

Name of meeting: Corporate Parenting Board
Date: 15th April 2019
Title of report: Risk and Vulnerabilities Report

Purpose of report

To update the Corporate Parenting Board of the work being undertaken by the Risk and Vulnerabilities Team, within the wider Contextualised Safeguarding approach

Key Decision - Is it likely to result in spending or saving £250k or more, or to have a significant effect on two or more electoral wards?	N/A
Key Decision - Is it in the Council's Forward Plan (key decisions and private reports?)	N/A
The Decision - Is it eligible for call in by Scrutiny?	N/A
Date signed off by <u>Strategic Director</u> & name	Elaine McShane (for Mel Meggs) 5.4.19
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Finance IT and Transactional Services?	N/A
Is it also signed off by the Service Director for Legal Governance and Commissioning Support?	N/A
Cabinet member portfolio	Cllr Viv Kendrick (Children's)

Electoral wards affected: Not Applicable

Ward councillors consulted: Not Applicable

Public or private: Public

(Have you considered GDPR?)

Yes all information has been anonymised.

1. Summary

- 1.1 The Risk and Vulnerability team was formed in November 2018 within Children's Social Care, and created from bringing together the previous Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation teams. The Risk and Vulnerability team aims to provide a flexible and responsive service to reduce the vulnerability to and risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and episodes of missing from home and care. The objective is to provide a service that is tailored to the needs and wishes of the child or young person and their wider family, practicing within the framework of a whole family, child centred and relationship based approach.
- 1.2 The Risk and Vulnerabilities approach places children and young people at the centre and takes a needs led child centred approach which focuses on the whole child and not just the presenting behaviours /concerns, taking account of the fact that exploitation is complex, and therefore service response is most effective when multi agency and collaborative with partner agencies, children and families. Intervention and support offered is based on a 'Trusted Adult' approach, and practitioners seek to gain and share information appropriately to help support the diversion and prosecution of those who seek to abuse, harm and exploit children and young people.
- 1.3 The approach of Risk and Vulnerabilities Team is informed by findings from inquiries, national and local reports and research, work undertaken within other Local Authorities, and sits within a strategic Contextualised Safeguarding approach. A Contextualised Safeguarding approach to Risk and Vulnerability seeks to include practitioners, professionals, individuals and sectors who have influence over and within extra familial contexts, as the approach recognises that assessment of, and intervention with these spaces are critical in safeguarding children and young people. Contextual Safeguarding therefore expands the remit and approach of traditional child protection in recognition that children and young people are vulnerable to harm, abuse and exploitation in a range of social contexts, outside of their family / home.
- 1.4 The Risk and Vulnerabilities team provides support and intervention to children with an allocated Kirklees Social Worker assessed to be vulnerable to /at risk of exploitation and /or those who go missing from home or care, and works closely with partner's agencies to support the child's wider statutory plan. The team currently consists of;

2 Team Managers

1 Early Help Team Leader

2.5 Social Workers

2 Early Help Case Consultants

2 Early Help Intervention workers

1 Parent Liaison Officer-PACE (Parents against Child Sexual Exploitation)

1 BSO

Partner agencies professionals also work in or alongside the team, these include

- Young Persons Drug and Alcohol Services
- The CSE Police team
- Police Missing Coordinator's

- 1.5 The work of the team is supported by a Multi-agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Coordinator post (temporary), a Child Protection and Review Unit Service Manager and a newly appointed Senior Transitions Manager.

- 1.6 The work of the Risk and Vulnerabilities Intervention team, is one element of the wider approach, and seeks not to duplicate work of other teams /agencies.
- 1.7 Currently the team are actively supporting 38 young people aged between 13 and 18 years old (inclusive). Of these 10 are children looked after, 7 are young females assessed to be at risk of child sexual exploitation and the 3 young men being supported, are assessed to be at risk of criminal exploitation.

2. Information required to take a decision

For information only – no decision required

3. Implications for the Council

3.1 Working with People

Contextualised Safeguarding and the Risk and Vulnerabilities approach recognises that that it is children and young people who have multiple vulnerabilities which are most likely to be exploited and harmed, and in order to effectively safeguard they need to be seen, heard and supported:

- Seen: in the context of their lives at home, friendship circles, health, education and public spaces (including social media).
- Heard: professionals need to take time to hear what children are saying, put themselves in the child or young person's shoes and think about what their life might truly be like.
- Supported: by remaining professionally curious and by implementing effective and imaginative solutions that help children and young people and have a positive impact on their lived reality.

The approach recognises that to support and intervene effectively a multi-agency approach is fundamental, whilst the child/young person and their parent/carer's voices should be at the centre.

The Risk and Vulnerabilities team continues to develop partnership working and there has been good "buy in" from agencies. Representatives from Health, Education, the Police and The Base commit to weekly meetings to discuss new referrals and merging themes, and the team continue to develop links with the police who hold information regarding serious crime, gangs, CCE and county lines. Although this is a newly formed relationship there is already better communication and information sharing between the police and children's social care, allowing for better informed decision making. There is however a need for further training and pathways to be developed in order to streamline the information sharing process and eradicate any barriers that may impact when assessing vulnerable and at risk children from exploitation.

3.2 Working with Partners

The Kirklees Safeguarding Children's Board has implemented a Contextualised Safeguarding Strategy and there is both a strategic and operational group and

associated action plan. Risk and vulnerability multi-agency work continues at pace to develop a comprehensive partnership approach to Contextual Safeguarding. This includes further development of the Risk and Vulnerabilities team, the appointment of a Transitions Manager, the development of a Multi-Agency Risk and Vulnerability hub, and revision of the Multi Agency Child Exploitation meetings (MACE).

3.3 Place Based Working

The Risk and Vulnerabilities team, whilst based at Civic 1 work across the partnership with children, young people and their families who have an allocated Kirklees Social Worker. The team works flexibly with children and their parents /carers in the child /young person's home, their school/ education setting, and in their community. Every effort is made to ensure that the support and intervention provided by the team takes account of the child's wishes and needs, education time table and their lived reality.

3.4 Improving outcomes for children

The Risk and Vulnerabilities team supports the work identified in the child's wider Children's Social Care plan, including the child looked after and pathway planning. An intervention agreement is undertaken with the child /young person to ensure that it is meaningful to them, whilst also seeking to address areas of vulnerability and risk which are of concern to parents /carers and professionals. Agreements may include positive activities, missing from home or care return interviews, support to access housing, education /employment /benefits, direct work to help improve a child / young person's confidence, self-esteem, emotional well-being, and help them make informed safe choices and decisions, with the aim of making a positive difference and reduce the child /young person's vulnerability to risk.

3.5 Other (eg Legal/Financial or Human Resources) Not applicable

4. Consultees and their opinions Not applicable

5. Next steps and timelines

- Work with partners in accordance with the KSCB Contextualised Safeguarding Strategy and progress the associated action plan. (From May 2019)
- Develop a Single Point of contact /referral and daily allocation /referral/escalation meeting. (May – September 2019)
- Further develop the multi-agency child exploitation meetings. (Ongoing)
- Improving data and information sharing regarding exploitation and missing – in order to achieve this the Risk and Vulnerabilities team are working closely with other children's social work teams to promote the work and remit of the team and better capture data, themes and intelligence. (Ongoing)
- Night time economy working is high on the agenda and the Risk and Vulnerabilities team will be liaising with partner agencies to develop a multi-agency service response. (From May 2019)
- Many young people the team work with often feel overwhelmed with the amount of services involvement and appointments they have. As a result the Risk and Vulnerabilities team have teamed up with health to form a "one stop shop" for young people where they can access service for advice and practical support from practitioners from Sexual health and The Base (Drug/Alcohol service).

6. Officer recommendations and reasons

That the report be noted

7. Cabinet portfolio holder's recommendation

Not applicable

8. Contact officer

Ophelia Rix, Head of Safeguarding, Quality Assurance and Principal Social Worker

Sara Miles – Service Manager, Family Support and Child Protection

9. Background Papers and History of Decisions

Not applicable

10. Service Director responsible

Elaine McShane – Service Director (Family Support and Child Protection)