



Report to Children Young People and Families Scrutiny Committee 9th February 2022

Report of: SCSP Statutory Partners (Sheffield City Council /South Yorkshire Police/ Clinical Commissioning Group)

Subject: Sexual Exploitation Service (Amber Project) Report 2020-2021

Author of Report: Dan White, Head of Health and Targeted Services

Summary:

This Report presents an overview of the work of Sheffield Child Sexual Exploitation Service for the period 2020 - 2021. Key elements of the report identify the service user population for the period and key achievements which impact on young people accessing the service.

Type of item:

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	✓
Other	

The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:

- Receive the Report and note its content
- Comment on and/or seek clarification on any issues raised

Background Papers:

Category of Report: OPEN

These reports are provided to enable discussion on:

- Progress, achievements and challenges in 2020/21
- Overview of work 2020/21
- Provide context and information on the developments to the service post Covid-19 pandemic

Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service

Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service (SSES) is a co-located Multi-Agency Service responsible for tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Sheffield. The service works with children and young people experiencing or who are at risk of sexual exploitation who are age 18 and under, and some over 18s dependent on need.

The Amber Project was formally launched in January 2020. As Sheffield's knowledge of Contextual Safeguarding has continued to grow and inform practice, the Sexual Exploitation Service integrated with Sheffield City Council's Criminal Exploitation Team to become the Amber Project. Whilst we continue to identify the early signs of CSE, our processes developed to ensure that screening tools, pathways and processes include those young people who are at risk of or are being criminally exploited.

Training was delivered to professionals in Sheffield to launch the service and ensure referral pathways to safeguard exploited children and young people were clear. This training was quickly moved online once Covid restrictions were introduced and expanded to give bespoke training around contextual safeguarding to Residential Care Home staff. The training was jointly delivered with social care.

CSE specialist support workers continued to provide face to face support for those identified as being at risk of/being sexually exploited. The team worked closely with the social workers of the highest risk young people providing bespoke support and guidance which enabled key workers to provide additional support around CSE.

In August 2020 the Child Exploitation Tracker Tool was brought into use in order to effectively record, score and manage all exploitation cases referred into the Safeguarding Hub. It provides a summary of risk for effective management by using key indicators – these are based on information held in the main by social care and the police. Each indicator has a weighted score which cumulatively create a risk rating for that individual. These weightings have been developed through national and regional practitioner input and feedback.

Alongside this Multi- Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meetings were introduced. The purpose of the MACE meeting is to provide operational management oversight of the risk management for individual children and groups of children identified as being vulnerable to child exploitation. The meetings are weekly and chaired by social care.

Service User Profile 2020 – 21

This year has seen extraordinary challenges to the service as new operational activities had to be employed to support the needs of existing young people in the service and those newly referred to the service due to the Covid-19 pandemic.

CSE referrals dropped dramatically this year, 20 referrals were received and allocated. It was anticipated that there would be a drop in referrals being made as the Covid-19 lockdown and school closures were implemented in March

2020. However, in respect of CSE, there wasn't the bounce back as restrictions eased. Whereas referrals in relation to Criminal Exploitation have increased with the majority of cases recorded on the Child Exploitation Tracker Tool evidencing this.

A total of 29 referrals relating to CSE were made to the Amber Project. This is in stark contrast to the 139 referrals that were received 2019 – 20. For this reason it is ineffectual to compare to last years data.

The breakdown is as follows:

- Q1 – 2 referrals
- Q2 – 2 referrals
- Q3 – 7 referrals
- Q4 – 18 referrals

All cases were allocated with 9 low level cases being signposted to the Community Youth Teams (CYT) The trajectory is going in the right direction.

All referrals were for females.

Age	10-13	14-16	17-19	20-21
	2	23	4	N/A

The majority of referrals (23) are White British with 6 young people being CLA (children looked after) at the point of referral.

Key Achievements in 2020/21

- Vulnerable young people at risk of CSE have continued to be supported by specialist CSE workers throughout a year of lockdown and uncertainty. Workers adapted their practice and Covid secure ways of working included walks, picnics, garden and park visits. Workers kept in touch with those self-isolating by phone, text and WhatsApp. Visits were also made to secure units and out of area placements to ensure young people had consistency in relation to their case worker and interventions.
- All cases have had input from the CSE Specialist Nurse who continued to see young people throughout Covid pandemic period. Health assessments were undertaken and specific interventions around sexual health was obtained. 3 young people were supported to attend the Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC).
- Collaborative work with Amber Project ensuring involvement and support for the most vulnerable young people, delivery of training and participation (key partner) in MACE meetings.

Priorities 2021/22

- Work closely with the Safeguarding Hub to ensure all cases where there are concerns regarding CSE are referred through to the service. And where possible collocate operations manager(s) within the Hub.

- Recruitment of a Trainer to develop and deliver sessions for professionals and young people around contextual safeguarding – including exploitation, missing young people, the impact of peers and culture on relationships.
- Continue to build and ensure close working arrangements with Amber Project (Children and Families) Intervention Workers to develop resources used when supporting young people who are being exploited.