

BRIDGEND COUNTY BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPORT TO CABINET COMMITTEE CORPORATE PARENTING

19 APRIL 2023

REPORT OF THE CORPORATE DIRECTOR SOCIAL SERVICES AND WELLBEING

IMPLEMENTATION OF THE BRIDGEND EXPLOITATION PREVENTION PANEL

1. Purpose of report

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform the Committee of the progress to date to develop and implement a multi-agency operational Exploitation Prevention Panel in Bridgend.
- 1.2 This report will set out what exploitation is, and request support for the implementation of the Panel.

2. Connection to corporate well-being objectives/other corporate priorities

- 2.1 This report assists in the achievement of the following corporate well-being objective under the **Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015**:
 - **Helping people and communities to be more healthy and resilient** - taking steps to reduce or prevent people from becoming vulnerable or dependent on the Council and its services. Supporting individuals and communities to build resilience, and enable them to develop solutions to have active, healthy and independent lives.

3. Background

- 3.1 Bridgend County Borough Council (BCBC) aims to highlight the issues surrounding child exploitation and encourage everyone to think, spot, and speak out against exploitative abuse, whilst adopting a zero-tolerance attitude towards adults developing inappropriate relationships with children, or children exploiting and abusing their peers.
- 3.2 BCBC wants to raise awareness of Child Exploitation in all its forms and are currently developing a strategy to help fight against child sexual and child criminal exploitation.
- 3.3 The Council intends to support the victims and their families who are subjected to exploitation whilst supporting those professionals and practitioners to work directly with young people and their families. It aims to do this through assessing children and their families through the lens of exploitation having developed screening tools that support identification and exploration of exploitation.
- 3.4 Therefore, within Bridgend it is proposed that a multi-agency Exploitation Prevention Panel is established to provide support, oversight and scrutiny of the

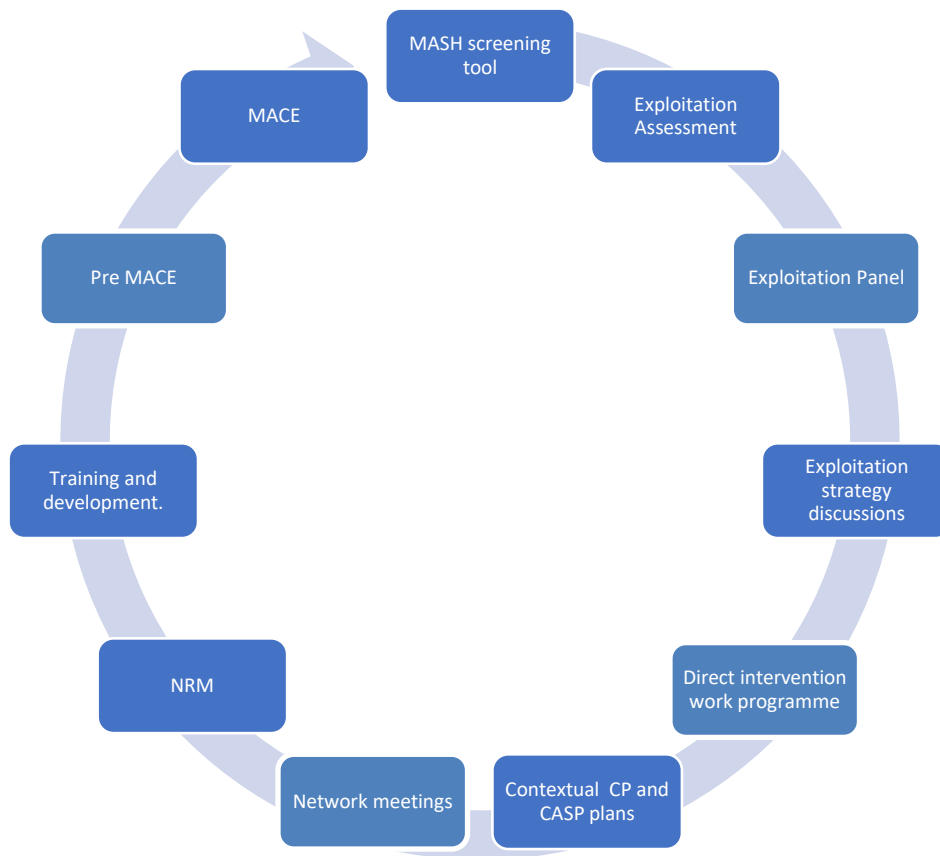
work required to ensure the needs of children and families at risk of exploitation are met and appropriate services are recommended.

- 3.5 At the Care Inspectorate Wales (CIW) Improvement check of Bridgend Children's Social Care in November 2022 CIW identified; "Whilst work in relation to child exploitation has commenced on both a local and regional level, the local authority is at an early stage of change management in respect of implementing and embedding consistent practice regarding identifying and responding to child exploitation. The local authority must progress this work as a matter of urgency."

4. Current situation/proposal

- 4.1 A Regional Exploitation Strategy which has been developed and agreed sets out how partner agencies will recognise and understand exploitation, safeguard and empower victims, and disrupt perpetrators.
- 4.2 Cwm Taf Morgannwg Regional Safeguarding Board (CTM RSB) regional exploitation steering group has been set up with the primary aim of translating national guidance and pathways into regional practice tools that will support practitioners to respond effectively to issues of exploitation. The strategic group will also focus on developing a national guidance framework, and also respond to national policy and guidance on exploitation to ensure that the Council is aligned to Wales-wide approaches.
- 4.3 Whilst this work is progressing nationally and regionally, Bridgend partners, led by the Authority, need to ensure it is supporting practitioners to respond to issues of exploitation. Below is a representation of the pathway developed to ensure exploitation in all its forms is explored fully.

Exploitation Framework



4.4 To support implementation of the framework an Exploitation and Prevention Panel is being established to provide a coordinated, multi-agency response to children, young people and vulnerable adults who are currently at risk, or likely to be at risk of, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE), county lines activity, and gang affiliation, through the following aims to ensure:

- Effective multi-agency working to safeguard, protect and prevent from harm people who are effected by exploitation.
- Safeguarding partners exercise effective oversight and scrutiny of arrangements for the safeguarding and protection of people at risk of exploitation.
- The needs of people at risk of exploitation are met and appropriate services are accessed.

.5 The Exploitation Prevention Panel will be a multi-agency panel at a level of sufficient seniority and expertise. The panel will fulfil its aims through delivering the following objectives:

- Providing a safeguarding forum where violence, vulnerabilities and exploitation is discussed and addressed from a multi-agency perspective.

- Co-ordinating the offering effective and timely intervention to families, young people, and vulnerable young adults at risk of exploitation.
- Offering disruption, intervention and protection for those children and families suffering the effects of exploitation.
- Developing multi-agency safety plans for people who are subject or at risk of gang affiliation, being missing from home, child sexual exploitation and/or criminal exploitation.
- Identifying, monitoring and sharing information and intelligence on people who are at risk of, or subject to, the various forms of exploitation
- Mapping through intelligence, data and evidence the extent of links for missing people and people who are victims of or at risk of child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation and gang affiliation of people in Bridgend.
- Ensuring that responses to people who are victims or at risk of exploitation are consistent and effective.
- Mapping the local intelligence in respect of exploitation in Bridgend's against local, regional and national data.
- Making recommendations in line with agreed referral pathways for additional resources and services
- Providing a reviewing mechanism and to gather intelligence to ensure appropriate services and agencies are aware of the risk to young people in BCBC.

4.6 To date, progress within Bridgend County Borough Council in respect of exploitation includes:

- Two senior social workers have been appointed to lead on exploitation within the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)/Information, Advice and Assistance Service (IAA) and the Safeguarding team.
- A dedicated business support role is currently being advertised to support the exploitation work and the Exploitation Prevention Panel.
- Key partner agencies have been nominated and have agreed to be members of the Exploitation Prevention Panel.
- The first meeting of the Bridgend Exploitation Prevention Panel is due to take place on 2nd May 2023, with monthly meetings of the Panel arranged thereafter.
- A draft Terms of Reference for the Exploitation Prevention Panel is being developed. The Terms of Reference will be reviewed at the first meeting of the Panel.
- A suite of screening tools and direct work tools have been created to support practitioners to identify and act on exploitation.
- A pathway for effective case management of exploitation has been agreed.
- Training around understanding and identifying exploitation and contextual safeguarding has been delivered and dates for multi agency training are scheduled for later during 2023.

5. Effect upon policy framework and procedure rules

5.1 There is no effect upon the policy framework and procedure rules.

6. Equality Act 2010 implications

- 6.1 The protected characteristics identified within the Equality Act, Socio-economic Duty and the impact on the use of the Welsh language have been considered in the preparation of this report. As a public body in Wales, the Council must consider the impact of strategic decisions, such as the development or the review of policies, strategies, services and functions. It is considered that there will be no significant or unacceptable equality impacts as a result of this report.

7. Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 implications

- 7.1 The Well-being of Future Generations (Wales) Act 2015 provides the basis for driving a different kind of public service in Wales, with five ways of working to guide how the Authority should work to deliver wellbeing outcomes for people. The following is a summary to show how the five ways of working to achieve the well-being goals have been considered in this report:

- Long Term – Social Services is demand led and the Social Services and Well-being (Wales) Act 2014 (SSWBA) focusses on sustainable prevention and well-being outcomes for the future. There is a requirement to meet the needs of people in the longer term and, because of changes in demographics, and increasing demand with increased complexity, the remodelling and transformation of services continues to be a priority. The work to support exploitation prevention is a long term service priority for BCBC.
- Prevention – the work to set up an Exploitation Prevention Panel within Bridgend ensures the local commitment to ensure that the needs of children and families at risk of exploitation in Bridgend receive the support and services required, and seeks to disrupt those who seek to exploit these children and families.
- Integration – The SSWBA requires local authorities to work with partners, particularly the NHS and the Police, to ensure care and support for people and support for carers is provided. This report and the work to develop support for exploitation refers to work with statutory partners. These statutory agencies together with a range of other partners who work with children and families have agreed to be members of the Exploitation Prevention Panel and work with the Authority in a multi-agency way.
- Collaboration – The collaborative approaches and multi agency work described in the report, will be managed and monitored through the regional exploitation board, and monitored against the regional exploitation strategy.
- Involvement – the key stakeholders are the people who use social care. There is considerable engagement including surveys, stakeholder meetings, engagement events, feedback forms and the complaints process. The provision of accessible information and advice helps to ensure that the voice of adults, children and young people is heard.

8. Financial implications

- 8.1 There are no financial implications arising from this report.

9. Recommendation

- 9.1 It is recommended that the Committee considers the report on the current progress of the work around exploitation and supports the proposal to establish a multi-agency Exploitation Prevention Panel in Bridgend.

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Background documents:

None