

PRACTICE AND PERFORMANCE UPDATE AND THE IMPACT OF MACE

To: **Corporate Parenting Sub-Committee**

Meeting Date: **25th March 2020**

From: **Jenny Goodes
Head of Service, Integrated Front Door**

Electoral division(s): **All**

Purpose: **An update report was requested on practice and performance and the impact of MACE.**

Recommendation: **To note and comment on the report.**

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Summary:

- Staff in the Missing Exploited Trafficked Hub (MET Hub) carry out interviews with children and young people who are found after they have gone missing.
- A team of police officers also works with these children to help them talk about what is happening and make sure action is taken to keep them safe if this is needed.
- Meetings are held each month to look at what can be done to reduce the risk of individual children or groups of children being exploited (taken advantage of) and to keep them safe. These are called MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) meetings.

1. BACKGROUND

1.1 Within Cambridgeshire, we are aware that some exploitation of children and young people is taking place. There is evidence that there are an increasing number of young people involved in county lines and in organised drug gangs and that they are drug running significant amounts of cannabis and Class A drugs both within the county and to neighbouring counties. There is evidence that some of these young people are being sexually exploited as a way of controlling them both within county lines, criminal exploitation cases and gang related crime. We know that a number of our young people are experiencing high levels of violence and assault and that the threats made are often carried out as a means of warning, punishment and to maintain control. Families can feel powerless to challenge and protect their children, and occasionally may be threatened and harmed if they try. Sexual exploitation of some young people is occurring as part of gang membership acceptance rituals, as a result of criminal exploitation and by adult males who target underage females grooming them, supplying alcohol/drugs and then exploiting them sexually.

Criminal exploitation creates a particularly demanding context, and police acknowledge nationally that the investigation of these crimes and targeting of offenders is extremely challenging. This is in part due to the speed at which the perpetrators work and change locations, the fact that victims do not often recognise themselves as victims, or when they do they are in fear of violence to them or family members if they withdraw from the behaviour / speak to the police.

The Local Authority is working hard with other professionals to understand, respond to and reduce the risks to children in Cambridgeshire from all forms

of exploitation. The strategic leads under the guidance of the Safeguarding Board have been working on updating the countywide child exploitation delivery plan which is focussed on the following objectives:

- Working to prevent children becoming victims and offenders of child exploitation and by challenging the attitudes, behaviours and environments which foster it
- Ensuring that we have an agreed assessment mechanism and threshold to identify, manage and mitigate the risk to vulnerable victims across the county
- Ensuring that we work in a way that encourages partnerships planning around the child and have an agreed core offer for those children at all levels of risk
- Working to pursue those perpetrators who seek to cause harm by exploiting vulnerable children in our communities

Underneath this sits the operational MACE (Missing and Child Exploitation) meeting. The monthly MACE meeting is a multi- agency forum that reviews and updates on any emerging or significant concerns about individual children, groups of children or areas that are giving cause for concern in respect of possible exploitation taking place. A themes and trends report is produced by the MET HUB and individual children are discussed to ensure that there are appropriate safety plans in place and that any appropriate disruption action has been taken.

The police present a report which identifies the children most at risk of exploitation, any alleged perpetrators that are coming to their attention and any “hot spots” in the county where there is intelligence to suggest that sexual or criminal exploitation is taking place. The report is produced as a result of the collation of information gathered from Return Home Interviews, police intelligence and information received from all professionals who work with children in Cambridgeshire.

Mapping meetings are used to investigate exploitation issues affecting a specific district or area highlighted at the Missing and Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting or emerging themes and trends identified by District Leads/MET Hub. The multi-agency group looks at available information and intelligence and formulates an appropriate response plan specifically to tackle emerging issues of gangs and county lines, on behalf of the Chair. Updates on progress are reported back to the MACE meeting. Currently there are a number of pre mapping meetings taking place at a number of locations in Cambridgeshire specifically Cambridge City and Huntingdon to identify if threshold met for full mapping activity to be undertaken. Within Fenland area there has been mapping activity and an enhanced offer has been made to relevant school staff at the schools in question.

As part of the mapping activity any location highlighted as a cause for concern has had disruption activity through the Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) disruption toolkit, this has included intervention by wider partners such as:

- Fire Service
- HMRC
- Trading standards
- Food Standards Agency

- Local Authority

Since April 2019 the Local Safeguarding Children Board lead Dave Sargent has presented to over 800 members of staff with regards to Child Exploitation training including 120 teachers as part of their CPINs training.

The SAFE team was formed in Oct 2019 to work exclusively with some of those children deemed to be moderate/significant risk of CCE. Whilst this funding is initially only available for a year it is hoped that this will be extended. Further to this Cambridgeshire have bid successfully for a two year funded pathfinder post working exclusively on CCE, the post holder commences on 16th March and will play a significant role in how we tackle CCE going forward.

The MACE meeting hears the most high risk Safe Team cases, the high risk exploitation cases and missing cases enabling multi-agency decisions and actions to be taken, multi-agency scrutiny to be offered and multi-agency challenge and resolution when partnership work gets stuck. Cases can also be escalated through MACE to senior managers to ensure that there is an awareness and ownership of the risk management plan when cases are particularly causing high level concern.

The MACE meeting has provided a forum for reviewing our young people who are causing significant concern due to the risks from going missing or from exploitation and has enabled the partnership to have a good sense of this cohort. It has enabled new cases to be identified and responded to quickly and has supported the improved safety planning around these young people. MACE has provided oversight of mapping activities and has co-ordinated interventions in complex abuse situations. MACE within Cambridgeshire is still developing and work is needed to improve the consistency of membership and to further improve how we measure the impact on quality of practice, reduction of risk and improved partnership response.

2. MAIN ISSUES

2.1 Return Home Interviews should be held within 72 hours of a child being found and are undertaken by MET Hub workers, unless they fall outside of the 70 mile radius. All information obtained is reviewed and key information is presented in a monthly report to the MACE meeting. There is clear evidence that going missing can increase vulnerability to being exploited and frequent missing episodes can be an indicator that a child may be a victim of exploitation.

The following table shows the number of Cambridgeshire young people that went missing over the last 6 months and their status:

	August 2019	Sept 2019	Oct 2019	Nov 2019	Dec 2019	Jan 2020
Total number of missing episodes each month	94	112	98	136	94	108
Total Number of children	71	76	75	79	64	74

who had a missing episode						
How many of these young people were Children in Care	30 42%	25 33%	32 43%	32 40%	32 50%	21 28%

This table shows the number of Return Home Interviews (RHIs) completed over the last 6 months. Each month there will be a number of RHIs that are not completed due to refusals either by young people or by their parents and there will be a small number of exemptions where a decision has been made not to offer a RHI. Return Home Interviews can also not be completed due to some young people going missing again as soon as they have been found.

	August	September	October	November	December	January
Episodes	94	112	98	136	94	108
RHI Completed	73 (78%)	89 (82%)	89 (96%)	121 (87%)	82 (87%)	94 (80%)
Within 72 hours of Found	24 (33%)	39 (44%)	39 (44%)	41 (34%)	25 (30%)	44 (47%)

Performance in terms of meeting the statutory timescale of the undertaking the Return Home Interview within 72 hours of the child or young person being found has not been at the level that we would have expected over the last 6 months. This is due to a number of factors including long term sickness within the staff team, some impact from young people being found at weekends which has reduced time available to complete, sometimes there are delays in receiving found notifications and sometimes young people can agree to an appointment and then fail to be in when a visit is made. There was also a notable delay in the service level agreement being signed off with NYAS which has meant that the team have continued to complete all Return Home Interviews regardless of geographical distance.

The primary reason given by young people for going missing tends to be wanting to spend time with friends or to visit boyfriends or girlfriends (44%) with the second most common reason given as difficulties in relationships with parents or carers (25%).

Any child who is deemed to be at risk has an exploitation risk assessment completed and this enables us through analysis of all available information and intelligence to establish whether the child is at emerging, moderate or significant risk of exploitation and whether the risk comes from sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, or gang related exploitation.

At the time of writing this report within Cambridgeshire there were 333 children on the exploitation tracker. These children will have had a completed risk assessment and have been identified as at some risk of Child Sexual Exploitation CSE (177) /Criminal Exploitation CCE (156) or in some cases both.

The Exploitation Risk Assessment categorises whether a child is assessed as being at Significant, moderate or emerging risk which then informs the level of intervention required. In respect of children and young people who are Children in Care and recorded as being at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or Criminal Exploitation we can see that the numbers are as follows:

Young person	Emerging	Moderate	Significant
CSE – Total 177	99	66	12
CiC – Total 35	18	14	3
CCE – Total 156	67	63	26
CiC- Total 20	8	6	6

Some of the children and young people who are vulnerable to criminal exploitation or who are being criminally exploited/exploited by gangs or involved in county lines are known to the Youth Offending Service.

The Youth Offending Service (YOS) run Risk Management Panels which are multi-agency in make up to ensure that high risk cases are well tracked and managed. At the lower end of the scale there is the offer of a preventative programme of intervention to children called “Which Way” which is delivered in YOS, the Early Help District Teams and in the Adolescent Teams to support children and young people to move away from gang affiliations and criminal behaviour.

The SAFE Team are currently working with 29 young people who are identified as being at significant risk of harm due to criminal exploitation. Work is planned with the young person, their parent and other professionals who are involved. The aim is to identify risk, needs and desired outcomes. This enables the worker to determine the resources required to enable positive change with the young person and potential means of reducing their vulnerability to exploitation. Services are delivered in a variety of ways including awareness work, community integration, enabling access to resources, positive activities, elements of disruption and safety planning. The work utilises contextual safeguarding approaches and a trauma informed model to enable intervention and engagement. Interventions with the SAFE Team are not time limited and they will continue to engage and support safety plans for as long as is appropriate to enhance the young person’s safety.

3. ALIGNMENT WITH CORPORATE PRIORITIES

Report authors should evaluate the proposal(s) in light of their alignment with the following three Corporate Priorities.

3.1 A good quality of life for everyone

Deliver consistent preventative messages into the community with the aim of creating communities where exploitation is unacceptable /not tolerated.

3.2 Thriving places for people to live

Disruption of exploitation /reduction of risk posed by those identified as perpetrators of exploitation of children

3.3 The best start for Cambridgeshire’s children

Disruption of exploitation /reduction of risk posed by those identified as perpetrators of exploitation of children

4. SIGNIFICANT IMPLICATIONS

**3.1 Resource Implications
N/A**

**3.2 Procurement/Contractual/Council Contract Procedure Rules
Implications
N/A**

**3.3 Statutory, Legal and Risk Implications
N/A**

**3.4 Equality and Diversity Implications
N/A**

**3.5 Engagement and Communications Implications
N/A**

**3.6 Localism and Local Member Involvement
N/A**

**3.7 Public Health Implications
N/A**

Source Documents	Location
None	None

