

Contact Officer: Helen Kilroy

KIRKLEES COUNCIL

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION AND SAFEGUARDING MEMBER PANEL

Thursday 3 March 2016

- Present: Councillor E Hill (in the Chair)
Councillors Ahmed, Allison, Holmes, Bellamy (Observer)
- In attendance: Chris Walsh, Safer Kirklees Manager (Safe and Cohesive Communities)
Joanne Bartholomew, Assistant Director (Physical Resources and Procurement)
Catherine Walter, Licensing, Local Land Charges & Highways Registry Manager
Michael Bunting, Passenger Transport Manager (Physical Resources and Procurement)
Helen Kilroy, Principal Governance and Democratic Engagement Officer
- Apologies: Councillor Kath Pinnock, Alison O'Sullivan, Carly Speechley and Pauline Martin

1 Minutes of previous meeting

The Panel considered the minutes of the meeting held on Wednesday 3 February 2016 and the Panel noted that Jackie Bolton from the Children's Society had been given the opportunity to comment on the Minutes.

Councillor Hill informed the Panel that she would be meeting with officers in Learning and Skills to discuss rolling out of the work of the children's society on the partnership project to other schools within Kirklees and would report back to the Panel.

AGREED –

- (1) That the minutes of the meeting on 3 February 2016 be agreed as a correct record.
- (2) That Councillor Hill to meet with Officers in Learning and Skills to follow up the issue of rolling out of work of the Children's Society on the Partnership Project to other schools within Kirklees and report back to the Panel.

2 Safeguarding in relation to School Transport Policies and Procedures

The Panel welcomed Joanne Bartholomew, Assistant Director (Physical Resources and Procurement), Catherine Walter (Licensing, Local Land Charges & Highways Registry Manager) and Michael Bunting, Passenger Transport Manager (Physical Resources and Procurement) to the meeting and considered an update on Safeguarding in relation to School Transport Policies and Procedures.

Joanne Bartholomew advised the Panel that she was the Assistant Director responsible for Safeguarding in relation to School Transport Policies and Procedures and that work had been undertaken in the passenger transport area to ensure it was well placed to manage risk. The Panel were informed that Kirklees Council had a statutory duty to provide home to school transport arrangements in accordance with Section 508B and 508C of the Education Act 1996. Under the Policy for home to school transport arrangements 2015-2016, approximately 800 children with Special Educational Needs (SEN), ability problems

or a disability were in receipt of transport arrangements to and from schools within Kirklees and out of area. Joanne Bartholomew further explained that transport was provided by 54 approved operators employing 586 drivers covering approximately 300 routes per day. The Council employed around 150 Passenger Assistants who were supported by 2 Escorts Supervisors, 4 Transport Officers and a Senior Transport Officer. It was hoped that 3 independent travel trainers would be recruited by the end of May 2016.

Michael Bunting advised the Panel that the Council was working with parents and the wider community on the transportation of children to and from school.

The Panel was informed that Passenger Assistants attended mandatory training as part of their initial induction, which included escort responsibilities, health and safety, safeguarding, challenging behaviour, and childhood conditions. All Passenger Assistants received regular 1 to 1 'job talks' in which the Council's Statutory Duty on Safeguarding and Standard Procedure for dealing with safeguarding concerns was discussed.

Michael Bunting further explained that in March 2015, the Home Office approved 'Workshop to Raise Awareness of Prevent (WRAP)' training which became mandatory for all Passenger Assistants. The Workshop was delivered by West Yorkshire Police Prevent Engagement Officers and aimed to give staff an understanding of the National Prevent Strategy and the Prevent Duty. All licensed drivers must attend Safeguarding Training provided by the Licensing Department, whilst all PSV drivers received the Safeguarding Training provided to Passenger Assistants.

Michael Bunting confirmed that information was sent to Escorts and parents to provide updates on developments within the service, including a Newsletter. The Panel agreed to receive examples of the Newsletter. Joanne Bartholomew further explained that the service had regular communication with parents, both verbally and in writing. Parents, whose children were transported to and from school, were in regular dialogue with the service.

Communications were maintained with parents for the duration of the time that the Council was providing Transport Service to their child and formal links were made via the parents Newsletter. The Panel were informed that complaints regarding drivers and Escorts were dealt with appropriately and that there was a robust process in place to deal with complaints in this area. Michael Bunting further explained that the service had good links on information sharing with the Police. When a complaint had been made against a driver they were removed from service, pending the outcome of a full investigation.

The Panel noted that Passenger Assistants and drivers were trained to recognise the signs and symptoms of safeguarding and CSE issues. They were also trained in what to do in the event of such an incident. Safeguarding matters were immediately reported to the Senior Transport Officer in order that an operational response could be implemented under the supervision of the Passenger Transport Manager. This could include contacting the child's social worker, reporting the matter to Referral and Response and/or the Police. It could also be necessary to liaise with schools. The response of other agencies was monitored and all actions were logged. Passenger Assistants were appropriately briefed and relevant information and communications were maintained with them in order to obtain feedback.

Joanne Bartholomew advised the Panel, however, that removing the driver/Passenger Assistant could be very distressing both for the employee and for the children. A range of support would be provided to ensure the staff member did not feel ostracised and isolated, whilst still maintaining appropriate safeguarding of the child. Joanne Bartholomew advised

that when allegations were found to be unfounded the employee would be put back on route as soon as possible and every effort made to restore parents confidence.

Michael Bunting advised the Panel that if complaints were made against a taxi driver, their approved transport badge would be removed. Intelligence would be shared with the Licensing Team who would then discuss the incident with the driver and a decision would be made as to whether the license should be removed.

Michael Bunting informed the Panel that where possible work was undertaken by the Council to help children with special needs to increase their independence, for example, independent travel training was undertaken where appropriate to enhance life chances in future for children. The Panel were informed that the service had a firm commitment to 'stranger danger' and that this was built into the independent travel training. Michael Bunting informed the Panel that an independent travel training pilot was undertaken at Ravenshall School in January 2016 with 8 children. This pilot included educating parents and engaging with them, and assisting to encourage opportunities. Class room sessions were carried out which hopefully resulted in the child receiving a bus pass that they could use on public transport, in place of taxis, to get to school or college. The Panel agreed that the independent travel arrangements for children with special needs gave them an opportunity for a different life and opened doors for them.

Changes to Regulatory Panel

Catherine Walter advised of the constitutional changes made to the Regulatory Panel in January 2016, in that officers were now responsible for decisions on license applications for taxi drivers. The Panel were informed that enforcement procedures were now in place in Leeds Council and other West Yorkshire Local Authorities would be up and running by April 2016. Catherine Walter advised the Panel that the mop up training for taxi drivers had been undertaken with only 100 drivers still outstanding. The Panel was informed that those drivers who had not had the training had been told that their license would not be renewed until they had undertaken the training.

Michael Bunting informed the Panel that if taxi drivers do not show their badge when transporting children, the Escort would report it and that the procedures in place for dealing with this were very robust. However, a reasonable approach was adopted to dealing with incidents where drivers had forgotten to show their badge. Michael Bunting further explained that if the service was not satisfied with the drivers response, they would be removed immediately.

Joanne Bartholomew informed the Panel that there were 2 badges given to taxi drivers and they were:-

- A Taxi Driver License; and
- A Kirklees Badge that authorises a taxi driver to deliver School Transport for Kirklees.

All drivers transporting school children were required to show their badge and if they were unable to, the company would be required to provide another 'badged' driver with immediate effect.

The Panel were informed that in order to carry out spot checks on safeguarding measures, 2 Escorts were sent out without notice to undertake an 'unannounced audit' of school transport and observe the whole of the journey.

Catherine Walter advised that where a taxi driver license had been removed and not returned by the driver, officers from the Council would visit the driver to retrieve the license.

AGREED:-

(1) That Joanne Bartholomew, Michael Bunting and Catherine Walter be thanked for attending the meeting and that the update on Safeguarding in relation to School Transport Policies and Procedures be noted.

(2) That Michael Bunting provide copies of the parent Newsletter to the Panel for information.

3. **Hate Crime Reporting**

The Panel considered an update on Hate Crime reporting, which included on-going work within Kirklees and the need to raise awareness of Hate Crime and CSE within communities. Chris Walsh, Safer Kirklees Manager (Safe and Cohesive Communities) was welcomed to the meeting.

Chris Walsh advised the Panel that the main areas of his responsibilities were Community Safety, Anti-Social Behaviour and Preventing Violent Extremism. The Panel were informed on the difference between a hate incident and a hate crime, as follows:-

- Hate Incident - any incident which was perceived by the victim or any other person to be motivated by hostility or prejudice based on personal characteristics, disability, gender identity, race, religion/faith and sexual orientation.
- Hate Crime - had a criminal or common law element. Should the necessary evidential threshold be met and the case went to court, if the defendant was found guilty there would be an appropriate punishment which could secure an increased punishment compared to the stand alone offence.

Chris Walsh advised the Panel that the Kirklees Hate Crime Strategy was based on 3 core principals which were:-

- Preventing Hate Crime, by challenging the attitudes that underpin it and early intervention to prevent it escalating.
- Increasing reporting and access to support, by building victim confidence and supporting local partnerships.
- Improving the operational response to Hate Crime by better identifying and managing cases and dealing effectively with offenders.

The Panel was informed that there were degrees of under reporting of hate crime incidents. There were more incidents of hate crime in the north part of the district, however, the Panel were informed that the increase could be to do with confidences and reporting mechanisms currently in place.

The Panel were informed that Hate Crime was one of the themes that sat under the Community Safety Partnership Priority to "protect people from serious harm". In order to achieve this overall outcome, it was essential that there was close collaborative work between the Community Safety Partnership and Safeguarding Board for Adults and Children by reducing harm at the earliest possible opportunity. Chris Walsh further

explained that the delivery of Kirklees Hate Crime Strategy and its action plans were driven and managed by the Hate Crime Strategic Group and reviewed on an annual basis.

The Panel were informed that online reporting of Hate Crime made for easier and quicker communication with the appropriate agencies. Chris Walsh further explained that the actions included:-

- effective and accessible reporting centres were in operation across Kirklees;
- online reporting via Council's website; and
- clear links with victim support agencies.

Chris Walsh advised the Panel that one of the areas of focus of the Strategy was to raise awareness within communities and part of this work included displaying posters in public places, for example, bus stations, railway stations, the university and Council buildings. The Panel received a copy of the poster entitled 'Stopping Hate Crimes in Dewsbury Starts Here' and also a leaflet entitled 'Hate Hurts - Report It, Sort It, Say No To Hate' which was a useful communication tool for road shows and events.

The Panel were informed of publicity events intended to raise awareness, for example, 'Transgender Day of Remembrance' held on 20 November 2015, which was an annual observance that honoured the memory of those whose lives had been lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. Chris Walsh further informed the Panel of the Hate Crime Awareness Week, was an annual event. The purpose of the Hate Crime Awareness Week was to encourage all Local Authorities, including the Police and other partners, to work in partnership with local groups and organisations to host a series of Hate Crime awareness events around the UK and abroad. The Panel were informed that briefings for staff and members on awareness of Hate Crime were arranged including, frontline worker briefings in libraries and children's centres with the intention of spreading the message as widely as possible.

Chris Walsh explained that the ability to report Hate Crime via the internet was useful as it gave an anonymous element if necessary and also increased the range of ways people could report incidents and was available 24 hours a day. The other places to report incidents were via third party centres, such as libraries and housing offices which was in line with the recommendation to increase the range of places people could report hate crime, other than police stations. The Panel were advised that community centres used the online form for reporting Hate Crime. Chris Walsh further advised that Kirklees Council had dedicated a page on its website on Hate Incident reporting, which included the incident reporting form.

Chris Walsh advised the Panel that Kirklees was not aware of CSE hate related crime and that there had been no increase of a link to CSE in any of the incidents reported.

The Panel agreed to receive a breakdown of Hate Crime data to a future meeting.

Chris Walsh advised the Panel that the Hate Crime Strategy had been in place for 3 years, however, there was a long history of partnership working on Hate Crime. Chris Walsh further explained that there were a number of centres within Kirklees where Hate Crime could be reported. An audit of the centres had resulted in significant reductions to ensure the support being provided at the remaining centres was effective and fit for purpose.

Chris Walsh advised that Hate Crime data in the North and South Kirklees was provided in the strategic intelligence assessments, broken down Ward by Ward. The Panel noted that some Wards had higher figures due to better reporting mechanisms. Chris Walsh agreed

that the data he would provide on Hate Crime would include the different types of incidents reported.

AGREED:-

- (1) That Chris Walsh be thanked for attending the meeting and that the update on Hate Crime reporting in Kirklees be noted.
- (2) That Chris Walsh provide data on Hate Crime to a future meeting, which would include a breakdown of the different types of incidents reported.

4. **CSE Management Information**

The Panel considered an update on CSE Management Information.

The Panel noted that the Management Information on Kirklees Young People showed cases increasing from December 2015 to January 2016. Councillor Hill agreed to raise this issue with the Assistant Director for Children and Young People and report back to the Panel.

The Panel discussed the Management Information for residential homes for Looked After Children and a number of Members were concerned at the high numbers. Councillor Hill agreed to discuss this issue with the Assistant Director for Children and Young People and report back to the Panel.

AGREED:-

- (1) That the update on Management Information be noted.
- (2) That Councillor Hill discuss the issues raised by the Panel on the Management Information relating to residential homes for Looked After Children and Kirklees Young People, with the Assistant Director for Children and Young People and report back to the Panel.

5. **CSE and Safeguarding Member Panel agenda plan for 2015/16**

The Panel considered the agenda plan for the CSE and Safeguarding Member Panel for 2015/16.

Councillor Hill suggested to the Panel that Chris Porter from Public Health could attend a future meeting of the Panel in the 2016/2017 municipal year to give an update following implementation of the CSE Victim and at Risk Individuals Strategy.

The Panel discussed the agenda items for the April meeting and noted that Jackie Bolton would be attending from the Children's Society to give an update on the partnership project taking place within Kirklees. The Panel also noted that Osman Khan, Superintendent of the West Yorkshire Police, (who had replaced Ged McManus), would also be attending the meeting to give an update on historic CSE cases.

The Panel agreed to have a discussion at the April meeting regarding the future focus and work programme of the Panel and agreed to receive a summary of work of the Panel during 2015/2016.

Councillor Holmes advised the Panel that she had met Alison O'Sullivan, Director of Children and Young People, along with Councillor Patrick, to discuss the information provided by the West Yorkshire Police to the CSE Panel and whether this could be provided in such a way that it could be shared with Groups. Alison O'Sullivan had agreed to discuss the matter with Councillor Hill.

Councillor Hill informed the Panel that a final draft of the report on the questions from Leading Members should be available shortly. The Panel noted that the report would be shared with Leading Members in due course.

AGREED –

(1) That the agenda plan for CSE and Safeguarding Member Panel for 2015/16 be noted and amended as agreed.

6. **Date of next meeting**

AGREED –

(1) That the date of the next meeting of the CSE and Safeguarding Member Panel be held on Thursday 7 April 2016 at 10.30am til 12.30pm in Meeting Room 3, Huddersfield Town Hall.