

Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee
Meeting to be held on Wednesday 13th March 2024

Electoral Division affected:
(All Divisions);

Corporate Priorities:
Delivering better services;
Caring for the vulnerable;
Protecting our environment;
Supporting economic growth

**Contextual Safeguarding Re-Model and Implementation of the EmPower
Contextual Safeguarding Multi Disciplinary Team**
(Appendix 'A' – 'B' refers)

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Brief Summary

This report provides an update regarding the development and progress of the Contextual Safeguarding Re-Model and the implementation of the EmPower Contextual Safeguarding Multi Disciplinary Team. A supporting presentation is also provided at (Appendix 'A').

Recommendation

The Children, Families and Skills Scrutiny Committee is asked to consider the evidenced based work that has been undertaken to re-design the Contextual Safeguarding Service and consider ways to further support this area of work.

Detail

Background:

The Contextual Safeguarding Re-Model has been delivered as part of the 'Where Our Children Live' Programme, to better support our most vulnerable children and young people in a way that is multi agency, cost effective and improves outcomes for young people and their families.

The Exploitation Team, alongside the Extra Familial Harm and Missing from Home Teams aim to keep children and young people safe from risks and abuse outside of



the home. The model meant that social workers, alongside partner organisations, were working in silos and as a result were unable to keep pace with assessment, support demands and quality processes. They were spending a considerable amount of time responding to crises leading to drift and delay in support, a lack of time to properly support children and families to change the root causes, and ultimately an increased number of children entering the care system. We believed that by targeting the support and driving a multi-agency approach to this cohort of young people and their families, and intervening before the situation reaches a crisis point, it would reduce the need for those young people to become looked after.

Aims of the model/staffing structure:

The aim of the model has been to strengthen practices utilising, learning from other authorities and multi-disciplinary approaches implemented successfully by other teams in Lancashire. By working with multi-agency partners, we are looking to develop multi-disciplinary teams involving, the mentoring service, targeted youth service, mental health practitioners, substance misuse, specialist and exploitation nurses, a psychologist and speech and language therapists. We are strengthening links with partners such as Education, Inclusion and the virtual school, Child and Family Youth Justice service, VRN, we are with you and the mentoring service to provide packages of support to help families build relationships, better support the needs of vulnerable children and stay together where possible. We have developed a specialised learning and development programme and we use the strength-based approaches such as trauma informed, relationship based and family safeguarding whilst enhancing practitioners understanding of adolescent development and how to address harm outside the home.

Research and outcomes

As part of the preparation and development of the model we spoke to several Local Authorities who have already developed their contextual safeguarding services. Whilst the makeup of the teams varied, the common theme was that they were all multi disciplinary.

Some of the outcomes from the Achieving Change together model in Greater Manchester were:

- **Edge of care** - The evaluation report (2017) showed that none of the young people living at home and considered to be 'on the edge of care' came into care, and no young people in care have moved to out of area, high cost or secure homes during the period prior to the evaluation.
- **Children, Young people and family feedback** - Young people reported improvements in things that matter to them, like relationships, how they feel, and the attainment of personal goals and improved relationships with caregivers.
- **Psychologists** - Embedding clinical psychotherapists in multi-agency Teams enabled all practitioners (Police, Social Workers, support workers, nurses, and wider partners) to receive timely support and expertise, to be more child centred and trauma informed in how they work with young people, their



families and with other professionals in and outside of the teams. They developed their skills, knowledge, understanding, competence and resilience - ultimately enabling the standard of support and safeguarding for young people and their parents to be bespoke, meaningful and enriched.

- **Financial** - Across Greater Manchester authorities they were spending £8.9 million on out of borough homes for 130 young people, many with poor outcomes. The evaluation found that for every £1 spent, £5 was saved on accommodation costs alone.
- **Financial contd** – Across Greater Manchester authorities children's records were audited, and it was felt that there was substantial evidence that, without the intervention, the young people would have been very likely to have gone into residential care or, in 2 cases, into a secure placement. Based on these assumptions, and assuming the project would support 30 clients a year on running costs of £305k, it was estimated that there could be annual benefits of over £1.6m through reduced and avoided accommodation costs.

The Power2 Service is a multi-disciplinary, multi-agency partnership between Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care, Wolverhampton Clinical Commissioning Group, Public Health and the Voluntary Sector. It supports vulnerable young people aged 11-25 at risk of exploitation and family breakdown. The service provides a trauma informed approach enabling vulnerable young people and adults to develop a consistent, non-judgemental, one to one relationship with a case/key worker with the relationship being built on trust and stability. As a result of the model, Wolverhampton have seen:

- Reduction in homelessness
- Reduction in reoffending
- Reduction in substance misuse
- Reduction in missing episodes
- Reduction in risks of exploitation
- Reduction in NEET
- Reduction in spend on commissioned Placements and step down in social care status
- Reduction in permanent and fixed term Exclusions and improved attendance
- Reduction in A&E attendance and hospital admissions

Benefits of Multi Disciplinary Teams:

A key element of Lancashire's family safeguarding model across Lancashire's Children's Services is the multi-disciplinary approach – MASH, Family Safeguarding, Children and Youth Justice Services.

- Enhanced and improved outcomes for children and young people, through a range of joined-up services, advice and support being readily available and easily accessible.
- Helps to build consensus, strengthen partnership voice, break down professional boundaries and parochial attitudes.



- Can help to build a more cohesive community approach through united multi-agency practitioners taking greater ownership and responsibility for addressing local needs jointly, thus avoiding duplication or overlap of provision.
- Improved co-ordination of services resulting in better relationships, improved referrals and the addressing of joint targets.
- Offers a broader perspective or focus to working practice.
- Helps to improve understanding and raise awareness of issues and agencies, and other professional's practice.
- Increased level of trust existing between partners/providers in relation to everyone knowing each can and will deliver.
- Increased staff morale knowing that they do not work in isolation and that issues and problems can be resolved collaboratively.
- More enthusiastic and committed staff who have high expectations of themselves and others.

Implementation of EmPower

We implemented a 'soft launch' of the EmPower service on the 8 January 2024 which entailed the exploitation, missing and extra familial harm teams merging into 7 Multi Disciplinary Teams with roles including case holding social workers, exploitation social workers, child and family practitioners, parenting support workers, engagement mentors, targeted youth support workers, exploitation nurses and specialist nurses. We have started the recruitment process of the vacant posts – social workers, engagement mentors, targeted youth support workers and parenting workers.

Conversations are ongoing with health regarding the mental health practitioners and speech and language therapists and with public health regarding the substance misuse workers.

Strengthened links with Child and Youth Justice Service and Empower

Lancashire Child and Youth Justice Service have been provided with an additional £95,000 through the Government's Turnaround programme to support anti-social behaviour. This is in response to an article that was published in May 2023 where Lancashire was highlighted as a hot spot for anti-social behaviour (ASB).

Preston and South Ribble is our greatest hot spot for ASB in young people and we have been working with the violence reduction unit, ED navigators, the police and community safety develop, a project to respond in a positive and strength based way, the gang culture and knife crime which often then leads to ASB and attempt to work with the police at a more trauma informed and early interventionist way to prevent a significant increase in the arrests of the young people involved.

Serious Violence Duty / Serious Youth Violence

EmPower and the Child and Youth Justice Service have been working with the Violence Reduction Network and the Community Safety Partnership as well as other partners to develop Lancashire's response to the serious violence duty. See



Appendix 'B' for our service's response and commitment to serious youth violence as part of the serious violence duty.

Appendices

Appendix 'A' – 'B' are attached to this report. For clarification they are summarised below and referenced at relevant points within this report.

Appendix	Title
Appendix 'A'	Presentation on Contextual Safeguarding Service Update
Appendix 'B'	Contextual Safeguarding / Child and Youth Justice Service commitment to Serious Youth Violence

Consultations

A consultation took with the workforce of the contextual safeguarding service in November 2023 prior to the implementation of the re-model.

Implications:

Legal

There are no significant legal implications detailed in the report and appendices.

Finance

There are no significant financial implications detailed in the report and appendices.

Risk management

N/A

**Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985
List of Background Papers**

Paper	Date	Contact/Tel
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N/A

Reason for inclusion in Part II, if appropriate

N/A

