

London Borough of Enfield

Children, young people and Education Scrutiny Panel – 14th December 2021

Subject: Protecting Young People from Exploitation and Family Breakdown

Cabinet Member: Councillor Uddin

Executive Director: Tony Theodoulou

Purpose of Report

- For Information

Relevance to the Council Plan

- **Safe, Healthy and Confident communities** – Children and Family Services meets the Councils' priority of "Safe, healthy and Confident communities"

Background

- This briefing provides a summary of the offer and the work undertaken to protect young people from extra-familial harm and reduce family breakdown.
- During the year between 1st April 2020 and 31st March 2021, 181 young people were identified as either experiencing or being at significant risk of child exploitation. 100 were at risk of child sexual exploitation, 72 at risk of child criminal exploitation and 9 were at risk of both. This figure is higher than the last full year analysis where 166 young people were identified in 2019-20.

Main Considerations for the Panel

- Two new Adolescent Safeguarding teams and a Contextual Safeguarding unit have been in place since 1st June 2021.
- The primary objective of the teams is to promote and safeguard the wellbeing of young people, to reduce risks of extrafamilial and to prevent homelessness or entering or remaining in the care system, returning young people to their families wherever possible. This service works directly with children and young people aged 10-17.
- The Adolescent Safeguarding Teams have worked with 323 children / young people between April and September 2021 who are on the edge of care and / or at risk of extra-familial harm. The teams are currently working with 163 children / young people of which 7 young people (4%) have become looked after. Through the intensive work with the young people and their families at the point of crisis using the FAMILY intervention model, the team have managed to prevent children coming into care where it has been possible to mend relationships and build resilience.
- The FAMILY intervention model requires that the work is targeted specifically around mutually agreed targets with families centred around interventions to

address the reasons behind family breakdown and contributing to the risks of exploitation which helps parents to become involved in finding solutions. It enables the team to work towards preserving family life wherever feasible, reducing family dependence on statutory/specialist children's services, encouraging participation and engagement, preventing crime and anti-social behaviour, reducing exclusion and improving attendance at school, improving life opportunities for young people and their pathways into education, employment and training.

- The Adolescent Safeguarding Teams have a CIN Advisory Teacher co-located who supports social workers with tracking school attendance of young people allocated in the service.
- The Contextual Safeguarding Unit's leads on implementation and embedding extra familial safeguarding approach across the service. This unit is led by a Practice Lead whose role includes:
 - Offering case consultations to social workers
 - Leading on embedding assessment of contexts within the Child & Family assessment to recognise and identify extra familial abuse and risks and threading into the care planning process to include use of contextual plans that
 - Overseeing data analysis and leading on the development of mapping of contextual intelligence
 - Supporting practitioners across thresholds and disciplines to be brave and innovative, to hold and manage risk, and to eliminate language and responses that blame and stigmatise adolescents
- We are currently recruiting to 6 Youth Workers from the Youth Service who will be attached to the Contextual Safeguarding Unit. Their role will include disruption work with young people in hotspot areas and will be able to work after school, evenings, weekends as well as during school hours.
- In addition to the above, we are progressing the co-location of a Police Officer within the team and are in discussion with the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) to fund a Family Therapist to be based in service.
- The Adolescent Safeguarding Teams have recently received DfE funding to use virtual reality headsets to engage young people and their families. In addition funding has been secured from "Your Choice" to offer therapeutic support (Cognitive Behavioural Therapy) to young people at risk of extra-familial harm.
- The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) panel and the SAFE Panel are the partnership forums for safeguarding children and young people at risk of extra familial harm. MACE and the SAFE panel contribute to the wider Enfield contextual (extra familial) safeguarding approach.
- Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Meeting (MACE) The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Meeting (MACE) has strategic oversight of all exploitation cases, information, intelligence and activity across each LA area and across BCU boundaries. MACE uses Victim, offender, location, themes (VOLT) mnemonic and works in line with the Pan London guidance.
- The main purpose of the SAFE panel is to be a multi-agency panel that maintains operational oversight of children and young people, aged up to 18, and where appropriate, care leavers or those on an Education, Health and Care Plan (up to age 25), at risk of significant harm through exploitation (CSE,CCE), harmful

behaviours, missing from home and care, trafficking, modern slavery and gang association and serious youth violence.

Conclusions

- The service provides a holistic approach to working with young people at risk of extra-familial harm and / or on the edge of care. The success of the work with young people and their families has helped reduce the pressure on the partnership (police, health) and well as reduce pressure on statutory services as this has prevented further escalation of risk.
- Children and Family services are delivered to fulfil the Council's statutory responsibilities towards children in the Borough who are in need of help and protection or are in care or are leaving care. Services are regulated by legislation and by statutory guidance.

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Appendices

Background Papers

The following documents have been relied on in the preparation of this report: