

EDUCATION, CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY PANEL

Minutes of the meeting of the Education, Children & Young People Scrutiny Panel held on Tuesday, 18 October 2016 at 6.30 pm at the Civic Offices, Portsmouth

Present

Councillor Will Purvis (in the Chair)

Councillors David Tompkins
Paul Godier

65. Apologies for absence (AI 1)

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Ben Dowling, Suzy Horton and Gemma New.

66. Declarations of Interests (AI 2)

Councillor Godier declared a personal interest as his sister-in-law works for the youth offending team.

67. Minutes of the Previous Meeting - 26 September 2016 (AI 3)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the Education, Children and Young People Scrutiny Panel held on 26 September 2016 be confirmed and signed as a correct record.

68. Review into how well Portsmouth City Council and partners are preventing and dealing with child sexual exploitation (AI 4)

The Chair invited everyone present to introduce themselves which they then did. He advised that a deputation request had been received from Mr Les Cummings and invited him to make his deputation. The Chair thanked Mr Cummings for his deputation.

Councillor Tompkins referred to one of the points raised in the deputation regarding the feasibility of developing an app for children to report CSE concerns, and said that he had made some preliminary enquiries with the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care who was looking into this. Alison Jeffery advised that this idea had been passed onto the Deputy Director for Children's Social Care. She advised members that it is already possible to report concerns about a child online through the NSPCC's website. This information then gets sent to the local authority Children's Social Care teams and police. It was therefore felt a PCC app would not have this broad reach as the NSPCC is a national organisation with a higher profile. Alison Jeffery however suggested that the panel may want to consider whether PCC could further promote the NSPCC's online reporting mechanism.

The chair then invited Jude Findlay, Service Manager in CSC and Chair of the MET Operational Group to give an overview of the work of the MET Operational Group.

Jude firstly responded to a point raised in the deputation regarding Operation Makesafe and the two day training event that took place at the end of September. She advised that the sessions were organised by PSCB, Hampshire Police and Licensing Team and a large number of drivers had attended. One of the examples given at the session was that of a taxi driver who had concerns about a child and reported this to the authorities. The report was investigated and it transpired there was no risk to the child. The example highlighted that it is always best to report any possible causes of concern about a child, without the fear of embarrassment and this was message was stressed to taxi drivers.

There are 20 different agencies that attend the MET Operational Group and include representatives from:

YOT
CAMHS
Public Health
Police
Sexual Health Team
City Deal
Youth Service
PARCS
Probation Service
Schools
Housing team

It was agreed by the group that as the youth service are working with young people on a daily basis they should be invited to meetings, so they have been invited to attend the next meeting and a copy of the risk assessment toolkit has been sent to them.

A police analyst also now attends MET meetings to advise on patterns and areas that might need dispersal. A housing representative also now attends meetings and any issues that arise are taken back to the hostels.

There are now better links with special schools and the risk assessment toolkit has been disseminated to them. Harbour School now regularly attend MET meetings.

The MET are considering whether other agencies dealing with vulnerable young people. All attendees are working with children at risk of CSE.

MET meetings are held monthly and partners will look at the level of risk and look for gaps in service. They also share information on hot spots where groups of young people are gathering and discuss ways to disperse these information on perpetrators is also shared. Children discussed at the meetings are categorised as being at one of three risk levels: high, medium or

low risk. Children at high risk are already open to Children's Social Care so at the MET meetings partners focus on those children and medium and low risk.

The PSCB have been providing training to schools and individuals working with families on CSE and the signs to look out for. This has meant that the number of children being referred to the MET group has increased.

Updates on the work of the MET

- A bespoke piece of work mapping which schools are most at risk of CSE.
- Operation Makesafe - partners are considering whether to provide this training more frequently.
- Police are now attached to the three hostels in the city to monitor any possible CSE concerns. Goldstone have also tasked to provide training to hostel staff on CSE.
- Attended Regional Problem Profile workshop which looked at issues other LA's are experiencing with regard to CSE to see if they are relevant to Portsmouth and if so look to put plans in place. Examples of this included issues with criminality so the MET now has a YOT worker on the group and children not in education, employment and training (NEET's) who are being missed so the MET now is addressing this through its education representatives.

The MASH education worker is the link to schools and supports them with the risk assessment toolkit.

Things the MET are doing right:

- All members of the MET have a real commitment to attending meetings and making sure that get it right for young people.
- Training for all PCC staff on MET Strategy.
- Staff are all competent in using the CSE risk assessment toolkit
- Good multiagency plans are in place.
- Database developed by YOT is now being used to look at gaps in the city and dispersing groups and are looking to use this to do more targeted work.

Data

- Three quarters of the children discussed at MET meetings are open to CSC.
- Three quarters are female.
- The average length of time a child is on the at risk list is 3-4 months. A child will only be removed from the list once the risk has gone.
- The majority of children discussed at meetings are at medium risk.
- There have never been more than five high risk children on the list, it is currently at two.
- The majority of the focus is on children aged between 13 and 15 years.
- At least half of them are white British.
- A high number of the children are experiencing education difficulties or are not in school. Linking with education team on this.

- There has been a reduction in cases where psychoactive substances are involved.
- There has been an increase in the number of children at risk of online CSE - this is a national issue.

Emerging themes of the MET Group

- E-safety including explicit images being sent/received, exchanging data online via social media and peer on peer issues.
- Low self-esteem leading to being vulnerable of CSE.
- Substance misuse and criminality.
- Further work the MET are looking at includes: Looking at further training with schools which will be more targeted. Also training for housing providers for the hostels and sexual health service. Engaging with colleges further. Also trying to ensure that once a young person at risk has left college who checks on these young people - this possibly could be done through neighbourhood policing.
- Work is taking place with the inclusions team on which children are missing school and the reasons for this as they are at risk.
- Looking to continue the work of the guardian angels and better linkup of training of street pastors.
- Consideration on who should have responsibility for care leavers between the ages of 18 and 24.
- Consideration of the CSE toolkit - our tool is well understood and shorter than the SERAF tool.

In response to questions the following points were clarified:

- The YOT database will be used to map children's friendships and relationships across the city. Officers are looking at moving the database across and adding in the historic information and this will be used to pull out reports. The MET also discuss which groups of children know each other and how to address that which may be to have a group meeting to discuss group activity and disruption activity.
- One of the biggest changes of the last 5 years is that the MET now exists which does a lot of work to help keep vulnerable young people safe. There is also a lot more publicity around CSE now e.g. the Alice campaign however further education work is needed. There is also a huge shift now to online CSE risks. Nicola Charles added that compared to 5 years ago, there is now more confidence to recognise vulnerability factors such as a change in behaviour and these are picked up earlier as there is more awareness.
- The under reporting of CSE within the BME community is discussed at MET meetings. The MET are considering what is delivered through schools in the PHSE lessons as some young people in BME communities might not be able attend these due to cultural reasons. Barnados have a BME worker so looking to use this person to consider how to improve this by talking to members of these communities. One option would be for the BME worker to go out and talk to church groups - a piece of work was previously carried out with the Pentecostal Church. The MET Group is actively looking at this.

- The patterns of perpetrators are discussed at MET meetings.
- Quarterly meetings take place with young people no longer at risk to find out what services helped them and how they felt about the help they received.
- Believe that the Police worked with young people who had been at risk of CSE to develop the Alice campaign - Jude advised she would check this and report back.

The chair then invited Natasha Charles to provide an overview of her work.

Natasha advised that the MASH started to record patterns leading to CSE and are looking at the reasons more referrals coming in - is it because there is more CSE or that people are more aware of the signs of CSE.

Harbour School, one of the special schools in Portsmouth, has a lot of children on reduced timetables and therefore these children are vulnerable. The MASH team are doing targeted work with them, particularly Harbour Fratton who are the most vulnerable children. The MASH team have regular informal conversations with the early help support team at the school and also assist with the CSE toolkit. A Harbour representative attends the MET which helps to raise awareness.

The MASH have identified importance of protecting children with special education needs from the risks of CSE. Kelly Huggett went into Redwood Park School and did training with the head. The school will now contact the team to check that their thresholds are correct.

As children as young as 9 or 10 now have mobile phones with internet access, it was recognised that these children need to be educated on the risks of CSE. Nationally there are the campaigns CEOP and Think U Know and Natasha is going to be targeting Junior Schools to educate staff and children.

In response to questions the following matters were clarified:

- There are some secondary schools that the MASH team do not have such good engagement with and officers will be contacting them to offer training. There have been occasions where schools have paid for training and not realised that they have signed up to the traded services package so can access this as part of the package.
- The risk assessment toolkits are completed by the pastoral team members who are best placed as they have the skills and confidence to do this. The PSCB offers training sessions to schools on how to complete the risk assessment toolkit and schools are becoming more confident in using them. Feedback on using the toolkit is shared with other schools. If a child is identified as high risk this immediately triggers a section 47 assessment. This involves discussion with all professionals on the best way of dealing with the situation and is escalated if needed.
- The basic awareness training provided by the PCC to schools is provided to all school staff which includes lunchtime supervisors,

caretakers etc. The schools safeguarding lead should then organise regular follow up training with staff.

- The Operation Makesafe campaign is a national campaign but Hampshire offered the multi-agency training and Portsmouth is the first to run this in Hampshire. This will be rolled out to other local authorities and they are considering whether to offer this training to parents.
- Young people at risk of becoming perpetrators were initially identified through a police report rather than MASH identifying them. Natasha then ensured that MASH identified the schools that they attend to ensure there is not a pattern. A worker from Sorted completed some work with the individuals.
- With regard to barriers to CSE in Portsmouth Natasha said the main issue is the secrecy of a teenager's lifestyle and being able to work around this to recognise the early signs of CSE. Children today are much more technology savvy and professionals are always playing 'catch up' with the latest social media and apps that young people are using and the lingo. Professionals need to ensure that parents are aware of what their children are accessing and also need to get messages across to children of the risks involved in what they are using and that images they send do not go away and can be recirculated, as they often feel they are safe as they are accessing the internet from home.

The meeting concluded at 7.55 pm.

Councillor Will Purvis
Chair