

<b>Decision maker:</b>	<b>Cabinet member children and families</b>
<b>Decision date:</b>	<b>Tuesday, 14 April 2020</b>
<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Executive response to the Spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools</b>
<b>Report by:</b>	<b>Director for children and families, Assistant Director Safeguarding and Family Support, Assistant Director Education Development and Skills</b>

## **Classification**

Open

## **Decision type**

Non-key

## **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

## **Purpose and summary**

To approve the executive response to the recommendations from the spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools. The spotlight review considered the Herefordshire approach to peer on peer abuse and made twelve recommendations to the executive.

## **Recommendation(s)**

**That:**

- (a) **the response to the children and young people's scrutiny committee's recommendations regarding the spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools, 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 Scrutiny Committee established a spotlight review to review peer on peer abuse in schools. The committee agreed to undertake this review due to reports of increasing levels of peer on peer abuse and public concern at schools in Herefordshire.
3. The review was carried out on 16 December 2019. A number of partners and local agencies were invited to participate in the spotlight review. The following bodies and organisations were represented: Herefordshire Council; Public Health; West Mercia Police; Primary and Secondary schools in Herefordshire; West Mercia Rape & Sexual Abuse Support Centre (WMRSASC); The Children's Society; and Herefordshire Clinical Commissioning Group.
4. The spotlight review received a number of presentations during the day and the committee members considered national guidance, work that had taken place over a number of years in Herefordshire, the work of schools and local services including charities.
5. The children and young people's scrutiny committee met on 14 January 2020 and approved the report (appendix 2) and recommendations from the spotlight 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 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**

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 spotlight review were sent to the chief executive on 3 February 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 Spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools

Appendix 2 - Spotlight review concerning peer on peer abuse in schools Final Report

## **Background papers**

None identified