

CHILDREN'S SERVICES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE



Report subject	Child Exploitation Working Group Findings Report
Meeting date	24 July 2024
Status	Public Report
Executive summary	Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 June 2022 received an update on Child Exploitation and following consideration of the information received resolved to commission a Child Exploitation Working Group to consider all areas of child exploitation to include county lines and knife crime. This report provides the findings of the working group.
Recommendations	<p>It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (a) Note and comment on the findings of the Working Group (b) Continue to monitor this important issue regularly. <p>It is RECOMMENDED that the Committee RECOMMEND to Cabinet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> (c) That partnership working be promoted to ensure increased communication around the issues highlighted with parents, schools, children and youth services. (d) That earlier age appropriate education be implemented within schools across BCP regarding the risks associated with exploitation, drugs and the dangers of carrying weapons.
Reason for recommendations	To ensure the Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee is proactive in monitoring child exploitation across BCP and that the committee allows time within its work programme to act as a critical friend to the services which deal with this issue. To promote effective partnership working and education to assist in tackling the issues associated with child exploitation.

Portfolio Holder(s):	Cllr Richard Burton, Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People
Corporate Director	Cathi Hadley, Corporate Director of Children's Services
Report Authors	Cllr Richard Burton (written when in position as Chair of Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Child Exploitation Working Group) Louise Smith, Democratic and Overview and Scrutiny Officer
Wards	Council-wide
Classification	For Recommendation.

Background

1. Children's Services Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 7 June 2022 received an update on Child Exploitation and following consideration of the information received resolved to commission a Child Exploitation Working Group to consider all areas of child exploitation to include county lines and knife crime.
2. The working group consisted of 5 members from the Children's Services O&S Committee – Cllr Burton, Cllr Coope, Cllr Haines, Cllr Lewis and Cllr Moore. The committee should note that these were members of the committee prior to local elections in May 2023.
3. Following the May 2023 elections and ensuing change in leadership of BCP Council, Cllr Burton became the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People. The work of this group concluded prior to this point.
4. The working group met on three occasions over a six month period from November 2022 to April 2023 and received presentations and information from:
 - a. The Director for Safeguarding and Early Help
 - b. Detective Chief Inspector, Dorset Police
 - c. Safer Schools & Communities Officer, Dorset Police
 - d. Service Manager for Navigators and Safeguarding in Education Advisers
 - e. The Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner
 - f. The Head of Service Educational Improvement and Services
 - g. The Service Manager – Complex Safeguarding, Assessment and Edge of Care
 - h. Service Manager – Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and Out of Hours Service
 - i. The **Service Manager** - Safeguarding and Targeted Support
5. Through the sessions the working group felt assured that there was a lot of effective multi agency working underway to tackle child exploitation across BCP. The group

concluded that, in addition to this, a focus on the following areas would assist in tackling issues associated with child exploitation:

- a. promotion of partnership working to ensure increased communication around the issues highlighted with parents, schools, children and youth services, and
- b. ensuring that earlier education be implemented within schools across BCP regarding the risks exploitation, drugs and the dangers of carrying weapons in an age appropriate manner.

Summary of financial implications

6. There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Summary of legal implications

7. There are no legal implications associated with this report.

Summary of human resources implications

8. There are no human resources implications associated with this report.

Summary of sustainability impact

9. There are no sustainability impact matters associated with this report.

Summary of public health implications

10. The increase in public awareness around these issues could have a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of children and young people across BCP by ensuring they are fully informed of the risks of exploitation.

Summary of equality implications

11. There are no equality implications associated with this report.

Summary of risk assessment

12. There are no risks to BCP Council associated with this report.

Background papers

None.

Appendices

Appendix 1 - Minutes of the working group dated 1/11/22

Appendix 2 - Minutes of the working group dated 24/1/23

Appendix 3 - Minutes of the working group dated and 4/4/23