

Children's Safeguarding Update

Children's Health, Social Care and Education

Overview Committee

Date: 3rd February 2016

Author:	Head of Children, Families & Community Health & Interim Director of Children's Services
Wards:	All
Locality Affected:	All
Parishes Affected:	All

1. Purpose and Reasons

- 1.1 This report updates the Committee on work being undertaken regarding Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence, Domestic Abuse and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.
- 1.2 Safeguarding Children, promotes the Council Vision, specifically Priority Four, "Help people to help themselves, while always protecting our most vulnerable children and adults". Safeguarding is also an integral element of the Swindon Health and Wellbeing Strategy.

2. Recommendations

The Committee is recommended to:

- 2.1 Comment on the progress set out in the report and how these relate to safeguarding children in Swindon.
- 2.2 Identify any areas of concern that require further investigation.

3. Detail

- 3.1 The report sets out both progress as well as challenges on the following Children's Safeguarding related work of the Council and its partners, namely, Child Sexual Exploitation, Female Genital Mutilation, Honour Based Violence, Domestic Violence and the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 3.2 The creation of the Local Safeguard Children's Board (LSCB) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Delivery Plan/Action Plan has enabled the prioritisation, resourcing, co-ordination and progressing of key deliverables of the CSE Strategy. The majority of actions on the delivery/action plan were complete in 2015 and work is currently taking place to refresh the plan against the new priorities which will be developed in line with the findings of the Partnership Profile and Serious Case Review.

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- 3.3 The Partnership Profile for CSE has provided an understanding of those people who are at most risk across Swindon. It has enabled targeted partnership activity, focused on identified areas of concern in Swindon.
 - 3.4 The council has had a CSE working group since January 2015, which is chaired by John Gilbert. There is a delivery plan in place that links closely with the LSCB action plan (**Appendix 1**). A presentation was made to the Children's Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6th January 2016. The majority of actions in the delivery plan have been achieved within timescales.
 - 3.5 Funding and agreements are in place for a co-located CSE team with significant representation from Police and Local Authority, operating under one roof, ensuring a more co-ordinated response to CSE from key agencies. The Opal Team is expected to be operational by March 2016.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub

- 3.6 A Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) provides the opportunity to improve safeguarding approaches through better information sharing across a range of agencies and shared high quality and timely safeguarding responses. The Wiltshire MASH began in January 2014 in County Hall, Trowbridge. At that time it was agreed that Swindon Borough Council would be a 'virtual partner' it is now appreciated that arrangements need to be more localised with workers co-located and integrated to share real time decision making.
- 3.7 A project to establish the Swindon MASH, where the three core members, Council's Children's Services, Health and Police members will be co-located, is making good progress with the MASH scheduled for testing in February 2016. Accommodation in Clarence House, on the Council's Civic Campus has been refitted to accommodate the MASH. The Police have successfully recruited experienced staff to work in the MASH, Health representation has been agreed and work is continuing to identify the Health staff who will work in the MASH.
- 3.8 The processes and procedures for the MASH have been defined and changes are being made to the computer systems that staff will use building on the already established Family Contact Point (FCP) structure and systems. As part of this progression the Domestic Abuse Pathway into Social Care is also being reviewed to ensure a timely and proportionate response to children and families that experienced domestic abuse within the family.
- 3.9 The Council and its partners continue to work with wide range of agencies to establish the MASH and agreement has been reached with the Probation Service to participate in the MASH from January 2016.

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Domestic Abuse

3.10 Domestic abuse continues to be a complex and challenging priority; it is a crime, as well as a social and public health issue, cutting across all geographic and cultural groups. The impact on those living with its effects is long lasting and devastating. Victims experiencing domestic abuse may suffer not only physical violence but also be subject to long systemic periods of psychological and emotional assaults, financial control and threats. The impact extends to their families and includes children and young people.

3.11 The Council and its partners have adopted the following definition in accordance with Home Office guidance:

"Any incident or pattern of incidents of controlling, coercive or threatening behaviour, violence or abuse between those aged 16 or over who are or have been intimate partners or family members regardless of gender or sexuality. This can encompass, but is not limited to, the following types of abuse: psychological, physical, sexual, financial and emotional."

3.12 The Council and its partners commissioned a new Domestic Abuse Strategy in 2015. The work has been completed and Cabinet recently agreed the new strategy. The priorities are:

Victims and Survivors, Swindon and Wiltshire agencies will work together in partnership to meet the needs of all victims and survivors to ensure access to quality appropriate support

Children and Young People, to recognise the specific needs of and provide support for children and young people whose lives are affected by domestic abuse

Perpetrators of domestic abuse, to ensure that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and brought to justice, using both supportive and enforcement approaches to reduce offending behaviour and harm

Training and Awareness Raising, to increase the local communities and organisations understanding and awareness of the extent and impact of domestic abuse

Continuous improvement, in both statutory and voluntary agencies, sharing skills, resources and good practice to reduce the prevalence of domestic abuse

3.13 The completion of the Strategy is timely given that monthly returns show the reporting of Domestic Abuse increasing by just over 30% in the first 6 months of 2015/16. The new Strategy and Action Plan will help to address this. One example is improving the work agencies deliver at Multi Agency Risk

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Assessment Conferences (MARACs). Here we have seen an increase in repeat referrals with 45% of cases being referred back again due to repeat incidents. The detailed Action Plan is shown in **Appendix 2**.

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

- 3.14 In 2015 Swindon LSCB has developed multi-agency guidance and procedures to address Female Genital Mutilation (FGM). The board has developed a pocket guide to raise awareness of the issue amongst the children's workforce, 1400 pocket guides have been distributed to date. The LSCB has incorporated FGM into Level 3 safeguarding training and provided two specialist courses in 2015.
- 3.15 Work in the area of FGM will be incorporated into a strategy to address violence against women and girls and will be led by the Community Safety Partnership. The strategy will join up the areas of; CSE/Sexual Violence, Teenage Domestic Abuse. Forced Marriage and FGM.

Honour Based Violence

- 3.16 Training in awareness of 'Honour' Based Violence (HBV), Forced Marriage (FM) and Female Genital Mutilation was delivered in 2015. Since 2010 over 400 frontline staff have attended this course. Two further courses are scheduled for 2016.
- 3.17 MARAC (Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conferences) continue to deal with cases. Some of which have been identified at the MARAC as risk factors. The cases are dealt with in a closed MARAC as appropriate.

4. Alternative Options

- 4.1 The Council has a duty to scrutinise its operational activities.

5. Implications, Diversity Impact Assessment and Risk Management

Financial and Procurement Implications

- 5.1 There are no specific financial implications arising from this report

Legal and Human Rights Implications

- 5.2 All legal and human rights considerations have been taken fully into account in compiling this report. It is considered that the recommendations of this report are compatible with Convention rights.

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All Other Implications (including Staff, Sustainability, Health, Rural, Crime and Disorder)

- 5.3 There are no direct implications in this report.

Diversity Impact Assessment

- 5.4 Diversity Impact Assessments have been carried out on all of the functions reported.

Risk Management

- 5.5 No additional risks have been identified.

6. Consultees

- 6.1 The Board Director, Resources (Section 151 Officer) and Director of Law and Democratic Services (Monitoring Officer) are consulted in respect of all reports.

7. Background Papers

- 7.1 None.

8. Appendices

- 8.1 Appendix 1: Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan
8.2 Appendix 2: Domestic Abuse Action Plan