

	<p align="center">Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee</p> <p align="center">20 April 2015</p>
<p align="center">Title</p>	<p align="center">Addressing the risk of child sexual exploitation in Barnet</p>
<p align="center">Report of</p>	<p>Strategic Director for Commissioning and Director of Children's Services Family Services Director</p>
<p align="center">Wards</p>	<p>All</p>
<p align="center">Status</p>	<p>Public</p>
<p align="center">Enclosures</p>	<p>Appendix A: Addressing the risk of child sexual exploitation in Barnet</p>
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<h2>Summary</h2>
<p>Child Sexual Exploitation has been identified as one of Barnet Children's Safeguarding Board's top priorities. This report sets out Barnet's position in meeting the challenge of preventing and tackling child sexual exploitation and the learning from key national reports many of which have been critical about agencies' responses to this issue. Appendix A details what is currently known about child exploitation in Barnet and what work is planned and in progress to respond to the challenges for local child protection partnerships raised by the rapidly developing national child sexual exploitation agenda</p>

<h2>Recommendations</h2>
<p>1. That the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee note the content of the report and the details set out in Appendix A.</p>

- 2. Members of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee are invited to consider the mechanisms set out in paragraphs 1.6 to 1.8 to enable the Committee to receive further information regarding progress in addressing child sexual exploitation in Barnet.**
- 3. Members of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee are asked to agree the recommendation that the independent Chair of Barnet Children's Safeguarding Board is a co-opted member of the Barnet Children's Trust Board and Safer Communities Partnership Board in line with paragraph 1.9**

1. WHY THIS REPORT IS NEEDED

- 1.1 There have been a number of high profile reports in recent months on the issue of child sexual exploitation (CSE). These reports have served to highlight the failures of authorities across the country, most notably in Rotherham and Oxfordshire, to recognise the scale of the problems they faced and take appropriate action.
- 1.2 On 3 March 2015, the Government published the report Tackling Child Exploitation. This sets out a series of actions that relevant bodies should take, including:
 - Accountability and leadership – expectation that local safeguarding children boards (LSCB) will carry out assessments of local practice, improved national data collection, external scrutiny of LSCB annual reports, delivering a new system of multi-agency inspections, refocusing inspection regimes on practice as opposed to policy and strengthening sanctions for leaders and professions;
 - Changing the culture of denial – revise national guidance and implement a communications campaign, training for teaching staff, support community programmes and projects designed to allow the public, especially women, to challenge abuse and cultural attitudes which create the conditions for abuse and national training programme for national health service staff and police;
 - Improved joint working and information sharing – clarify the ability to share information between agencies and publish new guidance, require all agencies to have internal whistleblowing policies, provide a national single point of contact for child-abuse related whistleblowing reports, ensuring multi-agency inspections examine whistleblowing arrangements;
 - Protecting vulnerable children – setting up new national task force to assist local authorities when child sexual abuse is a concern, setting up a new national centre of excellence to share best practice, developing a new model of support that responds to the needs of young people, improving the quality of frontline social work practice, clear expectations that local authority decision making tools are properly evidence based, better protect children who go missing or are absent from care;

- Stopping offenders – ensuring that child abuse is seen as a national threat and it is prioritised by National Crime Agency, funding a new network of regional police co-ordinators, enhanced powers for the police to disrupt and prevent offending and move to a national definition of child sexual exploitation;
 - Supporting victims and survivors – providing additional national funding to non-statutory agencies supporting the victims of sexual abuse, training for staff involving in supporting victims and survivors of child sexual abuse and a clear national ambition around delivery of mental health services to children and young people,
- 1.3 On 3 March 2015, the Government’s Chief Social Worker, Isabelle Trowler, wrote to all local authority Directors of Children’s Services, Chief Executives and Lead Members requesting that they immediately review any assessment and decision making tools in use in their authorities designed to support professionals making decisions about risk. The letter stressed that decision-making tools can be helpful, but that they should only be used to assist in decision-making, and should be rigorously assessed prior to implementation. A numeric-based tool used by authorities in Rotherham and South Yorkshire which resulted in risks being underestimated was cited as an example.
- 1.4 These developments inform this report which enables Members of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee to consider what is currently known about child exploitation in Barnet, what work is planned and in progress to respond to the challenges for local child protection partnerships raised by the rapidly developing national child sexual exploitation agenda.
- 1.5 Appendix A sets out in detail information relating to:
- key findings and learning from the national reports about Rotherham and elsewhere
 - what is known about child sexual exploitation in Barnet
 - data and information about referrals etc
 - progress on actions to address the issue
 - work going forward.
- 1.6 Members have a key role to play in the governance and scrutiny of CSE in local areas. An all-member training session was held on the 9th March which included advice for members about how to raise any concerns they may have within their own communities. Information from the session was subsequently circulated to all members.
- 1.7 The Chairman of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee is a member of Barnet’s Safeguarding Children Board which provides critical oversight, support and challenge to ensure our operational initiatives are coordinated and have the desired impact for our children and young people. The board has four key priorities of which CSE is one and will be the main focus for the board over the forthcoming year. Further to this, the

Safeguarding Children Board is currently refreshing its performance suite to align with the Board's priorities; within this CSE will receive a particular focus.

- 1.8 Barnet's Lead Member for Children's Services receives updates from the Director of Family Services and any performance or quality issues are raised and discussed. The Children, Education, Libraries, Safeguarding Committee also receives an annual report from the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board, this will next be presented to the Committee in July 2015. The report will contain information on the progress achieved in implementing the multi-agency response to CSE in Barnet.
- 1.9 In addition, the independent Chair of the Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board is a non-voting member of the Health and Well-Being Board (HWBB), ensuring that the priorities of the HWBB address the wider children's safeguarding agenda. The Safer Communities Partnership Board has also been consulted on the development of the CSE Strategy and Action Plan through the Violence against Women and Girls Board. On the 25th of March 2015, the Police and Crime Committee of the London Assembly published a report entitled 'Confronting Child Exploitation in London.' The report made a number of recommendations, mostly for the police, however recommendation 3 relates to governance arrangements at a Borough level – 'London's LSCBs and Directors of Children's Services must ensure well-defined links with other safeguarding strategies and robust reporting structures between the LSCB and the Community Safety Partnership and Children's Board'.

2. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 2.1 This report puts Barnet's response to the issues of child sexual exploitation in the context of the national picture. It brings together the local data and insight on the issue and notes that the limitations imposed by a lack of available national comparator data. The report is to update Members of the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee on what is known about child sexual exploitation in Barnet and what work is planned and in progress, to provide opportunities for scrutiny and oversight of the approach adopted by the Council and its partners.

3. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED AND NOT RECOMMENDED

- 3.1 The report is provided for information to invite discussion of the issue of child sexual exploitation and to provide challenge to the Council's and partners' approach. There will be a number of alternative options and focal points for approaching this issue, which the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee is invited to consider. The report reflects current strategic and operational thinking across the local partnership.

4. POST DECISION IMPLEMENTATION

- 4.1 As national comparator data on child sexual exploitation becomes available, the Children, Education, Libraries and Safeguarding Committee will be updated with local insight on the issue in the context of the national picture. Inspection of Barnet's Children's Service by Ofsted will provide further insight

into the effectiveness of local safeguarding arrangements for child sexual exploitation. The Committee will be duly updated with outcomes in this regard.

5. IMPLICATIONS OF DECISION

5.1 Corporate Priorities and Performance

5.1.1 The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board's strategy for tackling child sexual exploitation supports Barnet's Children and Young People's Plan 2013 – 2016, which sets out a vision that children and young people are safe in their homes, schools and around the borough, with an ability to develop healthy relationships with others. The safeguarding priorities as part of the Children and Young People's Plan are:

- Address unhealthy relationships based on exploitation and build aspirations for the future;
- Educate children and young people on how to stay safe and provide support for those who are victims of crime. Taking action to prevent the impact of gang involvement developing in Barnet;
- Protect children at risk of harm and support them to achieve their potential.

5.1.2 The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board's strategy for tackling child sexual exploitation supports a key priority of Barnet's Health and Wellbeing Strategy:

- wellbeing in the community – that is creating circumstances that better enable people to be healthier and have greater life opportunities

5.2 Resources (Finance & Value for Money, Procurement, Staffing, IT, Property, Sustainability)

5.2.1 There are no direct resource implications associated with the recommendations in this report. From the 2014/15 budget, the Council has allocated an additional £250,000 to provide additional capacity to support the implementation of the childhood sexual exploitation strategy within the Council.

5.3 Legal and Constitutional References

5.3.1 Constitution, Part 3, Responsibility for Functions – Section 3.

5.3.2 Local Safeguarding Children Boards were established by the Children Act 2004 which gives a statutory responsibility to each locality to have this mechanism in place. Local Safeguarding Children Boards are now the key system in every locality of the country for organisations to come together to agree on how they will cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The purpose of this partnership working is to hold each other to account and to ensure safeguarding children remains high on the agenda across their region.

5.3.3 Amendments to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010 came into force on 27 January 2014. These create new requirements for local authorities making distant placements to consult with children's services in the area of placement, and for the Director of Children's

Services of the responsible authority to approve these placements. The responsible authority will need to be confident about the support that the child can expect within the area of placement. In particular the responsible authority should confirm how the child will be effectively safeguarded and how they will access the services they need, including from education and health services.

5.4 Risk Management

5.4.1 The protection of children and vulnerable adults is the highest priority for the Council and its partners when considering the implications of CSE. Failure to protect and provide appropriate services significantly increases the risk to children in the Borough. It would also lead to significantly reduced public confidence in the Council, the Metropolitan Police and other partners, as has been demonstrated in other areas.

5.4.2 Social work recruitment and retention in children's social care remains challenging as it does for all councils and any changes to pay and reward arrangements will need to ensure that Barnet Council's package is competitive and attracts experienced qualified social work practitioners. The Council has made additional resources available during 2014/15 to raise awareness of the risks of CSE however the resourcing implications of increased level of referrals to social care services will need to be closely monitored during 2015/16 through monitoring of social work caseloads.

5.5 Equalities and Diversity

5.5.1 The 2010 Equality Act outlines the provisions of the Public Sector Equalities Duty which requires Public Bodies to have due regard to the need to:

- eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010
- advance equality of opportunity between people from different groups
- foster good relations between people from different groups

The broad purpose of this duty is to integrate considerations of equality into day business and keep them under review in decision making, the design of policies and the delivery of services.

5.5.2 Services commissioned by the Council and the Barnet Safeguarding Children Board to tackle child sexual exploitation in the borough are subject to Equality Impact Assessments in line with national guidance. There is some evidence that child sexual exploitation has a greater impact on girls than boys, so the particular attention needs to be given to any potential equality impact on the protected characteristic of gender associated with commissioning of child sexual exploitation services. The Barnet Children's Safeguarding Board has recognised the importance of working with Barnet's diverse faith communities and over the last 12 months, the Council has invested specifically in faith based projects to tackle issues of child sexual abuse and exploitation.

5.6 Consultation and Engagement

5.6.1 The Childhood Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan has been developed through the Barnet Safeguarding Children's Board and has involved full multi-agency engagement at a local level. The strategy and action

plan has been published as is available at <http://www.barnetscb.org/bscb-home/key-documents/board-key-documents.html>. The Council has also participated in a peer review with the London Borough of Ealing as part of a wider piece of work led by the London Children's Safeguarding Board. The approach therefore being undertaken in Barnet has been based on extensive engagement with partners and learning from peers.

- 5.6.2 An important strand of preventative work is engaging with communities and leaders to raise awareness of CSE. Central to Barnet's response to CSE is the recognition that schools and colleges have a major role to play in tackling the issues. The Council and partners recognise that changing the attitudes of young people towards relationships and sexual activity is key. Therefore, a strategy and work programme is planned, beginning in PHSE education in primary schools and continuing through to secondary school, to help children towards forming healthy relationships and avoiding abusive or exploitative situations. This work will be driven by education staff with support from the BSCB and CSE coordinator. A working group has met twice to further this strand of the work.
- 5.6.3 In further recognition of the involvement of local businesses in CSE highlighted by the Rotherham enquiries, Barnet Council will be supporting the local delivery of Operation Makesafe, a Police-led CSE awareness campaign for the business community piloted in Sheffield and now being rolled out nationally

6. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 6.1 Barnet Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan are published and can be found at:

<http://www.barnetscb.org/bscb-home/key-documents/board-key-documents.html>