

**Manchester City Council  
Report for Information**

**Report to:** Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee – 4 September 2019

**Subject:** Child Sexual Exploitation

**Report of:** Strategic Director of Children and Education Services

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**Summary**

Further to the complex safeguarding report presented to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee on 17th July 2019 and the subsequent recommendation that the Local Government Association (LGA) CSE (Child Sexual Exploitation) Peer Review feedback letter be shared at the committee; the purpose of this report is to provide a context to the LGA Peer Review and to update committee members on progress that has been made against areas identified for further development.

**Recommendations**

Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee members are invited to:

1. Consider the context of the Peer Review, the progress that has been made and the actions being taken to address the areas identified for further development.
  2. Seek a further update and impact of the identified actions within the annual Complex Safeguarding Report 2019/20.
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**Wards Affected:** All

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**Alignment to the Our Manchester Strategy Outcomes (if applicable)**

<b>Manchester Strategy outcomes</b>	<b>Summary of how this report aligns to the OMS</b>
A thriving and sustainable city: supporting a diverse and distinctive economy that creates jobs and opportunities	Effective specialist services are critical to ensuring the most vulnerable citizens are able to connect and support the drive towards a thriving and sustainable City
A highly skilled city: world class and home grown talent sustaining the city's economic success	Universal and specialist services ensure the most vulnerable citizens are able to connect and support the drive towards a thriving and sustainable City
A progressive and equitable city: making a positive contribution by unlocking the potential of our communities	Relationship based services helps build the resilience of children and families which they need to achieve their potential and be integrated into their communities.

A liveable and low carbon city: a destination of choice to live, visit, work	Improving outcomes for children and families across the city helps build and develop communities.
A connected city: world class infrastructure and connectivity to drive growth	Universal and specialist services provide support to families to be successful who are then able to support the continuing growth of the City.

**Contact Officers:**

Name: Paul Marshall  
Position: Strategic Director of Children and Education Services  
Telephone: 234 3804  
E-mail: p.marshall1@manchester.gov.uk

Name: Julie Heslop  
Position: Strategic Head of Early Help  
Telephone: 234 3942  
E-mail: Julie.heslop@manchester.gov.uk

**Background documents (available for public inspection):**

The following documents disclose important facts on which the report is based and have been relied upon in preparing the report. Copies of the background documents are available up to 4 years after the date of the meeting. If you would like a copy please contact one of the contact officers above.

Complex Safeguarding Report to Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee, July 2019.

LGA Peer Review letter July 2019

## **1.0 Introduction**

- 1.1 Research and evidence tells us Child Sexual Exploitation is not only an offence of assault but the abuse of trust and power; perpetrated by the very people (adults) culturally we teach children will protect and keep them safe. As with many forms of abuse, the impact of Child Sexual Exploitation and effects for survivors is life changing and potentially enduring.
- 1.2 Whilst the primary legislative framework for the protection of children has been in place since 1989 (Children Act 1989), the first National Statutory Guidance in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation was published in 2008, prior to which was the Department of Health's 'Children involved in prostitution'(2000). This has undoubtedly informed and supported the awareness, understanding and response which over time has significantly improved to a point where multi-agency working is the norm and the response to disrupt and prevent the exploitation of children and identification and prosecution of perpetrators increasingly more sophisticated and intelligence led.
- 1.3 This report within the context of Manchester's Complex Safeguarding Annual Report provides a further update to scrutiny committee members specifically in respect of Manchester's approach to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and provide a context to the commissioning of the recent LGA Peer Review; providing an update on progress against areas identified for further development.

## **2.0 Background**

- 2.1 Following a number of public statements in respect of CSE across Greater Manchester in September 2017 the Greater Manchester Mayor commissioned an independent assurance exercise to explore the current and future delivery models across the conurbation in response to CSE. Within the scope of the assurance exercise is the decision making/practice in respect of Operation Augusta, a Child Sexual Exploitation investigation, which ran between 2003 and 2005.

The findings of the Mayor's review is yet to be published.

- 2.2 Manchester City Council has positively and proactively engaged with the Mayor's office and the Independent Review Team and Greater Manchester Police to ensure areas for learning are identified. However, there is a balance to be struck between the commitment to engage with the review and await the published findings and the wider duties and responsibilities to ensure children are safe and their welfare promoted. Subsequently, in order to proactively contribute to the review and respond to emerging and reported issues/concerns in respect of practice and management oversight related to Operation Augusta. Manchester City Council's Strategic Director for Children and Education Services commissioned in June 2018 an independent child care/protection expert to review the historical records to learn from, inform and further strengthen current practice. This review focused on 25 children where CSE was a recognised risk and were resident in a children's home; providing

an insight of practice and response to CSE in Manchester and progress since 2005.

### **Summary of Practice Review Findings**

- 2.3 The findings of the aforementioned practice review of historical records which highlighted whilst risks to children were identified there were shortcomings in practice and management overview; with an overemphasis on advice interventions for children and not enough on affirmative multi-agency prevention and protection strategies during the period covered by the Mayor's review. Consequently, in order to be assured that the findings from these historical records are not evident in current practice, they have been used to inform a Peer Review undertaken independently by the Local Government Association (see paragraph 2.11. In addition, the findings and learning were shared with the Review Team as part of our ongoing cooperation with that process.

### **Development of Practice, Strategy and Response to CSE in Manchester since 2005**

- 2.4 Preceded by the Area Child Protection Committee, in accordance with national guidance Manchester Safeguarding Children Board (MSCB) was established in 2006. The then MSCB and now Multi Agency Safeguarding Arrangement for Manchester brings together statutory and voluntary agencies to ensure there is a joined up approach to safeguarding the welfare of children. As set out in the annual MSCB report 2018/19 presented to today's Scrutiny Committee CSE as a form of 'Complex Safeguarding' is a priority within the MSCB plan.
- 2.5 In recognition that residential care works for some children but most do better in a family setting, in 2011 the Council embarked upon a programme to reduce the number and size of children's homes in a move to improve the quality of care, support and supervision for our looked after young people. This has resulted in Manchester Children's Home estate reducing to its current capacity of 4 small children's homes.
- 2.6 In 2006 Manchester established the 'Protect Team; this was a multi-disciplinary team established to respond to issues of CSE. Many of the CSE teams nationally follow this model. However, building on the success of Protect Team Model and learning to date, as part of Greater Manchester Children's Services partnership working and recognising that those who seek to exploit our children do not recognise geographical boundaries in 2012/13 Project Phoenix was established. Project Phoenix is a partnership that operates across Greater Manchester to share good practice, standards, cross-boundary working and coordinate a bespoke peer review system.

Manchester will be subject to a Project Phoenix Peer Review in September 2019; the findings and learning from this will be reported in the Complex Safeguarding Annual Report 2019/20.

- 2.7 Following Ofsted's inspection of Manchester's Children's Services in 2014 there has been a comprehensive programme of reform put in place that is focused on creating the conditions for effective intervention with children and their families and good practice to flourish. This has been supported by £10.5m investment to recruit 121 social workers and managers to strengthen and improve management support, guidance and oversight. The impact of this can be seen in the quarterly scorecard presented to Scrutiny Committee and the reduction in staff turnover, absence and reliance on agency staff.
- 2.8 The re-inspection of Manchester's Children's Services reported in December 2017 there were strong partnership work between Manchester City Council and GMP this was having a positive impact on vulnerable children, including those at risk of sexual exploitation. The report said: *"Strong partnership work between the local authority and the police, at both strategic and operational levels, is having a positive impact on vulnerable children. This includes children at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation...Work with these children and their families is increasingly effective, with examples of good assessments and targeted work to reduce risks. Responses for children at risk of exploitation are increasingly effective...The multi-agency Protect team provides intensive work with children at higher risk of exploitation and also co-ordinates the successful disruption of the adults seeking to exploit them."*
- 2.9 A review of Manchester's Protect team in summer 2016 led to a redesign of services with a strengthened focus on partnerships and improved links with neighbourhood services. However, the service continues to challenge itself and seek to be the best it can be; taking lessons previously learned, as well as drawing on local and national research. In 2018 Manchester's Complex Safeguarding Hub was established to have a focus on protecting vulnerable people in the city from sexual and other forms of exploitation. The hub brings together adults and children's services and a range of partners. It works with nationally-recognised experts to proactively protect children from all forms of exploitation.
- 2.10 In addition, as part of the collaborative work across Greater Manchester Children's Services, in October 2018 Manchester City Council was the first local authority in Greater Manchester to adopt the Achieving Change Together (ACT) model which focuses on a more collaborative approach to working with vulnerable young people to reduce their risks and enable them to feel more supported as well as protected. This approach has been pioneered in Wigan and Rochdale where it has been independently evaluated and found to have a significant and beneficial impact for children and young people at risk of or being exploited.
- 2.11 Safeguarding young people in the city is a key priority for the Council and while there have been demonstrable improvements by Manchester City Council and its partners in identifying and effectively responding to the exploitation of children, there can never be any room for complacency. In line with our overall ambition to ensure this ongoing improvement process results in excellent services for children in our city, Informed by the findings from the review of historical records, Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board at the

invitation of the Strategic Director for Children and Education Services on 4th October 2018 agreed to commission the Local Government Association to undertake an independent peer review/challenge to focus on the effectiveness of the current complex safeguarding hub multi- agency arrangements and response to children at risk of exploitation and those being exploited’.

- 2.12 As previously reported the LGA Peer Review was led by a former and experienced Director of Children’s Services who was supported by 4 experienced and senior leaders who had expertise in Policing, Health, Education and Social Care. The review was undertaken during May 2019 and the findings of which were shared with Scrutiny Committee members at the July 2019 Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee meeting.

### **3.0 Findings and response to the LGA Peer Review/challenge**

#### **Methodology**

- 3.1 The Local Government Association (LGA) peer review was commissioned to focus on three core components:

- Leadership and management, including vision and strategy
- Effective practice and impact on outcomes for children and families
- Resources and capacity

The peer challenge scope considered:

- Governance structure and accountability
- Use of Quality Assurance and Performance
- Management and supervision
- Awareness raising
- Investigations and prosecutions

- 3.2 The first phase of the review consisted of three members of the peer challenge team spending 3 days in April 2019 auditing the records of children and young people; this was undertaken alongside front line staff and was subsequently followed up by 2 further days of auditing; resulting in a total of 33 children’s records being reviewed.
- 3.3 The review team then returned and were on site from 13th - 17th May 2019 and undertook a range of activities including focus groups with front line staff, managers, partners and Senior Strategic Leaders.
- 3.4 Assurance was sought in relation to the quality and impact from our practice and a number of areas were explored in more detail including - planning, assessment and interventions including step down support from high risk/complex cases, the effectiveness of partnership working and workforce development strategy plans. The peer challenge looked at the extent of awareness raising and education in relation to CSE and the effectiveness of disruption and enforcement activity.

- 3.5 Whilst the peer challenge focused on a thematic area in relation to CSE it also provided feedback on the quality of practice and impact of work from across the social care system and therefore has wider applicability; identifying strengths along with areas for further development.

### **Review key messages/findings**

- 3.6 The peer review team were very positive about the staff who work in Manchester and recognised their pride and passion and reported this was evident from frontline staff to senior leaders and throughout the partnership. The key messages from the review were:
- Strong leadership and political support for CSE
  - Strong partnerships
  - We are well placed to accelerate progress and further improvements
  - We need to focus on impact and outcomes
  - We need to ask and answer ‘how well?’ and ‘what difference?’
  - There was recognition of innovative work mapping and using contextual safeguarding principles to tackle child exploitation
  - We need to ensure we balance child led practice with keeping children safe
- 3.7 In relation to effective practice the team reported they could see improvements in practice since the new Complex Safeguarding Hub was established, there was a focus on keeping children safe, staff know young people well and build trusting relationships. Caseloads are reducing and manageable, workers report good management support. There was evidence of statutory compliance in most case files audited and effective missing from home procedures and interventions. They saw strong evidence of multi- agency working, sharing of intelligence, joint operations and disruption and there were examples of positive outcomes and innovative interventions.
- 3.8 A number of areas for further consideration were highlighted with the review team reporting that there is further work to do to ensure that the quality of practice is consistently good across all young people’s records. An area the service is already focused and working on. Our priority is to ensure good practice is evidenced in young people's records; we embed reflective supervision within our recording and achieve a stronger focus on impact and outcomes. The peer review team recognised that we are committed to developing our performance and quality assurance arrangements that staff and managers are positive and understand audit. However, there is more to do to ensure auditing activity is analytical and reflective to better evidence impact and support continuous practice improvement.
- 3.9 The overall feedback was positive and welcomed given the Complex Safeguarding Hub had been in operation for only 6 months and therefore much of the areas for development affirmed ‘we know ourselves well’ and therefore enhanced our insights and service plan.

## **4.0 Progress since and in response to LGA Peer Challenge findings**

### **Governance and Quality Assurance**

- 4.1 Following receipt of the LGA Peer Challenge letter two feedback sessions have been undertaken with Children's Service Managers, one led by the LGA Lead Peer Reviewer and a detailed session with Complex Hub social workers on developing further the quality of intervention.
- 4.2 A Complex Safeguarding Hub multi-agency delivery group has been established, joint chaired by Children's Services and Greater Manchester Police with representation from key partners. A delivery plan has been created to inform this work moving across the partnership and will report in to the Complex Safeguarding Executive Partnership Board through to Manchester's Safeguarding Partnership.
- 4.3 To strengthen auditing and quality assurance and ensure learning continues to inform practice a detailed refresh of the Children's Services Quality Framework has been undertaken and will be implemented from September 2019. The Complex Safeguarding Hub will be included in these arrangements and this will provide a greater window into practice and outcomes for young people - including the use of practice observations, self assessment, service user feedback alongside audit activity. As part of the new framework the Service Lead will provide an overview and summary on the quality of practice and evidence of impact.
- 4.4 The Strategic Head of Early Help and Complex Safeguarding Hub and Service Lead undertake quarterly dip sampling, team managers carry out monthly audits, there are monthly Independent Return Interview (IRI) audits and the Service Lead carries out a monthly review of the most frequently reported missing young people.
- 4.5 Since the Peer Challenge in May 2019 and the aforementioned feedback sessions, whilst early days subsequent auditing activity indicate there has been improvements in practice recording and key decisions (2 areas for development identified).
- 4.6 In addition CSE/Complex Safeguarding will continue to be a theme for multi-agency auditing/learning for Manchester's Safeguarding Partnership.
- 4.7 In respect of performance data reporting specifically relating to 'complex safeguarding'. A core data and performance dashboard has been agreed across Greater Manchester for each of the 10 Complex Safeguarding Hubs/arrangements.
- 4.8 The recently implemented Liquid Logic System has already simplified the data sources and anticipated to further improve data reporting in due course.

## 5.0 Practice and Impact

- 5.1 Key areas of work to consolidate practice within the hub include development and embedding of case formulation, the use of a self assessment tool and practice observation within the team alongside outcome focused recording, and plans. We are creating opportunities for young people to inform service development, and are developing stronger links with the youth and other community providers to enable better quality signposting within the Hub and a stronger aspiration based offer for our young people. This is being developed in partnership with Unity Radio, Youth Providers and Manchester City Football Club. We are trying different approaches to respond to demand such as recently trialled group work with a small group of young people, joint work with SIU to relaunch 'My Safety Plan', and a review of the impact of the ACT (Achieving Change Together) innovation.
- 5.2 There is also work taking place by the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse commissioned by the Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding Team to develop an assessment tool that has a strong evidence base, is outcome based and which reflects the growing research about what works well when working with young people. The Phoenix assessment tool is currently being used by social workers across Greater Manchester in the interim, and the social workers have a good understanding of some of the limitations of this, having received training from Research in Practice and Centre of Expertise, and how to apply professional judgement.
- 5.3 The Complex Safeguarding Hub have developed a case formulation model, led by the work of an embedded Trusted Relationship psychologist, which draws upon a range of theory and research to understand and respond to the needs of children at risk of or being exploited, and includes a focus on contextual safeguarding. While in the testing phase, feedback about this approach including from Centre of Expertise is positive.
- 5.4 The Complex Safeguarding Hub has a clear referral pathway via locality social workers, and multi agency daily risk meetings are in place to share information and intelligence to ensure a timely and effective joined up response. There are a number of operations being run from the Complex Safeguarding Hub with a focus on contextual safeguarding and disruption and there is growing evidence of impact from this work, including a number of successful prosecutions.
- 5.5 Intrinsic to the approach of the Complex Safeguarding Hub is the application of the Trust Relationship and Achieving Change Together approach and practice models. Whilst Manchester is at an early stage of evaluation there have already been some positive progress and impact identified for example 1 young person who had a prolific history of missing episodes has maintained a place in school education and begun to share information about their experiences which contributes to intelligence building, safety planning incidents and ultimately successful prosecution of those who seek to exploit children/vulnerable adults. This has been the case for one very recent joint

operation that culminated in 13 convictions for 4 perpetrators of CSE involving multiple victims.

- 5.6 In addition and informed by the information shared by young people there has been a targeted county lines operation which has led to disruption and arrests of perpetrators alongside safeguarding work with 10 victims, and a location focussed operation in relation to the selling of Xanax.

## **6.0 Summary**

- 6.1 It is evident that awareness and understanding of CSE and other forms of exploitation has improved significantly since the early 2000s with fundamental changes as to how these issues are responded to and tackled in Manchester. However, whilst we are confident that the shortcomings identified within the Internal Practice Review have been effectively addressed. However, as history informs us, we can never be complacent and that is why Manchester actively seeks out local and national learning and welcomes Peer Challenge/review as was the case with the recent LGA review.
- 6.2 In addition Manchester is an active member of Project Phoenix arrangements for Greater Manchester and will be the first authority in which will include input from reviewers from the The Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, Research in Practice and Greater Manchester Complex Safeguarding; this is therefore a good opportunity to review progress already made since the Peer Challenge and to receive further expert feedback.
- 6.3 Finally the findings from inspection, peer challenge/review and research will continue to inform and drive Children's Services to continually improve in order to build a safe, happy and healthy future for all our children.

## **7.0 Recommendations**

- 7.1 Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee members are invited to:

Consider the context of the Peer Review, the progress that has been made and the actions being taken to address the areas identified for further development.

Seek a further update and impact of the identified actions within the annual Complex Safeguarding Report 2019/20.