

Independent Inquiry to Child Sexual Abuse (IICSA)



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- IICSA was established in 2014 as a Public Inquiry to look into multiple child sexual abuse failures through a series of investigations
- IICSA has carried out 19 separate investigations since it was established and it will close in March following publication of its last report
- It is chaired by Professor Alexis Jay supported by 3 panel members and a legal team
- 14 of the 15 inquiries had a focus on a particularly organisation or sector linked to specific allegations.
- Inquiry into organised networks was designed to provide a more contemporary picture of practice through the lens of 6 local exemplars

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In July 2019 IICSA launched an investigation into institutional responses to the sexual exploitation of children by organised networks.

The Inquiry chose 6 geographical areas at random to participate.

Durham

St Helens

Tower Hamlets

Swansea

Bristol

Warwickshire

Scope of this Inquiry

The 8 themes chosen to investigate were:

1. Disruption and profiling
2. Empathy and concern for child victims
3. Risk assessment, protection from harm and outcomes for children
4. Missing children, Return Home Interviews, Looked after children
5. Male Victims
6. Children with a disability
7. Partnership working on child sexual exploitation (CSE)
8. Audit, review and performance improvement

Report was published on 1st February 2022

Methodology and scale

Durham County Council, Durham Constabulary and Durham Safeguarding Children Board were asked to provide a narrative and specific examples to over 200 questions about the arrangements in each organisation across the partnership for children who were victims or at risk of CSE.

Time period of practice covered April 2017 – March 2019

Initial submission of the minutes of the Multi-Agency CSE Meeting (over 150 individual children discussed over the 2 year period)

ICSA report focussed on case studies and evidence submitted for 5 children, 4 girls & 1 boy. 3 of the children were Looked after Children.

IICSA Headline Recommendations

- **Recommendation 1:** Aggravation of offences relating to the sexual exploitation of children – Government should amend the Sentencing Act 2020
- **Recommendation 2:** Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit – Department for Education (DfE) should publish an enhanced version of the Toolkit
- **Recommendation 3:** Government guidance on child sexual exploitation – DfE should review and update its guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation
- **Recommendation 4:** Categorisation of risk and harm – DfE should clarify through updated guidance how LA's categorise risk and harm in their assessment process
- **Recommendation 5:** Child sexual exploitation data – Police and LA's should improve data collection to inform problem profiling and commissioning of services
- **Recommendation 6:** Unregulated placements – DfE should ban the use of unregulated placements for 16-17 year olds who have experienced or are at increased risk of CSE

Learning Themes for Durham

- Understand the scale of CSE – defining networks – problem profiling - data
- Meeting the needs of particular groups of sexually exploited children – CLA, disabilities, LGBTQ+, boys and young men, BAME,
- Blaming child victims - Use of language and approaches
- Risk assessment, protection from harm and outcomes for children
- Investigations when Children who go missing from home/care and service
- Disruption, Investigation and prosecution
- Partnership Working – schools, health, cross border working

Improvement and Investment since April 2019 (1)

- 2 x additional Child exploitation interventions workers to ensure all victims of CSE receive specialist support and interventions
- 2 x additional Police Detectives to lead on disruption, intelligence gathering and target perpetrators, building profiles of offenders and identification of networks
- 3 x missing from home Co-ordinators to form a dedicated team to provide independent return to home interviews, sharing intel with Police
- 1 x dedicated partnership data Analyst
- Reviewed the identification, screening and assessment tools in line with national best practice

Improvement and Investment since April 2019 (2)

- National tracker to be able to track the young people we are most worried about, which can be shared with other partnership areas
- Strategic and operational links with specialist LGBTQ+ services for victims of CSE
- Investment and implementation of a new Children's Services case management System (Liquid Logic) includes a dedicated CSE space to record and provide management oversight
- Daily Dynamic meeting between Children's Service and Police for children who go missing to formulate responses and share information/risks
- weekly multi-agency screening meeting to discuss any child in Durham where there are concerns about exploitation

Improvement and Investment since April 2019 (3)

- Agreed dataset so both Children's Services and Police and the wider partnership have a better understanding of what we are measuring, and what this is telling us
- Review of procedures and implementation of enhanced criteria for Strategy meetings when children are at risk of CSE or going missing
- Renewed strategy and delivery planning - inclusion all forms of exploitation
- Creation of a "language that cares" document co-produced by young people in Durham to help all professionals to understand the impact of victim blaming language.
- Development for a performance and insight sub group – Strategic CEG
- Deep Dive review into children at risk of child exploitation who have SEND or LD

New Service Developments (1)

- Investment of a dedicated specialist Adolescent Safeguarding and Exploitation Social Work Team (in operation from January 2022) 6 x Social Workers and a Team manager
- Roll out of Trauma Informed Care Approach Training – including how to create the conditions and deal with children making a disclosure of harm.
- Toolkit, guidance & Training to support the assessment of victims of exploitation in line with research from the National Contextualised Safeguarding Unit led by Professor Carlene Smith from Durham University
- Durham University specialist support offer into the PRU's

New Service Developments (2)

- Contextualised Safeguarding model – looking at how we work together with community stake holders to safeguard places and spaces in County Durham
- Development of a Regional Children’s Services Contextualised Safeguarding Group
- Feedback from Deep dive into CE and SEND – developing additional specialist support to our Pupil Referral Unit

IICSA report next steps

- Strategic leads from the DSCP Strategic CEG to review all points raised in the report (not just in relation to Durham) and compile an audit and quality assurance matrix
- Senior Safeguarding Leads from across the partnership will be asked to form a multi-agency child exploitation review group to review all points raised in the report
- Multi-agency child exploitation review group will report back findings and any recommendations to the DSCP Strategic CEG.
- Regular reporting into the DSCP executive to provide governance, oversight and progress

Questions

