

## **Title of report: Report of work of prevent and disrupt group to address child exploitation and the current risk of exploitation in Herefordshire**

**Meeting: Children and young people scrutiny committee**

**Meeting date: Tuesday 1 June 2021**

**Report by: Cabinet member children and families;**

### **Classification**

Open

### **Decision type**

Non-key

### **Wards affected**

(All Wards);

### **Purpose**

To provide detail on the work of the Prevent and Disrupt group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire. To include details of the current risk of exploitation to children in Herefordshire.

To facilitate the child exploitation summit to include a focus on modern day slavery.

### **Recommendation(s)**

That:

- a) **The committee reviews the information provided and determines any recommendations it wishes to make to the executive to secure further improvement.**

### **Alternative options**

1. There are no alternative options to the above recommendations; it is a function of the committee to review actions 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 Prevent and Disrupt group provide an effective tactical multi-agency response to all forms of exploitation involving children and young people, including care leavers. This includes child sexual exploitation, children missing from home or care, trafficking and modern slavery, criminal exploitation and online abuse
3. The attached presentation (Appendix A) provides an overview of the response to exploitation across Herefordshire and includes details of the current risk of exploitation to children in Herefordshire. Further analysis of data to better understand if we are making a difference in keeping our children safe is being undertaken. This will include direct feedback from young people themselves as part of the inter-agency commitment to a single practice approach (Signs of Safety).
4. As part of the inter-agency work on child exploitation, the Safeguarding Partnership has created the Child Exploitation and Missing sub-group, chaired by the Assistant Director for Safeguarding Quality and Improvement. The purpose of this group is to strategically join up all the work on child exploitation so we have a single view on young people at risk across Herefordshire and how we more intelligently work together to bear down on the causes and make more of a difference preventatively.
5. Importantly the Prevent and Disrupt group connects into the Child Exploitation and Missing sub group, as does the multi-disciplinary work on Peer on Peer Abuse and Sexual Harm, to ensure connectivity across these three important areas. In respect of peer on peer abuse the focus here is on implementing previous work and the key recommendations on peer on peer abuse and the NSPCC project on sexual harm which was undertaken through a task and finish programme that commenced under the new safeguarding arrangements in January 2021.
6. A new draft inter-agency protocol on sexual harm has been developed which with partnership agreement will go live in June 2021. Also inter-agency training from child exploitation staff will start in July 2021 to work with perpetrators of sexual harm to children. Finally partners are looking at rolling out the Brook multi-agency child exploitation risk assessment tool which uses a traffic light system to identify concerns to inform joined up responses.
7. Peer on peer abuse is a key community concern both in Herefordshire and nationally and is not a single agency responsibility. Our next key development as part of our above partnership work is to establish a community forum whereby partners can reach out and engage with members of the public to transparently hear and discuss concerns.
8. The community forum will also share work on our joint response around peer on peer and sexual harm to enable a co-production on developing effective guidance and practice. This will provide a two-way engagement in an open and transparent approach in order to get from discussion to action. It is important to note that peer on peer is a wider partnership responsibility to safeguard children across all settings within Herefordshire. This ensures peer on peer expands beyond a single focus around

schools, and enables the multi-agency responsibilities through the MASH and their duty to investigate concerns so we get the “right help at the right time”.

9. On the 21<sup>st</sup> May 2021, the Herefordshire Childrens Safeguarding Partnership hosted with our colleagues from Worcestershire a multi-agency conference on all forms of child exploitation including modern day slavery and peer on peer abuse. Members of Scrutiny were invited to attend. Members have previously identified their desire to lead and organise a future summit on child exploitation in its wider sense, which officers would be very willing to support.

## **Community impact**

10. In accordance with the adopted code of corporate governance, Herefordshire Council is committed to promoting a positive working culture that accepts, and encourages constructive challenge, and recognises that a culture and structure for scrutiny are key elements for accountable decision making, policy development and review. To support effective accountability the council is committed to reporting the progress on action completed and outcomes achieved.
11. Furthermore, enabling residents to live safe, healthy and independent lives; improving access to learning opportunities at all levels and improved outcomes for all children and young people, and those contained within priority two of the health and wellbeing strategy.
12. The families and carers of vulnerable children and young people are experiencing different and improved approaches to service delivery as we continue our implementation of the actions set out in our plan and in the context of the plan’s status within the wider children’s development plan. This includes looked after children and care leavers up to the age of 25

## **Environmental Impact**

13. Whilst this is a decision on back office functions and will have minimal environmental impacts, consideration has been made to minimise waste and resource use in line with the Council’s Environmental Policy.

## **Equality duty**

14. Under section 149 of the Equality Act 2010, the ‘general duty’ on public authorities is set out as follows:
  - 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.
15. 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. We continue to make sure that, as our improvement plan is implemented, we pay due regard to equality legislation.

### **Resource implications**

16. There are no resource implications arising from the recommendation. The resource implication of any recommendations made by the committee will inform the executive's response to those recommendations.

### **Legal implications**

17. There are no specific legal implications of the recommendation of this report

### **Risk management**

18. There are not specific risks associated with the recommendations of this report.

### **Consultees**

19. None

### **Appendices**

Appendix A – Presentation - The Role of Prevent and Disrupt Group to address child exploitation in Herefordshire

### **Background papers**

None identified.