

## **SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MENTAL HEALTH AND WELLBEING INCLUDING SUICIDE AND SELF HARM**

### **CHILDREN'S SOCIAL CARE**

Stockton on Tees Borough Council; Children's Services Strategy 2017-2020 highlights the importance of emotional health and wellbeing:

'this is a major issue for our young people and we know we have problems around their ability to access support. Self-harm rates are too high and our schools report increasing levels of anxiety, low mood and depression as well as more complex mental health issues. We also know that the emotional health and wellbeing of children is a major concern for our parents.'

Research continually tells us that certain individuals and groups are more at risk of developing mental health problems than others. These risks can relate to the child themselves, to their family or to their community or life events. One group of particularly vulnerable children are those generally aged between 13-17 years who have experienced bereavement or loss, have low self-esteem or self-confidence, are a young carer or lack a strong positive peer group and who may have experienced abuse/neglect (Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) 2011). A number of these issues are often identified in those children who go missing or who are at risk of or are being sexually exploited.

'Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact: it can also occur through the use of technology' (Department for Education 2017).

The process of CSE often involves a stage of grooming in which a child might receive something (such as a mobile phone, clothes, drugs or alcohol, attention or affection) prior to, or as a result of performing sexual activities or having sexual activities performed on them. Although every case is different, there are different models of grooming.

CSE may occur through the use of technology without the child's consent or immediate recognition: for example through being persuaded to post sexual images over the internet or via mobile phone. CSE is often conducted with actual violence or the threat of violence. This may be threats towards the child, her or his family and may prevent the child from disclosing the abuse, or exiting the cycle of exploitation. In some cases the child may be so confused by the process that they do not perceive what is happening to them as abuse but rather describe it as being in a 'loving relationship'.

One of the priorities of Stockton's Local Children Safeguarding Board is to create an environment where CSE is identified, prevented and challenged. Collectively with the other Tees Wide Safeguarding Children Boards, Stockton's vision is to ensure that children, young people and their families whose lives are effected by CSE receive a high level of support as well as protection and that suspected perpetrators are held accountable for their actions and where possible brought to justice.

The Tees wide and local arrangements to support this vision have been highly commended in various recent inspections – Single Assessment Framework (SIF, OFSTED 2016), Joint Targeted area Inspection (JTAI, 2017), Her Majesty Home Office Inspectorate (HMI, 2017).

Together at both a strategic and operational level the four Local Safeguarding Children Boards and their partner agencies work together to reduce the level of and harm from CSE through the coordination of an agreed strategy (currently being updated) which will focus on:

Prevention  
Protection  
Prosecution  
Public and professional confidence

It is recognised that the early sharing of information is key to providing effective support where there are emerging problems of CSE as recognised by the Department of Education (DFE). Currently intervention in Stockton can be offered through a number of processes/services:

On a Tees Wide level the role of the Strategic Vulnerable, Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (VEMT) multi agency group is to provide strategic operational and commissioning direction across the Cleveland Police area. This group ensures that any learning and information from across the four Boroughs is shared and used to improve services and outcomes for children. This will include consideration of issues involving suspected perpetrators.

On a local level Stockton's strategic multi agency VEMT group ensures that individuals at risk of CSE are identified and action taken to protect those at risk. The group reviews both the strategic and operational approach to the protection of victims and ensures that the information in relation to 'trends' or 'hotspots' is shared at a wider strategic level.

Stockton's VEMT Practitioners Group (VPG) is a multi-agency forum that provides the opportunity for discussion about individuals at risk of or who have experienced sexual exploitation. A Teeswide common referral form has been agreed which includes mapping of interrelations with others who appear to be at risk along with details of any relations with other young people and alleged perpetrators.

The following services are available for children in Stockton and all services are part of Stockton's Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked Group (VPG):

### **CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

Social Workers, Senior Family Workers and Family Workers undertake direct work with children and their families around online safety using a variety of resources including:

- 'Spot the signs' leaflet is for parents and carers around identifying signs of CSE and signposting for support.
- Online training via PACE UK which is 'Keeping them Safe training'. This training is free to complete online and is a good refresher of CSE models and practice.
- 'Wud U' is an interactive tool to use with young people and includes a CEOP (Child Exploitation Online Protection) with good interactive videos.

### **MISSING CHILDREN**

All children who are reported as missing from home or placement are offered a Missing from Home Return Interview/Assessment by an Independent Person. The information gathered during the interview informs whether there is a need for a service to be involved to address any concerns that have been identified.

## YOT & TARGETED SUPPORT TEAMS

All children & young people undertake an Online Safety Initial Assessment with their parents/carers to incorporate addressing their concerns. This is to identify what the children use the internet for, what sites are accessed, and to identify potential risks including cyberbullying, grooming, inappropriate websites, overuse, control over pictures and videos, online reputation when using the internet for the following purposes: Social Media, Online Gaming, Instant Messaging, Chatrooms, Webcams & Use of Mobile Phones.

All children & young people undertake a Social Networking & Sharing Information session. All parents/carers are offered this advice and guidance to support their children with appropriate internet settings in place.

Where any additional support is identified, there are more specific sessions of intervention tailored to address the following risk areas. These are delivered either one to one or in group sessions as appropriate

- Sexting & Selfies
- Cyberbullying
- Gaming & Talking to People
- Online Grooming & Exploitation

## PREVENTIONS, SWITCH & YOUTH SUPPORT & OUTREACH TEAMS

There is a range of offers to meet the needs of secondary prevention and targeted interventions of these teams. The resource used is matched to the individual's circumstances and needs.

Visual film/short film/	Source	Who uses it
Get to know me before I get to know you	Cyrenians/Prison and Probation service	Y/S, SWITCH, Outreach for brief interventions
Ryan's Story	BLAST Project (Boys and Young Men)	Y/S, SWITCH, Outreach for brief interventions
Can I be your friend	Two boys opera – English national opera	Y/S, SWITCH, Outreach for brief interventions
Consequences	CEOP	Preventions, Y/S, SWITCH, Outreach for brief interventions

## Paper resources

- High risk, Low risk, No Risk – Visual aid using risk scenarios
- Traffic Light Decisions – Visual aid to help a young person make safe choices based on risk.
- Yellow Brick Road – To help young people identify support options
- A to Z of relationships - A resource used to identify young person's perception of relationships
- Seven stages of grooming – A resource from the THINK AGAIN BLAST Project pack designed for young men and boys

## ACE SERVICE

The ACE service is an SBC commissioned service, provided by Barnados. The service provides a comprehensive support service to young people under the ages of 18 (or in the case of Children in Our Care up to the age of 25), who may be at risk of or who are being sexually exploited or need support having run away from home or care.

The service also offers advice and support to parents and carers regarding keeping children safe.

## **BLOSSOM PROJECT**

The Blossom project is provided by [A Way Out](#) and is funded through [Big Lottery](#).

The project provides targeted support for young women (aged 16-24 years) in Stockton-on-Tees who are at a significant risk of poor outcomes due to a range of vulnerabilities and complex needs. A key aspiration of the project is to prevent the exploitation of vulnerability and routes into survival sex work.

The Blossom service offers to empower and advocate for young women and support them to:

- Build emotional resilience and social capital;
- Make positive life choices; and
- Realise their aspirations/fulfil their potential.

They look to do this via a range of different activities:

- Outreach;
- Drop-ins;
- Internet Safety Day
- Workshops – ‘Keeping Safe’
- Befriending/mentoring;
- One to one support;
- Therapeutic group work;
- Personal counselling;
- Family mediation;
- Employability and work-related support;
- Mental health and work-related support through rolling programmes;
- Health and fitness programmes; and

Healthy lifestyle and life skills programmes

## **EDUCATION BASED PROVISION**

CSE is included in the plans for the revised risk taking behaviour toolkit for secondary schools.

Health relationships will include in the primary school version of the risk taking behaviour toolkit, which will include preventative CSE measures.

## **CAMHS**

CAMHS aim to improve the Mental Health and Psychological Well-being of all children and young people and deliver their service in Stockton with:

- Group work
- Individual work
- Clinics in community settings
- Joint sessions such as parenting workshops/support
- Advice
- Signposting to the most appropriate service
- Consultation

CAMHS Teams also work in community settings such as Schools, Youth Clubs and Children’s Centres.

Targeted Service can be accessed if families/children have:

- Relationship issues that have on-going impact on daily life
- Mild/moderate anxiety
- Low mood
- Sleeping problems
- Eating difficulties
- Low risk self-harming behaviour
- Low level psychosomatic presentation
- Changes in presenting behaviours

Other areas where early intervention can be offered to vulnerable children and young people not specifically just those at risk of CSE are:

The future in mind programme which is seeking to redesign support for children and young people with emotional health and wellbeing issues, working jointly with the CCG and Hartlepool. Many schools in Stockton are engaging in workforce development training as part of a programme that was rolled out to schools in Autumn 2017.

Learning is an important and crucial factor in shaping the future of services. Following the sad and unexpected deaths of several Stockton school children during 2016/2017 a consultant in Public Health Medicine was invited to Stockton's Local Safeguarding Children Board Learning and Improvement Practice Sub Group (LIPSG) to provide a Public Health perspective on whether these suicides constituted a potential suicide cluster. Following advice and further consideration it was deemed that though tragic there was no evidence to suggest a link between the young people.

A multi-agency learning review was undertaken in relation to one of these young people, incorporating the Public Health England suicide documentation. This review involved the Police, Social Care, Health (CCG, and NTHFT) and a school representative. Learning from this review was shared with relevant multi-agency staff to support further awareness-raising.

A partnership has recently been agreed between CAMHS and our Early Help teams in order to identify at the earliest opportunity those children, young people and families who may require additional specialist services due to mental health and emotional and wellbeing issues. The CAMHS worker is also available to offer advice to staff around appropriate responses to self-harm/suicide.

Stockton's newly formed 'problem solving' panel to support early help and prevention is made up of various partners, including a representative from CAMHS. The purpose is to identify problems at an early stage and to offer interventions as soon as possible in order to prevent an escalation of risks.

Early Help assessments and the Graded Care Profile 2 are both tools used to assist professionals and families in identifying issues at an early stage and if appropriate agree early interventions to prevent risks from escalating.

The Signs of Safety (SoS) model has been launched in Stockton following a number of training and briefing sessions. The model supports increased focus on the family themselves identifying problems through restorative practice techniques, building on relationships to encourage open and frank discussions. It is hoped that by including the family in this way, early identification of any problems including self-harm/suicide will be explored and responded to before the risk escalates.

Moving forward Stockton is looking at a number of options to support Social Workers in achieving better outcomes:

1. A specific post or resource from CAMHS to act as a consultant to support decision making.
2. Recruitment of Social Workers who could access intensive training on psychological techniques. This may involve a secondment to TEWV.
3. Pairing up a number of Social Workers with TEWV staff so that they can learn about therapeutic assessments and interventions to build up specialist expertise within the current Social Care Teams.
4. Develop a tool for Social Workers which will assist in the understanding of presenting Mental Health problems and result in a more effective and appropriate response.

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