

HAMPSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL

Decision Report

Committee:	Cabinet
Date:	5 February 2016
Title:	Safeguarding Update
Reference:	7307
Report From:	Interim Director of Children's Services

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1. Purpose of Report

- 1.1. The purpose of this report is to provide an update to the Cabinet on safeguarding of children activity within the Council.
- 1.2. Members will recall that Ofsted carried out an inspection of Hampshire Children's Services' safeguarding practice and associated arrangements for children in care and adoption services under their new, explicitly tougher, Single Inspection Framework in March 2014. The outcome of that inspection was that the local authority's performance was assessed as being 'good' with 'outstanding' leadership and management and adoption services. A feature of the County Council's good governance arrangements includes a routine high level report to Cabinet describing current issues and progress.

2. National Developments.

2.1. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

- 2.2. Following the report in June, CSE remains a focus of national safeguarding activity and there continues to be much comment about CSE in national and local media. It is important to highlight the definition of child sexual exploitation as set out in statutory guidance:

“Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by

virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.”

- 2.3. Even this definition is relatively broad and it is important to remember that child sexual abuse has been a known form of abuse for many years. The term ‘child sexual exploitation’ is an attempt to define a set of abuse behaviours that are in some ways new, may be more organised or systematic, drawing on new technologies, gang cultures, elements of organised abuse etc., but which also have similarities to behaviours which have been sadly common features of abusive behaviour in the past. Too often the term is being used interchangeably and without discrimination about other forms of abuse, for example historical abuse in children’s homes in previous decades. Therefore, care needs to be taken in drawing distinctions between child sexual exploitation and other forms of child abuse. Equally it would be wrong to seek to establish some form of hierarchy of abuse – all abuse of children is abhorrent.
- 2.4. The media focus on CSE was primarily initiated by the Jay and Casey reports on Rotherham and the Serious Case Review in Oxfordshire which led, in turn, to a government response ‘Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation’ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation--2>.
- 2.5. The key features of the national response are as follows:
 - A new whistleblowing national portal (presumably in addition to the existing Ofsted national whistleblowing line)
 - A national task force to offer expertise for areas which are ‘struggling’
 - An extension of the ‘wilful neglect’ law to children’s social care, education and elected members (but not Members of Parliament)
 - Enhanced status of CSE as a ‘national threat’
 - Additional support to survivors groups (£7m)
- 2.6. The report also contained further more detailed actions which are of interest. In particular the local Safeguarding Board will be required to ‘conduct regular assessment on the effectiveness of local responses to CSE’.
- 2.7. A new system of inspections (already being piloted) will be multi-agency with a clear focus on CSE and there will be greater scrutiny of Safeguarding Boards’ annual reports.
- 2.8. A letter was sent to all local authorities outlining how information can be better shared. This will require further review of our existing information sharing protocol although the letter is broadly positive and enabling for us as a local authority.
- 2.9. The report references four authorities receiving funding for innovation in the area of CSE and Hampshire is one of those authorities (see Section 4 below).

- 2.10. Hampshire has strong (as assessed by Ofsted) multi-agency arrangements in place to address the issue of children who go missing, are at risk of exploitation and trafficking via an operation working group which regularly meets to exchange information and draw up plans to protect any children at risk of these issues.
- 2.11. Hampshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) has recently circulated a Local Area Effectiveness Assessment on Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) Children. This has been sent to all Board partner agencies including the voluntary sector and is in response to the new expectation, set out above, in the updated *Working Together 2015* for LSCBs to conduct regular local assessments on progress to tackle CSE. It is worth highlighting that this expectation does not place any new responsibilities on agencies, nor does it over-ride existing responsibilities. It provides an opportunity for partners to take stock of their activities to date and for HSCB to be assured that agencies are doing all that they can to identify and protect children at risk of CSE.
- 2.12. Children's Services continue to chair the Hampshire MET (Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children) strategic group. Four sub-groups 'Understand and Identify', 'Prevention', 'Intervene and Support' and 'Disrupt and Bring to Justice' have been created to improve focus and momentum in each area and further encourage joint working from partners such as Hampshire Constabulary, health, voluntary and third sector colleagues and District Councils. Targeted work is due to be undertaken within the next year on increasing awareness of the risks CSE for children, parents/ carers and the wider community. Following the successful Innovation bid, the 'Willow Team' has been created. This is a multi-agency team comprised of Children's Services, health, police and Barnardos workers. The team has been created specifically to work with children identified who are going missing, at risk of child sexual exploitation or trafficking. Alongside providing a specialist service for children and their families the team will be offering consultation, advice and support to allied professionals in Hampshire. Another key aspect of the team is the proactive work in targeting perpetrators of CSE and trafficking.
- 2.13. **Children's Homes Regulations and Ofsted inspections**

Children's Homes Regulations 2015 came into force on 1st April 2015. These regulations replace earlier regulation and include Quality Standards that replace National Minimum Standards.

Ofsted published a new inspection framework for children's homes which commenced from April 2015. Ofsted have stated that this is the biggest change ever made to the inspection regime. All inspections are unannounced. Each children's home will have at least one full inspection per year and this inspection will normally last two days. The full inspection judgment will be made on the overall experiences and progress of children and young people living in the home, taking into account a) how well children and young people are helped and protected and b) the effectiveness of leaders and managers. An interim inspection will occur at least annually and this inspection will focus on progress made since the last full inspection. Most children's homes in Hampshire have now been inspected under this new regime and the outcomes are listed in section 3 below.

3. Performance and Activity levels

3.1. Workloads, as evidenced in contacts and caseloads, continue to rise although not at the same pace as hitherto and the number of referrals appears to have levelled out. The data referred to here is for the last complete quarter available at the time of writing (i.e. the quarter ending 30 September 2015). The table below sets this out along with source of referrals received via Hantsdirect.

Contacts and Referrals	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Sept 2015
No. of open social work cases	6502	8020	7818	8632
Number of initial contacts	61174	68789	71591	75317
Number of referrals	10297	16217	16749	16398
Referral Source : Individual	<i>N/A</i>	11.2%	10.9%	10.5%
Education	<i>N/A</i>	18.7%	21.7%	22.8%
Health Services	<i>N/A</i>	13.7%	13.8%	13.1%
Housing	<i>N/A</i>	0.0%	1.7%	1.7%
Local Authority Services	<i>N/A</i>	11.2%	8.6%	10.9%
Police	<i>N/A</i>	29.1%	28.3%	27.2%
Other legal agency	<i>N/A</i>	3.3%	3.0%	2.6%
Other	<i>N/A</i>	7.4%	8.1%	7.02%
Anonymous	<i>N/A</i>	2.2%	2.5%	2.5%
Unknown	<i>N/A</i>	1.8%	1.3%	1.5%
Not Recorded	<i>N/A</i>	1.4%	0.0%	0.0%

3.2. With regards to assessments we have gone through a period where more assessments have been classified as child abuse investigations (s47) but a lower percentage of those have progressed to an Initial Child Protection Conference (ICPC).

Section 47 and Assessments	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Sept 2015
% of S47 going to ICPC	53.3%	53.5%	45.7%	40.9%
Initial Assessments Timeliness	64.9%	68.1%	N/A	N/A
Core Assessments Timeliness	66.8%	66.6%	N/A	N/A
Children and Families Assessment Timeliness	N/A	91.4%	79.4%	80.9%
Assessments Total	65.7%	74.8%	79.4%	80.9%

- 3.3. This change has been expected and is a result of increased police resource being made available to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) which has enabled more referrals to be more accurately categorised at an earlier stage. We would anticipate that number of s47 assessments to further decline and, consequently, the proportion of those which then go on to initial child protection conferences to increase in line with previous data. There are no “correct” ratios in this regard but it is important that these figures are scrutinised and understood.
- 3.4. During the last year, the assessment process has changed in line with national guidance and we no longer carry out ‘initial’ and ‘core’ assessments but instead have a single Child and Family Assessment (CFA) with a different timescale for completion - hence the fact that some of the columns in the above table are no longer applicable. The timeliness of our assessments historically has remained steady at around 75% of all cases falling within the guidelines. Benchmarking against other authorities this appears to be good. This has now improved to 80%. The complex nature of some assessments means that they will necessarily fall outside the timescale. Managers operate a principle that in some cases it is better if an assessment is completed properly if slightly out of time.
- 3.5. Our work within the child protection planning process remains robust although the numbers have continued to rise. We have seen a rise in the number of children subject to a plan for neglect, though categorisation between neglect and emotional abuse is often variable. Few plans are lasting beyond two years, indicating proactive work, and few require a repeat plan within two years, an important “outcomes” indicator. The number of visits made within the required dates has improved and continues to be an area for focus for the Department. In part this reflects better data gathering (and some limitations within the data gathering system) but also pressures in the system. It should be noted that all late/missed Child Protection visits are followed up by managers and reported back to senior managers. Generally they are visits that have had to be delayed because of the child’s commitments, by agreed variation e.g. where there is a genuine need to rearrange, or where there is a conflicting appointment with another professional.

Child Protection Plans (CPP) and visits	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Sept 2015
No of children on CPP	909	1111	1354	1452
New CPP in the Year %: Neglect	46.6%	49.0%	56.7%	59.1%
Physical	26.9%	21.6%	15.2%	13.7%
Sexual	7.6%	4.9%	5.5%	6.5%
Emotional	18.9%	24.6%	22.5%	20.0%
New CPP in Year Rate Per 10,000 : Neglect	19	20.7	37.0	38.9
Physical	10.9	8.2	9.9	9.0
Sexual	3.1	1.9	3.6	4.3
Emotional	7.7	8.7	14.7	13.2
CPP's ending after 2 or more years	5.2%	3.2%	2.7%	3.0%
Current CPs lasting 2 or more years	2.1%	1.8%	1.9%	2.1%
Children requiring a repeat CPP within 2 yrs	<i>N/A</i>	10.0%	7.8%	9.3%
Visits made in accordance with CPP - 14 day	<i>N/A</i>	84.4%	81.2%	82.1%

3.6. With regards to children in care, the number of such children has slightly reduced. However, given the national picture of demand outstripping supply of places, the costs of placements are continuing to rise significantly. The data also shows that the stability of placements has declined and an action plan has been put in place to improve this.

Full Time Children Looked After (CLA)	2012-13	2013-14	2014-15	Sept 2015
No of full time CLA	1131	1267	1341	1325
% of CLA with 3+ moves during the year	16.2%	13.7%	13.9%	15.9%

3.7. Managers in Children's Services also use a range of qualitative data to ensure that services continue to deliver good outcomes for children. In particular there is a regular programme of case audits. Each social work team is regularly required to audit cases against set criteria. Around 100 cases per month are audited. For example, outcomes from file audits indicate the following:

- 95% of files (September 2015) evidenced appropriate multi-agency involvement in child protection and children in need planning an increase from 88% in the last quarter.
- 70% of files had an up to date chronology (September 2015) against 59% in the last quarter.
- High levels of participation of children and young people in their plans – evidenced at 82% of files in the quarters but with a fall to 80% for the current quarter of files (September 2015).
- 91% of audits showed evidence that the assessment had informed the intervention in the last two quarters, but with a decrease to 80% in the current quarter (September 2015).
- 73% of files have evidence that ethnicity and culture have informed intervention (September 2015).

3.8. As well as the main Ofsted inspection referred to above, Hampshire's children's homes are routinely subject to inspection twice per year by Ofsted, using the new Ofsted framework implemented in April 2015. The latest outcomes for these are as follows:

Swanwick Lodge secure unit: was judged to be good at the last inspection (October 2015).

The Mead: good (November 2015)

Cypress Lodge: good (September 2015)

Milesdown: outstanding (July 2015)

The Green House: good (August 2015)

Godbey House: requires improvement (October 2015)

Glendalyn is closed as part of the residential strategy.

3.9. Respite care units for disabled children were also inspected:

Firvale: outstanding (November 2015)

Merrydale: good (July 2015)

Sunbeams: good (November 2015)

4. Local Developments

4.1. Innovation Programme

4.2. As has been previously reported, Hampshire Children's Services has been successful in a bid to the Department for Education's Innovation Fund. The purpose of the innovation programme is to transform children's social care in Hampshire in order to safely reduce the demand for high cost, complex placements for children in care through creating the conditions for more interventionist and change-oriented social work practice with families as well as ensuring that earlier help is available for families in local areas. As such the programme builds upon the proven track record of Hampshire County Council in delivering high quality services for vulnerable children as well as building upon the work of our Supporting Troubled Families programme and the Early Help Hubs. The innovation programme in Hampshire has seven, inter-related elements:

- Family Intervention Teams – Eight existing CIN teams will pilot additional specialist workers in their teams to support parents where there are issues of domestic violence, substance misuse or mental health issues, in order to provide a service for adults in the family but which has a clear focus on the outcomes for the child.
- Volunteers - Recruiting and training a cohort of volunteers to support children and young people and their families.
- Social work personal assistants – These are highly skilled administrators who can release social worker's time to enable them to deliver more effective interventions.
- An edge of care support service - Targeted at preventing young people aged 14-17 years old entering care through a range of commissioned activities, mentoring support and overnight support care.
- Willow Team – A dedicated multi agency team addressing the identification of and support for children and young people who are victims of, or at risk of, being Missing, Exploited and Trafficked.
- Social work surgeries – Children's Services will pilot social work surgeries in two areas to work with partners at the earliest stage to offer advice and guidance on social work thresholds and early help.
- Partnership for excellence - To provide the necessary workforce training and support for social workers and other professionals which is a precondition for system improvement and innovation.

4.3. The programme is now in full implementation mode, with staff having been recruited or seconded into relevant roles for all of the above programmes. At the time of writing it is too early to report on the outcomes of the programme which is being independently evaluated and forms part of our Transformation to 2017 programme. It is reasonable to point out though, that one of the aims of the programme is to safely reduce the number of children coming into care and early data supports the notion that progress in this area is promising.

4.4. Partnership with the Department for Education

4.5. During the Autumn the DfE has sought to engage with a small number (six) of local authorities that have been rated as 'good' by Ofsted and who were interested in further developing their innovation programmes in order to inform national policy making. Hampshire was one of the authorities approached to be a national partner for the DfE and this was subsequently announced by the Prime Minister in his speech on children's services in December. Contrary to some reporting, the partnership, which it would be fair to say is in the early stages of its development, does not commit Hampshire (or any authority) to 'take over' the running of another authority's department. What it does do is provide an opportunity to potentially extend our innovation programme into other areas and then share the learning and expertise that can be developed from this with other areas. Part of the extension of innovation could involve new freedoms and flexibilities from regulations and guidance. Discussions with the DfE and the Chief Social Worker for England and Wales are ongoing at this stage.

4.6. Family Support Services

4.7. As has been reported to Cabinet elsewhere, Children's Services will be embarking on a public consultation on a new model of Family Support in line with its proposals for Transformation to 2017. The details of those proposals are set out elsewhere but for the purposes of this paper it should be reiterated that the intention is to ensure that targeted early help is offered to families in order that professionals can offer help prior to any concerns crossing the threshold into becoming safeguarding concerns.

4.8. Regional Memorandum of Co-operation on the use of agency staff

4.9. The recruitment and retention of social workers is an ongoing priority. Nationally, vacancy rates are now at around 20% of all posts and, at times, we have had similar rates in Hampshire. Part of our strategy to manage this has been to join with regional colleagues in agreeing a memorandum of co-operation which will ensure that agency staff are treated equally across all authorities, with agreed rates of pay, references and with greater transparency between authorities.

4.10. Hampshire Safeguarding Children's Board

4.11. The HSCB has updated its Constitution and reviewed its Board membership to ensure that representatives are of sufficient seniority to fully represent their organisations, and, that whilst the board includes those from key agencies charged with safeguarding children in Hampshire, its overall membership is not too big to hinder quality discussions.

- 4.12. The Board welcomed a number of new educational representatives from primary, secondary, special and independent schools. This will be further extended to include a representative from post-16 years educational settings.
- 4.13. In addition a representative from CAMHS will be invited to attend future Board meetings.
- 4.14. **Serious Case Reviews**
- 4.15. One of the key duties of a safeguarding board is to commission and oversee the local responses to serious case reviews in accordance with guidance. The decision to commission such a review rests with the Independent Chair of the LSCB, based upon the recommendations of a sub-committee. All such reviews are now published, unless very exceptional circumstances apply. Hampshire's reviews are to be found on the board's website. All recommendations are in hand and subject to effective oversight.
- 4.16. In October 2015 the HSCB published the Serious Case Review (SCR) into the events leading up to the closure of the Stanbridge Earls School. This, and the HSCB response to the recommendations raised, is also available on the HSCB website. This independently conducted review concluded that the main statutory agencies in Hampshire had carried out their responsibilities appropriately in a complex episode. The SCR highlights a number of challenges relating to the governance and regulation of independent schools, including the supervision of health professionals working in or directly employed by independent schools. HSCB is currently setting up a number of follow-up workshops with independent schools across Hampshire to feedback the findings of the SCR and to raise the profile of safeguarding across the board. These will take place in the Spring 2016 term. These events will respond to learning identified as part of the review but will also cover new and emerging safeguarding issues arising from other national SCRs.

5. Future Challenges and Operational Priorities

- 5.1. The future challenges and priorities can be summarised as follows (this is not an exhaustive list and the history of this type of work is that new priorities will emerge such as CSE).
- There has been a very significant upturn in child protection and associated children looked after activity since 2011 which continues to create a significant financial risk. Part of the mitigation of that risk is through the Department's Innovation Programme which forms part of the strategy to deliver T2017.
 - MASH – the model has had a highly successful start but needs to be reviewed and refreshed to ensure that the model is sustainable in terms of recruitment and retention. This is being addressed in January 2016..
 - The Innovation Programme is being fully implemented which, although exciting in terms of social care practice and with long term potential to address capacity issues, in the short term will inevitably be an additional pressure on staff and management capacity. As set out above, there is the potential to extend the scope of our innovation.

- Implementing a new social care IT system. The new system will be created and implemented via a development partnership rather than an 'off the shelf' solution. This will therefore involve a greater lead time and as a partnership approach will require significant staff input into the research, design and testing phases of the project. The benefits are that we will be able to heavily influence the design of the system and how electronic case recording is organised, reducing administration time required by social workers.
- Continuing to develop capacity and sustain improvement in the Isle of Wight.

6. Recommendations

- 6.1. That Cabinet notes the positive progress and continued consistently high performance with regards to safeguarding children in Hampshire.
- 6.2. That Cabinet note the commitment of a wide range of Children's Services officers in achieving this level of performance.
- 6.3. That Cabinet receives further updates on safeguarding on an annual basis.

CORPORATE OR LEGAL INFORMATION:**Links to the Corporate Strategy**

Hampshire safer and more secure for all:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Maximising well-being:	yes
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	
Enhancing our quality of place:	no
Corporate Improvement plan link number (if appropriate):	

Other Significant Links

Links to previous Member decisions:		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Reference</u>	<u>Date</u>
Direct links to specific legislation or Government Directives		
<u>Title</u>	<u>Date</u>	

Section 100 D - Local Government Act 1972 - background documents

The following documents discuss facts or matters on which this report, or an important part of it, is based and have been relied upon to a material extent in the preparation of this report. (NB: the list excludes published works and any documents which disclose exempt or confidential information as defined in the Act.)

<u>Document</u>	<u>Location</u>
None	

IMPACT ASSESSMENTS:

1. Equality Duty

1.1. The County Council has a duty under Section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 ('the Act') to have due regard in the exercise of its functions to the need to:

Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimisation and any other conduct prohibited under the Act;

Advance equality of opportunity between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic (age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, gender and sexual orientation) and those who do not share it;

Foster good relations between persons who share a relevant protected characteristic and persons who do not share it.

Due regard in this context involves having due regard in particular to:

The need to remove or minimise disadvantages suffered by persons sharing a relevant characteristic connected to that characteristic;

Take steps to meet the needs of persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic different from the needs of persons who do not share it;

Encourage persons sharing a relevant protected characteristic to participate in public life or in any other activity which participation by such persons is disproportionately low.

1.2. Equalities Impact Assessment:

This report is for Cabinet to note Hampshire County Council's progress and performance with regards to safeguarding vulnerable children. As such it creates no disadvantage or inequality and the activity described serves to reduce inequality for some of the county's most vulnerable children

2. Impact on Crime and Disorder:

The report is for Cabinet to note and so does not create any impact on crime and disorder although the activity described herein serves to reduce the impact of crime on the most vulnerable children.

3. Climate Change:

How does what is being proposed impact on our carbon footprint / energy consumption?

How does what is being proposed consider the need to adapt to climate change, and be resilient to its longer term impacts?

3.1 It is not anticipated that this decision will have any impact on Climate Change.