

**To the Chair and Members of the
CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY PANEL**

**Responding to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Doncaster: Assurance Report by
the Independent Chair of Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board**

Relevant Cabinet Member(s)	Wards Affected	Key Decision
Councillor Nuala Fennelly lead Member for Children's Services Councillor Tony Corden, Support to lead Member for Children's Services with a focus on Safeguarding.	All	None

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. The Panel will be asked to consider an assurance report from the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) in respect of the progress made in responding to child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Doncaster. The report, which will be circulated separately to Members of the Panel prior to the date of the meeting, has been prepared by the Independent Chair of DSCB, and will cover the contribution made by all partner agencies with responsibilities for safeguarding children and young people from CSE in Doncaster.
2. In line with the recent national findings by OFSTED in its thematic inspection of local responses to CSE, the Independent Chair's report presents a mixed picture of the way in which DSCB and partner agencies are responding to CSE in Doncaster. There are a number of positive developments in the current arrangements and there remains a number of areas for improvement, which are incorporated into the CSE Action Plan coordinated by DSCB. A copy of the Action Plan will be appended to the Independent Chair's report, circulated separately.

EXEMPT INFORMATION

3. The assurance report to be circulated separately may contain exempt information, and if so, the public and press may be excluded from the meeting during consideration of the relevant issues.

RECOMMENDATIONS

4. The Panel is asked to consider and comment on:
 - a) the Independent Chair's assurance report; and
 - b) the Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board CSE Action Plan

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

5. The issue of Child Sexual Exploitation has very recently been raised as a key safeguarding issue in a number of areas around the country and particularly in South Yorkshire. Consideration of this issue at Overview and Scrutiny provides elected Members with the chance to question the Council, agencies and other relevant bodies to understand and identify the systems in place to protect the children and young people of Doncaster. This holding to account role will seek to ensure there is a transparency around the current arrangements and will allow Members to articulate and represent the concerns of the public in seeking any specific assurances or improvements around this issue.

BACKGROUND

6. CSE is not a new phenomenon but over the past decade national reports along with high profile investigations and criminal trials in Derby, Rochdale and Oxford have led to a higher level of awareness of the extent and scale of such abuse. There is now a better understanding of the experiences of victims and those at risk, and greater knowledge of the ways in which perpetrators exploit children and young people. It is recognised that CSE can happen anywhere and that coordinated local arrangements are required to prevent CSE, protect and support victims, and to pursue and prosecute perpetrators.
7. The strategic review of the DSCB in January, 2014 led to a stronger focus on CSE. Within the DSCB Business Plan 2014-17, CSE is identified as part of Strategic Priority 3 as follows:-

“Doncaster has effective arrangements for responding to key safeguarding risks (particularly child sexual exploitation, missing children and neglect, promoting early identification and support to prevent escalation of risk to keep children safe”

“To reduce the likelihood of children and young people being sexually exploited and also to protect those who are involved by disrupting and bringing to account those who commit this form of child abuse”
8. As a result, the Doncaster CSE Strategy and Action Plan have been and updated and arrangements for their coordination through the Board's Sexual Exploitation and Runaways Sub-Group has been strengthened.

9. Statutory guidance published in August 2009 ‘*Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children*’ sets out the responsibilities of Local Safeguarding Children Boards, working with local authorities, police, the NHS, schools and other partner agencies, to ensure that there is a coordinated local response to prevent CSE in their area. The recent report into CSE in Rotherham by Professor Alexis Jay (August 2014), and OFSTED’s thematic inspection report ‘*The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn’t happen here could it*’ (November, 2014) both raise questions about the extent to which local authorities and partner agencies are meeting their statutory responsibilities to safeguard children and young people from CSE.

10. Doncaster MBC has recognised the importance of such concerns and, at a meeting of Full Council on September 25th 2014 resolved that:

‘ the independently chaired Doncaster Safeguarding Children’s Board undertakes an assessment of the recommendations contained in Professor Jay’s report and benchmarks practice in Doncaster against all of the recommendations contained in the report, identifying any additional improvements that should be made by all agencies involved in keeping children safe’;

11. The assurance report from the Independent Chair of DSCB will provide a response to that resolution. The report will outline the national policy context for responding to CSE, statutory roles and responsibilities of DSCB and local partners, and an evaluation of current progress in Doncaster based on ten key assurance questions. These assurance questions provide a framework for the Panel and all Members to scrutinise and challenge the work in Doncaster to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded from CSE.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

12. There are no specific options to consider within this report. It provides an opportunity for the Panel to discuss the assurance report and CSE Action Plan, and to make any recommendations for consideration by DSCB or individual partner agencies in Doncaster with statutory responsibility for safeguarding children and young people from CSE.

IMPACT ON COUNCIL’S KEY OBJECTIVES

	Priority	Implications
1	<p>We will support a strong economy where businesses can locate, grow and employ local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> 	<p>The Overview and Scrutiny function has the potential to impact upon all of the council’s key objectives by holding decision makers to account.</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
2	<p>We will help people to live safe, healthy, active and independent lives.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	<p>Responding to CSE is a key aspect of effective safeguarding of children and young people by the council and partner agencies. CSE can have a devastating impact on social integration, economic well-being and life chances of young people. It is also has a profoundly damaging effect on families and communities.</p>
3	<p>We will make Doncaster a better place to live, with cleaner, more sustainable communities.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Creating Jobs and Housing</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Safeguarding our Communities</i> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Bringing down the cost of living</i> 	
4	<p>We will support all families to thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
5	<p>We will deliver modern value for money services.</p>	
6	<p>We will provide strong leadership and governance, working in partnership.</p>	<p>Responding to CSE is a key area where effective partnership working is required.</p>

RISKS AND ASSUMPTIONS

13. There are no specific risks and assumptions with this report, they will be addressed separately in the report to be circulated. The Panel may wish to discuss and identify any potential risks with current arrangements.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

14. The Council's Constitution states that subject to matters being referred to it by the Full Council, or the Executive and any timetables laid down by those references Overview and Scrutiny Management Committee will determine its own Work

Programme (Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rule 6a).

15. Specific legal implications and advice will be given with any reports when Overview and Scrutiny have received them as items for consideration.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

16. The budget for the support of the Overview and Scrutiny function 2014/15 is not affected by this report however, work undertaken needs to take place within agreed budgets. There are no specific financial implications arising from this report and will be addressed separately in the report to be circulated.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

17. The Overview and Scrutiny Panel may wish to give consideration to the extent to which the Council has complied with its Public Equality Duty and given due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, promote equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different communities.

CONSULTATION

18. No consultation has been undertaken for this assurance report, it will be addressed separately in the report to be circulated.

CONTACT OFFICER AND REPORT AUTHOR

19. John Harris, Independent Chair, Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board

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Background Papers:

Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation; Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children (August 2009)

www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance

The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could it? (OFSTED 2014)

Professor Alexis Jay OBE, *Independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham (1997-2013)* (Rotherham Borough Council August 2014)

www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham

Eleanor Brazil

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