



Date of Meeting: 9 December 2019

Lead Member: Cllr Andrew Parry - Lead Member for Education and Early Help

Lead Officer: Sarah Parker – Executive Director for People – Children

Executive Summary:

The Joint Targeted Area Inspection carried out in May 2018, focussed on child sexual exploitation, children associated with gangs and at risk of exploitation and children missing from home, care or education, identified gaps in the partnership understanding and joint working in these areas. Since the inspection, significant work has been completed to develop the understanding of the issues across Dorset and to improve practice with individual children and young people. This work was completed pan-Dorset to support a consistent approach across the partnership and to share best practice. New working practices were put in place during the summer of 2019 with the introduction of the Child Exploitation Toolkit.

This report provides an update of the progress made since the last report to the Corporate Parenting Board held on 4 September 2019.

Equalities Impact Assessment:

Not applicable

Budget:

Not applicable

Risk Assessment:

Medium

Climate implications:

Not applicable

Other Implications:

Not applicable

Recommendation: Not applicable
Reason for Recommendation:
Appendices: None
Background Papers: None
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1. Introduction

- 1.1 Young people who go missing or run away from their homes or care are at increased risk of potential harm. Research suggests that approximately 25% are at risk of serious harm; the most significant risk being Criminal Child Exploitation. Child exploitation is where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into criminal, including sexual activity. This will be carried out in exchange for something the young person needs or wants, and/or for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator, and/or through violence or threat of violence.
- 1.2 A young person may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. It is important that all practitioners are aware that when we describe children and young people's experiences, we must avoid language that implies that children and young people are complicit or responsible for the exploitation they may suffer or crimes that they may be victim of.
- 1.3 Criminal exploitation of children is broader than Child Sexual Exploitation and County Lines activity and might include for example, children forced to work on cannabis farms, commit theft, modern slavery, radicalisation and trafficking.

2. Missing Data Q2 2019/20

2.1 There was a significant increase in the number of missing incidents reported in Q2 (251) compared with Q1 (176). This is likely to be due to the time of year, with older young people more likely to be out and returning home late during the summer months.

Description	Missing	Absent	Total
01. Number of missing incidences during the period	251	8	259
02. Number of missing children during the period	116	8	124
03. Number of missing incidences where child is still missing	0	0	0
04. Number who were male	124	4	128
05. Number who were female	127	4	131
06. Number of missing incidents where child is missing more than 24 hours	89	2	91
07. Number of children who were missing more than 24 hours	44	2	46
08. Number of missing incidents where child is missing more than 72 hours	9	0	9
09. Number of children who were missing more than 72 hours	8	0	8
10. Number of children who went missing on one occasion	74	6	80
11. Number of children who went missing on more than one occasion	42	2	44
12. Number who are LAC	38	1	39
13. Number who are CIN	50	1	51
14. Number who are children who are vulnerable	36	6	42

Fig.1 Children reported missing Q2 2019/20

2.2 Fig.2 provides the detail on the numbers of Return Home Interviews (RHIs) completed and the timeliness of the visit. Every child reported as missing should have been offered and have ideally accepted an RHI. In Q2 all but 13 of the 116 children reported as missing were offered an RHI. In each of the 13 cases, a reason is recorded:

- Missing report made but child not missing x 4
- Child unavailable x 2
- No risk identified by manager x 2
- Completed by residential staff outside of Dorset x 2
- Record unclear x 3

2.3 There was an increase in the percentage of RHIs offered and accepted in Q2 from 56% to 60%. The Missing Reports allow for a record of the work completed to encourage young people to accept the RHI. This is not consistently being used. However, where it has been, it is apparent that many of the declines are from young people who are missing on multiple occasions. Workers are generally making robust attempts to engage them.

- 2.4 There was a decline in overall timeliness of RHIs in Q2 from 48% being completed within 72 hours in Q1 to just 37% in Q2. However, data now available shows that in Q2 79% of the RHIs completed were carried out within 72 hours of Children's Services receiving the notification of their return.

Description	Missing	Absent	Total
01. Number of RHIs conducted	154	3	157
02. Number of RHIs not conducted	97	5	102
03. Number of children who had at least one RHI	80	3	83
04. Number of children who did not have an RHI	35	4	39
05. Number of RHIs conducted within 72 hours	56	1	57
06. Number of RHIs conducted within 3 working days of being notified	122	2	124
07. Number of RHIs not offered as child missing on subsequent occasion(s)	0	0	0
08. Number of RHIs not offered as 24 hr decision did not identify risk	0	0	0
09. Number of RHIs not accepted	81	2	83
10. Number of children not accepting RHIs	47	2	49

Fig.2 Return Home Interviews Q2 2019/20

3. Criminal Child Exploitation

- 3.1 Significant work had been completed across the partnership in our understanding of and management of the risk of Child Criminal Exploitation. A toolkit has been developed and is now available to all multi-agency practitioners. The toolkit contains the CE Screening Tool, the CE Risk Assessment and CE Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Meeting and Plan templates. There is guidance to support practitioners in the use of the toolkit.
- 3.2 Risk Assessments can and should be completed by all partner agencies. The assessments indicate three levels of risk:
- **Significant Risk** – where a significant risk is identified, there will be a Moderation Meeting to consider the risk. This meeting is attended by the assessing practitioner, and MASH Police, Health and Social Care. The Moderation Meeting is a benchmarking and intelligence gathering forum. Where a Significant Risk is confirmed at the Moderation Meeting, a Strategy Meeting will be held within 24 hours. All children and young people where there is a significant risk identified, will have an allocated social worker and an initial Multi Agency Child Exploitation Meeting (MACE) will take place within 15 working days. There will be continued MACE Meetings at least every 6 weeks until the risk is reduced.

- **Moderate Risk** - where a moderate risk is identified and confirmed at a Moderation Meeting, a Social Work assessment will commence if there is not already an allocated social worker. All children and young people where a moderate risk is identified, will have an allocated social worker and an initial MACE Meeting will take place within 15 working days. There will be continued MACE Meetings at least every 12 weeks until the risk is reduced.
- **Emerging Risk** – where a potential emerging risk is identified, a Moderation Meeting is not required but a MACE Meeting should be considered by the assessing practitioner and a MACE plan developed to reduce the risk. This can be managed through the Team Around the Family (TAF) process.

4. Child Exploitation Data Q2 2019/20

4.1 The data for Q2 in relation to child exploitation continues to be somewhat unreliable as practitioners across the partnership become more familiar with the CE Toolkit. This is however steadily improving.

4.2 There has been an increase in the CE assessments completed in Q2. Whilst on the face of it this might seem concerning, it is to be expected as all practitioners become more familiar with the risk assessment and consider all forms of child exploitation, rather than as was previously the case, CSE. Further, the previous data reported only considered 2 months, rather than a full quarter as the CE data was only available to May and June.

Risk Level	CSE	CE	Both	None	Not Known	TOTAL
1. Emerging/Reducing risk of criminal/sexual exploitation	3	2	2	33	0	40
2. Moderate risk of criminal/sexual exploitation	6	11	7	7	0	31
3. Significant risk of criminal/sexual exploitation	2	9	7	0	0	18
4. Category 1 – Minimal risk of sexual exploitation	0	0	0	0	2	2
5. Category 2 - Mild risk of sexual exploitation	0	0	0	0	1	1
6. Category 3 – Moderate risk of sexual exploitation	0	0	0	0	1	1
8. Not Calculated	0	1	0	2	0	3
TOTAL	11	23	16	42	4	96

Fig 3 – New CE Assessments completed Q2 2019/20

- 4.3 Moderation Meetings are now well embedded into practice and practitioners from across the partnership (not pan Dorset) are sending through completed risk assessments for Moderation. We would expect to hold a Moderation Meeting in all cases where a Significant or Moderate risk has been identified. In Q2 there should have been in excess of 49 cases moderated. The table below confirms that 54 moderation meetings were held. The additional 5 cases are likely to have been where the risk was reduced from Moderate to Emerging through the multi-agency discussion.

Did Moderation Meeting Take Place	CSE	CE	Both	None	Not Known	TOTAL
Information Not Available	1	0	1	7	4	13
No	1	2	2	24	0	29
Yes	9	21	13	11	0	54
TOTAL	11	23	16	42	4	96

Fig 4 – Moderation Meetings completed Q2 2019/20

- 4.4 During May and June 2019, just 6 Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Reviews were recorded as having been completed, presenting a disappointing picture. There has been a significant improvement during Q2 with 30 Reviews recorded although we would want to see this figure approaching the same number as there are children identified as being at Significant or Moderate risk (49).
- 4.5 Q2 is the first period in which we can monitor the difference we are making for children in reducing risk (Fig. 5). Although the risk for 5 children decreased, for 17 we appear to have made no impact on the risk level. This is new data and we will need to monitor this over the coming months as we would want to see many more cases where risk is reducing as a result of the intervention.

Statistic	CSE	CE	Both	None	Not Known	TOTAL
01. How many children were reviewed?	5	17	4	2	0	28
02. How many reviews took place?	5	19	4	2	0	30
03. How many reviews on time?	1	15	2	1	0	19
04. How many children where the risk increased?	0	2	1	0	0	3
05. How many children where the risk stayed the same?	3	12	2	0	0	17
06. How many children where the risk decreased?	1	2	0	2	0	5
07. How many reviews where the professional judgement risk is different from the scored risk?	0	2	0	2	0	4

(Fig 5 – CE Assessment reviews completed Q2 2019/20)

4.6 We can calculate the total numbers of children and young people assessed as at Moderate or Significant Risk at any given date. Fig 6 is the total number of young people assessed as being at Significant or Moderate risk as of 10th November 2019.

4.7 Although the emerging risk numbers are very low, this does not take account of the children assessed as being at emerging risk by practitioners outside of Children’s Services. Currently, this data is not recorded centrally.

Risk Level	CSE	CE	Both	None	Not Known	TOTAL
1. Emerging/Reducing risk of criminal/sexual exploitation	1	2	0	2	0	5
2. Moderate risk of criminal/sexual exploitation	7	18	8	4	0	37
3. Significant risk of criminal/sexual exploitation	4	11	8	0	0	23
TOTAL	12	31	16	6	0	65

(Fig 6 –All children (open to Children’s Services) assessed as at risk as of 10.11.19)

4.8 We can also report on age and gender of the children assessed at risk at the end of a defined period; with 15-year-old males again being most at risk of CE. 15-year-old females are the likely to be at risk of both CSE and CE.

Gender	Age	CSE	CE	Both	None	Not Known	TOTAL
1. Male	12	0	2	0	0	0	2
1. Male	13	0	1	0	0	0	1
1. Male	14	0	8	0	1	0	9
1. Male	15	0	10	0	0	0	10
1. Male	16	0	4	1	0	0	5
1. Male	17	0	4	2	1	0	7
2. Female	11	1	1	0	0	0	2
2. Female	12	1	0	1	1	0	3
2. Female	13	1	0	0	1	0	2
2. Female	14	4	0	2	1	0	7
2. Female	15	2	1	6	1	0	10
2. Female	16	2	0	2	0	0	4
2. Female	17	1	0	2	0	0	3
TOTAL		12	31	16	6	0	65

(Fig 7 –Age/Gender of children and young people assessed as at risk on 10.11.19)

5. Update on previous plan presented to CPB

Action	Responsible Manager/s	Completion Date	Expected Outcome	Actual Outcome
MASH Audit of RHIs	Maggie Aldwell	30.08.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased understanding of the decline rate of RHIs offered Increased understanding of timeliness issues 	<p>Completed. General findings where reasons are recorded:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The reason for the decision to decline an RHI is not always recorded RHIs are often declined by young people who frequently go missing. The young people generally give no reason other than they don't want to meet or see no benefit to them. There are usually robust attempts to engage the young person, including visits to schools Alternative methods for conducting the interview i.e. over the phone, or another person having the conversation are not explored
Discussion with Dorset Police to understand the delays in notifications being sent to Children's Services and resolve the issues	Maggie Aldwell	30.08.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Improved notification and RHI timeliness 	Brief discussion took place but did not result in a conclusion. Further discussions to take place.
RHI Options Review to be discussed	Maggie Aldwell/Tanya Hamilton-Fletcher/Mary Taylor	30.09.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> A decision made on how RHIs are managed for children placed outside of Dorset that ensures timely and independent interviews are consistently taking place. 	It had not been possible to fully review this due to the work completed for Blueprint for Change. However, as a temporary measure, the dedicated RHI workers will undertake telephone RHIs with young people placed outside of Dorset. Where concerns are noted, an immediate visit will be arranged by the allocated worker.

6. Conclusion

- 6.1 We continue to build on the significant progress in the work across the partnership in assessing and understanding the risks to children and young people at risk of criminal exploitation. The number of MACE Meetings and reviews being held has increased significantly although we would want to see more meetings taking place, meetings being timelier and evidence of reducing risk.
- 6.2 We continue to offer RHIs to most children reported as missing and when an RHI was not offered, this was a decision made in the best interests of the young person. The decline rate remains stubbornly low and this needs to be a priority action for the coming months.
- 6.3 Timeliness of RHIs also needs to improve and we need to work with Police colleagues to ensure that notifications are sent though quickly enough to allow the visits to take place in good time.

7. Actions

Action	Responsible Manager/s	Completion Date	Expected Outcome
Updating Audit of RHIs	Susan Blizzard	31.12.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased understanding of the decline rate of RHIs offered Increased understanding of timeliness issues Consideration of offering RHIs more flexibly
Further discussions with Dorset Police about the timeliness of notifications	Susan Blizzard	30.11.19	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Increased timeliness of reports and therefore RHIs completed