



Report of the Cabinet Member for Children’s Services
Child and Family Services Scrutiny Performance Panel –
24 February 2020

Safeguarding (County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation)

Purpose	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> To provide a briefing requested by the Board about Safeguarding (County Lines and Child Sexual Exploitation)
Content	<p>This report includes a summary of</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Current Context of County Lines and CSE 2. The current CSE numbers. 3. An overview of the main trends and themes since April 2019. 4. Interventions and Outcomes 5. Progress of a contextual safeguarding approach
Councillors are being asked to	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Give their views
Lead Councillor(s)	Cllr Elliot King
Lead Officer(s)	Julie Thomas – Head of Child and Families Services
Report Author	Damian Rees – Principal Officer for Safeguarding.

The Tarian Report (police intelligence) from January 2020 has identified that the majority of County Lines Operations across Wales are within Swansea and that the number is significantly more than in any other place in Wales. This will include both children coming into the local area from other regions across the UK as well as the potential recruitment of local young people to distribute drugs within Swansea.

We currently have identified 25 young people (under 18) at risk of CSE since April 2019, and 20 of those identified have required oversight and intervention via the CSE protocol that is coordinated by the Practice Lead for the Disruption of Child Exploitation.

At the end of January 2020 there are 5 young people currently on CSE protocol. The average age currently is 15 years 5 months all female and all from Swansea. The average time they have been on protocol is 97 days

An overview from April 2019 -

- a) There have been two young people on Protocol for more than 6 months.
- b) The average age of young people on Protocols is 14 years.
- c) Currently there is an under representation of males as males.
- d) A high proportion of the young people on protocol are placed in residential provisions within Swansea from other Local Authorities.
- e) $\frac{3}{4}$ of young people on protocol have substance misuse worries.
- f) $\frac{1}{2}$ have experienced parental substance misuse.
- g) $\frac{1}{2}$ have experienced parental mental health
- h) $\frac{1}{2}$ have experienced Domestic abuse within the home.
- i) On average around 90% have experienced family breakdown.
- j) Over half are not in full time mainstream education.

In respect of disruption there have been:

- a) a number of Child Abduction Warning Notice's requested by the local authority.
- b) There has been regular communication between social services and housing when there have been worries around CSE young people visiting properties of worry and a multi-agency response has proved effective.
- c) Increase in the knowledge and understanding on the National Referral Mechanism which has been achieved through training to staff. This means that trafficking legislation is now being considered more frequently with CSE cases.
- d) Use of passport markers prevented young people being taken out of the country by someone believed to be exploiting them.
- e) We ensure that when looked after children from other local authorities are placed in Swansea, that we involve the home authority but

coordinate the safeguarding through the Practice Lead for the Disruption of Exploitation.

There are strong links with our local youth offending service who attend every initial strategy meeting regardless of whether they are open or not to them where there are concerns that a young person is at risk of CSE.

There are direct links between children services and the safer Swansea partnership over exploitation and a representative from the partnership attends CSE strategy meetings.

To support our safeguarding work we have accessed the St Giles Trust who offer support around diversion away from gang culture and the preventative CSE. In addition we also link closely with other third sector organisations and their specific support, such as, Roots foundation, NSPCC and Barnardos. Each of these organisations regularly attend CSE meetings.

We are also working with the University of Bedfordshire, following a success bid for them to work with us, in creating a contextual safeguarding approach in Swansea.

Contextual safeguarding sets out the relationships between the environments that children spend their lives and the decisions they make in their life are central to how they influence their decision-making. That is because environments impact on decisions that young people make as they try to obtain status within their environments within that environments set of social rules. Then the understanding of these field rules influence their behaviours.

We are currently in the first year of developing a contextual safeguarding approach to CSE and County Lines.

- Focus of the work is for 11 to 17year olds (as the most at risk group).
- Three Year Approach (2019-21)
- First Year (2019-20) to complete a systems review and develop multi agency framework/ tools and practice to support Contextual Safeguarding. To identify pilot area (site) for second year. Benchmark data to support reviewing impact when approach is implemented.
- Second Year (2020-21) Implement a contextual safeguarding approach in a pilot area and review the systems to develop practice and the systems to support this approach. Review the impact of the approach against bench marked data
- Third Year (2021) Implement a Contextual Safeguarding Approach across Swansea and review impact of approach, leading to embedding approach in “business as usual”

- To prevent, protect and support Children and Young People at risk of Child Exploitation (as defined in the West Glamorgan Exploitation Policy).
- Robust coordinated early intervention and identified of young people at risk of exploitation and reduce need for statutory service intervention.
- To oversee and ensure that all young people identified as at risk of exploitation have access to specific targeted support at the right time.
- To ensure there is an effective multi-agency strategic and operational response to the identification, disruption and safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people, and that the cases and children identified are deemed a priority are able to access the right support.
- The sharing of relevant and proportionate information, both within the Council and between the Council and other agencies to safeguarding children and young people from exploitation.
- To create a peer/ location mapping approach to consider contextual circumstances for young people/ groups of young people. Which will include, places, peer networks, adult networks and any other relevant factors in order to ensure effective safeguarding of young people at risk of Child Exploitation (CE).
- Create electronic recording of information about a young person's peer relationships and networks to promote effective safeguarding from exploitation.
- To review the impact and effectiveness of operational interventions and develop and review strategic solutions where required.

In January 2020, the University Of Bedfordshire completed a systems review of how we identify, respond and protect children and young people who are at risk of CSE and County Lines.

This identified that we are identifying extra familial harm within current practice better than the other sites that they looked at across the UK, and responding to this in a coordinated manner.

To conclude, there is considerable work ongoing and being developed in regards to CSE and safeguarding young people. Swansea is an area that has been identified as having a large number of County Lines gangs within it, and therefore the risks to young people and the impact of these criminal operatives is significant locally.