



Hounslow Safeguarding Children Board

Position Statement – Child Sexual Exploitation in Hounslow

Strategy to Address Child Sexual Exploitation

A strategy to address child sexual exploitation was agreed by the Board in December 2013. This strategy was based on the experience of the Metropolitan Police in identifying and responding to the sexual exploitation of young people and is based on four key themes:

- Prevention
- Disruption
- Protection and Support
- Prosecution

An action plan to implement the strategy is in place.

Metropolitan Police Specialist Team

Risk assessments are undertaken of young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation and when the assessment indicates higher levels of risk, these cases then become the responsibility of a dedicated team within the Metropolitan Police.

MASE Group

A Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Group has been established in Hounslow since July 2013. This group oversees the issues emerging from cases of sexual exploitation in Hounslow to ensure that there is a full understanding within the multi-agency network of the profile of sexual exploitation in Hounslow and an ability to recognise and respond to the challenging issues.

Missing and Vulnerable Sub Committee

A Sub Committee of the Safeguarding Children Board is established to address the strategic issues of a range of vulnerable young people. This sub-committee deliberately had a wide remit in recognition of the complexity of factors that may be present in child sexual exploitation. This multi-agency sub-committee reports regularly to the Safeguarding Children Board. This group receives information and data on numbers of missing children; and children presented to MASE who may be at risk of sexual exploitation.

Rotherham Report

The report into child exploitation in Rotherham was published in August 2014.

This report expressed clear concern about the lack of attention given to earlier reports in Rotherham to the magnitude of the problem of child sexual exploitation in that town.

Some of the findings of the report were specific to the Rotherham context, but there were also important points of learning that can be applied elsewhere.

In particular, one third of young people who were considered to have been involved in child sexual exploitation were already known to agencies in Rotherham because of their being looked after or because they had child protection plans.

It was felt that there was a need for more preventative work, especially by using outreach workers to establish trusting relationships with young people.

It was identified that there had been improved services for young people who had been sexually exploited over the years, but that there was still a lack of long term support for young people and their families to deal with the emotional impact of the sexual exploitation.

There was a need to review the risk assessment tool to ensure there was a common understanding of the process.

There was a need for comprehensive training on child sexual exploitation across agencies.

There was a need to ensure that agencies did not avoid sensitive political issues when abuse appeared to be linked to particular ethnic groups.

Review of Rotherham Report recommendations in Hounslow

Following the publication of the Rotherham Report, the Safeguarding Children Board convened a joint meeting of the MASE Group and the Missing and Vulnerable sub committee of the Board on 09.09.14 to consider the implication of the report for Hounslow.

The views from the meeting were:

1 Good multi-agency working

It was felt that there is good multi-agency working in Hounslow in relation to child sexual exploitation. It was established however, that the risk assessment process was not consistent between agencies and that the risk assessment model used by the Metropolitan Police from the London Safeguarding Procedures should be used as a standard risk assessment model for all agencies in Hounslow.

2 Child Sexual Exploitation training

Training has been available in Hounslow for some time on the recognition of child sexual exploitation. Pilot training programmes have now been incorporated into the multi-agency training programme.

There is also an e-learning module on child sexual exploitation available to staff across agencies; and one available for parents.

The Board has asked all agencies to consider the training and development needs of their staff in relation to the understanding of and response to child sexual exploitation.

3 MASE addresses issues emerging from cases

This multi-agency group to identify issues arising from the operational response to child sexual exploitation is in place in Hounslow. These include identifying cross borough issues, and raising awareness among volunteers, hotels/B&B's and taxi companies.

4 The Planning for children involved in child sexual exploitation

MASE does not develop plans for individual children. That process will be undertaken in the context of the planning regime for individual children. For instance, if a young person is looked after planning will take place through looked after reviews, if a young person has a child protection plan then the planning will be through the child protection plan, etc.

5 Should all young people considered to be involved in child sexual exploitation be subject to a section 47 assessment (child protection assessment)

It was established that not all young people who are thought to be involved in child sexual exploitation are being assessed in the context of a child protection assessment. It was agreed that this would be considered further a specific guidance given as to the relationship with a child protection assessment.

6 Missing and Vulnerable Sub Committee

It was felt that the Missing and Vulnerable Sub committee's wide remit allows the factors that may lead into child sexual exploitation to be recognised and that the regular reporting to the Board provides an opportunity for the strategic issues from child sexual exploitation to be understood across agencies.

7 Coordination of the response to Child Sexual Exploitation

Although no resources were identified to support such a post, there was discussion of the desirability of a Child Sexual Exploitation Services Coordinator post to oversee the emerging needs of young people involved and to engage with agencies to achieve the appropriate scale of service response to their needs, and those of their families. There will be further consideration of this post.

8 Prevention activity

There is evidence that some schools have addressed the prevention agenda for child sexual exploitation, but there is a need to ensure that the issue of the recognition and prevention of child sexual exploitation is incorporated into on-going programmes within schools. Further work is being undertaken on this.

There is a need to achieve clarity about the role and capacity of youth worker to be able to both be alert to child sexual exploitation and to engage in preventative activity. Further work requires to be undertaken on this

9 Long term support services

As with Rotherham, the focus of work with young people is on securing their safety, and, as yet, there is little clarity about the level of need for on-going support services and the capacity of agencies to meet them. This scoping is an area of work that requires to be undertaken.

10 Addressing Culturally Sensitive Issues

The information available to the meeting was not able to identify that, at this stage; there is any indication that Hounslow is facing an issue of specific threat or vulnerability in any one ethnic community. It was agreed that there is a need to monitor the ethnic heritage of all victims of sexual exploitation and to also

monitor the ethnic heritage of all perpetrators of sexual exploitation to ensure that any preventative activity can be targeted appropriately.

11 Strategic Coherence

Child sexual exploitation is a key priority in the Local safeguarding children Board business plan; and also within the joint commissioning plan for children's services; as well as the high level business plans of partner agencies.

Donald McPhail

Independent Chair of the Hounslow Safeguarding Children Board

September 2014