

Meeting:	Children and young people scrutiny committee
Meeting date:	Tuesday 2 June 2020
Title of report:	Review of peer on peer abuse cases
Report by:	Assistant Director Education, Development and Skills

Classification

Open

Decision type

This is not an executive decision

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To provide the outcome of the review (including lessons learned) into peer on peer abuse cases referred to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) The committee reviews the outcome of the review and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive.**

Alternative options

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; it is a function of the committee to review action taken in connection with the discharge of any functions which are the responsibility of the executive and make reports or recommendations to the executive.

Key considerations

2. The children and young people scrutiny committee received a report at its meeting on 14 January 2020 following the completion of a spotlight review into peer on peer abuse in schools and made recommendations to the executive. One of the recommendations arising from the spotlight review asked for the outcomes of the review into peer on peer abuse cases referred to the MASH to be presented to the committee, which this report provides.
3. A report was commissioned as part of Herefordshire Council's response to cases of peer on peer sexual abuse. (Appendix 1). It is part of efforts to both review and strengthen safeguarding within the county. There are other aspects that also take place. For example, additional training for safeguarding leads in school, additional guidance provided which reflects the updated national guidance and the multi-agency NSPCC audit into harmful sexual behaviour being undertaken by the Herefordshire Children and Young People Safeguarding Partnership.
4. The methodology involved reviewing over 300 cases reported to MASH and identifying peer on peer sexual abuse cases from the period January 2017-November 2019 where pupils attended the same schools. The advice given by MASH, in those cases identified and where it was recorded, was assessed against the guidance available from the Department for Education (DfE) on peer on peer abuse at the time (Appendix 2).
5. The local authority's role is the provision of support, advice and guidance in relation to safeguarding in settings, schools and colleges and to develop, implement and monitor quality assurance processes across schools, colleges and settings. This service is provided by the learning and achievement team who work with the organisations, not individual pupils.
6. This review looked at historic cases that were referred into the MASH of known recorded peer on peer sexual abuse where there was sexual assault/rape/or alleged cases. It covered the years Jan 2017- Oct 18 and Oct 2018 – Nov 19.
7. The council has committed to keeping training and guidance to schools a priority in all such cases for the future - and has accordingly - led training for all Designated Safeguarding Leads in all schools. There is also a set of recommendations agreed to strengthen the review of any such fresh cases as they arise. This will adopt a multi-agency approach and we will apply rigorously any changes to DfE and legal advice in these cases. We will also implement any further service changes as a result of the findings of the NSPCC audit work. The cabinet member has also agreed the response to the recommendations of the Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee Spotlight review into peer on peer abuse and these will be implemented.

Community impact

8. The approach to peer on peer abuse for children and families in Herefordshire is an important and integral part in the provision of safeguarding, education, health and care services for vulnerable children and their families throughout Herefordshire. This enables the council to work with children, young people and their families where this is possible to keep children and young people safe and give them a great start in life; and secure better services, quality of life and value for money. This contributes to fulfilling the aims of the Herefordshire Children and Young People's Partnership Plan 2019-2024 and the councils County Plan 2020-2024.

Equality duty

- 9 Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the 'general duty' on public authorities is set out as follows:

A public authority must, in the exercise of its functions, have due regard to the need to -

- (a) eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under this Act;
 - (b) advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it;
 - (c) foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.
- 10 The public sector equality duty (specific duty) requires us to consider how we can positively contribute to the advancement of equality and good relations, and demonstrate that we are paying 'due regard' in our decision making in the design of policies and in the delivery of services. This is a factual report highlighting the outcomes of the review into historic cases of peer on peer abuse, including areas of good practice, areas for improvement and the next steps that council will take. Peer on peer abuse is an Equality issue and the outcomes of the review demonstrate that the council has considered this and is committed to working to support those effected while exercising its Equality duty.

Resource implications

- 11 The outcomes arising from the review largely reflect work that is already underway. There are no additional cost implications to the outcomes as actions will be met from existing budgets.

Legal implications

- 12 There are no legal implications of the outcomes of this review of historic cases of peer on peer abuse.

Risk management

- 13 There are no risks associated with agreeing the content of this report which provides information regarding the review of historic cases of peer on peer abuse and indicate how the work is being taken forward.

Consultees

- 14 None

Appendices

Appendix 1 – Report on peer on peer abuse review of historic cases dealt with by the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Appendix 2 - Sexual harassment and Sexual Violence in schools and colleges was implemented in December 2017 (Department for Education)

Background papers - None identified