

Supplement to the agenda for

Children and young people scrutiny committee

Tuesday 2 June 2020

1.00 pm

Online meeting only

5. QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

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Supplement – schedule of questions received for meeting of children and young people scrutiny committee – 2 June 2020

Agenda item no. 5 - Questions from members of the public

Question Number	Questioner	Question	Question to
PQ 1	Name and address supplied	<p>While I was a student at a school in Herefordshire I was the subject of the most serious form of peer-on-peer sexual abuse. I reported the incident to the police at the time. However my school expected me to return to classes with my abuser. This was wrong.</p> <p>I wanted lessons to be learnt so that no other child should have to face their abuser in school. My parents raised these concerns on my behalf with the Council.</p> <p>In April 2017, the Council commissioned and funded an investigation into the handling of my case, which produced a report containing clear recommendations about shielding a victim from their abuser and a pro-forma risk assessment to help schools keep victims safe.</p> <p>The recommendations - if implemented - would have prevented other children being put back into school with their abusers.</p> <p>But the Council didn't share the recommendations or risk assessment with Scrutiny or schools and has just produced a report which fails to mention the clear guidance received in April 2017. Why?"</p>	Chairperson of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee

Response:

I accept it would have strengthened our approach in supporting schools if we had shared the risk assessment form with all schools and this was a missed opportunity. The council did not produce a specific policy at that time but undertook briefing sessions that included a focus on peer on peer abuse. This included the promotion of the use of the Brook Traffic Light Tool that supports professionals to assess and work with presenting sexual behaviours of children and also the NSPCC preventing abuse “Let’s Talk Pants Campaign”.

The Council did brief chairs of governors and schools in the May 2017 briefings on peer on peer abuse, including reflecting on learning and continued to do so in regular briefings thereafter. Scrutiny was not advised of the report because it was not a matter identified by officers or members as a piece of work requiring further investigation for the scrutiny work programme.

The MASH audit report benchmarks the advice given to schools against the national guidance as that is what the council has worked to. The council did reflect on the 2017 report to inform our advice to schools regarding peer on peer abuse, and continued to advise schools on peer on peer abuse at chairs of governors briefings, head teacher briefings and designated safeguarding leads briefings.

