



## Report to Children, Young People and Family Support Scrutiny Committee on 21<sup>st</sup> January 2021

**Report of:** CEO, Sheffield Futures

**Subject:** Sexual Exploitation Service Annual Report 2019-2020

**Author of Report:** Dan White, Head of Health and Targeted Services

**Summary:**

The work of the Sheffield Child Sexual Exploitation Service is identified in the attached Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service (SSES) Annual Report for the period 2019 -20. Key elements of the report identify the service user population for the period and key achievements which impact positively on young people accessing the service.

**Type of item:**

Reviewing of existing policy	
Informing the development of new policy	
Statutory consultation	
Performance / budget monitoring report	
Cabinet request for scrutiny	
Full Council request for scrutiny	
Community Assembly request for scrutiny	
Call-in of Cabinet decision	
Briefing paper for the Scrutiny Committee	✓
Other	

**The Scrutiny Committee is being asked to:**

- Receive the Annual Report and note its content
- Comment on and/or seek clarification on any issues raised

**Background Papers:**

Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service Annual Report 2019-2020

**Category of Report:** OPEN

These reports are provided to enable discussion on:

- Progress, achievements and challenges in 2019/20
- Overview of work 2019/20

## Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service

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Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service (SSES) is a co-located Multi-Agency Service responsible for tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Sheffield. The service works with children and young people experiencing or who are at risk of sexual exploitation who are age 18 and under, and some over 18s dependent on need.

Over the past year, as Sheffield's knowledge of Contextual Safeguarding has continued to grow and inform practice, the Sexual Exploitation Service has integrated with Sheffield City Council's Criminal Exploitation Team to become the Amber Project. Whilst we continue to identify the early signs of CSE, we have developed our processes to ensure that screening tools, pathways and processes include those young people who are at risk of or are being criminally exploited. Training has been developed and delivered to ensure professionals in Sheffield are aware of the referral pathways to safeguard these children and young people, many of whom are vulnerable and have a range of complexities.

In February 2017, The Government introduced new guidance for practitioners working with victims of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and published the following revised definition:

***Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.*** (Child Sexual Exploitation - Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation, DfE 2017).

### **Service User profile 2019/20**

A total of 139 referrals were received by the Sexual Exploitation Service (SES) between 1st April 2019 and 31st March 2020

- A slight drop from the 150 received in 2018/19
- 68 were allocated to the Sexual Exploitation Service, 48 were allocated to Community Youth Teams for CSE early intervention/prevention work. Referrals signposted to CYT has increased slightly; these cases are low to medium with the risk often around social media.
- 23 not allocated to SSES or CYT - there has been a drop in the number of very low level CSE cases which fall under the level 1 'universal' threshold of need; these include cases of teenage pregnancy (where no CSE concerns are raised) and worries about the use of social media which are being addressed by school and parents. There is also a noticeable rise in cases where other agencies are already involved at a significant level; in some cases providing specific counselling support or mental health input (including young people who are admitted) and the added pressure of another worker becoming involved is too much.

- The main referrers into Sheffield Safeguarding Hub (SSH) for CSE are Social Care 35%, Police 25%, School or College 15%.
- **Age** - the peak age of referrals is 16, with 88 of the 139 referred aged 14-16. 30 for those aged 10-13 and 17-19 year olds 20.
- **Gender** - 92% were for females. Virtually the same for 2018/19 (91%), this has remained static for some years.
- **Ethnicity** - the majority of the referrals are White British with 68% of the total referral which is slightly lower than the 70% in 2018/19.
- **LAC** - Of the 139 referrals in 2019/20, 21 (15.1%) are looked after in either residential care, foster care or out of area. The number of LAC referrals in 2018/19 was 22 (14.7%) and 2017/18, 27 (18.2%) so a slight decrease in comparison.

### **Key Achievements in 2019/20**

- Participation in the successful launch of the Amber Project which sees the Sexual Exploitation Service and Criminal Exploitation Team combine to provide a generic Child Exploitation Service in Sheffield, ensuring efficient information sharing and partnership approach.
- Increasing productivities between Missing Young Persons Team co-located with the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service.

### **Priorities for 20/21**

- Continuing to develop and shape services which are responsive to working with complex vulnerabilities.
- Work alongside statutory partners delivering evidence-based interventions ensuring young people are supported by individual case plans within a framework of contextual safeguarding.
- Ensure continuity and productivity is sustained whilst consideration is being made for the position of the service, following Cabinet decision on the future commissioning of Sheffield Futures.

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