

Case study

Child Sexual Exploitation

February 2017

Findings from Ofsted Joint Targeted Area Inspections

In September 2016, Ofsted published a [themed report](#) on the findings of the five joint targeted area inspections (JTAs) that focused on child sexual exploitation. The report identified many areas of effective practice across agencies, including:

- the importance of mapping child sexual exploitation in each local area
- raising awareness of it
- the various elements of direct work with children to reduce risk and respond to child sexual exploitation
- the indisputable value of the commitment of local leaders to tackling the issues in their local areas

In her [monthly social care commentary](#) in January 2017, Ofsted's National Director, Social Care, Eleanor Schooling highlighted several local authority case studies, which are compiled in this document for reference.

Local Authority Case Studies

Thurrock

Responses to anonymous questionnaires issued by the Thurrock Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) highlighted that the risks to children as young as 8 online were far greater than had previously been recognised by local professionals.

Interactive 'Walk On Line' safeguarding roadshows established as a result have been attended by over 10,000 children since 2014, and consider a broad range of risks to children, including:

- child sexual exploitation
- grooming
- sexting
- going missing
- cyber-bullying
- female genital mutilation
- radicalisation

Children decide how the events are organised and have been involved in developing a specially commissioned play and a DVD on e-safety. Follow-up surveys have provided examples of changed behaviour, for example children have changed their online privacy settings after attending the roadshow.

Hackney

In order to better understand the local profile of offenders and patterns of exploitation Hackney has carried out analysis of the historical behaviour of some children involved in peer-on-peer abuse. A pattern of allegations of previous sexual assault and inappropriate sexualised behaviour was identified, in some cases stemming back to primary school.

The partnership has carried out research to better understand the extent of the issue in Hackney, and developed a programme of work across agencies to work with children as soon as those behaviours emerge, with increasing numbers of children now being referred for support. This not only helps to prevent risk of harm to others, but means that the safeguarding needs of the children who may be harming others can be addressed. Responsibility for inappropriate behaviour is still addressed, but there is an understanding that with peer-on-peer abuse, the young person responsible for the abuse is also likely to have experienced sexual abuse or witnessed the abuse of others. A coordinated, skilled and empathic response is needed from professionals to work sensitively with these children, if they are to be helped.

Calderdale

Calderdale has developed a central record of the most vulnerable children in the area to ensure that a range of risks are identified, including those missing from education, those not receiving their full-time educational entitlement, those who are known to go missing from home or care and those at risk of sexual exploitation. The record also incorporates information on other known risk factors, such as special educational needs, whether children are known to the youth offending team and whether there is any risk of radicalisation. The record is updated on a daily basis and can be accessed by the police, children's social care and the head of learning, allowing information to be shared in a timely way, while each child on the central record has a key worker.

Timely sharing of this range of information means that as risk changes, agencies can respond quickly to provide appropriate support to children. This means that, as risk changes, it can be addressed quickly and children can be supported appropriately..

Rochdale

The Rochdale 'Sunrise team' is well established and pivotal to how the local authority, police and health services work together to respond to sexual exploitation.

The team's multi-agency meetings share information about the risk of exploitation on a daily basis so that children at risk are identified early and discussed, and information about offenders and potential offenders is shared. This results in swift and robust action planning to reduce risk and support successful disruption techniques.

This team functions well because they know their children well, thanks to consistent and meaningful engagement with children and families. For example, an experienced family worker provides intensive support to families, sometimes visiting one family three or four times a week or offering short-term intervention when required.

Bury

In Bury, each child at risk of child sexual exploitation is allocated an independent reviewing officer (IRO) who has been employed as the dedicated child sexual exploitation lead. The IRO chairs the child sexual exploitation strategy meetings and the subsequent reviews, providing an additional level of scrutiny and a level of independence from direct frontline practice that strengthens Bury's work.



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