

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Tuesday, 3 March 2015 at 6.00pm in Meeting Rooms G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford.

PRESENT: Councillors K R Guy (Chair), G M Green, J Loveridge, J Pinter, R G Scammell, C R Turley and Co-optees S Ali, S Rayner and Mel Ward.

ALSO PRESENT: Jo Banks, Associate Director Patient Safety at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust and Cllr P R Watling, Cabinet Member for Children, Young People & Families.

IN ATTENDANCE : F Bottrill, Scrutiny Group Specialist and D Moseley, Scrutiny Officer

CYPSC-17 MINUTES

RESOLVED – that the minutes of the meeting of the Children & Young People Scrutiny Committee held on 14 November 2014 be confirmed and signed by the Chair.

CYPSC-18 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Mr A Atkinson (Co-optee) and Mr A Mason (Independent Chair of Telford and Wrekin Local Safeguarding Children's Board).

CYPSC-19 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-20 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MULTI AGENCY WORKING AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Consideration of public consultation process and feedback received on the Terms of Reference

The Chair invited the Scrutiny Group Specialist to give an overview of the feedback received. She advised that 21 responses had been received in total and a number of issues raised had already been responded to following consultation with the Chair:-

- The Probation Service had been invited to attend the inquiry day on 13 March 2015 and representatives had been nominated to attend.
- Representatives from the Borough's further education colleges (Telford College of Arts and Technology and New College) had accepted an invitation to take part in the Inquiry Day and representatives from Madeley Academy and Ercall Wood Technology College had also agreed to attend. Representatives from Primary Schools, Independent Schools and Special Schools were still being sought.

- Contact had been made with Shropshire Council to inform the Head of Public Protection that the review was taking place and that the issue of taxi licensing would be included in the work undertaken by the Working Group
- The Chair would attend a meeting on 6 March 2015 with a voluntary organisation supporting victims of CSE. The Chair expressed the opinion that this could result in an opportunity to co-opt an expert in the field onto the Working Group, depending upon the individual's ability to commit their time, or at least receive some expert knowledge in evidence.

The Scrutiny Group Specialist highlighted that one of the main themes that came from the public feedback was that the survivors of CSE and their families wanted to help develop services that better met the needs of victims, survivors and their families.

Members were disappointed at the low number of responses received and queried who had been invited to respond. The Scrutiny Group Specialist outlined the consultation process and the local media coverage which had taken place, which included a number of radio interviews with the Chair and newspaper reports. The deadline to respond had also been extended in an effort to give more time for responses to be made. Despite the low response rate, this did not detract from the value of the responses received. The Chair hoped that the lack of response was a positive indicator that the public thought the terms of reference were thorough enough and required no further comment, rather than demonstrating a lack of engagement or confidence.

Finalising the Terms of Reference

The Chair asked Members to consider whether the scope of the review and Terms of Reference had been drawn broad enough to reflect the feedback or whether the Committee wished to further respond to issues regarding:

- Ongoing support for victims and their families
- How to engage with young people in a safe and unpressured environment (both young people in general and victims or young people at risk)
- How to engage with parents during the review (both in general and parents of children affected by CSE)
- Engagement with Primary Schools
- Role of councillors in tackling CSE. The Chair of the Scrutiny Management Board had offered to give evidence on his experiences of Operation Chalice.
- Engagement with Landlords
- Engagement with voluntary organisations working with young people to seek the views of staff and volunteers and young members regarding awareness and the referral process.
- Engagement with other services for vulnerable people (eg Drug and Alcohol Recovery Service (DARS), NACRO, TACT, Axis counselling)
- Whether to invite the chair of the appropriate Scrutiny Committee and LSCB Chair in Shropshire to the meeting which discusses Taxi Licensing in Shropshire

The Chair encouraged Members to read the recently published report of Louise Casey's Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council. For the avoidance of doubt, he felt that Ms Casey clearly identified the significant role of Local Authorities in addressing CSE: "Tackling CSE effectively requires a council and its partners to mobilise their services and powers together. The Council has a duty to safeguard the victims. It also governs the landscape in which CSE is played out including many schools, care homes, parks, taxis and take away food shops. Councils have powers of licensing and regulation which can be used to disrupt illegal activity in these places and keep the community safe. *This is in addition to the duties and powers of the police*". [Chair's emphasis].

The Chair had noted a theme in some recently published reports which demonstrated a breakdown in communications between agencies, which was also a concern in the recent HMIC National Child Protection Inspection of West Mercia Police. The Chair asked Members to endeavour to read the HMIC National Child Protection Inspection report prior to the Inquiry Day on 13 March 2015.

Members considered each paragraph of the Terms of Reference alongside the feedback received and were satisfied that the feedback fitted into the broadly drawn Terms. Members also requested that the Oxford Serious Case Review and HMIC National Child Protection Inspection be added to the background documents.

Members were conscious of the borough election in May 2015 and, due to the importance of the Review, requested that reassurance be sought from all Group Leaders that the Review would be continued by the Committee (or any successor Committee) following the election.

Information to be requested from participants prior to the Inquiry Day

Members had previously informally raised a number of initial lines of inquiry which had been circulated to the participants. Members identified some further issues to explore during the course of the review as follows:-

- How the Police engage and share sufficient information with the Cabinet Member and Senior Officers with regard to current cases whilst maintaining an appropriate level of confidentiality.
- Whether young people are successfully made aware of where to seek support and guidance, and, after disclosure, whether processes are adequately explained to them and their families.
- How the National Probation Service and local Community Rehabilitation Companies work together and with others to share information regarding Child Sexual Exploitation.
- Availability of training for Councillors and the role of Councillors in supporting affected community members.

Members were concerned to ensure that all participants at the Inquiry Day understood the role of Local Government Scrutiny. Some information had been provided to participants when the Chair initially wrote to organisational leads but it was agreed that explanatory information would be distributed to the participants in the Inquiry Day.

Members considered the draft agenda for the Inquiry Day on 13 March 2015 and were satisfied that, within the time available, sufficient organisations had been included. In later stages of the review, the Committee would seek to meet with Shropshire Council's Head of Public Protection, the voluntary sector, Councillors, front line staff in various agencies, and a cross-section of young people. It was agreed that it was important that the scope of the Review remained manageable.

Jo Banks, Associate Director Patient Safety at Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust was in attendance at the meeting and made a commitment that the Hospital would take part and engage in the review. She reflected on the Trust's experience of CQC Inspection, noting the outstanding rating received for safeguarding, and drawing on this experience, she supported the Committee's commitment to challenge information received by Managers by also seeking to engage with frontline staff.

CYPSC-21 CHAIR'S UPDATE

There were no other relevant issues upon which to update the Committee.

The meeting ended at 6.40pm.

Chairman:.....

Date:.....

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Friday, 13 March 2015 at 9.30am in Meeting Rooms G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford.

PRESENT: Cllrs K R Guy (Chair), G M Green, J Loveridge, J Pinter, R G Scammell and C R Turley and Co-optees: Mr S Ali, Mr S Rayner and Ms M Ward

IN ATTENDANCE : Jo Banks (Associate Director Patient Safety – Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals NHS Trust); F Bottrill (Scrutiny Group Specialist, Telford & Wrekin Council); Chay Davis (Head Teacher – Ercall Wood Technology College); Superintendent Steve Eccleston (Head of Protecting Vulnerable People Unit – West Mercia Police); David Evans (Chief Officer – Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group); Dr Mahadeva Ganesh (Consultant Paediatrician, Designated Doctor for Safeguarding – Shropshire Community Health NHS Trust); Chris Hinde (Probation Officer – National Probation Service (West Mercia)); Laura Johnston (Director of Children & Family Services – Telford & Wrekin Council); Pam Kaminski (Head of Learner Services – Telford College of Arts and Technology); Duncan Marshall (Senior Deputy Head Teacher – Madeley Academy); Andrew Mason (Independent Chair – Local Safeguarding Children’s Board); Christine Morris (Executive Lead for Quality, Safety and Nursing – Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group); D Moseley (Scrutiny Officer, Telford & Wrekin Council); Audrey Scott–Ryan, (Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children and Young People – Telford & Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group); Superintendent James Tozer (Telford & Wrekin Policing Area – West Mercia Police); Jim Watts (Probation Officer – National Probation Service (West Mercia)); and Catherine Whitehead (Assistant Principal Student Voice and Reputation – New College Telford)

CYPSC–22 WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

The Chair invited the Committee Members to introduce themselves and advised that whilst questions would not be taken from the public gallery, any Members of the public who wanted to explore the opportunity to talk to the working group could contact the Scrutiny Team. The Chair also reminded everyone present that in accordance with the Council’s protocols, the meeting could be filmed or recorded but that any footage must focus on the Board table and not include the public gallery.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the scope and purpose of the meeting and, in order to remind attendees of the gravitas of the issue, an extract from the Channel 4 Dispatches documentary, “Hunt for Britain’s Sex Gangs”, was played. The Chair expressed thanks to the copyright holders, True Vision, who had agreed that the extract could be shown.

CYPSC–23 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllr A A Mackenzie and Mr A Atkinson (Co-optee); Crown Prosecution Service: Grace Ononiwu OBE (Chief Crown Prosecutor) and Suzanne Llewellyn (Deputy Chief Crown Prosecutor); ShropDoc/GP Federation: Ian Winstanley (Chief Executive); South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare NHS Foundation Trust: Sharon Conlon

(Safeguarding Lead Adults and Children) and West Midlands Ambulance Service NHS Foundation Trust: Andy Proctor (Head of Safeguarding).

CYPSC–24 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC–25 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MULTI AGENCY WORKING AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Local Safeguarding Children’s Board (LSCB)

The Chair welcomed the Independent Chair of the LSCB, Mr Andrew Mason, and the Director of Children & Family Services, Laura Johnston, to the meeting.

By way of introduction, Mr Mason explained the purpose of the LSCB as the key statutory mechanism by which organisations with responsibility for safeguarding children are brought together to agree on how they will co-operate with each other to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The remit of the LSCB, therefore, covered all children and not just those at risk of or being abused, and the focus of the partnership was on prevention. The LSCB operated by three principles:- that safeguarding was everyone’s responsibility, that the welfare of the child should critically be at the centre of interventions and that all services should seek the views of young people. The role of the LSCB was to co-ordinate the work of the partner agencies and hold each other to account to ensure effectiveness. A wide range of agencies were represented on the LSCB from across the sphere of education, Children’s’ Social Services West Mercia Police, Health, National Probation Service, CAFCASS, community (lay) representatives, Fire and Rescue and the West Midlands Ambulance Service. Each representative had strategic responsibilities within their organisation to ensure that decision-making could take place. The LSCB sought to fully involve every partner and as a result of a recent review of the Board’s operations, partnership working had been improved, governance arrangements streamlined and representatives of Member agencies (eg the Police and Health organisations) were now able to chair the Board’s sub groups.

As Independent Chair, Mr Mason’s role was to support representatives through both challenges and celebrations across the borough and, through his independence, represent the interests of children. He had been appointed in 2012, initially reporting to the Director of Children & Family Services and subsequently, as a result of changes in law, to the Managing Director.

The Director of Children & Family Services’ statutory role was to make sure effective systems were in place to promote the welfare of children and promote partnership working among agencies with responsibility for safeguarding. She was of the clear opinion that CSE could not be addressed by one agency and was, therefore committed to working with the LSCB. She had been a Board Member since joining the authority in 2009 as Assistant Director, throughout her appointment as Interim Director of Children and Family Services in 2011 and her subsequent permanent appointment to the post. She also had significant involvement in the functions of the Council to support victims and prevent further abuse.

The Chair asked Mr Mason for his views as to the health of the structure of the LSCB in comparison to other authorities' Boards. Mr Mason was of the opinion that, because of the local history regarding CSE since approximately 2006, the partners and Board were more advanced than might be the case in other areas. Children Abused Through Exploitation had been the subject of a priority strategic sub-group from 2009 in order to mainstream practice and facilitate performance improvements, but following a satisfactory review, this had subsequently been stepped down although activities were still closely monitored. The CATE Strategic Sub-Group remained challenging and kept in touch with developments in the field, for instance, ensuring the recommendations from Professor Alexis Jay's Independent Inquiry into CSE in Rotherham were fed into operations and used to benchmark services.

Cllr G M Green asked whether the minutes of the LSCB were public, and upon being advised by Mr Mason that these were available on the Board's website, she considered that it may be worth ensuring that all Council Members were reminded of this so that they could keep abreast of child protection issues in the borough.

The Chair asked Mr Mason whether the LSCB was quick to act if services were found wanting and he was advised of the RAG Rating System in place, which had been reviewed at the last strategic meeting. There had been a lot of green and amber ratings, with limited red ratings - most likely to be recently added action points - and the Board constantly reviewed these ratings to ensure progress.

The Chair asked Mr Mason whether the viewpoints of young people and families were fed into the LSCB and Mr Mason responded that the role of the LSCB was strategic and non-operational. However, the LSCB had commissioned the New Start Report following Operation Chalice which had highlighted strong messages about the complexity of communications with victims and their families. He believed the CATE team had been very successful in building the trust of young people and he felt it was important to leave such engagement to professionals.

Mr S Rayner asked Mr Mason whether the LSCB had been able to draw any conclusions with regard trends in offending. Mr Mason responded that CSE had been a problem for a long time and it was undoubtedly still continuing. Cases were monitored and numbers showed some fluctuations. The Director of Children & Family Services concurred that data had shown a steady number of cases of late but a small increase had occurred recently. Mr Mason indicated that the mode of offending was being transformed with the increasing use of technology and partner agencies needed to remain vigilant and keep abreast of change. Children were increasingly using communications technologies at a younger age and the activities of Team Safeguarding Voice at Holmer Lake Primary School provided an excellent example of peer-led education through their production of a leaflet regarding Sexting. Mr Mason expressed the opinion that a big issue locally was raising awareness and the Board was in the process of developing a CSE Communications Strategy, utilising materials from NWG Networks, to raise awareness in the wider community to ensure that individuals knew how to make referrals and had the confidence to do so.

Cllr C R Turley noted that many of the LSCB partner agencies would be under pressure to make savings and he asked whether Mr Mason had identified any impact

on services. Mr Mason agreed that budgets were stressed but stated that he had seen no diminution of input from partners and, in fact, he felt input had increased. The Local Authority budget had been safeguarded and partners generally were seriously seeking to preserve budgets for as long as possible. The level of attendance by partner agencies was excellent and Mr Mason commended partners' efforts.

Mrs Ward noted references to changing modes of offending being facilitated by technology and asked how services could keep up to date. Mr Mason considered that listening to the children themselves was key to staying ahead of the game. Drawing on the example of Team Safeguarding Voice, he stated that he was impressed by the ability of children to communicate complex ideas to adults. In order to produce the Sexting pamphlet which had been circulated to all schools, Team Safeguarding Voice had taken the guidance available and made it so child-friendly and all-age encompassing that the LSCB Academy Schools Representative had praised the quality as suitable for secondary age pupils. Mr Mason also advised that CEOP provided an authoritative online resource to which the Police fed in. The Director of Children & Family Services added the voices of frontline staff were also key to understanding. She noted that frontline managers shared issues identified at the CATE operational Group and she was aware that the understanding that informed Operation Chalice was a result of frontline staff trying to make sense of issues coming light.

Cllr G M Green pointed out that grandparents often had some care responsibilities for their grandchildren and, therefore, awareness raising should extend beyond parents to the wider family unit and suggested that the Pensioners' Forum could be approached in this regard. Mr Mason agreed that other family members had an important role in child care and consideration would be given to increasing the target audience of the Communications Strategy.

The Chair asked Mr Mason and the Director of Children & Family Services whether there were any areas which they thought the Committee should explore with the other organisations participating in the review. Mr Mason advised that the LSCB were seeking to roll out Team Safeguarding Voice to schools across the borough, in order to raise awareness of CSE and other abuses of power (eg radicalisation) so that young people were better equipped to protect themselves. He, therefore, thought that the Committee may want to explore what role schools considered they had in raising awareness. Similarly, he thought that the Committee may want to explore with health organisations, particularly GPs, what they were doing to raise awareness in their organisations and refer any issues identified. He asked that the delivery of training be explored, whether any gaps in knowledge were identified and how the effectiveness of training was monitored. The Director of Children & Family Services stated that she would be interested in the views of other organisations in terms of the Council's lead role in co-ordination and whether it had been effective and supportive to other agencies. She also sought views as to whether the CATE team had been found to be responsive and having the capacity to engage.

Mr S Rayner asked for more information about how Team Safeguarding Voice worked and Mr Mason advised that six of the borough's schools had so far formed a Team Safeguarding Voice Board. Nine children were selected from a school's pupil

numbers, based on their capability to engage and from a range of backgrounds. The children themselves than ran the Board. At Holmer Lake Primary School, the Board Members were identified to their peers by wearing a red sweatshirt and they were available to talk to and resolve playground issues such as bullying. Mr Mason considered that the children had shown a remarkable ability to deal with issues themselves. For example, within four years, the children were confident that there was no bullying in the school as peer pressure ensured bullying was unacceptable. The Holmer Lake Primary School Team Safeguarding Voice Board had organised the morning session of the LSCB's annual conference in the previous year which had brought in representatives from across Telford and Wrekin, including Ministers and the Chief Executive of CAFCASS, who were able to speak with the children and hear about their achievements. Mr Mason recommended that the Committee visit Holmer Lake Primary School at some point during the review. Mr S Rayner asked whether the Team Safeguarding Model would work in a secondary school setting and Mr Mason informed the Committee that the model was being introduced into secondary schools and there had also been strong involvement from further education colleges.

The Chair asked whether Mr Mason considered that partner bodies were all contributing fully to the work of the LSCB. Mr Mason responded that there was always room for improvement in what the partners were doing as individual organisations and would never be satisfied that enough was being done. He noted that some organisations, for instance NHS England and the Fire and Rescue Service were under enormous pressure to provide representation on numerous LSCBs and he therefore recognised it was impossible for them to attend every meeting. Critical and core partners regularly attended (education, children's services, police and health) and whilst there was a strong partnership, he felt that some improvement could be sought. For instance, he felt that the Fire Service offered valuable input when they were able to attend, as they often had to enter homes unannounced and would see things that other organisations did not.

The Chair thanked Mr Mason and Ms Johnston for their contribution to the meeting.

Crime & Justice

West Mercia Police

The Chair welcomed Superintendent Steve Eccleston and Superintendent James Tozer to the meeting and asked them to introduce themselves and the role of their organisation in tackling CSE.

Superintendent Steve Eccleston explained that he worked with the Regional Organised Crime Unit. He explained that West Mercia Police had members on the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and Adult Safeguarding Boards for Telford & Wrekin and also for Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Superintendent James Tozer explained that he had a long history of working in Telford and Wrekin to tackle CSE. He was based in CID during the Operation Chalice Investigation. He represented West Mercia Police on the Telford and Wrekin Local Safeguarding Children's Board. While he was not the formal lead for CSE he

recognised that this was a matter of great importance and assured Members that the police worked well with other services.

The Chair asked if they could provide more information about how well organisations in Telford and Wrekin were working together to tackle CSE?

Superintendent James Tozer responded that he was working in Telford and Wrekin in 2008 when there were initial concerns about CSE and he was involved in setting up what became Operation Chalice; he had recently come back to this area. In his view no other area had worked like Telford and Wrekin to tackle CSE. The concerns were taken to the Local Authority and the Local Safeguarding Children's Board at an early stage and it was recognised that the different organisations needed to work together. Coming back to Telford & Wrekin he said he had seen the genesis of the partnership working. However he said that West Mercia Police were never going to be satisfied or complacent about CSE, but compared to some other areas the partnership working in Telford and Wrekin was progressive and open. He assured Members that organisations were not 'backing off' the issue of CSE and organisations continued to work together.

The Chair asked how organisations shared data and was enough data shared?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston replied that the word 'data' was an innocuous word but in relation to CSE there was a wide range of data. The intelligence the police had related to 'who was where and who did what'. The police also had processes to share information. Data sharing in relation to some crimes, eg drug based crime, could be more simple, but with regard to CSE things may have occurred but the victim often does not recognise that they were victims of a crime.

Superintendent James Tozer added that police staff had had training on sharing intelligence to identify CSE and all staff worked to the definition of CSE used by the Association of Chief Police Officers. He said that without going into the detail of the definition this set out that someone was being groomed and exploited by a perpetrator. He assured Members that police officers knew how and when to share information. However, in relation to sharing data on the scale of CSE it was not particularly useful to say "there are 300 cases of this or 300 cases of that".

Superintendent Steve Eccleston assured Members that safeguarding the child or young person was the priority and that if a child or young person was at risk of CSE then the information would be shared – and after it may be necessary to determine which aspect of the law regarding data protection and sharing data should be applied. Information sharing was not something that organisations should be frightened of. It was important that staff know how to recognise information that should be shared. He gave the example of a parent who was concerned because their daughter had become secretive and had been given a mobile phone. If this was joined up with information from the school it may be a significant piece of information. Information was now shared through the Harm Assessment Units so individual officers did not have to decide "should I share this information?". The information was passed to the Harm Assessment Unit who shared it with the relevant people and organisations. Telford and Wrekin was fortunate in having the CATE Team. The only Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) in the West Midlands was in Herefordshire.

This took data sharing a step further as staff were co-located which removed further barriers to sharing information. The introduction of a local MASH was something that the Police needed to explore with partners.

The Chair asked if front line staff were on board with sharing information and if the Superintendents were confident that the processes were working correctly?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston responded that he was confident. He clarified this adding “could he vouch for every single member of staff - no”. However, the supervision and management structures were in place and the Harm Assessment Unit did a key word search trawl to identify cases but no system was 100% safe.

Cllr J Loveridge asked what the police did to protect victims and their families from further abuse?

Superintendent James Tozer replied that individuals were risk assessed by the CATE Team and the Police fed into this process, with the CPS prosecuting when necessary. He was confident that individuals at risk were identified through this process and the CATE Team assessed the support required accordingly. A Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) such as that in Herefordshire would provide the same service but in a different format.

Superintendent Steve Eccleston added that CSE was child abuse and there was strong statutory guidance about how to work together to protect the victim. The procedure set out the strategy meeting and child protection conference. He assured Members that these systems were in place in Telford and Wrekin.

Cllr C R Turley asked if there was sufficient legislation to enable the police to prosecute perpetrators of CSE and what the threshold for prosecution was?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston responded that the second question was for the Crown Prosecution Service. However, in relation to the first part of the question he explained that there was no specific crime of CSE but that perpetrators could be prosecuted through other offenses. The Police provided the evidence and the Crown Prosecution Service assessed if the case would go to court.

Superintendent James Tozer added that there was no specific legislation regarding CSE but under the Sex Offenses Act 2003, the police could use notices to stop people contacting victims, harbouring children and could also charge perpetrators with offenses of rape. He clarified the reasons behind the question – was it that the Committee wanted to know what would happen if the Crown Prosecution Service said that a case would not go to Court? He explained that the police did not stop investigating a case because there was no hope of a case going to court – the police would continue to do their job. The police continued to make arrests relating to suspected cases of CSE – even if the victim had not made a formal complaint. This was a brave step, the police were as bold as they could be and would take suspected cases of CSE seriously regardless of rules and thresholds. He explained that this was one of the reasons why Telford and Wrekin was different.

Mrs M Ward said that one of the issues identified in response to the CSE abuse in Rochdale was insufficient training. She said that it had been explained that staff had had training – did they have evidence to support this eg feedback or surveys?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston replied that the report of the HMI Inspection of Child Protection for the West Mercia Police force was available on the internet. This involved interviews with individual members of staff and looking at case files. The West Mercia Police and Warwickshire Police had invited the Police College to carry out a peer review. This would involve working with colleagues from universities. The West Mercia Police force also used electronic training packages and an audit could be carried out to see who had completed the courses. To assess what difference this make would required an external view.

Mrs M Ward asked if there were internal processes to monitor the training?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston responded that it was the responsibility of day to day managers to ensure that staff had the skills and knowledge they needed and identify training requirements. However, CSE must be seen as part of a much broader set of issues. The College of Policing recognised this as part of the 13 strands of the public protection policy. These included CSE, child protection, female genital mutilation (FGM), missing persons and radicalisation. West Mercia and Warwickshire Police had gone further and planned to deliver face-to-face training. This was being put to chief officers and they were hopeful it would go through.

Mrs M Ward asked what the timescales were for a decision about face-to-face training?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston said that this would be considered by Chief Officers in the next four weeks to seek approval. As with other public services, there had been a significant extraction of policing resources and any investment in training must demonstrate that it would be worth it.

Superintendent James Tozer said that all people were taking responsibility – they should not take what they saw or were told at face value but always question further. The symptoms of CSE could be the behaviour of many teenagers, e.g. difficult behaviour, being secretive. Another challenge that the police faced was that, as with other crimes, the crime set changed over time. Operation Chalice, which was the first of its kind in the area, was organised crime. This was a combination of victim, offender and location. It had been identified that the victims of CSE were not being picked on because they were vulnerable – but because they were young. There had been cases where people had said “I told the police 20 times”; Superintendent James Tozer said was not seeing that feedback constantly, but there were occasional cases where something was reported to a person on one shift and this was not passed on to another shift when it was reported again.

Cllr R G Scammell asked if there was an ‘average perpetrator’?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston replied that the perpetrators were typically aged between the late teens and early twenties, but in Operation Chalice and other operations perpetrators had been older. The pattern of CSE identified in Derbyshire,

Rotherham and Operation Chalice was organised crime, but there were also lone offenders who operated through online grooming.

Cllr R G Scammell asked about the ethnicity of perpetrators. He noted that the perpetrators in Operation Chalice were of Pakistani origin.

Superintendent Steve Eccleston responded that this was an interesting question. Many CSE offenders were of British Pakistani heritage, and this was the case in Operation Chalice. However, this was not typical of other types of sexual offending where the offenders had been white males. CSE was not a culturally defined crime – it was about the victim, offender, location and opportunity. Certain situations could develop where potential offenders acquired access to cars, phones and money but this was possible within a wide variety of groups across the country and not only applicable to one cultural group.

Through Operation Chalice it was found that CSE grew quickly. Superintendent Steve Eccleston said he was reassured that the West Mercia Police had tackled it and had prevented opportunities for the crime to develop over subsequent years. He concluded that it was not helpful to focus on a particular group, type or place.

Cllr G M Green said that her question was not so much how the Police were working to tackle CSE, but rather how Elected Members could help the Police. Ward Members were often approached by members of the public in their ward about issues – if someone had concerns that could be related to CSE what should a Ward Member do?

Superintendent James Tozer replied that the first thing to do was to consider the information that you were being told. If someone was at risk then call 999. If the information was part of a picture then call 101 the non-emergency number which would go through to a national switch board. The person would then be put through to a trained call taker who would ask questions to get the correct information across. It was reported that there were occasions where calls have been received but it would have been better to deal with the incident at the time rather than wait to call.

Cllr Green suggested that information should be provided to all elected members after the election about who to contact and how to do this when concerns are raised.

Superintendent James Tozer said he would be happy to assist with this.

The Chair said he had called 111 when there was an issue in his ward and he had been put through to the local office straight away and kept up to date. He was very impressed with this response.

Superintendent James Tozer said that he should make Members aware that if they call 111 they would not always be put through to the local police station.

Superintendent Steve Eccleston said that police officers should have a level of professional curiosity eg if an incident involves girls, has the school or children's services identified any issues.

Superintendent James Tozer added that if members of the public had concerns he would ask Members to encourage them to phone the police.

The Chair said that there were occasions when a constituent raised their main concern eg drains, but during the conversation other issues that may affect young people are also identified eg young people going in and out of a house during school hours.

Cllr C R Turley asked if the CSE legislation was fit for purpose?

Superintendent James Tozer explained that there was no specific CSE legislation. There were 15 different offenses that could be used to prosecute CSE offenders. It was suggested that the Sexual Offences Act 2003 should be reviewed. There were wide ranging criminal and civil powers available e.g. a Sexual Offences Protection Order (SOPO), a Community Order or Anti-Social Behaviour Order could be issued or there may evidence of another offence eg rape. Whilst some offences may not result in arrests, arrests may be possible for related offences. It was confirmed that the police do have enough powers but it is complicated.

The Chair referred to the organised crime involved in Operation Chalice. He asked if this was a current issue?

Superintendent James Tozer responded that it was probably still happening, but that he did not see the signs of CSE organised by criminal gangs. He assured Members that the police did look at vulnerable locations and that they were working proactively with partners. Members were also assured that there were currently sufficient resources to respond to CSE cases. However, as reporting rates increased and people who have been victims of CSE for a long time came forward, those individuals would require ongoing support and that would have particular implications for the CATE Team. It was recognised that where a victim had been involved in CSE through organised crime, they often required longer term support.

Superintendent Steve Eccleston said that in West Mercia there was not a full understanding of the picture of CSE, but this was not unusual for criminal activity eg HMIC estimated that 1 in 6 rapes were reported. What the police could do is that anyone who was in a position to interact with a child was able to pick up on the signs of CSE and act. This was also the case for the CATE team and teachers. It was also discussed that children did look out for each other and it was important to raise awareness eg through the National CSE Awareness Day on 18 March. It was suggested that a national campaign should be sustained.

Mr S Rayner asked about the implications of raising awareness of CSE which would result in an increase in the number of cases being reported. Would there be sufficient resources to respond to these?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston replied that the police had the support of the Police and Crime Commissioner to invest in services to tackle CSE. This would include 16 posts. These would be based in Warwickshire, Shropshire, Telford and Wrekin and Worcestershire to meet the increase in the number of cases being reported and ensure that there were the specific skills. This would include five Barnados workers as young people often did not want to see the police but would talk to other staff with the

right skills. It was discussed if this would be sufficient resource to respond to the number of cases as reporting increases – the answer to this question was not known.

The Chair said that one question the Committee would be asking all partners was – are there questions you think the Committee should ask of other organisations?

Superintendent Steve Eccleston responded that it would be helpful to know if other organisations would be able to keep pace with resources as reporting of CSE increased. The police force had made a national commitment to tackling CSE, which was one of the Strategic Policing Requirements, and for the first time CSE was identified as a national risk. It was reported that West Mercia Police was ‘ahead of the game’.

Superintendent James Tozer said that CSE remained a focus for policing in Telford and Wrekin and it was previously a focus when other areas were not looking at this issue. However it was also recognised that there were other pressures on police services. The issue of ‘sexting’ was also identified as a concern as this was seen as a ‘new norm’. This raised the question of how electronic evidence would be managed in the future.

Superintendent Steve Eccleston added that there was a National Intelligence Model and that he did not control 100% of policing resources in the area. A Police Tasking and Co-ordinating Group met monthly and he was confident that if CSE became more of an issue in Telford and Wrekin he would get resources.

The Chair thanked Superintendent Steve Eccleston and Superintendent James Tozer for attending the meeting.

The Committee was informed that the Chief Crown Prosecutor had planned to attend the meeting for the next session, but due to transport problems was unable to attend and she had sent her apologies. It was confirmed that the Chief Crown Prosecutor would be happy to attend a future meeting of the Committee.

The Committee agreed to adjourn the meeting at 11.04am and to reconvene at 11.20am.

National Probation Service (West Mercia)

The Chair welcomed representatives from the National Probation Service who introduced themselves as Probation Officers. Mr Chris Hinde had been a Probation Officer in West Mercia for 10 years. He dealt with offenders on a day to day basis, including those who had been subject of Operation Chalice. Mr Jim Watts had been a Probation Officer for 15 years and operated a similar role to Mr Hinde, ie supervising high risk offenders. In general each Probation Officer had an individual caseload of approximately 35-40 offenders.

The Chair explained the remit of the review in looking at how well information was shared between agencies and asked for views in this regard. Mr Watts indicated that information was generally shared through the Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) process. The MAPPA process operated on three tiers and

offenders who were about to be released from custody were allocated to a tier after an assessment at a formal meeting of partner agencies (including the police, social workers, housing and mental health) which created a management plan for each offender and parties would reconvene at intervals to consider progress and share information. This process was rated very highly and good links between the majority of parties existed, although the Probation Service would welcome greater involvement from representatives of the UK Border Agency, which was required to engage with the process but had a low attendance rate, resulting in the meetings lacking knowledge or information about Deportation Orders.

The Chair asked whether Probation Officers had direct involvement with victims of CSE. Mr Hinde advised that it was the remit of the Victim Liaison Officer to ascertain what support was required from the service. The Chair asked for Mr Hinde's view as to whether this support was robust enough. Mr Hinde believed that support was available and that protections were available to victims when offenders were released in the form of licence conditions, eg exclusion or non-contact. Offenders were subject to rehabilitation, when they were released on licence, they had to join support groups which looked to address the underpinning reasons for offending. Ultimately, if offenders broke their licence conditions, they could be recalled to prison.

Mrs M Ward asked if all the information at the MAPPA meetings was confidential or if some of it could be shared e.g. patterns, profiles?

Mr J Watts replied that probation officers had to be careful as their role was to deal with the offenders on an individual basis and that it was the role of the police to carry out profiling.

Mr C Hinde added that probation officers carried out risk assessments on individuals which would look at things such as upbringing and attitude. This assessment would then pin point attitudes and behaviour that needed to be addressed. Probation officers worked with individuals who all had different reasons for their offending behaviour.

Cllr C R Turley asked about situations when an offender was to be released from prison and did not have their own housing and was not able to live with family. Would an offender be housed in the area where the victim lived and would the victim be notified?

Mr J Watts responded that in the first instance it was highly unusual for probation to suggest that a high risk offender resided in the same area. When someone was released from prison on licence, they would be directed to live in an approved premises, for example for a 12 week transitional period subject to license conditions which may include for instance a curfew and drug and alcohol tests. The only approved premises in the area was Brady House in Worcester. Over this 12 week period the probation officer would see what happened next and work with the police to see where they might still be placed with licensed conditions eg not to go to a particular place. Sometimes it was better not to be too specific so rather than naming a particular area that the offender cannot go, it would be better to say that they must not contact the victim. The license for Operation Chalice Offenders would be more stringent.

Mr C Hinde confirmed that perpetrators convicted through Operation Chalice would be identified as predatory and would 'go up a level'. When the licence was agreed there would be input from the Victim Liaison Officer. It was confirmed that when people came out of prison on licence they were still serving a sentence.

The Chair said that eight people were convicted through Operation Chalice. Were there any breaches of the licence in those cases?

Mr J Watts said that he held two of the cases and there had not been breaches in those cases.

Cllr G M Green asked about accommodation and expressed concern about Houses of Multiple Occupation. The planning system did not allow the Planning Authority to say that a property could not be turned into a hostel. This could be very lucrative for landlords and some of the properties may be near schools.

Mr C Hinde said that if someone had converted a property and it was sub-standard it would not be suitable and would not be approved. Also the housing would be seen as unsuitable if it was too near the victim. It was recognised that housing was an issue, both the suitability of the housing and the other residents in the house.

Mr J Watts said that the local police were helpful and shared information about who else is in the accommodation. However, the service struggled to obtain the same information about HMOs in other policing areas.

Cllr C R Turley said that in preparation for some work that the Housing, Economy and Infrastructure Scrutiny Committee would undertake the following municipal year, he had been working with Council Officers to look at the issue of HMOs.

Cllr J Pinter asked if Perpetrators of CSE were put on the Sex Offenders Register?

Mr Hinde indicated that on conviction or on becoming subject to a SOPO which was enforced by the police, a sex offender would be put on the register for life. This would affect what job an offender could do when released, and they would not have unsupervised access to under 16s. When the probation officer wrote the pre-sentence report for a CSE offender it would recommend that the person should be on the Sex Offenders Register and subject to a SOPO for life. It was recognised that the role of the probation service to work with an ex-offender would end when the licence finished (up to 5 years after release). However, a person who remained on the Sex Offenders Register for life would still be on the police radar. It was the decision of the Courts whether someone was placed on the Sex Offenders Register.

Cllr J Loveridge gave an example of some one who was on the Sex Offenders register for viewing child pornography. What checks were made to ensure that such an individual was not offending again?

Mr C Hinde said that someone could be given a Community Order or Suspended Sentence. Probation would then work with them to change their attitudes and behaviour. The license conditions could state that the person must not own a computer. It was reported that the number of IT offenses was growing. When the

Probation Service was split as a result of reforms the new Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) took responsibility for ex-offenders who were convicted of downloading.

Mr J Watts said that if someone went to prison for a downloading offense when they were released on licence, conditions would include no internet access, or not being allowed to delete the computer browsing history. The police used a software system to monitor computer use which was maintained by Worcester Police.

Mr S Rayner referred to the comments of the Chair of the LSCB that preventing CSE occurring was essential. As the probation service worked with people who had offended, were there any lessons that could be drawn about what might be done to prevent individuals from becoming perpetrators?

Mr C Hinde replied that it is difficult, and if it were possible to draw up a plan to identify potential offenders and prevent them offending this would reduce the need for the police. There were many reasons why people offend. Some people had been abused themselves.

Mr J Watts added that one issue that came up when doing assessments was people's ability to plan ahead and consider the consequences of their actions. Poor problem solving should be addressed by schooling eg how to define a problem, how to think of options, solutions and consequences.

Mr S Rayner added that this was about people's relationships and how to work together to resolve problems.

Mr J Watts said that offenders were often very impulsive people. They may have obtained passes in GCSE Maths and English but if they could not relate to other people and manage their own behaviour what good did that do them?

Mr C Hinde added that he agreed with this analysis. When someone came from a stable background it could be easy to underestimate the importance of these skills. But many offenders were isolated at a young age and may witness things in their family. Organisations needed to identify young people at risk at an early stage to stop these distortions of social norms.

The Chair commented on the work of Holmer Lake School which had been brought to the attention of the Committee by the Chair of the LSCB. He commented that the work would not only help young people protect themselves now but also provide those children with the skills to prevent problems in 10 or 20 years' time.

Mr C Hinde said that one of the issues with downloading crime was that people did not realise that there was a victim. In some cases the offender was only just older than the victim.

Cllr R G Scammell asked if the Community Rehabilitation Companies (CRC) worked with the Probation officers?

Mr C Hinde said that before the Service was split by reforms they were part of the

same organisation. Now they were still in the same building on two separate floors and the Community Rehabilitation Companies had been privatised. The separation went live one month ago and there was a bedding in phase. The Probation Service now worked with medium, high and very high risk offenders. The CRCs worked with medium and low risk offenders. This was part of the Government's 'through the gate policy' which meant that anyone who had been in prison for more than 2 days would have contact with an organisation on release. However this meant that the information that Probation Officers used to have access to was now held by a different organisation which had made it more difficult.

Mr J Watts confirmed that there had been bedding in problems and at that time it was not clear how it would work out.

The Chair asked whether the service reforms had created problems with co-ordination and data sharing between the Probation Service and CRCs.

Mr J Watts said that when staff shared the same computer system they had access to the same information. The separation of the service had caused problems.

Cllr R G Scammell said it would be helpful for the Committee to meet with a representative of the CRCs.

Mrs M Ward said that there was no way back but it was important to look forward. She commented particularly on the issue of young people not having the skills to problem solve. Personal and Social Health Education (PSHE) was not mandatory. It was down to schools to determine how they delivered PSHE. Perhaps they could be encouraged to look at this.

Cllr Green said that it was the role of the Committee to look at the strategic issues and make recommendations. How well did schools monitor attendance and when did the Education Welfare Officer become involved? Did any patterns emerge at school level?

Mr J Watts said that the Probation Service was the 'end of the line' as people had already offended once they reached this service.

The Chair asked if there were any questions the Probation Officers thought that the Committee should ask other organisations.

Mr J Watts and Mr C Hinde said that there were no issues that they could think of at that time but they would come back if there was anything they wanted to raise later.

The meeting adjourned at 12.04pm until 1.00pm

Education

The Chair welcomed the representatives from this sector and asked them to introduce themselves and explain their roles:-

- Chay Davis, Head Teacher at Ercall Wood Technology College had joined the LSCB in September 2014 and had responsibility for the training of staff and

parents with regard to safeguarding issues and disseminating information received by the LSCB.

- Duncan Marshall, Senior Deputy Head Teacher at Madeley Academy had been a member of the LSCB for approximately 18 months and shared details of the work undertaken with colleagues. He was a member of the Student Services Team, and CSE came under this banner. He was also the Academies Representative in the South Telford Cluster.
- Pam Kaminski, Head of Learner Services at Telford College of Arts and Technology (TCAT) was also the Designated Safeguarding Lead. CSE was an important aspect of safeguarding work and the College worked closely in this regard with the LSCB and partners, including the police and Local Authority. This Multi-Agency approach was considered vital in the fight against CSE.
- Catherine Whitehead, Assistant Principal Student Voice and Reputation at New College Telford (NCT) was part of the college's small safeguarding team and provided training to colleagues. The College worked closely on safeguarding initiatives with Inspector Gary Wade of Wellington Police.

The Chair asked participants how their school or college shared data sets with other organisations and made referrals regarding safeguarding concerns.

Mr Marshall advised that his experience of the Family Connect service had been very positive. There was a good level of information sharing between the school, Family Connect and the Police and positive working experiences with social workers and the CATE workers. The school had benefited from having an onsite Police and Community Support Officer (PCSO) for nine months, and during that time information sharing had been excellent; since the PCSO's departure, information remained good but not at quite the same level. Mr Marshall advised that he had worked at Madeley Academy for 11 years and been safeguarding lead for 5 years. He felt that it was very easy to share information with Family Connect and there was constant improvement and review taking place. Mr Davis added that the relationship with onsite PCSOs worked really well, information sharing was a two-way process with Family Connect and, in his experience, parents were receptive to the idea of Family Connect being a single point of contact. Ms Whitehead was not aware that any data-sets had been shared.

The Chair asked whether representatives considered staff had been adequately trained to recognise and report concerns regarding CSE. Mr Davis advised that the Council's Ollie Online Training Module had been made available to school staff alongside formal procedures. He had been assured awareness existed by the levels of completion and he felt that the central hub of Family Connect was well received. Ms Kaminski advised that all staff at TCAT undertook Level 1 Safeguarding training and regular three year refreshers. Mr Marshall advised that all academy staff undertook mandatory training, evidence of which was required by Ofsted. Madeley Academy had four safeguarding leads to ensure capacity as levels of reporting varied throughout the year. Staff adopted a cautious approach and when they were unsure they would report concerns. Mr Davis expressed the opinion that training parents was the next step and had recently held an awareness evening. He felt that those parents who attended were probably already proactive in gaining awareness and methods to engage further would need to be considered. Ms Kaminski advised that

training workshops for students took place at TCAT regarding healthy relationships and students themselves would report concerns. She advised that Loudmouth Theatre Group had attended TCAT at the start of the educational year in support of the safeguarding agenda. Ms Whitehead indicated that students at NCT received induction training which included CSE awareness.

Following on from this, the Chair referred to the example of Team Safeguarding Voice at Holmer Lake Primary School and asked how representatives perceived student awareness. Mr Marshall advised that he had used Team Safeguarding Voice materials as he felt they were of an appropriate level to be of use to all ages, including adults. He felt that some primary head teachers may be uncomfortable with primary school students tackling sensitive issues, particularly as students may be experiencing difficulties themselves. However, the practices at Holmer Lake School demonstrated that the students did have the skills to engage with these issues. In Mr Marshall's experience, students cared for and looked out for each other and, therefore, were likely to refer concerns about their friends. He felt that awareness among his students was good and they were all aware that any concerns should be reported to him. By way of example, he cited an incident when some concerning images had appeared on social media and a high level of students had reported the incident to him. Mr Davis considered that Team Safeguarding Voice offered a useful template to raise awareness and ensure young people knew who to talk to about their concerns.

The Chair asked whether the representatives considered any schools to be leaders in the field of safeguarding or, conversely if any were behind. Mr Davis acknowledged Team Safeguarding Voice and rollout of the Ollie CSE Module as innovative developments. However, he noted that every school was required to comply with statutory requirements with regard to safeguarding although each may tackle issues differently - this did not apply only to CSE, but also Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) etc. Mr Marshall acknowledged the speed of development of technology represented a big challenge, for instance in the year previously the main issue was Facebook but in the current year it was Snapchat, which did not offer the same traceability as Facebook. Keeping up was a challenge but the Local Authority shared information guides with the schools – eg “Snapchat Guide for Parents” and he was lucky to have an excellent ICT Specialist at the Academy who understood these issues. Mr Davis agreed that training for parents was required, particularly regarding awareness of protecting their children through the use of privacy settings and monitoring mobile app use since ICT was prone to abuse and the arena was fast changing. He recognised that the NSPCC provided good guidance for parents but the main issue was getting out the messages that the internet was a “global play park” and “if you wouldn't do it in public, don't do it online”.

Cllr C R Turley asked whether students received training in the pitfalls of social media. Ms Kaminski advised that TCAT students received training on privacy settings, Ms Whitehead informed the Committee that this was included in the tutorial programme at NCT and blocking software was also used. Mr Davis said that he was concerned with how easily online use could go wrong, from clandestine grooming techniques to misjudging interaction with peers. He acknowledged the internet as a fantastic resource but said that it was important to educate people to use it responsibly and appreciate the consequences of their actions.

Cllr R G Scammell noted that Ercall Wood Technology College had put on an awareness evening for parents and asked about the level of attendance and how successful Mr Davis thought the event had been. Mr Davis advised that there was a low attendance: six families out of pupil numbers of 600. However, those families were very interested and pleased with the practical awareness offered. He had sent a letter, three emails and a text reminder about the event but he felt the majority of families did not think it affected them and he felt the problem was the case studies in the media focussed on numbers but there was no focus on preventative measures which parents could take or the tell-tale signs to look out for. Ms Whitehead agreed that she felt there was a prevalent “it couldn’t happen to me” mentality. Mr Davis said he had put together some useful materials for the event which he would publish on the website and he felt putting the event on was the right thing to do as there was not enough happening to raise awareness among parents and help them protect their children. He would consider running the event again.

Ms Ward asked if Mr Davis had had any thoughts on how to improve turnout or whether he had engaged with the heads forum for ideas. Mr Davis was felt that parents needed to be interested to attend, incentives were not sufficient as most felt that they had “got it covered” although he believed that they didn’t generally see how day to day events impacted on young people. Mr Davis thought that the Ollie Training Module could be used as a basis for training parents, for instance as part of induction as they would already be onsite. For ad hoc events, the parents who were worried and already looking for information were the ones who attended, and it was the families who did not attend that he wanted to reach. He felt that face to face training was important as it had more impact than paperwork.

Cllr G M Green asked whether there was training for governors and whether a safeguarding lead was identified among governors. Mr Davis advised that governors received CPD training and there were several training options available including Ollie. Mr Marshall echoed these comments and added that governors were very experienced at working with safeguarding issues and were rigorously scrutinised. Ms Whitehead advised that part of her role was to keep governors updated.

Cllr G M Green asked whether information moved quickly with pupils when they transferred between schools. Mr Davis advised that the transfer of secondary age pupils was subject to a Fair Access Panel, in which a member of staff gave a presentation which included any issues of concern. As part of secondary induction, a member of staff would go to the primary school and collate information on each child moving to Ercall Wood. He was confident that there was a good level of communication and a full and comprehensive picture was shared. Mr Marshall considered that transition information was generally excellent and, in the current year, he would also be personally visiting every primary school from which a pupil was progressing to Madeley Academy so that any safeguarding concerns could be highlighted in person. Ms Whitehead informed the Committee that NCT worked with Future Focus to ensure that information travelled with students.

Cllr J Loveridge asked how often schools reviewed their safeguarding policies. Mr Davis advised that review was subject to statutory cycles which were usually annual. Ercall Wood Technology College utilised the services of Telford and Wrekin Council

Consultancy Services to ensure that their statutory requirements were met. Both Head Teachers felt that the quality of updates was timely and that the team were good at assisting schools with appropriate and legal wording. Governance Services were also praised together with the regular magazine which suggested where improvements could be made.

Mr S Rayner asked whether the representatives were satisfied with the service provided by Family Connect and that the safeguarding systems offered were effective. Mr Davis stated that he was satisfied Family Connect was the appropriate channel to report concerns and that staff were experienced and updated the school with regard to the status of referrals; he had never referred a concern and heard nothing back and noted the speed of service. He felt that the model was good and preferred the Family Connect team to make the threshold judgements required, however he was aware of resource issues and the need for schools to rely on common sense reporting, hence the need to keep training up to date. Mr Davis noted that if a serious case review was taking place, the school would be involved. Ms Kaminski added her understanding that any verbal referral to Family Connect had to be followed up in writing within 48 hours to receive status updates. Ms Whitehead confirmed that she had also always received a response to any referrals made. Mr Marshall was also comfortable with the process and recognised the need for the system to be clearly signposted for individuals to access. He pointed out that the Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) at the school met each half term for an update session with Family Connect and felt that the only weakness with that system was that if the DSL was unable to attend, they missed out on the update. However, briefings attracted a large captive audience.

The Chair asked whether the representatives were confident in the system and Mr Davis indicated that he had worked in other local authority areas where he did not have the same level of confidence.

The Chair asked the representatives whether there were any areas which they thought the Committee should explore with the other organisations participating in the review. No issues were raised at the meeting, but the Chair asked the representatives to let the Scrutiny Team know if they later thought of any concerns and thanked the representatives for attending.

Health

The Chair welcomed those attending the meeting to provide evidence to the Committee. He asked those attending to introduce themselves and the role of their organisation in tackling CSE.

Mr D Evans introduced himself as the Chief Officer at Telford and Wrekin Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). The CCG was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2011 and was responsible for commissioning acute, community and mental health services. The CCG was not currently responsible for commissioning General Practice, but was responsible for the quality of GP services. The CCG would take on the commissioning of GP services from 1 April 2015.

Mrs A Scott-Ryan introduced herself as the Registered Nurse for Safeguarding Children. In a previous role she had worked in Shropshire and currently worked

closely with colleagues in Shropshire. She was a registered nurse and her strategic role was responsible for the supervision of the named nurses at the acute hospital, the Community Health Trust, ShropDoc and the South Staffordshire and Shropshire Healthcare Trust. Her role also involved teaching. The CCG had trained 97% of GPs up to Level 3 on CSE. She was a statutory member of the LSCB and worked closely with Dr Ganesh who was the designated doctor.

Mrs C Morris introduced herself as the Executive Nurse Lead for Quality and Safety, who had responsibility for safeguarding adults and children. She was the CCG representative on the LSCB, chaired the Operations Group and was elected Vice-Chair of the LSCB. This had been part of a strategic approach to ensure that the work of the LSCB was not too Local Authority focussed. The CCG commissioned services from providers and set quality schedules.

Mrs J Banks was the Associate Director for Patient Safety at the Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust. She worked to S Bloomfield who was the Executive Lead at the Trust for Safeguarding. Her role was to ensure that the Trust had appropriate policies in place and that the Trust enacted those policies. Mrs J Banks managed the named nurse at the Trust who worked with Mrs A Scott-Ryan.

Dr Ganesh was the Designated Doctor for the Community Health Trust. He was involved with Operation Chalice.

The Chair said that it had become clear that no one organisation could tackle CSE on its own. How well were organisations working together to prevent CSE, support victims and their families and prosecute perpetrators?

Mrs C Morris responded that the different organisations were working together in a very joined up way and this was demonstrated by the participation of many different organisations in the Team Safeguarding Voice Conference. The LSCB Quality Group looked at the results of the peer challenge and this process was very beneficial. The professionals looked at each others roles and produced a RAG Rating report which showed that many of the areas were 'green'. This raised the question – did this reflect practice across the organisation? Does what is written in the policies affect what practitioners did on a daily basis. The multi-professional challenge showed that frontline staff were able to show that the policies and processes were in place.

Mrs A Scott-Ryan added that the health services were heavily involved in Operation Chalice and the development of the CSE pathway. It had been recognised that one of the key points from the inquiries into CSE in the North West had been education and training. Previously the PCT was both a Commissioner and a Provider of NHS services, but the CCG now just commissioned. An example of how the CCG worked with the provider organisations to safeguard young people and identify CSE was the contract with the British Pregnancy Advisory Service for out of area terminations. The staff in this organisation had now been trained to identify and respond to CSE. This was part of the process for any new contract for services for vulnerable women. Professor Rod Thompson in Shropshire was the Chair of the Governance Children's Committee and had championed the need for training. Shropshire had also set up a similar panel. The CCG had also been involved in establishing a Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) which provided a link across West Mercia and Worcester. This

was a hub and spoke model based at Wellington and had helped to 'upgrade' the evidence gathered that would go to court on CSE. This was joint work between the NHS and Police and had enabled more intelligence to be gathered about 'hot spots'.

The Chair asked if there were good examples of data sharing?

Mr D Evans replied that he had worked in Telford and Wrekin for three years and he had been impressed by the strong working relationships between health, social care, police and education. He could not give categorical assurance that there were no cases of CSE, but if there were cases, the organisations could pick these up. The organisations worked formally and informally together. He explained that after Operation Chalice there was a risk that organisations could be complacent, he recognised that things were not perfect but they were very good.

The Chair clarified that the Committee were being assured that there were strong and robust systems in place to share data.

Mr D Evans said that compared to other places the systems were strong. He explained that Operation Chalice had tested the data sharing processes.

Mrs J Banks said she had worked within the Hospital Trust for the last two years and assured the Committee that the NHS commissioners held the providers to account for safeguarding practices. Within the Royal Shrewsbury and Telford Hospitals Trust there was an internal Operations Group that the Commissioners attended. Local assurance was also provided by the Care Quality Commission (CQC) which recognised the quality of safeguarding processes and practices at the Trust as Outstanding, which included safeguarding children and the processes to report safeguarding issues to the Trust Board. The work with the police had also been commended and the support for vulnerable children seen at A&E.

Dr Ganesh explained that the Shropshire Community Health Trust was engaged with the operational and strategic work against CSE. In his clinical work, if he saw 13 or 14 year old girls, and suspected that they were a victim of CSE, he knew where to go to get help. However, he explained that it was an ongoing challenge to make sure that all staff knew where to get the right support. He explained that there was a need for a CSE co-ordinator role so that everyone knew how to recognise CSE so they could get support for the victim and know who they should contact. He explained that part of his work included examining children who were suspected victims of rape. He was the only qualified clinician in the County to carry out this role. He said he was very proud to be part of Telford and Wrekin.

The Chair asked if organisations had become complacent about tackling CSE or if Operation Chalice had been a spring board to improve local work against CSE?

Dr Ganesh said that organisations had not become complacent.

Mr D Evans said that he had been assured that organisations were working together and that CSE was a high priority for them.

Cllr G M Green asked if there were specific issues regarding CSE in Telford and

Wrekin. She added that she had raised on a number of occasions the number of children in the care of other authorities placed in the Borough. Could the Committee be assured that those children receive the same level of support that children in the care of Telford and Wrekin Council receive?

Mrs A Scott-Ryan responded that she was the Chair of the Child Death Panel and explained that the local authority who placed the child remains the organisation with the corporate responsibility for the child. She said there had been cases where the authority placing the child had not specifically shared health concerns and it was important that local organisations had the information that would enable them to assess the risk for the child. An example was given of a case where a child had been placed in Shropshire but the local authority making the placement did not share information about the child's mental health needs as those had not been assessed before the placement. It was recognised that this was a national issue and that information needed to follow the child more quickly.

Mr D Evans confirmed that there was a national data issue regarding children placed in another authority. He said that this was better locally and the NHS relied on local authority colleagues to pass on the information.

Mrs C Morris added that the caseload for nurses had increased tenfold over the last three years. She gave the example of a nurse she had spoken to recently who had been the only person who retained consistent contact with a child in care for 10 years. She recognised that children placed by other authorities was a challenge and the role of the CCG Board was to ensure that such issues were made more visible.

Cllr Green asked how was a school informed about the needs of a child placed by another authority?

Dr Ganesh responded that the issue about the risk of CSE for a child placed out of authority was a national issue. The Shropshire Community Health Trust had a designated doctor. In Shropshire there were around 200 private residential homes but Telford and Wrekin had very few. The schools did need to be aware and the local education authority should inform the school of relevant issues. He assured members that within Telford and Wrekin professionals were aware of CSE but this needed to be picked up with other local authorities.

Mrs A Scott-Ryan said that social care and health organisation currently had different IT systems and information had to be shared manually. A joint IT system was now being developed and this area would be a second wave pilot. Sharing information was essential, eg when a young person attended A&E clinicians needed to know if the young person was a victim of CSE.

The Chair asked about the threshold of evidence that was required to prosecute perpetrators of CSE and how NHS organisations worked with partners to secure convictions? He asked if there were blocks in the system that prevented prosecutions?

Mrs C Morris said that she was aware that there were three ongoing operations.

Mrs A Scott-Ryan said that the question about legal processes was very significant.

There was a need for training in the legal system to ensure victims were supported. It was reported that organisations were picking up on 'hot spots' particularly following Operation Chalice. There was a need to continue to work with faith communities and also to work with perpetrators. An example of how the CCG was working with provider organisations to identify young people at risk of CSE was the contract with the provider for terminations which now required them to flag up where a young person had repeat terminations. Through the work of the Sexual Assault Referral Centre and programmes like Team Safeguarding, organisations in Telford and Wrekin were identifying children before they were trafficked.

Mr D Evans added that part of the problem for the judicial system was that if a case of CSE was not identified at an early stage and a young person had been trafficked the victim may not be able to identify perpetrators. NHS organisations were providing training so professionals could pick CSE up as early as possible. He explained that cases of CSE were not being picked up early enough and trafficking makes it very difficult.

Mrs A Scott-Ryan added that victims of CSE may experience Stockholm Syndrome where they see what they experience as the norm.

Dr Ganesh said that organisations were being reactive. By definition the victims of CSE did not disclose. He explained that the most important part of the work to tackle CSE was prevention and educating 10-14 year olds. It was difficult to gather evidence of CSE and prove it had taken place in a court of law. Organisations must work together to prevent CSE.

Mrs J Banks provided evidence where a young female had been admitted to hospital and staff had found her behaviour to be unusual when certain people visited. The ward staff acted by sharing information with the local authority and it was found that the patient was a victim of CSE. This highlighted the importance of training, education, awareness and partnership working whereby hospital staff needed to be confident about contacting social care professionals.

The Chair asked if trafficking was still an issue in Telford and Wrekin?

Mrs A Scott-Ryan said that there had been Operation Chalice and Operation Willow but organisations had not been complacent. She asked the question "have we stopped trafficking?" and responded that she could not confirm that this was the case but organisations in Telford had done a lot more than other areas. She gave the example of a recent conference she attended where people were asking for advice about how services work in Telford and Wrekin. In Telford and Wrekin organisations were recognising victims quickly and were aware that trafficking could occur. She explained that she had worked in safeguarding for 25 years and it had in the past been a problem that with crimes such as domestic violence and CSE that people think "it is not happening here". However, agencies were now more actively aware of CSE and there were fewer cases, like that in Oxford, which had been due to naivety.

The Chair asked what questions the Committee should ask other organisations during the review?

Mr D Evans responded that training was an important issue – what percentage of staff, from front line staff to executives, had been trained on CSE awareness and how to respond to cases? How regularly was this training provided? Was it part of induction for new starters?

The Chair said that one of the issues that has been picked up in national reports on CSE was that Scrutiny Committees had taken the word of senior officers but had not checked this with front line staff. He said that the working group that would continue this review of CSE intended to talk to front line staff.

Mr D Evans said that within the NHS there had been protected training for all GP practices and nurses. The CCG had done a lot of training and he was confident that other organisations had also provided training – but he had not seen the information on this.

Mrs A Scott-Ryan said that there was a need to look at how CSE affected boys. This had been raised at a national level and needed to be considered within Telford and Wrekin.

Mrs M Ward said that the Committee had received assurance that sharing of information through a joint IT system was being addressed, but asked about the scale of the challenge of CSE and the resources available.

Mrs A Scott-Ryan said that professionals knew how to refer and cases were being managed. It was important to look at the perpetrators and make sure that all groups were considered. In Telford, there were resources to keep support going. One advantage of the systems in Telford and Wrekin was that despite organisational change, the people in the organisation had been consistent. This helped as professionals got to know the children.

Dr Ganesh said that the confidence of staff was an issue. Having a CSE champion would help. At the moment if someone identified concerns about someone who may be at risk of CSE, when that information got passed on, there was a risk that the information became ‘diluted’.

The Chair clarified if he was suggesting that each department should have a CSE Champion or if this should be at Board level?

Dr Ganesh replied that it needed to be at both levels – one person could not do it all. He said that there was a need for a short term co-ordinator role who could report to the Director of Children’s Services.

Cllr C R Turley asked whether representatives thought it would be prudent for a National CSE Board to be created?

Mrs A Scott-Ryan said that NHS England operated a Task and Finish Group.

Mr D Evans said that in his opinion raising awareness with the public was also an important issue and this should be addressed at a national level. There had been high profile issues in Sheffield and Rotherham where local systems failed. There was a

need for a national campaign so that public know how to identify CSE. He drew comparisons with the national stroke campaign which had been successful.

The Chair said that there was a National CSE Awareness Day on 18 March.

Cllr G M Green said that the Committee had received copies of the CATE leaflets for parents and professionals.

Mrs J Banks said that the Hospital Trust would have an information stand at the Women's and Children's Centre in Telford on CSE Awareness Day. CSE would also be part of the staff briefing that day and included in the staff 'chatter box'

The Chair thanked everyone for attending the meeting.

The meeting ended at 2.50pm

Chairman:.....

Date:.....

CHILDREN & YOUNG PEOPLE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of a meeting of the Children and Young People Scrutiny Committee held on Monday, 16 March 2015 at 6.00pm in Meeting Rooms G3/G4, Addenbrooke House, Ironmasters Way, Telford.

PRESENT: Cllrs K R Guy (Chair), G M Green, J Loveridge, J Pinter, and R G Scammell and Co-optees: Mr S Ali and Mr S Rayner

ALSO PRESENT: Cllr P R Watling (Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families)

IN ATTENDANCE : F Bottrill (Scrutiny Group Specialist, Telford & Wrekin Council); Laura Johnston (Director of Children & Family Services – Telford & Wrekin Council); B Longmore (Police and Crime Commissioner); D Moseley (Scrutiny Officer, Telford & Wrekin Council); L Noakes (Assistant Director: Health, Well-Being & Public Protection and Statutory Director of Public Health); and K Perry (Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services).

CYPSC-26 WELCOME & OPENING REMARKS

The Chair reminded everyone present that in accordance with the Council's protocols, the meeting could be filmed or recorded but that any footage must focus on the Committee Members and not include the public gallery.

The Chair reminded the Committee of the scope and purpose of the meeting.

CYPSC-27 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Cllrs A A Mackenzie and C R Turley & Mr A Atkinson and Ms M Ward (Co-optees);

CYPSC-28 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CYPSC-29 SCRUTINY REVIEW OF MULTI AGENCY WORKING AGAINST CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

Evidence of the Police and Crime Commissioner – Mr Bill Longmore

By way of introduction, the Commissioner explained his role as an elected official tasked with ensuring the West Mercia Police Force was providing a good service and performing well. Any complaints regarding the Force were dealt with by his office. A key element of his plans for more effective working in the Force Area was to create partnerships with other agencies and this had so far been successful. He noted that himself and the Deputy Commissioner had been very pleased with the partnership response from agencies in Telford and the efforts made to work together.

The Chair asked the Commissioner to provide an overview of the approach of West Mercia Police to tackling CSE. The Commissioner responded that at the time of his

election, the cases subject to Operation Chalice were just going to Court. He had been surprised at the scale of offending and that it had been able to go on for so long without censure. He felt the Operation had been a wake up call for the Force and he had taken this on board and, following discussions with the Chief Constable regarding resources, considerable additional resource had been put in to this area. Additionally, media coverage of Operation Yewtree (the Metropolitan Police investigation of sexual abuse allegations against the British media personality Jimmy Savile and others) had resulted in a general increase in the reporting of abuse and this had to be properly resourced.

The Chair indicated that representatives of West Mercia Police had indicated at the Inquiry Day that additional resource of 16 officers and 5 Barnado's workers had been identified and he asked whether this resource was specific to Telford. The Commissioner advised that underspent budgets had been re-allocated to fund 27 officers and the allocation of that resource was the remit of the Chief Constable. Officers were not designated to a specific area but were allocated as need was identified and, therefore, if the Force had indicated 16 officers in Telford that was likely to be correct.

The Chair asked whether the Commissioner was satisfied that West Mercia Police co-ordinated well with other organisations and the Commissioner stated that good working relationships existed with partners across the Force Area. Officers were very dedicated and the issue of CSE was one that was 'close to home' due to the experience of Operation Chalice so awareness was very high. He was confident that Officers were looking for the signs that CSE may be happening and were working hard in this regard. The Commissioner had implemented some areas for improvement around the provision of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs) in schools in order to ensure that they were appropriately trained to deal with a complex environment and the Chief Constable had undertaken a check of training and provided PCSOs with a report setting out the types of issues they should look out for in order that they were better equipped. The Commissioner had not spoken to PCSOs locally but could confirm that in other areas of the Force, they were very dedicated to their work in schools and were a big weapon in the fight against CSE, reaching children at a grassroots level, being easily approachable. There were 35 PCSOs in schools across West Mercia and the Commissioner had no intentions to reduce this budget. He would, however, continue to monitor their effectiveness and that they were well equipped to do the job.

The Chair noted that during consultation on the Terms of Reference, questions had been raised about organisations' confidence in staff training and resources. The Commissioner advised that experienced officers dealt with cases of CSE and that he was keen to ensure that all officers entering the force were aware of the issue. Drawing on his own experience in the Force, the Commissioner attended all new officer inductions courses and made a point of explaining to inductees that they may encounter this crime and highlighted the signs to look for, so that awareness was there from the point of induction, rather than waiting for the topic to be covered in the general training syllabus.

Cllr R G Scammell noted the Commissioner had provided funding to support the provision of additional officers but, with increasing government cuts, could he

guarantee that this support would be ongoing? The Commissioner indicated that the resource was there for two years. CSE was now a strategic priority and the Police and Crime Panel were very aware that resources were needed to mount an effective fight against this crime. He, therefore, felt it would be foolish not to try to ensure that the money remained available.

Cllr R G Scammell asked whether the Force liaised with neighbouring Forces. The Commissioner reminded the Committee that his role was non-operational but he could assure the Committee that inter-force liaison took place and was firmly on the agenda; appropriate technology to support this was being implemented.

Cllr G M Green, noted that children were gaining access to internet technologies at a much younger age and asked whether PCSOs were installed in secondary schools or primary schools? The Commissioner noted that placement was more likely in secondary schools because these children made greater use of technology. However, if Members were minded to make recommendations which supported a PCSO presence in primary schools, he would be willing to consider it.

Cllr J Loveridge noted that discussions at the Inquiry Day on 13 March had included sharing data, information and intelligence to tackle CSE. She asked whether the Commissioner considered that sufficient systems were in place to ensure information was shared to inform the understanding of the scale of CSE and the development of the CSE strategy? The Commissioner responded that technology was in place but he did not know whether it had capacity to accurately record the scale of CSE. There was a lot of technology available and there were sufficient funds to ensure procurement of the best technologies but installations did not occur overnight – the introduction of new technology could take up to 12 months. He also reiterated that, in the wake of Operation Yewtree, there was greater confidence among the public to report issues so records would be increasing.

The Chair asked whether the Commissioner was confident that West Mercia Police supported victims through disclosure and the court system. The Commissioner advised that commissioning of Victim Services had recently become part of his remit. A Victim Services Officer had been appointed and this had increased value for money. He had also doubled the budget of the Grant Fund to £2m - Axis Counselling and Psychotherapy, who provided Independent Sexual Violence Advisory (ISVA) services locally, had received an award of £118K in the previous year and this would be likely to be made again in the current year. He had also increased the precept in order to support the prevention of crime and rehabilitation so more money than ever was available. He considered prevention to be the best way forward.

The Chair asked the Commissioner whether there were any areas which he thought the Committee should explore with the other organisations participating in the review. The Commissioner considered that the Committee could investigate the potential to create closer working relationships across the whole of the Force area. He considered that partners across Telford and Wrekin worked well but this could be expanded into closer working with colleagues in Shropshire, Herefordshire and Worcestershire.

Mr S Rayner asked how the voice of victims informed policy and practice. The Commissioner responded that victims must always be the first consideration. He advised that any complaints were properly investigated. He was confident that victims were considered in prosecution cases although he felt that in cases where victims spoke English as a second language, better relationships could be built as mothers from minority communities could be isolated and unable to report crime. He was making efforts to bring these communities together and there were funds available to further understanding in these communities and create closer working relationships with the Police.

The Chair noted that Police Representatives attending the Inquiry Day had considered that legislation was sufficient to enable them to properly prosecute crimes of CSE and he asked whether the Commissioner agreed with this view. The Commissioner did not believe there were any weaknesses in the legislation. He felt that if evidence was gathered properly, the police could secure convictions. He was not aware of loopholes which could be exploited.

The Chair asked whether the Commissioner was aware of concerns about trafficking in the local area. The Commissioner advised that he had received a report from the Street Pastors who had been monitoring suspicious vehicular activity (eg cruising around) and taking licence plates. He was pleased to note that due to the vigilance of the Street Pastors, when he received the latest report, prevalence of this type of activity had declined. He felt, therefore, that there remained potential for trafficking and CSE but that local preventative activity was having a big impact.

The Chair thanked the Police and Crime Commissioner for attending the meeting.

Evidence of the Local Authority

The Chair welcomed the Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families, the Director for Children's Services, the Assistant Director: Health, Well-Being & Public Protection and Statutory Director of Public Health, and the Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services. He asked them to introduce themselves and their role in relation to tackling CSE.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families explained that his role was as the political voice for Children's Services in the Council. This included all children and young people's services, preventative work, education and everything in between. He had a weekly meeting with the Director of Children's Services.

The Director of Children's Services explained that she was accountable for the management and performance of children's services in Telford and Wrekin which included child protection and tackling CSE. Her role also included leading and promoting partnerships with other organisations and she had a role on the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

The Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services said that she was the Council's Assistant Director with responsibility for CSE and she chaired the multi-agency strategic CSE group.

Assistant Director: Health, Well-Being & Public Protection explained that the services she was responsible for include Licensing. She was a member of the LSCB and a member of the Strategic CSE Group.

The Chair asked how well was Telford and Wrekin Council working with other organisations?

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families said that he was an observer member of the LSCB and had worked to tackle CSE over the last 4 years. He said that the partnership approach to tackling CSE in Telford and Wrekin was very positive. He explained that when he was elected one of the first meetings he attended was the Gold Group for Operation Chalice. Through this work the Council and other organisations had developed services and this work had now been mainstreamed and within the Council was part of Cohesion Services. He explained that it was his view that CSE was an issue for society and that all agencies had a role.

The Director of Children's Services said that she was proud of partnership working in Telford and Wrekin, but recognised that it was not perfect. She explained that she started in Telford and Wrekin in early 2009 and prevention of CSE was a priority then and the Council, police and health organisations came together. As Director for Children's Services she led the Silver Group as part of Operation Chalice and the development of the CSE pathway to support and protect victims. She explained that working with the LSCB has been very important and that Board held the partners to account. Since 2009 the public sector partners had been re-organised but had been able to maintain good partnership arrangements, including the Strategic CSE Group, the Operational CSE Group. In summary there was good partnership working and the partners were held to account by the LSCB.

The Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services said that she Chaired the Strategic CSE Group and other organisations put items on the agenda. An external view of the partnership working had been given by Ofsted in 2011 and 2012 which commended the partnership working in Telford and Wrekin to tackle CSE.

The Assistant Director: Health, Well-Being & Public Protection said that she was a member of the Strategic CSE Group and the public protection service had been involved in the work to tackle CSE. She explained that she joined the Local Authority relatively recently but had been impressed with the involvement of partners.

The Chair said that data sharing had been an issue that had come up in Inquiry Reports in other areas. He asked for clarification if this was working effectively from a Council perspective?

The Director of Children's Services replied that in relation to high level data there was more work to do. There was not a national dataset. The Council was working as part of the regional ADCS group (Association of Directors of Children's Services) comprising the 14 West Midlands authorities to develop benchmarking data. There was a data analyst working for West Mercia and Warwickshire Police. At an individual level data was addressed by the CATE pathway. The Council understood how its own services worked and they had been improving since 2009. The Council was

looking at data as part of the performance framework and there was a data sharing strategy.

The Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services said that there was a CSE Pathway. This set out that if a child was assessed as being at risk of CSE there was a meeting with that individual child and that was followed up as needed. The strategic and operational CSE groups enabled staff from different organisations to meet and share information. Some of this was not hard data but emerging themes. This could then be passed on to the relevant organisation eg CATE Team or Police.

The Director of Children's Services said that the Council shared data on an individual level within information governance requirements. This was part of the success of Operation Chalice.

The Chair asked if there was confidence that data at a local level and national level was robust?

The Director of Children's Services responded that there was no CSE national data set to be able to compare how well the Council was doing or the scale of the problem. The Council and police were carrying out analysis to develop this locally, but this was a work in progress.

The Chair said that health organisations has raised concern about children placed by other authorities in Telford and Wrekin and the need for better information sharing.

The Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services replied that all children in care had a social worker and it was their responsibility to ensure that relevant information was passed on. Where a child or young person was on the CSE pathway, the CATE worker would talk to other organisations.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families said that he would be more concerned about young people placed in Telford and Wrekin. The Local Authority making the placement should have a care plan, but the Council here had a duty of care.

The Director of Children's Services said that currently there was no national system for sharing data, but a new system was being developed to enable the NHS and Councils to share limited data. The Council was also working with care providers supporting Young People placed in Telford and Wrekin. If there were concerns about a young person placed in Telford and Wrekin eg if a young person went missing a lot, if the Council believed that the young person was not being kept safe, the Council could raise this with the care provider, the placing authority and Ofsted. Another way the Council could raise concerns was to write to the Assistant Director in the placing authority.

The Chair said that the CSE pathway had been explained to the Committee. It looked complicated but it was simple when it was explained. He said that the Committee would like to speak to front line staff as part of the review. This was something that Scrutiny in other areas had been criticised for not doing.

The Director of Children's Services said that staff should be aware of CSE and how to respond, enough could never be done and the strategy would be reviewed and updated; this would be under the remit of the LSCB. The Council had provided training at many levels and a session had been run for Councillors. The CATE team also delivered training for other staff.

The Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services said that managers had also been trained and this had been recognised as a business continuity issue.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families said that he listened to what officers say and had visited schools. It was important to cross reference.

The Director of Children's Services said that specific audits on CSE case records had been carried out.

The Assistant Director: Children's Safeguarding & Specialist Services added that this audit looked at the quality of the records but also the understanding of the staff. If any issues were identified this was followed up.

The Chair asked for a copy of this report.

Cllr G M Green said that all members were corporate parents. Lead Members may know about CSE and what to do, but new councillors should be informed of this as part of their corporate parenting training.

The Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families explained that there was a cross party group, but he would be wary of Councillors taking an officer's role. He agreed that the induction for new members should include CSE.

The meeting ended at 7.55pm

Chairman:.....

Date:.....