

An Evaluation of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) awareness, preventative strategies and support for children, their families and carers within South Wales Police.

The advocates unanimously state that not all children at serious risk of CSE are reported missing. They will often learn about these children and young people from others or more often than not, when the child has been involved with a crime.

The advocate's primary role is to undertake return home interviews (RHI) and on completion of the interview, their notes are forwarded to the relevant officer who will read and submit any intelligence. Only one advocate has the access to attach documents to Niche the others have read only privileges. The advocate will also forward information to the child's allocated social worker but rarely have a reply or feedback.

Not all advocates were aware of the missing whiteboards developed and in use by South Wales Police. The advocates feel that the RHI form needs to be changed as they are currently using one that was recommended by another force in 2015 by the Home Office. Since their introduction their experience tells them that there is a need to capture different information for example, the types of exploitation. The advocates considered the questions being asked in the form were not appropriate for the child and the majority of the time need to rephrase them in interview.

The advocates' ability to access Barnardos systems from police stations was considered a barrier with advocates spending a day a month at Barnardos offices transferring information onto their system. Where MASH is in place, other agencies and partners are able to access their own systems but there appears to be a specific issue with Barnardos.

9. CONCLUSIONS

The evidence from this review suggests that the child advocates are providing a service that is both beneficial to children and many other stakeholders.

The advocates are dedicated and successfully build relationships of trust with children and help them to work through very complex and difficult circumstances.

However, there is evidence of blurred lines between what the advocate's responsibilities and the role and responsibilities of social workers in some areas.

The high number of missing children means that cases have to be prioritised based on risk. There is an opinion that earlier intervention and prevention could reduce the high-risk group through early identification of ACEs and the provision of support.

There is clear evidence that the advocates and interventions work better in areas where a MASH is present and in BCUs where advocates are located with public protection teams, specifically with missing persons and CSE officers.

The ability to access and share information is essential. Whilst access to systems is a barrier, the use of regular structured strategy meetings as demonstrated by Eastern BCU contributes to mitigating this. Duplication of SERAF assessments contributes to a delay in support.

ACRONYMS

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| ACE | Adverse Childhood Experience |
| BI | Business Intelligence |
| BCU | Basic Command Unit |
| CPS | Crown Prosecution Service |
| CSE | Child Sexual Exploitation |
| FCASE | Families and Communities Against Sexual Exploitation |
| HMIC | Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary |
| LAC | Local Authority Care |
| MARAC | Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference |
| MASH | Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub |
| MISPER | Missing Person |
| NFA | No Further Action |
| NSPCC | National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children |
| PPN | Public Protection Notification |
| PTSD | Post-Traumatic Stress Disorder |
| RHI | Return Home Interview |