

**To the Chair and Members of the
COUNCIL**

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

1. Council is asked to note the assurance report (“the 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, was prepared by the Independent Chair of DSCB, and covers 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 is appended to the Report.
3. The Report has been presented to the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel and their comments are attached to this report for noting, at Appendix D.

EXEMPT REPORT

4. Not applicable.

RECOMMENDATIONS

5. Council is asked to note:-
 - (1) The Independent Chair’s Assurance Report, as attached at Appendix A;
 - (2) The Doncaster Safeguarding Children Board CSE Action Plan, as attached at Appendix B; and
 - (3) The Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel response to the report, as attached at Appendices C and D.

WHAT DOES THIS MEAN FOR THE CITIZENS OF DONCASTER?

6. 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. This report provides elected Members with an update as to the work being undertaken in Doncaster in relation to this key issue.

BACKGROUND

7. 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.
8. 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”
9. As a result, the Doncaster CSE Strategy and Action Plan have been updated and arrangements for their coordination through the Board’s Sexual Exploitation and Runaways Sub-Group has been strengthened.
10. 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.
11. 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’;

12. The assurance report from the Independent Chair of DSCB provides a response to that resolution. The report outlines 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 and provides a framework for future scrutiny and challenge to the work in Doncaster to ensure that children and young people are safeguarded from CSE.

OPTIONS CONSIDERED

13. There are no specific options to consider within this report. The report provides an opportunity for the Council to consider action taken to date 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.

REASONS FOR RECOMMENDED OPTION

14. The report provides an opportunity for the Council to consider action taken to date 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 THE COUNCIL’S KEY PRIORITIES

15.

	Priority	Implications
	<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>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Be a strong voice for our veterans</i>• <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster’s vital services</i>	
	<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 Child Sexual Exploitation (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>

	<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> 	
	<p>We will support all families to thrive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Mayoral Priority: Protecting Doncaster's vital services</i> 	
	<p>We will deliver modern value for money services.</p>	
	<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

16. Members will note in Appendices C and D that the Children and Young People Overview & Scrutiny Panel were satisfied with the assurances provided in response to their questions and concerns about the Report. It was recognised however that the system established to tackle CSE was in its infancy and the Panel was pleased that the Response and Referral team was now fully resourced and hoped that measures put in place will continue to have a positive impact.

LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

17. By Direction of the Secretary of State for Education the Council has transferred the delivery of its Children's Safeguarding functions to Doncaster Children's Trust. However, the Council retains statutory responsibility for the effective delivery of these duties.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

18. There are no specific financial implications contained within the body of this report.

HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS

19. There are no specific Human Resources implications contained within the body of this report.

TECHNOLOGY IMPLICATIONS

20. There are no specific Technology implications contained within the body of this report.

EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

21. Section 149 Equality Act 2010 contains the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED). This obliges public authorities, when exercising their functions, to have 'due regard' to the need to:
- a. Eliminate discrimination, harassment and victimization and other conduct which the Act prohibits;
 - b. Advance equality of opportunity; and
 - c. Foster good relations between people who share relevant protected characteristics and those who do not.
22. The relevant protected characteristics under the Equality Act are age, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnerships, but only in respect of eliminating unlawful discrimination. The relevant characteristics in relation to this issue are sex, age and race. The Report notes that perpetrators of CSE do not appear to be drawn from any particular minority ethnic group or community.

CONSULTATION

23. This report has significant implications in terms of the following:

Procurement		Crime & Disorder	x
Human Resources		Human Rights & Equalities	
Buildings, Land and Occupiers		Environment & Sustainability	
ICT		Capital Programme	

BACKGROUND PAPERS

24. None.

REPORT AUTHOR & CONTRIBUTORS

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