work.

In this CSE assessment, SSCB and partners have benchmarked current practice against the Jay recommendations to ensure agencies are providing the most responsive best practice. This is a comprehensive assessment, which due to its thoroughness, has taken slightly longer than anticipated. The findings will inform future strategic direction and continuous development of SSCB's response to CSE.

The CSE assessment looked at many aspects including: leadership and governance; multi-agency CSE safeguarding self-assessment; compliance with Ofsted CSE thematic inspection Annex A requirements; evaluation of processes, procedures and tools; evaluation of the CSE training programme; staff survey on training and support; evaluation of ten cases managed via the SSES service; audit of 32 cases of children and young people who received input from SSES and a young people's panel.

This overview report on the CSE assessment has been compiled by an independent consultant, Dr Kathryn A. Houghton. It is based solely on collation and analysis of material provided by SSCB and partners including Sheffield City Council (SCC) in October 2014 and November 2014. SSCB and SCC have approved and confirmed the accuracy of this report. Whilst compiling this report, the author gained a strong sense of seamless working together, partnership and joint ownership in dealing with CSE in Sheffield. Detailed actions in progress from each of the strands of this assessment have been developed. Analysis of the information gained, provides SSCB and partners with the following key recognised areas of strength and areas for development.

Areas of strength

Strategy, leadership and compliance

1. CSE is a long standing key strategic priority for SSCB and partners.
2. SSCB and partners strongly comply with the Jay recommendations and many of the requirements have been embedded in Sheffield for many years, given the early and proactive response to CSE.
3. Prevention; protecting; pursuing and prosecuting are at the heart of the CSE strategy.

4. Sheffield has a history and evidence of being willing to tackle and confront difficult issues, regardless of any gender or ethnicity implications.
5. Reducing the impact of CSE on children and young people is central to all activity.
6. Sheffield has effective leadership and governance arrangements discharging their statutory obligations.
7. There is a culture of openness; questioning and professional challenge supported by robust policies and procedures.
8. SSCB and partners operate in a learning environment evaluating and adapting services to children and young people.
9. Evolution of services and timely actions to address dynamic and complex demographics.
10. SSES manager now part of a multi-agency case review panel to add in CSE elements and intelligence.

Quality assurance and recognition of the CSE service

11. Ofsted recognition of SSCB in effectively responding in partnership to CSE.
12. The SSES is long established and recognised as good practice by Ofsted and HMIC.
13. Operation Alphabet was recognised by the judge as a model of its kind, due to diligent work including partnership working and support provided to victims.

Policy and process

14. CSE activity is supported by a robust and frequently-refreshed suite of policies and procedures.
15. SSCB and partners demonstrate good compliance with Ofsted's CSE thematic inspection Annex A data and documentation requirements.
16. Agencies and partners reference and signpost staff to SSCB policies and procedures, which provide guidance on the management of CSE.
17. The CSE self-assessment indicated that all agencies had a safeguarding lead, the majority also led on CSE.
18. All agencies and many schools have a good understanding of the referral process for CSE cases.
19. All agencies and schools have information-sharing protocols and actively encourage staff to attend multi-agency meetings, contribute to and deliver the plan.
20. Robust action has been taken to deal with CSE in all areas of licensing regulatory requirements.

CSE Awareness programmes and training

21. CSE training and awareness programmes have reached over 1700 practitioners, is recognised as best practice and been adopted nationally.
22. E-safety training and awareness programmes are delivered to professionals; children and young people and parents.
23. The voluntary, community and faith sector have been included in CSE training; planning and delivery.
24. The impact of CSE training noted through increased referrals to SSES and participants' acknowledgement of enhanced understanding.
25. CSE awareness literature is available to children and young people; parents; carers and practitioners utilising innovative communication channels.
26. SSCB and partners believe it is important to deliver CSE awareness to all of the community, regardless of gender or ethnic group.
27. CSE awareness programmes are delivered to a variety of public audiences including BME community groups.

Practitioner activity

28. Practitioners and managers are able to recognise the indicators of risk and vulnerability of CSE and when to refer children and young people to SSES.

29. Practitioners requesting and undergoing continuous professional development to enhance their understanding of CSE and how to effectively support children and young people.
30. Over 83% of practitioner respondents to the survey said they received enough support to respond to the issues of CSE.
31. Over 94% of practitioner respondents said they were confident in identifying issues in relation to CSE.
32. Case evaluations and audits demonstrated innovative and effective means of engaging with children and young people who have been subject to CSE.
33. Children from all ethnic groups; gender and presenting CSE risks are referred to SSES.
34. SSCB and SSES have strong links with schools, who are the highest source of referrals.
35. All children and young people referred to SSES had received a CSE assessment.

Work with children and young people

36. Work with children and young people around CSE spans across the spectrum of nationally-recognised thresholds from addressing need through universal services; Team around the Child; Child in Need (CiN); Child Protection (CP) and at the far end of the need spectrum to children in care (LAC) at the most risk, including providing secure accommodation.
37. Sheffield have a recognised Community Youth Model of working with the children and young people.
38. Sheffield give children a safe space and time to talk about their experiences.
39. Sheffield builds trusting and supporting relationships with children and young people, ensuring the most appropriate professionals deliver direct work.
40. Practitioners will try to ensure children and young people strongly influence the direction of work undertaken with them.
41. Practitioners ensure children learn to say "No" and deliver *Keep Safe* work right from the start of their relationship with them.
42. Sheffield supports the whole family in the child's journey.
43. Sheffield agencies have exit strategies from the different levels of support and ensure children and young people's cases only close to social care when risk has sufficiently reduced.
44. Children and young people are involved in the development of CSE services through panels and one-to-one input. Sheffield children and young people also contribute to the consultation work of Office of the Children's Commissioner. Future thematic panels are planned.

Areas for development

Strategy, leadership and compliance

1. SSCB need to continue to provide those who serve on scrutiny and licensing panels with sufficient CSE awareness and knowledge to enable effective independent challenge and decision making.
2. SSCB need to ensure that all elected members, leaders and practitioners are aware of further CSE learning resources, including the National Working Group network.
3. SSCB and SSES to co-ordinate a portfolio and timetable for reports and bulletins to inform relevant audiences including the SSCB Operational and Executive Boards; Scrutiny; agencies and schools, of CSE activity.

Policy, process and systems

4. Education advisors to provide a specific CSE policy for all schools and other groups such as MAST, faith sector and voluntary agencies etc.
5. SSCB to provide an information-sharing factsheet and checklist to schools.

6. As part of the review of front door services, ensure closer alignment of the Sheffield Joint Investigation Team; social care and SSES and clarify terminology and pathways used.
7. Clinical supervision to be provided for SSES support workers.
8. Continuation of development of the CSE assessment tool, in particular looking at alternatives to scoring systems.
9. Clearer pathway to, and greater availability of, health services for those children and young people who are impacted by CSE.
10. Practitioners will be reminded of the purpose and interaction of the many single and multi-agency assessments used when working with children and young people.
11. Undertake a benchmark of investigation and prosecution statistics against other authorities.
12. Further improve effective recording:
 - a. CareFirst to be utilised as a central information system for recording of all CSE activity taking place for individual children and young people. Access at appropriate levels to be provided to those working with children and young people.
 - b. Rationalisation of information systems to reduce resource heavy data extraction for CSE profiling.
 - c. Record the ethnicity of all alleged offenders, to facilitate profiling.

CSE awareness and training

13. SSCB and educational advisors to provide a CSE training pathway for agencies and schools and to secure consistent high quality referrals.
14. SSCB and SSES, together with partners, to further develop CSE awareness in schools and all communities within Sheffield including ethnic minority communities, leveraging on available networks and resources.
15. Proactive availability of CSE awareness material in the main languages spoken in Sheffield to run alongside verbal messages.
16. Guidance to be provided to practitioners on the relevant powers, duties and toolkits to aid engagement with 16/ 17 year olds who refuse to engage and parents who do not perceive risk.

Conclusion

CSE has a devastating impact on the lives of children and young people, together with those of their families. Working with the communities of Sheffield, SSCB has a responsibility to ensure that they effectively handle CSE and continue to support those who have been subject to it. SSCB and partners will continue to prevent, protect, pursue and prosecute regardless of the gender or ethnicity of the perpetrator or victim. Sheffield has pioneered and commissioned services such as the SSES, opened in 2001, and has been recognised for good practice by Ofsted and HMIC.

As a partnership, SSCB recognise that continuous learning is required to react to Sheffield's dynamic population and ever increasing evidenced based best practice in dealing with CSE. Sheffield City Councillors requested this assessment as part of their learning culture and SSCB have co-ordinated the response. Whilst recognising the strengths, SSCB and partners have already begun to address the areas for development identified in this assessment. Agencies will be working together to deliver on an action plan, whilst continuing to listen to those who have the strongest voice, that of the children and young people who have been impacted by CSE.

All enquires about this report should be submitted to:

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