

Decision maker:	Cabinet member children and families
Decision date:	Friday, 14 August 2020
Title of report:	Executive response to the task and finish group concerning Child Exploitation
Report by:	Assistant Director Childrens Safeguarding Quality and Improvement

Classification

Open

Decision type

Non-key

Wards affected

(All Wards);

Purpose

To approve the executive response to the recommendation from the task and finish group review concerning child exploitation. The task and finish group review considered the Herefordshire approach to child exploitation and made ten recommendations.

Recommendation(s)

That:

- (a) The response to the children and young people's scrutiny committee's recommendations regarding the task and finish group review concerning child exploitation, as attached at appendix 1 are approved.**

Alternative options

1. None proposed; it is a statutory requirement to provide a response to recommendations made by the children and young people's scrutiny committee. It is open to the executive to accept, partially accept or reject a recommendation from scrutiny committee, should a recommendation not be accepted an explanation should be provided.

Key considerations

2. The Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee established a task and finish group review to review child exploitation. The committee agreed to undertake this review as part of the setting of its work programme priorities. The committee agreed that the review would cover the issues of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE). The topic was identified by the scrutiny committee as a priority over concerns regarding county lines activity, as a form of child criminal exploitation, in the West Midlands. Furthermore it is felt to be a critical element of the work of the scrutiny committee to scrutinise data relating to child sexual exploitation and examine initiatives and projects to address its incidence in Herefordshire
3. The review was carried out over three meetings in November and December 2019. A number of partners and local agencies were invited to participate in the task and finish group review. The following bodies and organisations were represented: Herefordshire Council; Public Health; West Mercia Rape and Sexual Abuse Support Centre; The Children's Society; West Mercia Office of Police and Crime Commissioner; Vennture; West Mercia Youth Offending Service; West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
4. The first meeting was focused on providing a background on child exploitation in Herefordshire. The second meeting was a witness session which involved the engagement of stakeholders, partner organisations and relevant agencies. The witness session consisted of a series of presentations followed by questioning of witnesses by the task and finish group. The group met for a third and final time to resolve its recommendations to the scrutiny committee.
5. The children and young people's scrutiny committee met on 2 June 2020 and approved the report (appendix 2) and recommendations from the task and finish group review.

Community impact

6. In accordance with the adopted code of governance, Herefordshire Council achieves its intended outcomes by providing a mixture of legal, regulatory and practical interventions. Determining, the right mix of these is an important strategic choice to make sure outcomes are achieved. The council needs robust decision-making mechanisms to ensure our outcomes can be achieved in a way that provides the best use of resources whilst still enabling efficient and effective operations and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review.
7. The approach to child exploitation 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

8. 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.
9. 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 recommendations that indicate how the work is to be taken forward. Peer on Peer abuse is an Equality issue and the recommendations demonstrate that the council has considered this and is committed to working to support those effected while exercising its Equality duty.

Resource implications

10. The recommendations largely reflect work that was planned in this area, some of it already underway. There are no additional cost implications to these recommendations as actions will be met from existing budgets.

Legal implications

11. In accordance with the Scrutiny Rules and specifically paragraph 4.5.44 of Herefordshire Council's constitution, a report containing the recommendations of a scrutiny committee following a review or investigation should be submitted to the chief executive to arrange for consideration by the executive. Under paragraph 4.5.50 (and section 9 of Schedule 2 of the Localism Act 2000) the scrutiny committee should be notified of the response of the executive and the authority within two months of the receipt of a scrutiny report.
12. The recommendations arising from this task and finish group review were sent to the chief executive on 18 June 2020.

Risk management

13. There are no risks associated with agreeing the content of this report as the recommendations provide information and indicate how the work is being taken forward.

Consultees

14. None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Summary of Recommendations and Executive Responses to the task and finish group review concerning child exploitation

Appendix 2 - Task and finish group review concerning child exploitation Final Report

Background papers

None identified

Please include a glossary of terms, abbreviations and acronyms used in this report.