

**Joint Safer and Stronger  
Communities and Children and  
Young People's  
Overview and Scrutiny  
Committee**



**25 July 2016**

**ERASE Team Update –  
Working with agencies to help  
keep young people safe from  
abuse**

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**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 To provide an update about the progress of Durham and Darlington in tackling CSE under the ERASE brand.

**Background**

- 2 The profile of sexual exploitation has grown exponentially over the last five years. In March 2015, HM Government released “Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation”. The report sets out a range of measures aimed at preventing CSE through improved joint working and information sharing, better protection of vulnerable children, stopping offenders and supporting victims and survivors. In recognition of the harm caused to victims, CSE was elevated to a national threat with a requirement to adopt the PURSUE approach to combat it.
- 3 The national action plan for tackling child sexual exploitation was first published in November 2011 with work in Durham & Darlington including developing multiagency policies and practice which were launched in 2012. As is the case nationally, cases of CSE increase as knowledge and identification improves. Locally we acknowledge the need to tackle all forms of sexual exploitation not just of children but also of young and/or vulnerable adults.
- 4 CSE robs children of their childhood and can have a serious long-term impact on every aspect of their lives, health and education. It damages the lives of families and carers, which can lead to family break-ups. Sexual exploitation of children and young people is completely unacceptable. We do however know that CSE doesn't stop at 18, with many young adults and vulnerable adults also requiring help and support.

- 5 There are strong links between sexual exploitation and those young people who are reported missing from home. Recent analysis conducted by Police Research Teams (Missing from Home Summary Report – Early Findings February 2015) highlighted a range of risks associated with missing including sexual exploitation, mental health, and alcohol or drugs issues with motivation for missing including family conflict or relationship issues. The introduction of the absent category has generated debate nationally around how best police and other agencies ensure all missing and absent episodes are dealt with effectively; including gaining intelligence, around locations and suspects; in addition to protecting people and reducing or ending their missing episodes.
- 6 A multiagency CSE audit finalised in 2015 identified that policies and practice within Durham and Darlington protect victims and identify and stop offenders; however more needs to be done to promote intelligence sharing, proactive identification and disruption of offenders including a robust case overview to ensure in all cases procedures are followed. Initial missing audits conducted by Audit and Inspection around Missing Cases identified that more could be done to identify and problem solve around missing and absent cases.
- 7 In 2015, Dr Joe Sullivan, Mentor Forensics ([www.mentorforensics.com](http://www.mentorforensics.com)) in association with Durham Constabulary's Public Protection Unit (PPU), provided a number of half day inputs to hundreds of officers and other agencies around Intervene to Protect a Child (IPC). The training resulted in several days of action where those who posed a risk to children were identified by intelligence techniques to ensure young people were safeguarded. This resulted in national media interest and numerous contacts from other police forces both nationally and internationally.
- 8 Existing national good practice and local audit and analysis, recommend that we pilot additional resources to tackle CSE. They would be effectively performance managed by existing multiagency and force structures via the Local Safeguarding Boards subgroups, the Missing and Exploited Groups (MEG) and the constabulary threat and risk processes. The team would support and complement existing resources allocated to tackling CSE which includes dedicated CSE workers employed by Barnardos. This was agreed at both Strategic MEGs by the chair, Det Supt Paul Goundry and highlighted and agreed at Durham Domestic Abuse Sexual Violence Executive Group and Darlington Vulnerability Group.

### **Aim of the ERASE Team**

- 9 The aim of the ERASE team is to ensure the appropriate identification, prioritisation and management of both those at risk of harm and those who may cause that harm. To ensure risk is understood, people are safeguarded and suspects are disrupted and held to account for their actions. The team:

- (a) Identify and monitor young people at risk of or subject to sexual exploitation to ensure an effective multiagency response to safeguard them is in place as documented within Local Safeguarding Children Procedures.
- (b) Identify and monitor all missing and absent cases reported to the police, and where possible, to ensure those who go missing are provided with an appropriate multiagency response including early intervention.
- (c) Escalate and be part of the problem solving around cross-border offenders, victims and processes.
- (d) Identify and monitor the response to suspects and offenders associated with sexual exploitation or causing missing episodes, harbouring those missing or causing other harm to them whilst missing.
- (e) Support ongoing work to identify common locations associated with missing and sexual exploitation and to ensure an effective problem solving approach is taken.
- (f) Identify suspects, people at risk and locations and ensure they are escalated to the appropriate meeting structure where they can be prioritised via risk of harm and effective resources allocated to them.
- (g) Ensure the effective running of fortnightly CSE meetings in Durham ensuring attendance, documented and circulated actions and consistent case quality. The team provide full administrative support and chair the meetings alleviating the work load on area teams.

### **Achievements of the ERASE Team**

- 10 The ERASE team and website: [www.eraseabuse.org](http://www.eraseabuse.org) were launched on 12 January 2016 and received numerous positive news stories. A new media and marketing plan was agreed in June 2016, which will promote the website and include the production of a quarterly newsletter for professionals.
- 11 Numerous successes of the team have attributed to a decrease in repeat missing children reported to the police and ensuring the appropriate placement of vulnerable children from other local authority areas.
- 12 The team have also worked with a range of agencies to tackle perpetrators and support children at risk of CSE.
- 13 A multiagency steering group to monitor the implementation and focus of the ERASE team has met in November with quarterly meetings planned.

- 14 The team has supported the identification of organised exploitation and provides tactical support to current live investigations in the Durham area.
- 15 The team recently hosted three half days sessions around practice improvement which was attended by over 300 delegates from a range of agencies.
- 16 The team have hosted several Young People's Conferences which aim to raise awareness about CSE, missing and healthy relationships to Year 8 and Year 9 pupils. Two more events in Durham and Darlington are planned.

### **Next Steps**

- 17 An interim review of the ERASE team is underway and led by Prof Simon Hackett, as the ERASE team pilot ends in September, the review will inform decision makers if to continue funding the team
- 18 A second multi-agency CSE audit is underway and will be utilised within the interim review.
- 19 The team are now working with neighbourhood police teams to ensure every child who goes missing and is likely to go missing again is provided with focused support and problem solving. The team are also working closely with all the children's homes in the area to reduce the demand they cause to police teams.
- 20 It is acknowledged that CSE does not end at 18 and a task and finish group has been created to understand how ERASE can support adults who are sexually exploited.
- 21 More needs to be done to raise awareness to young people and the community. A number of primary school sessions are planned, and a media and marketing group meet regularly, but more needs to be done to educate and engage young people and their parents or carers.
- 22 Durham Police have secured two years' worth of proof of concept funding to pilot the child advocacy centre model, which was highlighted as best practice by Anne Longfield OBE, Children's Commissioner for England. This heralds an exciting time where Durham is a national pioneer ensuring child focus is at the heart of our response.

- 23 In May 2016, Ofsted published Durham's Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers. Its findings into how we tackle CSE stated: 'The arrangements for children and young people who go missing and those at risk of child sexual exploitation are good. The local authority is working effectively with partners to implement strategies and raise awareness through the Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation (ERASE) team. As a result, the number of children and young people who go missing has decreased. However, more work is needed to use the analysis from return home interviews to further strengthen practice.' There is still more work to do to ensure intelligence from return home interviews and intelligence sharing from other agencies is improved and will be the focus of the ERASE team in the next three months.

### **Recommendation**

- 24 Members are asked to note information contained within the report and presentation and comment accordingly.

### **Background Paper(s)**

- 25 None

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**Appendix 1: Implications**

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**Finance – None**

**Staffing – None**

**Risk - None**

**Equality and Diversity / Public Sector Equality Duty – None**

**Accommodation - None**

**Crime and Disorder – None**

**Human Rights – None**

**Consultation – None**

**Procurement – None**

**Disability Issues – None**

**Legal Implications – None**