Summary of recommendations to the executive and executive responses [Peer on peer abuse review]

On 15 September 2020 the children and young people scrutiny committee considered the Peer on Peer Review Herefordshire MASH 2017 - 2019 report. Recommendations 1-3 and 5-11 are made to the executive Recommendation 4 is to the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee	
Recommendation 1	**That the committee calls on the executive to consider the recommendations of the committee during its finalisation of the Peer on Peer Review Herefordshire MASH 2017 - 2019 report;**
Executive Response	The executive has considered the recommendations of the committee during the finalisation of the report by officers that was commissioned through the chief executive and they have informed the final version of the report attached as Appendix 1 to the cabinet report.

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
A final report of the review of the historic cases is attached.	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	13/11/20	The report is now final	Completed

Recommendation 2	**That the committee recommends that the report is strengthened to provide an explanation as to why the CSO report of April 2017 was not circulated to schools prior to the commencement of the summer term in 2017 together with the risk assessment template. An explanation as to why it was not shared or mentioned at the peer on peer abuse in schools spotlight review is also required. The use of the term 'unhelpful', to describe the decision to not share the report, should be reconsidered and a stronger term adopted;**
Executive Response	Why the CSO report was not circulated to all schools will require investigation. The term unhelpful in the report has been reviewed and replaced

Action	Owner	By When	Target/Success Criteria	Progress
To provide an explanation regarding the circulation of the CSO report and template and why it was not mentioned at the spotlight review of 2019.	Andrew Lovegrove, Deputy Chief Executive	December 2020	Explanation provided	Terms of reference are currently being scoped

Recommendation 3	**That the committee recognises that risk posed to victims of peer on peer abuse is not merely physical but also emotional and psychological. In light of the handling of some cases detailed in the review report the committee recommends that there is a reassessment of the finding in the review that no children were put or left at risk;**
Response	Response: Risks can be physical, emotional and psychological as indicated in the report. The report finding was that, for the period in question, no children were put or left at risk. However, it is recognised that this wording means different things to different people and that it is a sensitive issue. It is further recognised that the absence of evidence largely rests on the records available from that time which were imperfect. It is acknowledged that the effects of peer on peer abuse can be and are profound and can affect survivors into and through their adult life. This is stated in the final version of the report.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
The report is to make clear that although the review found no evidence that children were put or left at risk of harm this is different to children potentially being affected emotionally and psychologically into adulthood by peer on peer abuse	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	Nov 2020	Report reflects the potential impact of its wording	Completed see appendix 1 to cabinet report

Recommendation 4	**That the committee retains a watching brief, through the quarterly performance report, on the reporting rates of peer on peer abuse and the performance of the council in response to reported cases. This progress will be monitored at meetings of the children and families performance challenge. Any concerns with reporting rates or the performance of the council will prompt a report to the following meeting of the committee to explain concerning trends;**
Executive Response	Agreed and will be reported on quarterly. The reporting office is the Safeguarding Officer in children and families directorate and this will be done via the challenge sessions. We also recommend that when reviewing the quarterly figures the council should consider including a review of the data drawn from wider organisations than within the council itself.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
To provide the quarterly updates on the reports of peer on peer abuse allegations, and to review, in partnership with organisations beyond the council alone.	Children and Families Safeguarding Officer	On a quarterly basis but to include wider organisations as soon as can be agreed	That the committee are able to review information and performance and exercise their scrutiny function to inform practice	In place for council data but not yet beyond that.

Recommendation 5	**That the committee recommends that the *Response to Reports* flowchart for Herefordshire schools (appendix 1 of the review report) is enhanced with yes and no actions and is regularly scenario-tested with schools by the council. The flowchart should incorporate details of individuals accountable for actions and timelines for the completion of actions;**				
Executive Response	Response: Agreed in part. The flowchart is not produced by Herefordshire - it is part of the national system which can be improved as the report makes clear. Herefordshire could draft a similar local version with details of the roles and timelines as suggested.				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
A 'local' flowchart will be produced to include aspects of the new SRE curriculum (which was due to be implemented nationally in September 2020 but delayed in it's implementation due to COVID-19)		Children and Families Safeguarding Officer	December 2020	New flowchart to be issued to all schools with the model guidance	In train

Recommendation 6	**That the committee recommends that schools that do not implement the model policy are held to account for the decision not to implement. Schools should be encouraged to share any policy which they feel supersedes or is superior to the model policy produced by the council;**				
Executive Response	Response: Agreed in part. Schools are not obliged to adopt any suggested policies - and indeed Ofsted do not encourage that as a default response by schools; instead Ofsted encourage schools to develop their own individually. Officers will log conversations with those that choose not to do so as to their reasons and what they have as alternatives. We anticipate however that most (if not all) schools will want to use the model guidance and incorporate it within their polices. Officers will ask that this guidance be adopted as a matter of urgency.				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Legal to approve the model guidance and CM to share with schools and other agencies such as WMRASAC		Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	End of December 2020	All schools have a copy and the Note of Visit completed when schools are visited shows whether they have adopted it - and if not why not - and a register kept.	The draft guidance has been approved by legal and is awaiting consultation response with The University of Bedfordshire as the national authority in this issue. We recognise the urgency in this now.

Recommendation 7	**That the committee recommends that when consideration is given to an act of reconciliation there should be an assessment of long and short term processes to provide a variable response tailored to needs of children and families affected by peer on peer abuse. A longer term process would provide for comprehensive engagement with children and families who required and requested this level of reconciliation. A shorter term process would provide for those children and families who did not want or did not need to engage with the longer term approach. The reconciliation process is not intended to be counselling but to provide an opportunity for victims to be heard if they so wish. As such the process would need to differ according to each family.**
Executive Response	Response: Agreed. The recommendation to provide an opportunity for reconciliation will require more detail to be set out and will therefore consider how these aspects can be addressed.

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
The opportunity for reconciliation will be established in detail and will take into account the short and long term approach, in line with the views of children and families. The process is optional and would be conducted in accordance with the wishes of the families of the victims.	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	Jan 2021	This process be in place to offer to families by January 2021	In train

Recommendation 8	**That the committee recommends that a comprehensive plan of help and support for victims of peer on peer abuse and their families is developed by the council. This should include detail of what ongoing mental health support for children and families would be available**
Executive Response	Response: Agreed. This is already underway and forms part of the model guidance - but expert advice is that each case needs to be considered with sensitivity and on an individual basis. When incidents of alleged peer on peer abuse emerge - there is now a clear pathway for schools to operate with - and the committee recommends that we engage with voluntary groups who have expertise in this area - we can and are doing this. Officers are setting out what more could be done. The intention is to prioritise the support for the mental health of both alleged victims and perpetrators (the evidence indicates most are themselves children).

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Complete and share the plans that are developed in partnership with wider agencies.	Safeguarding Officer	January 2021	Help and support for victims, survivors and perpetrators is enhanced	To be agreed with partner agencies

Recommendation 9	**That the committee recommends that clarification is provided in the report around the distinction between policy and guidance. There should be an explanation of who was responsible for: providing peer on peer abuse policies for use in Herefordshire schools; the adoption of such policies; the production of guidance; and the sharing of new guidance.**				
Executive Response	Agreed - there is a problem with the use of the word policy as most of our secondary schools have their own policies and we cannot enforce adoption. Guidance allows for more nuanced and detailed information to be shared. Draft guidance has been produced with support from others including the University of Bedfordshire who have a centre of expertise in peer on peer sexual abuse (as defined in the report) - it will be reviewed however continually and in the light of the forthcoming contribution of Ofsted and DFE				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
Issue the approved model guidance and then establish a reporting mechanism listing which schools have adopted it or not – and not what they do instead.		Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills / Safeguarding Officer	Jan 2021	Ensure all schools have discussed / adopted the guidance	In train

Recommendation 10	**That the committee recommends that the timelines in the recommendations in the review report should be finalised and include the title of those officers responsible for actions.**				
Executive Response	Agreed – see refreshed timelines in appendix 1 to the cabinet report				
Action		**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
The timelines in the report are agreed and has officer responsibility listed		Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	13/11/20	Timelines and responsibilities agreed	Complete

Recommendation 11	**That the committee** re**commends that a summary is provided at the foot of the review report detailing the scrutiny committee's recommendations and providing a recognition that the report was the start of a process to understand and address peer on peer abuse in Herefordshire. The summary should explain that not all elements of peer on peer abuse were understood and that improved data gathering, new guidance and new processes were being developed to attempt to come to terms with and address the issue.**
Executive Response	Agreed - the report was written to the specific terms of reference dates. The recommendations in the report (appendix 1) also note that nationally we could help improve wider systems of advice, prevention, recording and data analysis - we have made progress in this regard .

Action	**Owner**	**By When**	**Target/Success Criteria**	**Progress**
A summary will be provided at the foot of the report covering the scrutiny committee's recommendations and a recognition that in 2016 actions and understanding were limited. The action for improved data collection and guidance is being taken forward as there is still more to do to address this issue. Work will continue to be reviewed and developed.	Assistant Director, Education, Development and Skills	Quarterly reporting on progress will reflect on these	All schools locally contribute to and understand the processes - and Herefordshire Council continue to engage with national organisations and local expertise.	In train