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Appendix 1: Scrutiny Review of Child Sexual Exploitation

CITY OF
WOLVERHAMPTON
COUNCIL

Scrutiny Review of Child Sexual Exploitation

April 2016

Forward

The issue of sexual abuse of children is crime with destructive and far reaching consequences for victims, their families, and society. The protection of children from the risk of sexual exploitation is a key responsibility of the Council and it is important therefore for Councillors to challenge the work being done to safeguard children and young people in Wolverhampton, as part of their responsibilities. However, it is important to accept that we **all** have a role to play in keeping children safe.

I would firstly like to extend my sincere thanks on behalf of the review group to those people that have taken the time to contribute to our evidence base. The members of the review group now have a much better knowledge and understanding of the issue. I would also like to formally thank all witnesses for their dedication and commitment to protecting children and young people in Wolverhampton from the risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE).

An investigation into the issue of CSE in Wolverhampton covering all aspects would have taken many more months to complete. This would have been unacceptable as we wanted to make our contribution to protecting children in as timely a manner as possible. However, we have taken care to ensure that we took evidence from across the spectrum of key professionals leading on efforts to protect children and young people from harm.

The review report findings are therefore intended to give a 'snapshot' of current progress and challenges facing Wolverhampton. The review report also highlights areas where further action is needed to respond to the increase in the number of known victims.

The review group have been reassured by witness evidence that the local response to the issue is appropriate and that partner agencies are being both challenged and supported in their efforts to meet their safeguarding responsibilities.

The review group acknowledge the excellent work being done to protect children from the risk of sexual exploitation and range of initiatives, such as the establishment of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in January 2016. At present the number of young people at risk has fallen to 39 (January to March 2016), which is very much welcomed.

The review process has acted as a catalyst for organisations to make changes to their policies after presenting their evidence - without waiting for the final report to be presented. This is a clear sign of the added value of scrutiny and positive response from local agencies to the work of review.

We commend our report and recommendations to Cabinet.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Overview - The Rotherham MBC Story:

- 2010 - five men given lengthy jail terms after being found guilty of grooming teenage girls for sex in Rotherham.
- 2012 - Rotherham MBC Local Safeguarding Board published a serious case review into the death of a young woman who had been involved in CSE.
- 2013 - Home Affairs Select Committee publishes report into the role of key agencies involved in Rotherham MBC CSE cases.
- 2016 - Six people, including three brothers and their uncle convicted of the "systematic" sexual abuse of teenage girls in Rotherham.

1.2 The publication of independent review in 2014 by Professor Alexis Jay - [Jay Report into child sexual exploitation](#) in Rotherham highlighted a number of serious failings by key agencies in meeting their statutory responsibilities to protect vulnerable children from being sexually exploited. A series of similar high profile CSE cases around the country have led to increased awareness of this still hidden crime and prompted responses from national and local decision makers to look critically at what is being done to protect vulnerable children.

1.3 The Government published a detailed response to the findings of the Jay Report - [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation \(March 2015\)](#). The document makes reference to the overarching responsibilities of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children – see **Appendix 1** for details of published Government documents.

1.4 Local Government Association (LGA) also published guidance to support councillors in their safeguarding role. The guide is aimed at all councillors and sets out their responsibilities to keep children safe, and support council efforts to respond to the challenges of protecting children from CSE. Local councillors also have wider responsibility in their community leader role to consider if the right safeguarding policies and practices are in place to protect children, particularly vulnerable children, considered to be at risk of sexual exploitation.

1.5 The document includes a list of key questions that Councillors should ask to reassure themselves “that plans are in place to raise awareness of CSE, understand what is happening, develop a strategic response, and support victims of exploitation and help to facilitate policing and prosecutions” - see **Appendix 2** for details.

- 1.6 **It is important to note that safeguarding children is not the responsibility of any one person or agency.** The Independent Chair (WSCB) commented on the wider responsibility for Council employees and the community to report safeguarding concerns.
- 1.7 National press reports and further reviews linked to sexual exploitation of girls in Rotherham led to the publication of further national guidance and policy documents. The aim being to challenge local authorities and other members of children's safeguarding boards to review the effectiveness and robustness of their arrangements in protecting young people, particularly vulnerable children, and to work on the assumption that CSE is an issue in their area.

2.0 Overview of CSE

- 2.1 CSE is considered to be child abuse. A case involving CSE will automatically be treated as a child protection case - see **Appendix 3** for details of the different categories of child sexual exploitation.
- 2.2 CSE involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person):
- receive 'something' (e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.
 - are often groomed without their knowledge to engage with CSE.

A child is defined as 0-18 years. The age for safeguarding is 11-18 years.

- 2.3 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. The use of violence, coercion and intimidation are common feature of CSE cases - see **Appendix 4** for a list of indicators that may suggest a young person may be at risk of becoming a victim of sexual exploitation.
- 2.4 It is important to note that some children or young people do not recognise the coercive nature of abusive relationships and as a result do not see themselves as being victims of exploitation. The reality is their behaviour is not voluntary or consenting. **A child cannot consent to his or her own abuse.**
- 2.5 There is an enhanced rape offence if a CSE case involves a child under 13 years old.
- 2.6 Wolverhampton has a child sexual exploitation (CSE) strategy. A specialist CSE tool is used by social workers as part of the assessment process to check that referrals received are appropriately allocated. To check quality of the process cases are audited using a dip sampling exercise.

- 2.7 There is no specific criminal offence of CSE. There is instead comprehensive existing legislation for rape, sexual activity with a child under 16, sexual offences involving the internet, grooming, trafficking for the purposes of sexual exploitation, prostitution, pornography, distribution of indecent images and others which can be considered in CSE investigations by the Police.
- 2.8 According to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) most child sexual exploitation offences take place online. The findings from CEOP research reveal that 13 and 14 year olds represent the largest single victim group. This is also reflected in the findings for Wolverhampton.
- 2.9 In evidence it was reported that it was estimated that in the region of 250,000 reports of missing persons are made to police forces throughout the United Kingdom each year and 140,000 of these are children. There is a link between CSE and children and young people going missing, since going missing can be both a cause and a consequence of being sexually exploited.

3.0 CSE – The Local Picture

- 3.1 The members of WSCB are responsible for ensuring that the efforts of those agencies and groups who have contact with children work individually and collectively to ensure that children are supported and protected from the risk.

WSCB has a statutory duty to publish an annual report on the effectiveness of child safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in Wolverhampton. The most recent [Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board Annual Report 2014-15](#) provides an assessment of the performance and effectiveness of local services safeguarding arrangements during the preceding year. The report details specific work done to protect vulnerable children from the risk of being sexually exploited and progress made against key work priorities.

WSCB has a number of sub-groups tasked to investigate and report findings to them on work done to improve safeguarding local safeguarding policies and practices, for example, Child Missing Operational Group (CMOG) and Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Trafficked (SEMT) group. The various groups are chaired by the appropriate lead and report their progress to WSCB meetings.

- 3.2 In October 2014, Wolverhampton had 14 children identified as being at risk across the City of being sexually exploited. Based on evidence presented by West Midlands Police there are now an estimated 25 victims of CSE in Wolverhampton. In addition, it was reported that 15 offenders of CSE were identified in Wolverhampton. A factor behind the increase in the number of cases was the improved focus by all partner agencies in this area, which has led to the early identification of victims and offenders. The data relates to the period April to June 2015.

3.3 West Midlands Police have acknowledged the difficulty in getting accurate information locally and nationally about the prevalence of CSE. The following factors have been listed as factors which contribute to the challenge:

- Low levels of reporting by young people
- Variable levels of awareness and confusion about the definition
- Inadequate intelligence gathering and information sharing
- Inconsistent recording

3.4 See **Appendix 5** for further details about the number of recorded CSE incidents (crimes and non-crimes) across the West Midlands Police area, including Wolverhampton between 1 April 2014 and March 31 2015.

The majority of identified victims are white; aged 13-17 and 24/25 cases were female.

The 25 cases are rated as follows:

- 7 – at risk
- 12 – significant risk
- 6 – serious risk

In a more recent report presented to WSCB West Midlands Operations Groups' Data on young people at risk of CSE by Local Authority Area: October - December 2015 included an updated assessment on the previous data.

- 60 female
- 12 male

- 33 – significant risk
- 27 – at risk
- 12 – serious risk

- White UK 39 (54 per cent)
- Not known 20 (28 per cent)

3.5 The level of risk is based on the results of the initial CSE Screening Tool. The screening tool is required to ensure that an appropriate response can be made as a medium/ high risk referral would be treated as a priority and a response is made within two working days.

3.6 The level of risk is reviewed at monthly Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meetings. MASE meetings are also used by members to manage and review the level of risk to young person of being sexually exploited and ensuring the young person and their family are receiving the right level of support from partner agencies.

- 3.7 MASE meetings are also used to identify and disrupt offenders and alleged perpetrators as part of an action plan to protect a young person; while at the same time considering the city-wide picture, emerging trends and challenges.
- 3.8 Based on current data there are 279 suspected perpetrators across the West Midlands and the police were involved in 60 large scale investigations. An analysis of data shows that Asian males were over represented in the profile of perpetrators. There are few examples of abuse cases involving children and young people from Eastern Europe.
- 3.9 West Midlands Police has undertaken detailed mapping work on the profile of CSE in Wolverhampton and across the West Midlands region. The mapping work includes a profile of children identified as at risk, offenders and an understanding of 'hotspots' or vulnerable locations across Wolverhampton. The level of risk is reducing in some areas and the police are working hard to increase the number of people charged.
- 3.10 At present seven locations in the Wolverhampton area are considered to be particularly active areas for CSE. Wolverhampton city centre has been identified as a hotspot area for CSE activity.
- 3.11 Evidence presented about supported lodgings and accommodation for young vulnerable people in Wolverhampton being deliberately targeted by perpetrators. This issue is a problem across the Black Country region. The City of Wolverhampton Council in response to safeguarding concerns are decommissioning children homes and using alternatives such a specialist foster care provision.
- 3.12 The Head of Safeguarding commented about the issue of young people coming into the area that are not known to the safeguarding service, and therefore at risk of being sexually exploited. There are systems in place to monitor children moving into the area and to track children nationally and internationally. Local authorities are under a requirement when child moves into an area to ensure that they get the right support and when a child moves to formally notify the receiving area.
- 3.13 The current funding for the post of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Co-ordinator has been extended to 2017. The Head of Safeguarding raised concerns about the demands on the post holder following the work of MASH in identifying more vulnerable children. The Head of Safeguarding suggested that current numbers could increase to from 30 to 70, which will require an extra worker to meet the demand as CSE Co-Ordinator is expected to attend MASE meetings.
- 3.14 In addition, a CSE plan is created with the aim of ensuring that all agencies involved with the young person understand the child's circumstances, listen to what they are saying and offer them a support package that will protect them.

3.15 CSE victims in Wolverhampton compared to other local authorities in the West Midlands area

Local Authority	Identified cases of young people at risk	
	April – June 2015	October – December 2015
Wolverhampton	25	72
Birmingham	380	220
Walsall	24	47
Dudley	37	62
Coventry	118	177
Sandwell	100	114
Solihull	36	62

Source: West Midlands Police (April - June 2015)
Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation across the West Midlands
Metropolitan Region Assessment: October - December 2015

- 3.16 In evidence, presented by Stephen Rimmer, West Midlands Strategic Lead for Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People (PVVP), it was stated that the number of children in Wolverhampton considered to be at risk is proportionally the smallest in the region, when compared to our local neighbours. (This finding is based on the figures presented to the review group at the time before the latest figures were published which show an increase in the number of young people at risk.)
- 3.17 The work of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and (MASH) other awareness raising activities is expected to lead to an increase in the number of CSE cases; while there is an expectation that the current number of young people at highest risk will reduce following effective interventions.
- 3.18 The Head of Safeguarding explained that working relations between the police and the local authority are much better and changes in procedures and policies are being embedded into practice. For example, there is an agreed 'step down' process which provides a uniform process of dealing with a change in the assessment of risk to the child or young person.
- 3.19 The Head of Safeguarding commented on the need to consider the racial and cultural differences, attitudes about the acceptable behaviour, particularly towards young girls, and the challenge in engaging with existing and new communities living in Wolverhampton to raise awareness about CSE.
- 3.20 Evidence presented of improved working relationships with schools in terms of safeguarding referrals and their policies and practices. WSCB arranged a recent safeguarding event aimed at encouraging school staff to think more broadly about the issue.

City of Wolverhampton Council produces weekly information bulletins, and meets with school Head teachers and school governors to discuss a range of educational and welfare issues.

- 3.21 The Cabinet Member for Education commented on work done to build relationships with all schools, while acknowledging that they have a choice about how they meet their safeguarding responsibilities.
- 3.22 WSCB has made good progress in developing policies that everyone would expect to be in place with the aim of preventing children from being referred because of safeguarding concerns. The challenge of identifying perpetrators who enter professions with access to children and young people was highlighted as an issue and the need for robust checks.
- 3.23 Evidence presented by WSCB that the relationship with GP's is a weakness. The Board is committed to building relations with GPs and all schools due to their front line role in helping to identify potentially vulnerable young people.
- 3.24 Claire Thomas, Designated Doctor for Safeguarding Children Wolverhampton CCG, in evidence stated that GP'S have had three sessions of level 3 Safeguarding Children training over the last year. The training included the issue of child sexual exploitation as one of the core competencies. In addition, GPs received a CSE update from the local authority CSE Co-ordinator as part of their regular team update training.
- 3.25 The Designated Doctor advised the review group that following the evidence session the members of the Wolverhampton CCG held a health CSE scoping meeting to discuss their role in safeguarding children and young people. Local representatives from the main health providers such as GP, Accident & Emergency, GUM, paediatrics and mental health and others were invited to contribute to the discussion.

The scoping meeting outlined what the different providers were adding to the agenda and the level of representation by individuals on the groups, such as MASE, CMOG, and SEMT; and whether these participants needed to be updated. The meeting also addressed the use of the CSE screening tool in these areas.
- 3.26 Evidence from representatives of the health sector suggests that there is clear commitment in the health sector to meet their safeguarding responsibilities and protect vulnerable children.
- 3.27 The Head of Safeguarding commented on the need for 'professional curiosity' and for professionals to challenge their assumption and carefully consider evidence for themselves.
- 3.28 Witnesses have highlighted the importance of raising the awareness of the issue of CSE with parents and community groups and representatives.

- 3.29 The Head of Safeguarding commented on work being done to share information between agencies across the region on a bi-monthly basis.
- 3.10 An updated Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation across the West Midlands Metropolitan Region Assessment: October - December 2015 report was published by West Midlands Police. The report provides an update on the nature and scale of CSE across the West Midlands. The findings are based on data from the seven Local Authorities within the West Midlands Police boundary, in conjunction with the police.

4.0 Wolverhampton response to the Jay Report findings

- 4.1 WSCB published its Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy in 2014. This document sets out the strategy for Safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children from Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Wolverhampton.
- 4.2 Dawn Williams, Head of Safeguarding, published a briefing note for Councillors in September 2014. The briefing paper gave a summary of Wolverhampton's response to the findings and recommendations of the Jay Report.
- 4.3 The Head of Safeguarding provides regular briefings on current CSE position in Wolverhampton and the progress made in meeting its responsibilities to the Leader of the Council, Managing Director and the Strategic Director People.
- 4.4 An online CSE and safeguarding training courses has been developed for employees and Councillors. The course is mandatory.
- 4.5 SEMT – Sexually Exploited Missing and Trafficked Committee is a sub group of Children Missing Operational Group (CMOG) and both groups are chaired by West Midlands Police. SEMT Chair provides regular updates to the WSCB including details of good practice and performance data. The report includes details of how Wolverhampton compares against local, regional and national performance standards.
- 4.6 Wolverhampton established a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on 5 January 2016 – see **Appendix 6** for details about MASH.
- 4.7 WSCB funded a CSE Co-ordinator post to further strengthen safeguarding policies and practices. The post was initially funded for 12 months but was extended for a further 12 months. At the date of drafting there are early discussions about the future funding of the post at the end of the two year period. The City of Wolverhampton Council appointed a Schools Safeguarding Officer in September 2015. The School Safeguarding Officer provides safeguarding training and support to 52 schools that have a service level agreement with the City of Wolverhampton Council to help them meet their statutory responsibilities.

- 4.8 WSCB have a contract with the [Empower project](#). The project currently delivers a range of preventative and supportive work to young people. The prevention work includes developing a bespoke programme of work covering themes such as grooming, sexual health, healthy relationships and consent, protective behaviours around technology, personal safety and identifying risk.
- 4.9 WSCB arranged a series of public events during National Safeguarding Week to raise awareness of the issue. The public response to the campaign work done during Safeguarding Week in Wolverhampton has identified areas for further work to refine key messages aimed at raising awareness among specific target groups.
- 4.10 Stephen Dodd, Chairperson of Wolverhampton Safeguarding's Communication & Engagement Committee, presented detailed evidence of the promotional work being done with partner agencies to raise awareness about the issue of CSE and to engage with children and young people by providing appropriate resources and information. The panel welcome the development of the new [Wolverhampton Safeguarding home](#) page which is timetabled to go live on 1 March 2016.
- 4.11 The review group welcomed the findings of a Facebook advertising campaign to reach children and young people in Wolverhampton. The review group welcomed the work of B-Safe Team which was established in January 2015. The members of the group are young people with direct experience of receiving support available to vulnerable young people. The stated aim of the B-Safe Team is to invite, challenge and encourage young people to get involved in safeguarding.
- 4.12 B-Safe Project operates in a number of schools and provides peer support scheme to other young people. Young people are trained on recognising the signs of grooming and the risk signs. The HeadStart programme is another project aimed at helping young people to build confidence and resilience in dealing with issues such as bullying. The project has been granted £10,000 of initial funding and the hope is that if successful could lead to further funding bids. A funding bid to the Big Lottery Fund of £10 million has been submitted to support the programme.
- 4.13 A range of outreach work is being done to build relationships with representatives of different faith groups in Wolverhampton to take forward the safeguarding agenda to raise its profile and support changes in local practice and behaviour to better protect young people.
- 4.14 WSCB contributes to [SeeMeHear](#) project which is a West Midlands regional CSE resource containing information, advice and support.

4.15 The City of Wolverhampton Council Licensing Service has been proactive in raising the awareness of the issue of CSE with licensed taxi drivers and in taking proactive action to disrupt the work of perpetrators. For example, offering training on CSE for drivers licensed to operate in Wolverhampton.

5.0 West Midlands response to the Jay Report findings

5.1 Stephen Rimmer, West Midlands Strategic Lead for PVVP, was appointed to lead a review across all seven metropolitan local authorities looking at a wide range of issues such as domestic violence; but with a central focus on developing a collective response to the threat of CSE.

5.2 The Strategic Lead for PVVP was tasked to co-ordinate the development of a strategic and operating framework that would deliver consistent and effective practice across the region. A framework document was launched in July 2014, but significantly revised in the draft published in July 2015. The partners are committed to publishing quarterly regional assessments of the scale of risk, threat and harm across the region of CSE, and their response to it. This information will help to provide a baseline to review progress being made in Wolverhampton to take the necessary action to protect children against CSE.

5.3 Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children's Board (WSCB) will monitor the delivery of the action plan linked to regional framework document.

5.4 The Strategic Lead for PVVP praised the contribution of Katie Young, CSE Co-ordinator, in embedding systematic MASE case conferences on high risk cases and the level of challenge offered to partner agencies.

5.5 The Strategic Lead for PVVP also praised the strong level of engagement from the Local Policing Unit and their use of neighbourhood policing and other resources to pursue perpetrators and support efforts to protect children.

5.6 The Strategic Lead for PVVP led on the development of a common approach to dealing with cases of missing or trafficked children across the region.

5.7 West Midlands Metropolitan Area Child Sexual Exploitation Disruption Toolkit has been published. The document details a range of work led by West Midlands Police to protect children and young people from harm and prosecuting those who commit sexual crimes against them. The document also details the range of legal powers available to the police that can be used to either deter or disrupt the work of perpetrators and prosecute them where there is sufficient evidence.

6.0 Challenges to Wolverhampton

- 6.1 The Strategic Lead for PVVP commented on the challenges facing local agencies in protecting children and young people and specifically the impact of current policies and plans on individual and groups involved in sexual exploitation.
- 6.2 The Strategic Lead for PVVP commented that the issue of protecting children from perpetrators is a challenge for the West Midlands region as a whole; and while good engagement work is being done, the number of prosecutions is small in number.

The following comment was made

“...there are some very nasty, manipulative and violent individuals and networks still making (depressing rational) calculations that if they target really vulnerable girls and boys they will remain in control.”

- 6.3 The lack of support for young people, who may not want to disclose that they have been sexually exploited or even to recognise that they are a victim, is another contributory factor in the low levels of successful prosecutions.
- 6.4 Wolverhampton’s approach to responding to the threats posed by CSE to children and young people will depend on the extent to which policies take account of the City’s characteristics. The approach will also need to consider the level of public concern/anxiety, and embedding best practice and lessons learnt within the wider safeguarding procedures across all the key agencies.

7.0 Discussion - Findings

- 7.1 A key part of the review involved inviting witnesses with knowledge of the subject to submit written evidence and also contribute to discussions to help inform the findings and recommendations. In addition, to the planned meetings, evidence was also collected during visits to representatives of other organisations.
- 7.2 All witnesses were sent a short guide on preparing evidence and a copy of the review terms of reference – see **Appendix 7** for a list of witnesses. The review meetings were structured around questions linked to the following themes:
- **Prevent:** Raising awareness of CSE among young people, parents, carers and potential perpetrators.
 - **Prepare:** Providing strong leadership, effective systems whilst working with partners to tackle CSE.

- **Pursue:** Disrupting, arresting and prosecuting CSE offenders, ensuring a victim centred approach at all times.
 - **Protect:** Safeguarding vulnerable young people and supporting victims and those professionals who seek to reduce instances of CSE.
- 7.3 The evidence from witnesses suggests that there is strong commitment across all local partners to ensure that existing safeguarding policies and procedures make a real difference in supporting efforts to identify and protect children and young people from being sexually exploited.
- 7.4 The evidence from meetings with representatives from the health and education sectors suggests there is a similar commitment to improving local safeguarding arrangements and meeting best practice national standards.
- 7.5 Important that there continues to be the appropriate level of challenge so that there is a clear focus by key agencies on those children considered to be at risk and those generating harm. This work needs to be part of long term strategy where local partners are committed to safeguarding children.
- 7.6 The local community has an important role in protecting children and young people. It is important that local residents are made aware of the issue and are encouraged to identify and report concerns about a child or young person.
- 7.7 The [National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day](#) aims to highlight the issues surrounding CSE; encouraging everyone to **think, spot and speak out against abuse** and adopt a zero tolerance to adults developing inappropriate relationships with children or children developing inappropriate relationships with other children.

The following is a summary of the review group findings and observations under the main themes listed above

8.0 Prevent

- 8.1 The review group welcomed the statement from Independent Chair of WSCB that there was no evidence to suggest that abuse claims locally were either being ignored or not being properly investigated by professionals.
- 8.2 WSCB published its annual report 2014/15. The report detailed a review of work done to protect children and specific activities aimed at identifying and support vulnerable children considered to be at risk of sexual exploitation. The report details an action plan aimed at strengthening areas of practice and policy identified as weaknesses during a review of progress.
- 8.3 Witness evidence made reference to the evidence presented at the time of the numbers of CSE victims in Wolverhampton and the level of under reporting of cases.

Witness evidence has also highlighted the issue of under reporting of CSE cases involving young males and black and minority ethnic children and the need to encourage young people and the community to report their concerns.

- 8.4 The review group are concerned that the teaching of Personal Social Health Education (PHSE) is not compulsory in schools and therefore there is no proper opportunity to discuss a range of safeguarding and relationship issues. The review group accept that range of factors - schools are autonomous; the pressure to meet educational attainment targets; the congested school curriculum and the views of parents will make it difficult to persuade all schools to make the changes that the review group would like to see.
- 8.5 The Head of Safeguarding commented that not all school governors fully understood their safeguarding role. The review group accept that while school governors are encouraged to attend safeguarding training there is no statutory obligation for local authority governors to do so. The role of the local authority is to offer or signpost governors to sources of information. The feedback from those attending the school governor course has been very positive.
- 8.6 The review group are concerned however about the low numbers of school governors and fellow Councillors attending safeguarding training sessions. In evidence it was reported that six governors attended the safeguarding awareness training session on 5 November 2015 and the same number attended the course on 10 November 2015. The review group consider that there is need to consider alternative strategies to increase the numbers attending training or to engage with the safeguarding agenda. A witness suggested arranging training sessions in local venues might encourage more people to attend.
- 8.7 The School Safeguarding Officer is working with schools that have a service level agreement with the Council. The School Safeguarding Officer works with schools to help them prepare supporting documents and other evidence needed to complete the annual schools safeguarding self-audit report. In the latest review it was reported by the Head of Safeguarding that 100 per cent of schools had completed their safeguarding report.

To date the School Safeguarding Officer has delivered two Governor training – ‘Roles and Responsibilities’ sessions, 10 bespoke sessions for Service Level Agreement (SLA) schools and one session for a non-SLA school.

- 8.8 WSCB is required to monitor and evaluate any organisations working with children and young people and ensure they are fulfilling their statutory safeguarding obligations. An analysis of by the Head of Safeguarding has highlighted examples of poor practice in schools, for example, the quality of safeguarding training for all schools and in particular for volunteers. The findings are being reviewed and support provided where there are gaps in the safeguarding policies and practices.

- 8.9 GP's and schools are at the front line and should be the first to notice if things are wrong with a young person and to report it.
- 8.10 The findings of a recent survey highlighted that not all Wolverhampton Councillors have completed the compulsory online child sexual awareness course.
- 8.11 In view of the hidden nature of sexual abuse Councillors have an important role of reviewing Council policies and practices to reassure themselves that there are effective safeguarding arrangements in place to protect children and vulnerable adults when commissioning services.
- 8.12 Evidence from Barnado's highlighted the need to support young people to also develop healthy relationships and recognise the signs of damaging relationships. Barnado's have produced very useful online material to support this work-[Real Love Rocks](#).

Barnardo's has been awarded over £700,000 by the Department for Education for a 12-month pilot project to teach night-time workers how to protect children from sexual exploitation after dark. The project is being piloted in Birmingham.

9.0 Prepare

- 9.1 The evidence from witnesses suggests that there is increased awareness across local authorities in the region to review effectiveness of current policies aimed at protecting children from the risk of sexual exploitation. For example, both Birmingham City Council and Telford and Wrekin District Councils have undertaken major reviews on the topic of child sexual exploitation.
- 9.2 The review group welcomed the evidence presented by the Independent Chair, WSCB, about the work done to develop policies with partner agencies aimed at preventing children from being referred because of safeguarding concerns.
- 9.3 The Independent Chair, WSCB, highlighted the important role of Councillors in reviewing policies and in the commissioning of Council services to reassure themselves that effective safeguarding arrangements are in place to protect children and vulnerable adults.
- 9.4 The review group support the initiative of WSCB to contact all known faith groups in Wolverhampton to ask about their safeguarding and child protection arrangements. The review group are concerned about the low initial response to the survey and are keen to receive update on progress to evidence of the extent to which policies have been translated into better practices and increased awareness of the issue. In evidence presented to the review a list of more than 200 faith groups were identified, some previously unknown to WSCB.

- 9.5 The review was reassured by the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People that partner agencies are being challenged about the progress made in meeting their safeguarding responsibilities. The Cabinet Member for Children and Young People has the prevention of child sexual exploitation amongst her policy areas of responsibility.
- 9.6 In addition, to other responsibilities the Cabinet Member has specific responsibility for “championing the interests of children, young people and their families within the local authority’s area (including all those receiving services who do not live in the area).” The evidence presented shows a strong commitment by the Cabinet Member to meet these and other responsibilities necessary to protect children in Wolverhampton.
- 9.7 The issue of the amount of dedicated specialist capacity provided by Wolverhampton Council and other members of WSCB are putting into tackling CSE, when compared to other local authorities in the West Midlands region, has been identified as an issue for further investigation.
- 9.8 The review group welcome the positive response to the issues highlighted during the evidence session with Colin Parr, Licensing Manager. The role of licensed taxi vehicles in trafficking victims of sexual exploitation has been highlighted in a number of national reports. The review group welcome the range of initiatives led by the Licensing Manager aimed at responding to these findings and the use of licensing controls to strengthen safeguarding arrangements in Wolverhampton.

The review group particularly welcome the decision of the Licensing Manager to implement its suggestions for further strengthening safeguarding policies in respect of licensed taxi drivers before a final report is presented to Cabinet - see **Appendix 8**.

- 9.9 The review group while acknowledging the safeguarding training programme delivered to new drivers remain concerned about the number of existing drivers who have not yet completed the course. The review group welcome the plans outlined by the Licensing Manager to respond to this concern and to ensure that all drivers complete the safeguarding training. The review group are concerned about Government plans to relax current vehicle licensing regulations which would allow drivers to be licensed in another authority to operate within Wolverhampton; without completing the current safeguarding training course.
- 9.10 In evidence it was stated that schools that do not have a service level agreement with the City of Wolverhampton Council are responsible for obtaining their own safeguarding advice and support from elsewhere. It is important to note that the City of Wolverhampton Council does quality assure the safeguarding training delivered to these schools by other providers.

- 9.11 Emma Bennett, Service Director, Children and Young People, explained the range of work being done to identify and support missing children. There is a strong link between children who go missing and the chances of them becoming a victim of CSE. The process is now that all children who go missing are checked against the CSE risk indicator checklist at the point of return interview and if there is a significant risk are identified then the CSE screening tool is completed and referred appropriately for action.

The Service Director commented on the link between young people being disengaged from education and their vulnerability to being sexually exploited. Service Director explained that all permanently excluded pupils will have their level of risk assessed. In addition, all social workers have been briefed on the issue of CSE to check that cases are appropriately allocated and children at risk are identified at an early stage.

- 9.12 Evidence that partners are engaging in protecting children and young people from CSE. The service is receiving appropriate referrals and good attendance at MASE meetings. However, the issue of capacity of partners to progress cases to MASE has been reported as an issue.

- 9.13 **The review group would welcome an evaluation of the effectiveness of Wolverhampton's child sexual exploitation strategy against local and national performance standards.** In addition, data on the number of the referrals and outcomes from the CSE pathway including:

- Number of referrals by organisation per year.
- Number of cases identified as CSE per year.
- Information on the outcomes of these cases.

10.0 Pursue

- 10.1 West Midlands Police have a dedicated CSE police team responsible for the Walsall and Wolverhampton Local Authority areas. The investigation into CSE cases are very resource intensive. The team is based in Walsall. Members of the review accepted an invitation to visit Bilston Street Police station to Wolverhampton Police Station to meet the members of Public Protection Unit. The visit was very informative about the range of work done by the police to locate missing children and to further improve practice following a recent inspection of the service.
- 10.2 West Midlands Police have delivered a training package to all frontline police officers (constable and sergeant levels) to improve their knowledge and awareness of child safeguarding. The model was first piloted in Walsall area for six months before being expanded to cover the Wolverhampton area. The changes were made in response to the increase in the number of reported CSE cases. The work will be strengthened by monthly meetings with partners and the opportunity to pool intelligence on children at risk and also offenders.

- 10.3 West Midlands Police, in evidence to the review acknowledged the importance of building up the confidence and trust of victims that this process will take time.
- 10.4 In a recent successful prosecution a person was sentenced to five years in prison for sexual activity with a child and grooming offences. However, Head of Safeguarding explained that nationally the rate of conviction for CSE is low and that current laws are not an effective deterrent to serious sexual offenders, who consider the risk of being caught to be low. The Independent Chair, WSCB has raised the issue of low prosecution of perpetrators with representatives of the Crown Prosecution Service.
- 10.5 The police have powers to require hotels to disclose the personal details of guests, such as names and addresses if they have a 'reasonable suspicion' that someone is committing crimes against children. The police can also apply to close of a hotel or premises where there is evidence that the premises are being used for prostitution and child pornography offences.
- 10.6 West Midlands Police, presented evidence during a discussion about the ethnic profile of perpetrators involved in recent national CSE cases and that they were not aware of intelligence suggesting gangs within the Muslim community were deliberately targeting girls within the Asian community in Wolverhampton. This information conflicts with other evidence which suggests that there are many examples of young girls being sexually abused, but who are reluctant to report such incidents due to fear. The number of victims is likely to be therefore under reported within the community.
- 10.7 Shaista Gohir (MBE), Chair - Muslim Women's Network UK, presented evidence which highlighted the additional problems facing Asian girls who are victims of sexual abuse and reasons for their reluctance to report such incidents. The findings were based on a survey which was published in a report [Unheard Voices - Sexual Exploitation of Asian Girls and Young Women](#) (September 2013). The report highlighted that based on their evidence a child can be targeted by an offender of any background, and further that Asian/ Muslim girls were most vulnerable to offenders from their own communities. For example, in cases involving Pakistani victims, the offenders were usually Pakistani or when victim was Bangladeshi, the offenders were also Bangladeshi.
- 10.8 The review group welcomed the recommendation from the Muslim Women's Network that police data collection needs to record detailed information about the ethnicity of offenders and victims rather the use of the generic category of 'Asian' for both victims and offenders.
- 10.9 The Head of Safeguarding commented that University of Bedfordshire 'Self-Assessment tool' is being used to collect more detailed personal information about victims and alleged perpetrators.

11.0 Protect

- 11.1 The Head of Safeguarding, commented that based on her experience of other local authorities who have set up a MASH, for example Birmingham City Council, the number of known CSE referrals is expected to increase. At this stage it is difficult to assess the future demands on the resources of agencies represented on WSCB.
- 11.2 Sally Nash, Youth Offending Team Manager, commented on the complexity of situation and the need for strategies that address offending behaviour of adults.
- 11.3 The Youth Offending Team Manager commented that there is a need to improve the amount of psychological services available to children and young people. The Youth Offending Team Manager highlighted the importance of adopting a whole family approach to reducing CSE. The Youth Offending Team manager commented that the offender/victim divide is not always clear cut. The Youth Offending Team manager presented evidence about victims of sexual exploitation becoming offenders in the future and the need to challenge services is how they deal with this situation. For example, the challenge of supporting people who are both victims of CSE and also acting as perpetrators involved in grooming other young people. This is defined as peer-on-peer abuse.
- 11.4 Evidence presented by Lesley Writtle, Director of Operations, Black Country Partnership Foundation Trust reported that the organisation does not have a specialist role or service available to support victims of CSE and their families. The Director of Operations commented that the Trust would be able to support family members whose mental health had been affected by CSE after an assessment and considered suitable for structured psychological therapy.

The important of role of parents and families in identifying children being sexually exploited or at risk has been highlighted in a number of publications. For example, PACE (UK) (Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation) was set up by parents to provide support to parents affected by child sexual exploitation so that they can become active agents in responding to the sexual exploitation and abuse of their children. PACE has published a range of resources for parents and carers.

- 11.5 The Service Director, Children and Young People, commented on the need to ensure that there are measures to further protect and protect the most vulnerable children from engaging in CSE.

The Service Director commented on evidence that Looked after Children, young offenders, children excluded form education and those who regularly go missing are most at risk of sexual exploitation. The Service Director expressed concern that there are no specific actions to ensure we prioritise protecting these groups.

- 11.6 The review group highlighted concerns about resource gaps, for example, in dedicated frontline counselling support available to victims of CSE and their families. Witness evidence has commented on how sexual exploitation can seriously affect a victim's life into adulthood resulting in a range of damaging mental and physical illnesses and the importance of providing appropriate support in the short and long-term.
- 11.7 Jennie Watton, Empower Co-ordinator/ SAFE, argued that more resources are needed to help victims of CSE access appropriate emotional and mental health support services. The current waiting list to access these services was identified as a barrier for young people seeking help.

Base 25 Empower project provides one-to-one key working support to victims and families of CSE. The review group were advised that funding for the project will end in September 2016. The additional funding for the project from Children in Need ends in December 2016.

The performance measures for the project includes, number of young people increased awareness of CSE, number of young people who have reduction in risky behaviour including substance misuse, sexual and criminal behaviour, number of young people in appropriate and safe accommodation, number of young people who have improved family relationships.

- 11.8 The evidence from witnesses has highlighted that an implication for the Council and members of WSCB adopting an increasingly proactive approach to tackling CSE is that this will generate greater confidence in the reporting incidents leading to increasing demand on the resource capacity of key agencies. West Midlands Police, Public Protection Unit, has already highlighted in evidence to the review the impact of increased demand on the service as a result of its own and other local agencies work to identify victims of CSE and their alleged perpetrators.
- 11.9 City of Wolverhampton Council Legal Services has an important role in disrupting the behaviour of suspected perpetrators in Civil Courts and in protecting children considered to be at risk. Legal Services provides the following advisory services to Social Services. A Legal Gateway Meeting - meetings are held fortnightly, and provide an opportunity for social workers to seek legal advice over cases they are concerned about.
- In addition, Legal Services also provide duty rota service to social services. Social Workers or their managers can call the duty telephone to seek advice. Legal Services also has a role in meeting the Council's safeguarding responsibilities – see **Appendix 9** for details.
- 11.10 City of the Wolverhampton Council is a Licensing authority to effectively tackle and reduce the risk of sexual exploitation of children and young people in licensed businesses or by licensed persons.

Licensing Services issue a range of licences, consents and permissions to businesses covering a host of regulated activities. There are in excess of forty different licensing regimes delivered by the service.

- 11.11 The areas of licensing that have the greatest potential for issues to arise relating to the sexual exploitation of children are detailed below:
- Licensing Act 2003 (alcohol, entertainment and late night refreshment licensing)
 - Taxis
 - Gambling Act 2005
 - Sex Establishment Licensing
 - Street Trading
- 11.12 To date, no instances of CSE have been reported to the licensing authority regarding persons or businesses licenced under the Gambling Act 2005, Street Trading or Sex Establishment Licensing. Protocols for dealing with any such report would broadly mirror those applicable to premises licensed under the Licensing Act 2003. The licensing service has a performance measure to assess its effectiveness in responding to CSE complaints within one working day. The service has achieved 100 per cent compliance with this performance indicator since its inception in 2012.
- 11.13 Following the grant of a licence, responsible authorities can also request the licensing authority review the licence if they believe the licence holder has failed to promote the licensing objectives. The coordination of the activities of responsible authorities is managed through the 'Responsible Authorities Forum' (RAF). The Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) for Children's Safeguarding is a standing member of the RAF.
- 11.14 Licensing Services have carried out a self-assessment against the findings of the Casey Report, which investigated allegations of historic child sexual abuse in Rotherham, and found the service was performing well in those areas Casey highlighted as concerns when compared to Rotherham MBC.
- 11.15 A weakness that has been identified in the current licensing regime is the inability of the Licensing Authority to conduct an 'expedited licence review' for premises that do not sell alcohol. This limits the Licensing Authority's ability to immediately close food takeaway businesses where CSE is alleged to have taken place. Since March 2015 all new applications and reviews are screened by the LADO for Children's Safeguarding prior to being determined by employees or the Licensing Sub-Committee.
- 11.16 Safeguarding has been a key component of the new driver training programme since 2011. However, in July 2015 the Licensing Committee approved a revised driver training programme which extended the safeguarding content to include CSE awareness. In the last 12 months there have been two reports of suspected CSE involving taxi drivers.

In both cases, the drivers attended a hearing on the same day that the report was received and in one case a driver's licence was revoked with immediate effect.

- 11.17 At date of drafting it was reported that all drivers licensed since 2011 and all those that are on Home to School contracts will have completed some safeguarding training. This equates to about 50 per cent of the total driver fleet. The content for driver training planned for later in the year will include a section on CSE. The review group were advised that CSE literature is distributed to licensed drivers but they are not required to display the material; as it is not a requirement of their licence.
- 11.18 Claire Thomas, Designated Doctor for Safeguarding (The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust) explained that the CCG does not have access or the ability to collate the number of referrals received from health professionals about safeguarding concerns. This information is collected by the local authority safeguarding team.

The Designated Doctor for Safeguarding commented in response to a query about the effectiveness of training that nationally there have been difficulties in demonstrating its impact on protecting children. The review group were told that WSCB have developed evaluation tools that give a more meaningful responses and in the future (with the appointment of the WSCB training coordinator) it is anticipated that there will be follow up post courses work done to attempt to demonstrate impact .

Appendix 1: Government response to the Jay Report

The Government commissioned an independent inquiry in response to the findings of the Home Affairs Select Committee report which investigated the situation in Rotherham MBC. The review led by Professor Alexis Jay was published on 26.4.14. The findings of the “Jay Report”

For example, key agencies; police, health and council staff failed in their duty to protect some of the most vulnerable children in Rotherham; with clear evidence of reports of child sexual exploitation being disbelieved, suppressed or ignored. The report stated that an estimated 1,400 children, some as young as 11 years old, were sexually exploited over a 16-year period between 1997- 2013. In addition, children were trafficked to other towns and cities in the north of England, abducted, beaten and intimidated.

The “Jay Report” port also highlighted specific concerns about the extent to which local authorities were meeting their statutory responsibilities to protect children and young people from harm.

The Government commissioned a series of further wide ranging [reviews](#) in response to the findings and recommendations detailed in the “Jay Report”.

The Secretaries of State for Communities and Local Government wrote to the Leaders of the Councils on 24.9.14 asking them to read the “Jay Report” and “... consider whether you have adequate measures in place to ensure that you cannot be accused of similar failings.”

The Government and other bodies have published detailed guidance in response to the findings of the “Jay Report” challenging local authorities to review and challenge current practices and policies to ensure that vulnerable children are being properly protected from the risk of sexually exploitation:

- [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation \(March 2015\)](#) which makes specific reference to the overarching responsibilities of local authorities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- [Working Together to Safeguard Children \(2015\)](#) which details what local authorities are required to do to meet their responsibilities.
- [Governance Handbook\(2015\)](#) includes a reference to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of pupils and the responsibilities of school governing bodies.

In addition to above guidance the following have been produced to people working in primary health and education settings

- [Keeping children safe in education – statutory guidance for schools and colleges](#)

- [Safeguarding Children Toolkit for General Practice](#)

The performance of key agencies in meeting their responsibilities to safeguard children continues to be inspected and reviewed against national standards.

Appendix 2: Key questions for Councillors to ask

1. What is the extent and profile of CSE in our local area? How do we know?
2. Do we have a local CSE strategy and action plan? Are these multi-agency and how is progress monitored? How does this link to other plans and strategies?
3. How effective is the Local Safeguarding Children Board? Are all agencies engaged at a senior level, and is CSE an area for priority focus?
4. Does the relevant scrutiny panel receive the LSCB's annual report, and use this to challenge local priorities and outcomes?
5. What other multi-agency forums exist to facilitate joint working?
6. How is CSE incorporated into local training programmes, and who is able to access this training? Does this include training for a wider cohort than just those professionals working directly with children and young people, such as licensing officers, environmental health officers or elected members? Are outcomes measured, and are changes made as a result?
7. Is an awareness raising programme in place for children, families and the wider community? Is this reaching the right people?
8. What support is available to current, potential and historic victims of CSE?

Reference: LGA, [Tackling child sexual exploitation. A resource pack for councils](#)

Appendix 3: Different categories of child sexual exploitation

[The Barnardo's Puppet on a String report](#) defined three broad categories of child sexual exploitation. These categories are briefly outlined below:

a) Inappropriate relationships

This usually involves one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person (physical, emotional or financial). One indicator may be a significant age gap. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.

b) 'Boyfriend' model of exploitation and peer exploitation

The perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a 'relationship' and then coerces or forces them to have sex with friends or associates. Our services have reported a rise in peer exploitation where young people are forced or coerced into sexual activity by peers and associates. Sometimes this can be associated with gang activity but not always.

c) Organised/networked sexual exploitation or trafficking

Young people (often connected) are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be either forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'sex parties' and young people who are involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised 'buying and selling' of young people by perpetrators.

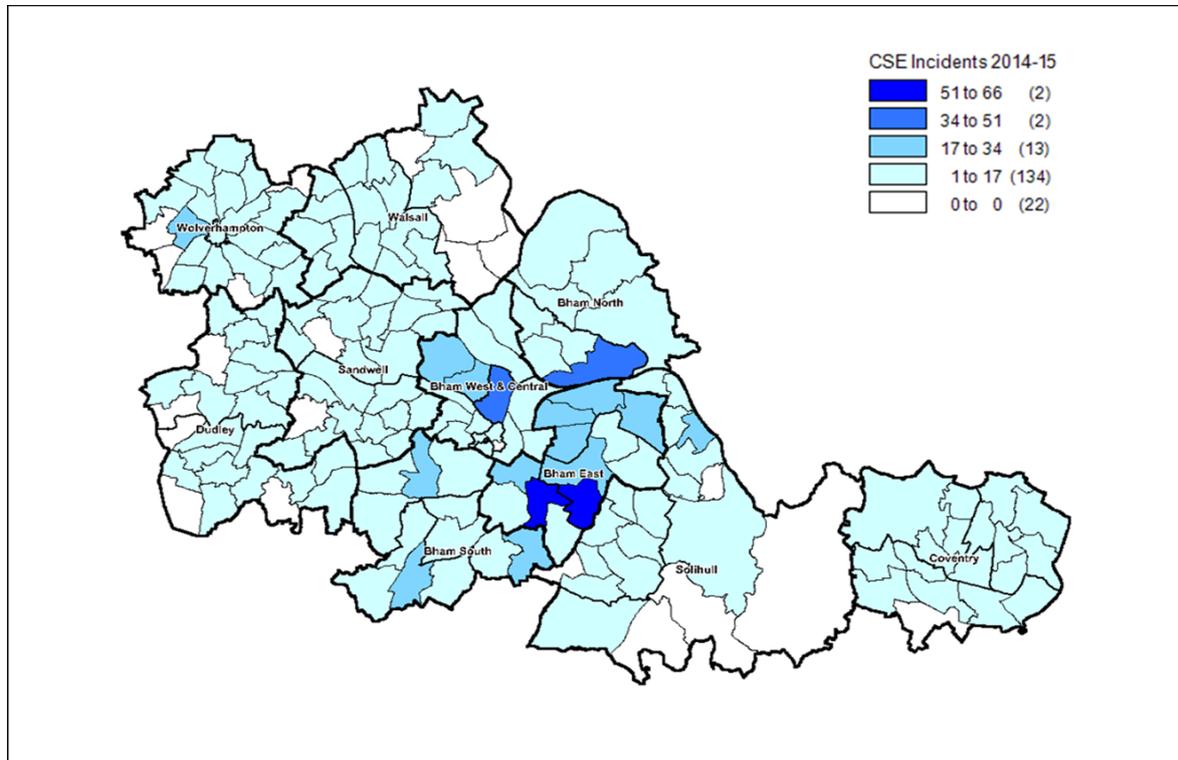
There is some crossover between the first two categories. They both involve an imbalance of power, which perpetuates the abuse and undermines the will of the victim to the extent that they feel unable to remove themselves from the position they are in.

Reference: [Barbados's Puppet on a string The urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation](#).

Appendix 4: Potential Indicators of CSE

- Having older boyfriend/girlfriend
- Additional mobile phones
- Gang affiliation
- Un-accounted for money
- Drugs
- Poor self-image/low self esteem
- Offending
- Changes in behaviour
- Secrecy
- Suddenly changing peer groups
- Missing
- Not attending schools

Appendix 5: Number of recorded CSE incidents (crimes and non-crimes) across the West Midlands Police area, including Wolverhampton between 1 April 2014 and March 31 2015



Definition of Non Crime - No Victim - No Crime: Where there are grounds to suspect that a 'victim related' crime i.e. a crime requiring victim confirmation may have taken place but no victim, (or person reasonably assumed to be acting on behalf of the victim), can immediately be found or identified, then subject to the exceptions identified (recording without victim confirmation), the matter must be recorded as a crime related incident until such time as the victim is located or comes forward to provide an account.

Reference: West Midlands Police

Appendix 6: Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

- The MASH brings together key professionals to facilitate early, better quality information sharing, analysis and decision-making. The stated aim of the MASH model is as follows:

“The model creates a secure environment where safeguarding partners share information in a dynamic way in order to identify and assess risk which in turn ensures social care decision makers are able to make necessary and proportionate decisions based on the best possible information available at a given time.”

- Wolverhampton’s MASH will initially focus on children and vulnerable adults. The creation of Wolverhampton MASH is an important part of efforts to improve the way children and adults are safeguarded in the city. Wolverhampton MASH includes an early help element and the ability to gather and link information and intelligence with regard to young people missing and at risk of CSE.
- The work of the MASH will include children at risk of permanent exclusions and other groups of children, for example home educated children.
- In the West Midlands Metropolitan Area - Coventry, Birmingham and Sandwell have a MASH, Solihull and Walsall have already set up a MASH. Dudley will establish its MASH in April 2016.

Appendix 7: List of witnesses who have contributed evidence to the review

- Alan Coe, Joint Independent Safeguarding Adult's and Children's Board Chair
- Stephen Rimmer, West Midlands Strategic Lead for Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People
- Shaista Gohir (MBE), Muslim Women's Network UK
- Cllr Claire Darke, Cabinet Member for Education
- Cllr Val Gibson, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People
- Emma Bennett, Service Director Children and Young People
- DCI Michaela Kerr, West Midlands Police
- Colin Parr, Licensing Manager
- William Humphries, Service Lead, Environmental Health Commercial
- Dawn Williams, Head of Safeguarding
- Katie Young, Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator
- Sally Nash, Youth Offending Team Manager
- Stephen Dodd, Youth Organisation Wolverhampton Co-Ordinator
- Ann Brown, Head Teacher, Secondary School Representative, Wolverhampton Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB)
- Mark Heywood, Head Teacher, Independent School Representative, WSCB
- Claire Thomas, Designated Doctor for Safeguarding (The Royal Wolverhampton NHS Trust)
- Lorraine Millard, Designated Doctor for Safeguarding (NHS Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG))
- Manjeet Garcha, Executive Lead for Nursing Quality (NHS Wolverhampton CCG)
- Jennie Watton, Empower Co-ordinator/ SAFE project worker (Base 25)
- Debbie Southwood, Children's Service Manager, Barnardo's Birmingham
- Kush Patel, Strategic Improvement Development Officer – Early Help Children & Young People
- Tracey Christie, Head of Legal Services

Appendix 8: Licensing Service

The focus for safeguarding both in licensing and compliance is on taking action following complaints. We will take the following steps to improve Private Hire Vehicle (PHV) client's access to making a complaint:

- On the next review of PHV signage Licensing will look at altering / supplementing the internal signage to advise clients that enquiries / queries can be made to The City of Wolverhampton Council.
- Licensing will also look at improving the relevant parts of the council website to ensure that when someone searches on the internet for how to complain about a taxi etc..... in Wolverhampton that the relevant Council webpage can be found easily and the complainant directed to City Direct.
- It has been raised that some people complain to private hire vehicle operators either directly or via their social media sites. On the next review of PHV operator conditions an additional condition will be considered requiring the base to make complainants aware of City of Wolverhampton Council's role in licensing and that they can complain directly to the Council.

William Humphries

Service Lead, Environmental Health Commercial

5.1.16

Appendix 9: Legal Services

In order for the Local Authority to instigate protective measures by way of issuing an application for care proceedings it needs to be satisfied that the threshold criteria is satisfied. The legal basis or “threshold criteria” is detailed in the Children Act 1989 and sets out the process by which a Family Court can make a Care or Supervision Order to a designated LA in respect of a particular child.

According to Working Together, significant harm refers to “the threshold that justifies compulsory intervention in family life in the best interests of children, and gives LAs a duty to make enquiries to decide whether they should take action to safeguard or promote the welfare of a child who is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm”.

The Children Act 1989 defines ‘harm’ as “ill-treatment or the impairment of health or development”. ‘Development’ means physical, intellectual, emotional, social or behavioral development; ‘health’ means physical or mental health; and ‘ill-treatment’ includes sexual abuse and forms of ill-treatment which are not physical. As a result of the Adoption and Children Act 2002, the definition of harm also includes “impairment suffered by hearing or seeing the ill-treatment of another”.

In terms of child sexual exploitation the threshold could be satisfied on the basis that the child is beyond parental control if for example they are continually absconding from the home and associating with adults or pose a risk and the parent is not aware of their whereabouts or unable to safeguard and protect them for the risks.

All matters are now referred to the Admission to Care Panel. The panel is constituted by Social Services management. If a social worker has concerns about the safety of a child/ren and or seeks to accommodate them in Local Authority care or seeks permission to issue court proceedings will be considered by the Panel. Legal services no longer sit on the Panel.

Legal Services has not received many cases for advice where CSE has been a factor. In practice, CSE has tended to be one factor amongst others i.e. neglect; substance abuse within the family.

Where CSE is the main factor an alternative order as opposed to a Care order may need to be sought as such an order alone may not sufficiently safeguard the child as there is a likelihood that they may abscond from their foster placement. Therefore the Local Authority would seek instructions from the client department about whether it is appropriate to apply for a Secure Accommodation Order. The decision to apply to restrict the liberty of children /young person is considered to be a serious step which must be taken only when there is no genuine alternative which would be appropriate to adequately safeguard the child/young person in the circumstances.

The Local Authority is often reluctant to seek such orders unless there is no choice as it is quite draconian and may not resolve the concerns as whilst the order is in place, normally a minimum of 3 months and the child is removed from the area once the order has expired the child often returns to the area in which she/he lived previously.

Local authorities and police forces have a range of civil and criminal remedies and powers to act as a deterrent to dissuade and disrupt the abusive and exploitative practices of the perpetrators.

Birmingham City Council applied successfully to the Court in 2014 for an injunction against men to prevent them having contact with a child or approaching in public places or having in their vehicle any other females under the age of 18 years with whom they are not previously associated.

The use of injunctive orders should be seen, therefore, as an essential piece of the jigsaw. They enable both the immediate protection of the child from the person involved in CSE they should.

However, there is a risk to the authority of possible damages for failed application to the Court for an injunction. In a situation where an individual is named there will be added pressure to be able to secure a conviction and/or succeed in a substantive civil claim after the injunction is granted. The police concluded that in the Birmingham case there was insufficient evidence to secure criminal convictions against the ten men, but the Council decided to apply for civil injunctions under the inherent jurisdiction to prevent the men from contacting the young person.

The Local Government Association has called for the introduction of 'disruption orders', a new type of banning order aimed at stopping predatory men suspected of grooming children for sex.

The LGA said the new orders would "give social workers and police a way of intervening in child sexual exploitation when they suspect something is going on but cannot provide evidence to bring a criminal prosecution without a child having been already harmed".