

# People Scrutiny Commission 19<sup>th</sup> February 2024



**Title:** Children and Families Services Response to Extrafamilial Harm

**Officer Presenting Report:** Fiona Tudge – Director, Children and Families Services

## **Recommendations:**

For People’s Scrutiny Commission to note the report and make comment on the services’ current provision and plans to safeguard children from extra-familial harm

## **Summary:**

- In 2023 Bristol City Council Children and Families Services received 1,385 contacts related to extra-familial harm, an 18.4% increase on the previous year
- Of these contact 46% were allocated to a social worker for further investigation or for safeguarding and support and 10% were allocated to the early help teams. This is 8% higher rate than our contracts across all contact types demonstrating that the service is taking our duty to safeguard children through statutory pathways seriously
- In 2023 97 children were open to a social worker due to child criminal exploitation and 118 children were open to a social worker due to child sexual exploitation across the year with an increasing rate of children being identified as victims of exploitation as compared to the previous year
- 27% of children are victims of exploitation have an EHCP and school inclusion remains a key area for improvement to support children to be safeguarded and recover from exploitation
- Bristol have launched a new Strategic Partnership with Barnardo’s to tackle exploitation and provide recovery services. A key aim of the partnership is to attract funding and investment in specialist interventions in the city
- Currently there is capacity to offer specialist support services to around half of the children open to children’s services who are victims of exploitation. These are delivered through Barnardo’s. Children who are unable to receive this support are support by their social worker and other services such as substance misuse teams and Safe Link ISVA services
- In the year 2022/23 Safer Options reached a total of 1,283 children, with 793 worked with via multi-agency detached youth work. The funding for serious violence prevention programmes through the Violence Reduction Partnerships ends in March 2025 and there is not currently government commitment on whether this will continue. Further work is required by the partnership to develop sustainability plans.
- Improvements in oversight of children’s plans by service managers have been made since OFSTED however further work is needed to develop the available performance reporting for the safeguarding partnership and senior leadership as part of the data and insight’s programme of work