

**Overview and Scrutiny Review,  
Cybercrime**

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**Report of Lorraine O'Donnell, Director of Transformation and Partnerships**

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**Purpose of the Report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to present the findings, conclusions and recommendations of the Safer and Stronger Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee review report on Cybercrime attached at appendix 2.

**Background**

- 2 The Committee has a role to scrutinise work of the Safe Durham Partnership. Members agreed to undertake review activity looking at work in relation to cybercrime with a focus on partnership work being undertaken to prevent young people becoming in engaged in cybercrime activity.
- 3 At a national level, the National Crime Agency (NCA) are leading on a number of initiatives to prevent young people getting involved in cybercrime. Locally the Safe Durham Partnership's Cybercrime Task group identified that locally, whilst work is very much active with victims of cybercrime, preventing young people becoming engaged in cybercrime was identified as a gap within their activity.
- 4 This is a developing area and the review provides an opportunity to raise awareness of this issue and seek to identify improvements to reduce the risk of young people becoming involved in Cybercrime.
- 5 The review has gathered evidence through desktop research, meetings with officers from the Safe Durham Partnership, University of Sunderland, North East Regional Specialist Operations Unit and undertaken focus group activity. Evidence and findings within the report are set within the context to preventing young people being vulnerable to getting involved in cybercrime activity and to seek more positive use of their skills.

**Conclusions**

- 6 Evidence gathered throughout the review has highlighted the potential impact of cybercrime or a cyber attack and that this is not a victimless crime. The average age of suspects arrested or cautioned by the NCA for cybercrime is 17 years old. Whilst it was acknowledged that is a minority of young people who commit these offences, throughout the review anecdotal evidence was provided by Members, Officers and Police Cadets of awareness to incidents of hacking by young people.

- 7 It was highlighted that the motivations for undertaking this activity are not always financial. Some see it as a challenge and are unaware they are committing a criminal offence. In addition, offenders perceive the risk of being caught was low and there was a limited understanding of the consequences of the law and committing an offence.
- 8 There is a structured approach to tackling cybercrime and contributing to the delivery of the Government's National Cyber Security Strategy at a national, regional and local level. The review is also timely with consultation on priorities for the Safe Durham Partnership Plan. The Committee fully support cybercrime as an objective within the plan.
- 9 At a national level there is a wide range of educational resources and engagement activity available to schools. It is positive that within the past year, a small number of schools in the county have participated in the Cyber Security Challenge UK event. An area for development could be to have a co-ordinated approach to the use of educational resources and consideration should also be given to the development of a cyber-safety event and campaign in Durham.
- 10 Furthermore, effective provision of careers advice could lead to encouragement in using cyber skills more positively for career opportunities within cyber security industry. There was information provided that engagement between the Safe Durham Partnership and County Durham Economic Partnership had just begun with regard to cybersecurity apprenticeships within the County.
- 11 The review's key findings focus on strategic context looking at national and local approaches to cybercrime and prevention through education and awareness, apprenticeships and careers and approaches to prevent young people from remaining in cybercrime activity and identifies recommendations for the Safe Durham Partnership and Council. The Safe Durham Partnership is asked to consider including prevention of young people becoming cybercrime offenders within the Safe Durham Partnership Plan priority objective of Cybercrime, engaging with young people and targeted groups through focus group sessions, carousel events and campaign activity. Furthermore the Safe Durham Partnership is asked to work with the County Durham Economic Partnership in exploring opportunities for the development of IT/Cybersecurity apprenticeships.
- 12 The Council's Children & Young People's Service is asked to note the availability of education and awareness resources and working with partners within the Safe Durham Partnership's Cybercrime task group consider development of a co-ordinated approach within schools to raise awareness to the consequences of forms of hacking, the Computer Misuse Act and use of careers advice to promote skills in a more positive way.

## Recommendations

13 Cabinet is asked to:

(a) note the review's recommendations:

- (i) That the Safe Durham Partnership Board note the content of this report and include as an action the prevention of people becoming cybercrime offenders within the Safe Durham Partnership Plan priority objective of Cybercrime.
- (ii) That the Safe Durham Partnership Cybercrime task and finish group give consideration to holding further focus group sessions with Durham Constabulary's Police Cadets and with young people with a specific interest in coding or programming to improve young people's awareness to the Computer Misuse Act and its implications.
- (iii) That the Safe Durham Partnership Cybercrime task group note findings of an anticipated report from the University of Bath, NCA and Research Autism into exploring any links between autism and cybercrime and consider any actions as recommended.
- (iv) That the Children and Young People's Services note the availability of education and awareness resources and working with partners within the Safe Durham Partnership's Cybercrime task group consider development of a co-ordinated approach within schools to raise awareness to the consequences of forms of hacking, the Computer Misuse Act and use of careers advice to promote skills in a more positive way.
- (v) That the Safe Durham Partnership Cybercrime Task Group explore the feasibility of a cyber-safety engagement event with schools similar to the Partnership's Wisedrive/Safety Carousel event of which awareness to the consequences of the Computer Misuse Act and hacking is one of the workshops.
- (vi) That the Safe Durham Partnership Cybercrime Task Group give consideration to undertaking a campaign to promote the risks of undertaking cybercrime activity and to explore the viability of producing a video resource that could together with the NCA Cyberchoices videos be shown within schools and at events.
- (vii) That the Safe Durham Partnership explore opportunities for the development of IT/Cybersecurity apprenticeships within organisations and companies within County Durham with the County Durham Economic Partnership.

- (b) Agree that the scrutiny review report on Cybercrime is presented to the Safe Durham Partnership Board.
- (c) Respond within the six month period for a systematic review of the recommendations.

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**Contact:**

**Tom Gorman, Corporate Scrutiny and Performance Manager    Tel: 03000 268027**  
**Jonathan Slee, Overview and Scrutiny Officer                    Tel: 03000 268148**

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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 –** The report includes information that aims to contribute to the Altogether Safer element of the Council Plan and Safe Durham Partnership Plan.

**Human Rights – None**

**Consultation – None**

**Procurement – None**

**Disability Issues – None**

**Legal Implications – None.**