

REPORT TO: Children Young People and Families PPB

DATE: 28th October 2013

REPORTING OFFICER: Strategic Director, Children & Enterprise

PORTFOLIO: Children, Young People and Families

SUBJECT: Missing From Home/Care and Child Sexual Exploitation Update

WARDS: Borough wide

1.0 PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

1.1 To provide an update on the development of the Missing from Home and Care service and Child Sexual Exploitation activity.

2.0 RECOMMENDATION: That

- i. The positive developments in the Missing from Home and Care service are noted and the proactive response to Child sexual exploitation.**

3.0 SUPPORTING INFORMATION

3.1 Since 2008 Halton has commissioned a Missing from Home and Care service in order to fulfil its statutory responsibilities. The statutory guidance serves to safeguard all runaways and to redress the imbalance that currently exists between services offered to runaways from the looked-after population and those who run away from home.

3.2 During 2010 and 2011 the Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB'S) of Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington with Cheshire Constabulary, have collaborated to produce a Pan Cheshire Joint Protocol for Children and Young People who run away or go Missing from Home or Care. The joint protocol seeks to identify and manage the risks and ensure a consistency in approach across borders and agencies.

3.3 During this time period the four local authority commissioners had a dialogue around the possibility of a pan Cheshire MFH service. All four local authorities agreed to go ahead with a joint commission with Halton being the lead authority, Catch 22 were the successful provider that started in 2012.

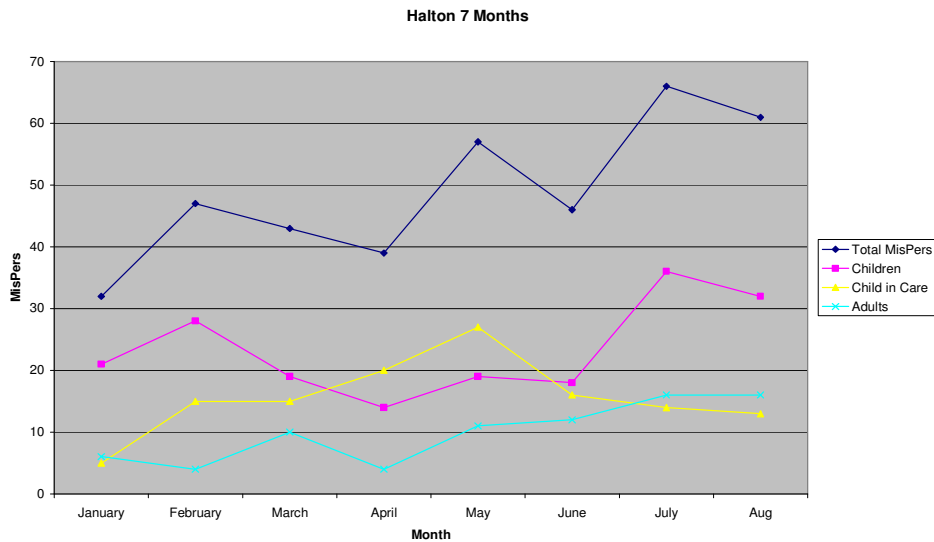
3.4 The Service works across all of the four local authority areas with clear links to Cheshire Constabulary's missing from home co-ordinators to support young people who have been notified as missing from home or care. There is a co-ordinated and organised response including return interviews and will facilitate where required direct intervention work with children, young people and their families.

- 3.5 The coalition government has identified child sexual exploitation as a key focus of its policy with regards to children and young people, publishing the Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan. This followed a campaign by Barnardo's to increase the profile of this underreported area of child abuse. Barnardo's contacted elected members directly to encourage individual and local authority sign up to the "Cut them free" campaign. Halton has signed up to this campaign.
- 3.6 A Pan-Cheshire CSE Strategic Group has been established by the Police. This group has produced a Pan-Cheshire CSE Strategy and Protocol which each LSCB has approved. The strategy has recently been amended to include the Merseyside LSCBs. The Strategic Group has also produced an Action Plan that reflects the areas to be addressed under the government's Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan.
- Map the needs of their own area.
 - Monitor on-going prevalence and responses.
 - Develop an effective local strategy ensuring a coordinated multi-agency response.
 - Increase understanding amongst practitioners and the wider public.
 - Safeguard children who are potentially more vulnerable – this includes establishing effective communication channels and ensuring multi-agency training.
 - Consider setting up a working group or sub group on CSE and appoint a lead officer to provide a coordinated response.
 - Develop links with neighbouring authorities and ensure cross border working.
- 3.7 A MFH /CSE Sub Group has been established by HSCB which reports directly to the HSCB Executive. The Sub Group oversees the Halton's CSE Action Plan which sits under the Pan-Cheshire and national action plans. The main focus of the Sub Group's business currently is:
- Undertaking a 'snapshot' across partner agencies of incidences of suspected CSE
 - Ensuring training and awareness raising materials are available to frontline staff
 - Developing CSE Practice Guidance

Current Picture of Missing from Home and Care

- 3.8 There have been several changes to the collection of data from Cheshire Constabulary and Catch 22 and there is still further developments planned for autumn 2013. Annually for 2012/13 the number of incidents reported to the police was 623 compared to 905 for 2011/12 which is an overall reduction of 31%. The graph below shows the total of incidents for adults, children and children in care from January to August 2013. For quarter 1 April to July there has been a reduction of 21% when compared to the same quarter during 2012/13, with 37 less Police incidents from 176 to 142. For quarter 2 onwards

this will include CICOLA's and the breakdown of incidents and number of repeat young people.



3.9 Catch 22 receives notifications from the police to undertake return interviews for young people that meet the Pan Cheshire MFH protocol of 3 or more episodes, LAC, missing over 24 hours or if there the young person appears to act out of character and is vulnerable. The below gives a snap shot of the activity for 2012/ 2013.

Snap Shot of Halton for 2012/2013	No
Total Number of individuals that have been reported Missing to the service	165
Total number of Individuals that have had a Return Interview	148
Number of Individual Young People that have undertaken Direct Work	107
Total Number of episodes that have been reported to and actioned by the Service	310
Number of <u>repeat</u> (3 or more 90 day period) individuals	32
Number of <u>repeat</u> (3 or more 90 day period) episodes	150
Number of planning meetings attended as a result of missing on more than 3 occasions across 90 days	107

3.10 Children and young people are more likely to be reported missing from the home than from care. That has been a fairly consistent theme and attributes to over half of all missing incidents. Catch 22 data for April to July 13 shows that at total of 37 individuals met the protocol. The number of children in care that are going missing is reducing, however we do still have a small number of CICOLA's that are creating repeat episodes.

3.11 A new pathway with Social Care started in July 2013. Catch22 receives notification from Cheshire Constabulary for a missing Incident as identified in Pan Cheshire Missing from Home Protocol. One of those triggers is if the Child is Looked After. In order to ascertain if this is the correct Status of the Child or Young Person at the point of notification to the Missing from Home Service, Catch22 will, via secure email, share all Missing Incidents pertaining to Looked

After Children, to quality assure this process. This will be done in advance of any reports, to ensure that data is correct at the point of writing. If any inconsistencies are highlighted, the point of the error can be established. Also on a monthly basis Catch22 will share information on all Missing Incidents for all children and young people that go missing for 24 Hours or more.

- 3.12 Performance mapping is regularly taking place to enable targeted prevention work particularly in schools. There have been a series of sessions on Risks and Dangers delivered in both primary and secondary schools. Catch 22 have co facilitated with LSCB training events to highlight the Missing from Home Service and the link of Missing to potential Child Sexual Exploitation. A telephone helpline is available and delivered in partnership with a national organisation 'Missing People'. It is operational 24 hours per day, 7 days per week, 365 days per year.
- 3.13 The Pan Cheshire Missing from Home Service was mentioned in a recent article as good practise that was published with Children and Young People Now in May 2013 as a positive response to working with young people in care. The PAN Cheshire model is highlighted as good practise within ACPO (Association of Chief Police Officers) Guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons 2013.

Current Picture of Child Sexual Exploitation

- 3.14 Halton's MFH /CSE subgroup has been in place for a few months. The group key activities have been the development and roll out of training and publicity materials to practitioners. The sub group develops and monitors the local CSE action plan which has clear actions and outcomes.
- 3.15 There is a CSE operational multi-agency group that meets to share local information from cases of young people identified as being at risk of harm due to sexual exploitation. This partnership arrangement will help to identify links between children and young people as potential victims, links with potential perpetrators and potential hotspots. There have been 18 referrals into the group so far and the information and intelligence that is being gathered will provide a matrix plan that will enable us to identify and target specific families / perpetrators, locations, business etc. where CSE has been identified as an issue. The operational group is showing there is no evidence to date of any CSE by groups or gangs.
- 3.16 The Relationship Centre has the AWARE project which is a Comic Relief funded project from 2011 to December 2013. The project works with young people from Halton and Warrington at risk of, or suffering from, sexual exploitation; and with young people who have gone on to exploit other young people after previously having being victims of exploitation themselves. From January to July 2013 there have been 34 referrals to the service of which 31 were females the highest proportion aged 12- 14 years. Some of these referrals have come from a group of girls within a school. This trend is indicative as the growing awareness amongst professionals working with this particularly vulnerable group and is a direct result of the training carried out in Halton by the team of multi- agency professionals.

- 3.17 Cheshire Constabulary have introduced a new sergeant that will work across Cheshire to support and co-ordinate activity of the police MFH co-ordinators and shortly the additional officer's to support CSE across Cheshire including Halton. The new post will provide the vital link to exchange of intelligence across police forces
- 3.18 Catch 22 as the missing from home and care service does have links to CSE, through this has been notably low so far they have seen a trend for young people at risk of CSE by internet / mobile phone use when completing Return Assessments. This may not be the primary reason for them running but due to lack of positive adult influence or parenting and attachment issues and low self-esteem these young people are very vulnerable. This is predominantly young females aged 13 – 16 years. Catch 22 have introduced a part time post for 6 months to support the CSE agenda this will mainly around awareness raising and to assist with the development co-ordination of intelligence for the operational group feeding into LA and police around building up a CSE picture.

Future Developments

- 3.19 Halton is linked in both locally, regionally and nationally to key areas and areas of best practise. There is a commitment across the partnership around the support and development of both the MFH and CSE programmes; Halton is being proactive but proportionate with the expansion of agenda's. Some key activities over the coming months are:
- Agreement to continue with Catch 22 as the current provider to deliver MFH services across Cheshire until March 2015.
 - The Pan Cheshire MFH protocol will be refreshed at the end of 2013 in line with the proposed new DoFE guidance that will including a process of children and young people that are absence
 - Development of the Pan Cheshire Communications group that will be key to deliver publicity materials across both Cheshire including businesses.
 - Development of a CSE risk assessment
 - Agreement of MFH action plan in line with OFSTED recommendations.

4.0 POLICY ISSUES

- 4.1 The authority continues to have a statutory duty to provide services to looked after children within the authority around Missing.

5.0 OTHER IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The work around MFH and CSE service delivery will assist with the new OFSTED inspection framework (2012) for local authorities. The Framework indicates a focus on the journey, experiences and voice of the child, stating: At every stage of the child's journey, the inspection will evaluate the effectiveness of:

- The focus on the interests of the child

- How well all partners take account of children's wishes and feelings and the extent to which this informs their care.

6.0 IMPLICATIONS FOR THE COUNCIL'S PRIORITIES

6.1 Children and Young People in Halton

This service directly relates to improving the safety and wellbeing of children and young people by reducing the incidents of missing and risky behaviour. The services support key elements within Halton's Safeguarding and Children and Young People's Plans.

6.2 Employment, Learning and Skills In Halton

The service will ensure that children and young people that go missing from home or care; subject to or at risk of CSE are supported in their learning and future employment and skills development.

6.3 A Healthy Halton

The service support people to minimise reduce the risks of harm, and access relevant services to improve their physical and mental health and wellbeing.

6.4 A Safer Halton

The service provides support to vulnerable children, young people and families to assist them to access appropriate service provision within their local communities. This links to satisfaction with services and overall perception of the area in which people live.

6.5 Halton's Urban Renewal

None.

7.0 RISK ANALYSIS

None

8.0 EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY ISSUES

The services specified within this report relate to the needs of individuals and families with protected characteristics as defined within the Equality Act 2010.

9.0 LIST OF BACKGROUND PAPERS UNDER SECTION 100D OF THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT ACT 1972

Document	Place of Inspection	Contact Officer
Equality Impact Assessment (2011)	Contracts & Commissioning Team, Second Floor, Rutland House	Barbara Butterworth