

# Children & Young People Overview and Scrutiny Committee

## Child Exploitation Annual Report 2020/21

19 October 2021

### Recommendation(s)

1. That OSC note the contents of the Warwickshire Child Exploitation Annual Report 2020/21
2. That OSC support the ongoing delivery and development of the team

### 1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 The attached report is self-explanatory and outlines the work of the C&F Child Exploitation Team through the year 2020/21.
- 1.2 The report outlines the response within the context of the COVID 19 pandemic and also notes the increasing levels of demand and complexity within the broad area of Child Exploitation.
- 1.3 Children who are exploited are subject to a variety of extremely negative influences including serious youth violence, forced labour, forced portage of drugs and other substances, sexual exploitation and coercion into the activity association with gangs. Urban Street gangs from the West Midlands conurbation and a wider geographic area are increasing their influence and control of young people who live in Warwickshire.
- 1.4 The attached report outlines how the team has expanded its range of roles and capacity to tackle the increasing levels of demand experienced. The teams remain co-located with partners in the Leamington Justice although both Warwickshire Police and Barnardo's have been in the process of redesigning and reshaping their own delivery. All partners remain committed to the view that co-location and joint working are the best ways to address the issues presented by the exploitation of children.
- 1.5 When a child is reported as missing and returns, the Child Exploitation undertakes the statutory function in relation to completing a Return Home Interview which seeks to establish the reasons for absence and identify any ongoing exploitation concerns, or potential exploitation concerns so that these can be addressed. It can be seen within the report that the response rate from children and young people is a challenge and there are added issues when Warwickshire young people are placed outside of our County, most likely as a part of their Child in Care arrangements. As stated in the report around 9% of our Children in Care are identified as at risk of exploitation.
- 1.6 Staff working in the Child Exploitation team have had the opportunity of significant training relevant to their work both in Restorative Practice and the 'Trauma informed approach' to working with young people. The journey towards a Contextual Safeguarding approach is a real strength and

welcome improvement for staff in the team.

- 1.7 Key areas of development moving forward in the team is the consolidation of the Transitions work so that young people moving to Adult services keep a continuity of approach. As outlined in the report it is also important to develop increased assertion with educational providers about engagement for young people as it is widely recognised that this is a key protective factor. As we move to an increasing Contextual Safeguarding approach it is important that engage with parents and carers to support them in trying to divert and care young people who are subject to such strong external influences.

## **2 Financial Implications**

- 2.1 The 2020/21 Budget for the WCC Child Exploitation Team was £451.730.00, which was allocated almost completely to staffing and staffing costs.
- 2.2 Moving forward, it is recognised that long term funding needs to be identified for the Adult Transitions worker as this is currently only approved for two years. The Nursing post is being funded out of C&F Transformation money . Future available funding and priorities for that funding are still under negotiation.

## **3 Environmental Implications**

- 3.1 None

## **4 Supporting Information**

- 4.1 The report provides a comprehensive overview and data in respect of the work undertaken by the team in conjunction partners.

## **Appendices**

1. Child Exploitation Annual Report 2020/21

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The report was circulated to the following members prior to publication:

Cllr Jeff Morgan