

**REPORT OF THE AVON AND SOMERSET POLICE AND CRIME COMMISSIONER**

**Child Sexual Exploitation Briefing**

**30 October 2014**

**Purpose**

This report provides an update to Panel Members on the PCCs role in overseeing the Constabulary's response to child sexual exploitation (CSE) and to update on recent activity in this area. The responsibility for tackling CSE is a shared one. In order to reflect this, this paper sets out the work the PCC is undertaking in partnership across Avon and Somerset.

**Background**

The PCC has made a commitment to tackling CSE as part of her priority to tackle domestic and sexual abuse, particularly towards women and children within the Police and Crime Plan. Work in this area has been ongoing for some time. The recent publication of the Rotherham report has however brought a national focus onto the issue of CSE and in response to this, the PCC has taken the opportunity to work with the Constabulary and partners to assess where we are locally in terms of our working in this area, reviewing the recommendations coming out of the Rotherham report and using them to refresh and refocus our local approach.

**Rotherham report- local response**

Following the publication of the Rotherham report, the PCC tasked the Constabulary to convene a multi-agency review of CSE. This review took the form of a meeting to which all Local Authorities, Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (LSCBs), Clinical Commissioning Groups (CCGs) and other key partners such as support agencies were invited to send senior, strategic representatives, on the 1<sup>st</sup> October. A representative from the Police and Crime Panel was also invited to attend.

Led by the Constabulary, the review session took partners through the current landscape around CSE in Avon and Somerset and considered in turn the recommendations coming out of Rotherham with a view to considering their impact locally. This provided an opportunity for all partners to look beyond their local boundaries and consider the development of more collaborative approaches across the force area, as well as highlighting any gaps both in terms of strategy and provision of support to victims.

Each of the five LSCBs across Avon and Somerset has established a CSE subgroup which is tasked with the development of a local strategy and ensuring partnership

arrangements are in place to seek to disrupt perpetrators of CSE and provide support to victims. The work of these groups will remain central in taking forward local approaches as they offer established mechanisms for partnership working in relation to CSE.

As part of her oversight role, the PCC regularly meets with all LSCB Chairs to discuss issues of shared priority and concern. Moving forward, the work of the CSE subgroups will be an area of focus for these meetings in order to highlight any gaps in our approach and to collectively share ideas across local authority boundaries. Alongside this, the Constabulary also host an LSCB Consortium which sees the Chairs come together on a quarterly basis to look at collaborative working as well as identifying and tackling issues of concern. The PCC receives regular updates from the Constabulary on the work of the Consortium and is able to feed in as appropriate should issues arise.

Following the review meeting on the 1<sup>st</sup> October, a commitment was made from all partners to establish a force wide, strategic approach to CSE, bringing together all of the work which is currently undertaken locally to develop some core principles which can be adopted by all. This work will be coordinated by the Constabulary, via LSCB structures with the PCC receiving progress reports to ensure effective oversight is maintained. Operational approaches will remain locally tailored in response to need, but it is anticipated that the development of a shared strategic approach will support local areas in ensuring they are best placed to develop effective local responses.

### **Support services for victims**

The PCC previously funded a pilot project in Somerset which saw the Targeted Youth Support team and the YOT develop a package of support for young victims at risk of CSE. This project saw the employment of a dedicated worker and this work has now been mainstreamed into the targeted youth support team to ensure CSE awareness and positive relationships work is available to young people in the area.

Specialist support for victims of CSE is currently offered via the Barnardos BASE project. This project works with young people who are in the midst of exploitation, providing long term, specialist support. Funding for this service is mixed, with the majority coming from Barnardos themselves and Bristol City Council, with the focus of the project being on supporting young people in the Bristol area. Support is also available in South Gloucestershire where the Local Authority provides funding via a service level agreement. In all other areas of Avon and Somerset, support is made available via spot purchase arrangements for a small number of young people who are identified as being particularly vulnerable and in need of support. Over the past year, due to an increase in demand linked to a number of significant operations, the Constabulary have also committed funding to BASE to allow the service to continue to provide support to victims in these cases.

As part of a scoping exercise carried out by the OPCC, it has been identified that there is a significant funding gap for this type of specialist support for victims. The OPCC are seeking to work with other commissioners, including Local Authorities and CCGs, to highlight this gap and seek to explore any opportunities to work collaboratively in order to ensure adequate support is available. Other avenues will also be explored such as any opportunities provided by national funding streams. Whilst this work takes place, it should be noted by the panel that provision of support to victims remains an area of concern to the PCC and one which she is keen to work with partners in seeking to address.

### **Recommendations**

Panel members to consider raising the issue of CSE within their respective areas and organisations in order to satisfy themselves that their local response is robust, highlighting the gaps in provision of support to victims and exploring any opportunities for collaborative working or pooled budget arrangements.

Panel members may also wish to consider the oversight role of the PCC in this area of work and request that updates are provided to future meetings of the Panel as work in this area progresses.

### **Contact Officer**

Amy Hurst

Youth Champion and Health & Wellbeing Officer

01275 816096

[Amy.Hurst@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk](mailto:Amy.Hurst@avonandsomerset.pnn.police.uk)