

<b>Local Members Interest</b>
N/A

## **Safe and Strong Communities Select Committee - Thursday 22 April 2021**

### **Commissioning of Child Exploitation (CE) and Children and Young People Missing from Home or Care**

#### **Recommendations**

I recommend that the Committee:

- a. Acknowledges and scrutinises the continued performance of the Pan-Staffordshire Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children & Young People's Service, provided by Catch22.
- b. Acknowledges and scrutinises the emerging future commissioning intentions in relation to the Pan-Staffordshire Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service
- c. Acknowledges and scrutinises that the service delivery outlined within the report contributes to the delivery of the Staffordshire & Stoke-on-Trent Child Exploitation Strategy.

#### **Report of Helen Riley, Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities**

#### **Summary**

1. This report provides an overview of the delivery and the future commissioning intentions of the Pan-Staffordshire Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children & Young People's Service. This Service is currently delivered by Catch22, on behalf of Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council and the Staffordshire Commissioners Office.
2. The Pan-Staffordshire Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children & Young People's Service contributes to a whole-system approach to the delivery of the priorities set out in the Child Exploitation Strategy, as set out in the report of the Head of Staffordshire Youth Offending Service (SYOS) to the Safe and Strong Select Committee on Thursday 22<sup>nd</sup> April 2021.
3. The Safe and Strong Select Committee has previously scrutinised and received update reports relating to the Catch22 CSE & Missing Service, with the last report given full consideration at the Committee in May 2019 and subsequent Briefing Paper been provided to Members in September 2020.

## Report

### Background

4. Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Children and Young People Missing from Home or Care continues to be a priority for Staffordshire County Council, Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the Staffordshire Commissioner's Office and its Partners.
5. Stoke-on-Trent City Council, Staffordshire County Council and the Commissioner's Office have commissioned Catch22 to deliver a Pan-Staffordshire Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People's Service. Catch22, who commenced service delivery in September 2017, were awarded the contract following an extensive period of research and design.
6. The Partners of the Joint Commissioning Group have agreed the Catch22 contract will remain in place until 31st March 2022, following approval to extend the provisions of the Deed of Agreement within the internal governance arrangement of each Partner. In Staffordshire, this was approved by the Deputy Chief Executive and Director for Families and Communities through the Families & Communities Leadership Team.
7. Accountability for CSE and Missing Children, along with the broader agenda around Child Exploitation is underpinned by effective governance and scrutiny arrangements. Regular reporting and scrutiny are facilitated through the Staffordshire Safeguarding Partnership, the Staffordshire Safe and Strong Select Committee, the Missing Children Strategic Board and Child Exploitation Strategy Group.
8. On 1st April 2021, Catch22 will enter the final year of delivery under the current procurement arrangements. In consideration to this, the Partnership are working collaboratively to coproduce future commissioning intentions relating to Child Exploitation and Missing Children.
9. In September 2020, a Briefing Report outlined the performance of the Catch22 service against the contract requirements and provided information relating to their COVID-19 pandemic response. This report to the Safe and Strong Select Committee will provide an update on service performance throughout April to December of 2020 whilst providing an outline of the emerging future commissioning intentions.

### **Overview of the Children and Young People Missing from Home or Care Service:**

10. Catch22 facilitates all independent Return Home Interviews (RHI) for missing children and young people aged up to 18 years residing in Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent. This includes children or young people cared for in Staffordshire who are the Corporate Parenting responsibility of another Local Authority. The interview is an opportunity to gather information from the individual and to identify root cause factors which have contributed to the incident. It also aims to protect and prevent further missing episodes.

11. The interview is in-depth and is completed by a specialist independent practitioner, who is trained to conduct these interviews and can respond to any issues that emerge. Information gathered during the interview is shared with appropriate organisations, including the Local Authority and Staffordshire Police. The interview supports the professionals working with the child or young person to build a comprehensive picture of the reasons behind the missing episode, activity during the missing episode and potential risk factors. It also provides an opportunity to inform care planning, wider strategic planning and for professionals to consider the views, opinions and experiences of a child or young person.
12. Catch22 does not conduct return home interviews for children or young people residing outside of Staffordshire who are cared for by Staffordshire County Council. This is undertaken either by a locally commissioned service or by the child or young person's key worker. The return home interview is then recorded on the child or young persons' individual record to ensure the same due diligence is taken and wider considerations can be made to inform care planning, wider strategic planning and for professionals to consider the views, opinions and experiences of a child or young person'.
13. Participation in a RHI is at the discretion of the individual child or young person, their parents/carers and sometimes also the Local Authority who has parental responsibility.
14. Processes relating to Children Missing from Home and Care are outlined in a Joint Protocol between Staffordshire County Council, Stoke on Trent City Council and Staffordshire Police.

### **Missing Service Delivery across Staffordshire**

15. Catch22 proactively seeks to encourage children and young people to participate in an RHI. Catch22 will work to engage with an individual and their families or carers for up to fourteen days after the missing episode has occurred in order to attempt to complete an RHI. Where multiple missing episodes occur in quick succession, Catch22 will ensure that each of these is discussed when an RHI is completed.
16. As a minimum Catch22 will make two separate attempts to engage a child or young person in an RHI, promoting the benefits.
17. Performance data for the period April 2020 to December 2020 is outlined below.
18. Throughout COVID-19, Catch22 has continued to offer face to face delivery of RHIs when they have been requested. Flexibility of the delivery methods have also enabled them to provide virtual and phone RHIs when these has been the preferred method or necessity has required this.
19. An overview of missing incidents is provided for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of the 2020 -2021 contractual year:

DISTRICT	Notifications			RHI Offered			Individuals Received RHI			Total RHI		
	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q1	Q2	Q3
Moorlands	46	28	47	46	28	47	20	21	15	45	27	37
Newcastle under Lyme	47	42	64	47	42	62	16	17	20	39	36	46
Stafford	41	46	60	38	45	58	19	25	26	25	37	44
<b>STAFFS NORTH TOTAL</b>	<b>134</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>171</b>	<b>131</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>167</b>	<b>55</b>	<b>63</b>	<b>61</b>	<b>109</b>	<b>100</b>	<b>127</b>
South Staffs	16	35	61	13	33	39	7	16	18	11	29	32
East Staffs	41	43	51	38	40	49	19	16	18	36	34	42
Lichfield	10	28	32	10	23	30	9	10	14	10	20	21
Cannock	31	40	35	24	36	35	11	18	18	22	31	33
Tamworth	17	32	17	17	27	13	12	14	8	15	19	11
<b>STAFFS SOUTH / EAST TOTAL</b>	<b>115</b>	<b>178</b>	<b>196</b>	<b>102</b>	<b>159</b>	<b>166</b>	<b>58</b>	<b>74</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>94</b>	<b>133</b>	<b>139</b>

## Performance Analysis of Missing Incidents

20. Excluding Q2 in North Staffordshire, Staffordshire has seen notifications of missing incidents increasing across each quarter in North, South and East Staffordshire.
21. In the majority of circumstances, where an offer of a RHI has not been made, it is because the child or young person is living in Staffordshire under the care of another Local Authority. In these circumstances the Local Authority has opted to complete the RHI and not utilise the Catch22 Service. SCC has seen this situation increasing in South Staffordshire in particular. An example of this can be found in Q3 when 61 missing notifications were received from the Police by Catch22 and yet the offer of an RHI was reported to be 39 (64%).
22. COVID-19 has resulted in an increase in overall declines of an RHI and this can be seen across the quarters. It should however be acknowledged that where families and carers do agree to the RHI taking place they are seeing an increased parental and carer involvement which is having positive results.
23. COVID-19 related school closures have also impacted on the delivery of RHIs in schools (often a preferred venue for children and young people). Catch22 has worked with the Staffordshire Education Safeguarding Leads closely to reassure schools and promote access where health, safety and wellbeing has allowed.
24. The number of children and young people receiving an RHI remains consistent. It is usual that the number of individuals will be less than the number of notifications and the overall RHI offer figure. This is because regrettably we see multiple missing episodes taking place in quick succession for some individuals. An example of this is a 32% increase in notifications in North Staffordshire in Q3. This could be attributed directly to the movement of three young people, who were known by Staffordshire Police and other services to be prolific missing persons, from Stoke on Trent into the Newcastle under Lyme district. In this instance it is reported that multiple missing episodes would take place before Catch22 could gain agreement from the individuals to partake in an RHI.
25. There has been a reported overall reduction in the number of children or young people requiring intervention meetings for the 5+ or 9+ missing episodes over a 90-day period. The average number of episodes has remained between 2-4 which

suggests that in many instances the first intervention meeting being held at 3+ missing episodes is impactful.

26. The 'top 3' primary reason for missing incidents remain unchanged.
  - a. Peer/Friends
  - b. Emotional wellbeing
  - c. Family
27. Of the males who have had a missing notification between April-December 2020, 52% of these were aged between 13-15 years, a further 41% were aged between 16-18 years.
28. Of the females who have had a missing notification between April- December 2020, 54% of these were aged between 13-15 years, a further 40% were aged between 16-18 years.

### **CSE Service Delivery across Staffordshire**

29. CSE has been a key strategic priority for Staffordshire County Council and its partners since 2014 and forms part of the broader Child Exploitation Strategy. Catch22 is commissioned to link effectively with SCC's specialist internal CSE Co-ordinators to provide support, guidance and intervention via four means which are outlined below:
  - a. **Direct Work:** Flexible, evidence-based, longer term interventions adapted to the needs of each child to reduce risk and help them cope and recover from the impact of CSE.
  - b. **Bespoke Delivery:** Work with a professional to co-deliver part of a planned piece of work or direct support for the professional to deliver the work themselves.
  - c. **Resource Sharing:** Catch22 has a range of resources that can be utilised by other professionals. Catch22 share these as appropriate and ensure that professionals are confident in their use.
  - d. **Group Work:** Through mapping themes and trends, Catch22 may determine that group work within certain settings is required to tackle low-level risks.
30. Referrals for CSE work are made to Catch22 using a Risk Factor Matrix (RFM) which was revised in 2020 to include all Child Exploitation. The RFM and guidance relating to it can be found on the Staffordshire Children's Safeguarding Board Website. One RFM is used consistently across Staffordshire and Stoke on Trent.
31. The RFM is formulated to help identify risk factors and this then is used by Catch22 to inform the approach to any CSE work undertaken with a child or young person. The support needs of an individual, associated risks, nature and the frequency of intervention alongside any wider partnership involvements will all be considered.
32. Support from the Catch22 Service can be requested directly if the RFM reflects a low risk. It can also be identified via Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panels.

33. The MACE panels review the referrals where a completed RFM is assessed as medium or high risk. Once the RFM has been received, all the information is cross referenced with intelligence and links made between vulnerable children and those causing them harm. Checks across various vulnerabilities are made across several systems which enables the panels to be informed about individual risk factors including SEND, Missing, Prevent, Safeguarding and Children who are Looked After or known to other targeted services.
34. Support and interventions in the CSE Service are in no way time limited and the reduction of risk level is always the dominant factor when Catch22 considers closing a referral. That said, the service resourcefully utilises its trained mentors and volunteers to continue support even when a key worker completes their involvement. For example, this has proven to be particularly effective where there are additional complex needs and/or an individual is awaiting support following a referral to a partnership agency (such as CAMHS or Child Sexual Abuse Services).
35. CSE service numbers, according to identified risk level for Q1, Q2 and Q3 of the 2020-2021 contractual year are outlined below:

RISK LEVEL	Q1 2020/21		Q2 2020/21		Q3 2020/21		TOTAL
	Staffordshire North	Staffordshire South/East	Staffordshire North	Staffordshire South/East	Staffordshire North	Staffordshire South/East	
Inappropriate	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
No CSE Risk	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Low	20	17	6	15	17	19	94
Medium	10	26	17	13	12	31	109
High	2	3	4	1	4	3	17
TOTAL	32	46	27	29	33	53	220

### Performance Analysis of CSE service

36. A total of 86 referrals were received in Q3 across Staffordshire and this was the highest referral rate across the quarters when compared to the 78 in Q1 and the 56 in Q2.
37. Significant increases in Staffordshire South and East have been seen across the contract year so far. Of the referrals received 30% resulted in direct work and 70% were consultations. In addition, there was a 60% increase in number of referrals compared to Q3 2019/2020. The increase can be attributed to service delivery presentations during SCC's Practice Week, Catch22 attendance at Practitioner Briefings and additional meetings with operational staff across SCC and our Partners.
38. Conversely, whilst referral rates in North Staffordshire dipped slightly in Q2 they remain consistent overall. There has though been a 64% increase in referrals for direct support, with 34% relating to consultations. Catch22 report that "this increase in direct work referrals reflects a reluctance from referrers to engage in either bespoke work or with consultations to receive resources and deliver support themselves."
39. Consistently the 'top two' reason for reported models of CSE are:

- a. Inappropriate relationships
- b. Online/Social Media

40. Of the 220 CSE related referrals that have come into the service in year, 87% of these are for females, the remaining 13% have been for males.

41. Improved outcomes and positive impacts for children and young people who access the CSE service are vital. Catch22 use Outcome Star (specifically My Star) when supporting an individual and report that routinely movement across 4.5 of the 8 areas within the star are achieved.

42. The below chart demonstrates the percentage of children and young people across the CSE Service who feel they have made progress. It also shows the average improvement in star rating and reassuringly it is clear to see that the greatest area of improvement is in the 'Being Safe' category, where we would most expect it to be.



### COVID-19 Response and Service Developments

43. Since March 2020, Catch22 has maintained face to face delivery when there has been an identified need to do so. At all times the service has worked within government guidelines and has ensured the safety of staff and families, using full PPE where any direct contact occurs.

44. Very recently, all Catch22 frontline staff have been offered the option of their first vaccine, which was universally welcomed. They will always of course continue to maintain high safety standards and will be guidance compliant in their work with children and families.

45. Catch22 developed 'COVID Response – Best Practice Guidance' for schools and care homes as well as a blended offer responsive to children and young people's wishes.
46. The Participation and Young People's Forum has continued throughout the pandemic and has met more frequently (as regularly as fortnightly) at the request of young people. Forums have diversified to include virtual music sessions, games event and quizzes.
47. A Summer Programme took place and benefited from Catch22's wider services and contracts. It enabled 12 individual sessions to be put on for young people to partake in (some virtually and some face to face during the summer school holidays). All were managed carefully to be compliant with guidelines but Catch22 successfully supported individuals to attend sports sessions, visit Serenity Farm and take trips to local green spaces too.
48. Mentors and Volunteers continue to be a vital resource for Catch22, once fully trained this part of the staff workforce support children and young people in a wide variety of ways. Currently there are 19 active mentors and volunteers and there is a further cohort also undertaking training.
49. COVID-19 Hardship Funding, devolved from a wider Catch22 bid in response to the pandemic, has seen an additional £12,500 come into the service this contract year. To date, 60 individuals or families have benefited in a wide range of ways. For example, the money has purchased children's shoes, flooring within a household, bespoke safety app software for a child's device and even some ICT equipment for one household. Additionally, each child or young person in the service in December received a personally delivered pamper pack or Christmas gift. The remainder of the money from this fund will be wisely used by the 31st of March 2021.

### **Emerging Future Commissioning Intentions**

50. On 1st April 2021, Catch22 will enter the final year of delivery under the current procurement arrangements. To ensure continued compliance with appropriate Procurement Regulations, the Partnership is working collaboratively to coproduce future commissioning intentions relating to Child Exploitation and Missing Children.
51. SCC has agreed to be the Lead for the future commissioning arrangements relating to Child Exploitation & Missing Children & Young People. In consideration to this, the County Council will lead a Joint Commissioning Group which includes Stoke-on-Trent City Council, the Commissioner's Office and Staffordshire Police.
52. The Partners are continuing to develop an emerging, aspirational Service Scope and set of Principles which seeks to provide a high-level overview of the components which will be explored through the development of the Service Specification through the Joint Commissioning Group.
53. At the time of writing, it is anticipated that the Partnership will jointly commission a Child Exploitation and Missing Children & Young People Service which will consist of three main core elements: a child exploitation service, a lived experience mentor



offer and a missing from home or care service. Each element will interlink with the other to ensure that the need and voice of a child is centric to any support that is provided within the Service and across wider partnerships. The Service will adopt a whole family approach to empower families in achieving their goals with the aim of sustaining long term change and stability.

54. The proposed Service will see the CSE & Missing Service Model reconfigured to be inclusive of all forms of “Exploitation”.

#### **Child Exploitation Emerging Commissioning Intentions:**

55. The emerging, aspirational Service Scope in relation to Child Exploitation is as follows:

- a. 0-18-year-old children, resident in one of Staffordshire’s eight districts or residing within the City of Stoke on Trent.
- b. Children referred into the Service prior to their 18th birthday can continue to receive the appropriate support beyond their 18th birthday as part of a planned exit from the Service. Transition into appropriate adult support service/s should be considered and actioned within the Service as part of any closure or exit plan.
- c. Children accessing the Service will always have a presenting need of “Exploitation”. A child identified to be at risk of ‘Child Exploitation’, an inclusive term that encompasses the following as per the Child Exploitation Strategy, endorsed by both the Staffordshire Safeguarding Children Board and the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Partnership.
- d. The Service will support all the following forms of Child Exploitation: CSE, CCE, Gangs, County Lines, Child Trafficking and Modern Slavery.
- e. The Service will include accessibility for children assessed as Low, Medium and High risk. However, the Service Delivery Model will be informed through the development of the Service Specification and the need to maximise resources to meet those most in need.
- f. The Child Exploitation service will adopt a Trauma Informed approach.
- g. The Service will seek to refer children into appropriate community networks of support or services which meet the needs of the whole family.

#### **Lived Experience Emerging Commissioning Intentions:**

56. The emerging, aspirational Service Scope in relation to Lived Experience Mentors is as follows:

- a. Research and best practice indicate that children who are victims of child exploitation or at risk of child exploitation can be particularly difficult to engage.
- b. It is intended that this element of the Service is used to complement the proposed service delivery model around child exploitation. Lived Experience Mentors will be an intrinsic part of the Service and will be used to initiate contact with children and families to encourage engagement and participation with the Service where engagement has proved challenging.
- c. It is anticipated that the mentors will increase the numbers of children referred into the service and that achieve a positive outcome.

- d. In addition to supporting children through direct work, the Lived Experience Mentors will also support Service practitioners to deliver training to professionals, promoting the referral pathways into the Service and the support available.
- e. Lived Experience Mentors may also assist in targeted group work.

57. The Lived Experience Offer would be underpinned by a robust infrastructure of support to reflect the sensitive nature of the proposed offer. This would seek to ensure the safety, wellbeing and protection of our children and young people and the Lived Experience Mentors.

### **Missing Children & Young People Emerging Commissioning Intentions:**

58. The emerging, aspirational Service Scope in relation to Missing Children & Young People is as follows:

- a. 0-18-year-old children resident in one of Staffordshire's eight districts or residing within the City of Stoke on Trent. The Service will cease to engage with most children on their eighteenth birthday. This includes any child who is resident in one of the eight district of Staffordshire or the City of Stoke on Trent and is reported as missing and therefore recorded as missing by Staffordshire Police. Once this child has received a Police prevention interview the child will be offered a RHI by the Service.
- b. Children must be offered the opportunity of a RHI within the timeframe stipulated within government Statutory Guidance. Current guidance stipulates a 72-hour time frame and the Service will be expected to operate to this until revised guidance is published. Any revision within future guidance to response times must be responded to by the Service.
- c. The Service will utilise virtual and digital methods to complete RHI, alongside a face to face offer where risk levels following a Police prevention interview dictates.
- d. The Service will seek to refer children into appropriate community networks of support or services which meet the needs of the whole family.
- e. The Service will continue to meet the statutory requirements in relation to Children Missing from Home or Care, as set out in the Statutory Guidance currently or in the future.
- f. The Service will work in partnership in order to uphold the principles and processes outlined in the Joint Protocol on Children who Run Away or Go Missing from Home or Care.

59. The Service will support a spot-purchase option for either Staffordshire County Council and/or Stoke on Trent City Council where the Local Authority has a child residing outside of Staffordshire or Stoke on Trent but would prefer the Service to offer an RHI.

### **Emerging Services Principles:**

60. The Service will be expected to work to the following set of guiding principles:

- a. It will assume contextualised safeguarding principles in all Service elements. Initially developed by Bedfordshire University six years ago, contextual

safeguarding is an approach to safeguarding children which responds to their experiences outside of the home.

- b. Inclusion and diversity will be championed within this Service. The Service will ensure that protected characteristics of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, and sexual orientation are at the forefront of Service delivery.
- c. Whole family approach to work will be endorsed across the Service, in line with The Care Act and whole-family approaches. For example, the Service will provide adults and children with the tools they need to set goals together. In achieving their goals, it is anticipated that long-term change and stability will be assured.
- d. Effective partnership working across agencies to ensure the earliest identification of need and risk. This will be best achieved by concise and effective information sharing across organisational systems at both an individual/family and strategic level. The Service will work using digital means and system-wide recording to effectively record activity and measure impact.
- e. System-wide collaboration, reducing the number of 'hand offs' and service transfer/transition points.
- f. Utilise digital technology to provide a blended service that offers both face to face and virtual delivery across both Child Exploitation, Lived Experience Mentor and Missing from Home or Care elements.

### **Moving Forward:**

61. The development of future commissioning intentions is underpinned by a Joint Strategic Needs Analysis which will inform the development of the service alongside coproduction with key partners and stakeholders.
62. The above Joint Strategic Needs Analysis will inform the development of a Joint Finance & Resources Formula which will underpin the development of the Service Specification.

### **Conclusion:**

63. Catch 22 continues to deliver against the Performance and Quality Assurance Framework for the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Missing Children & Young People's Service.
64. Catch 22 has adapted its delivery during COVID-19 and its efforts nationally have been recognised.
65. Staffordshire County Council is committed to the ongoing commissioning support for CE and Missing and will lead the development of the specification for the partnership.

### **Link to Strategic Plan**

66. Child Exploitation & Missing Children & Young People are underpinned by our Strategic Outcomes to create a Staffordshire where residents feel safer, happier and more supported in their community. It is also underpinned by our Strategic

Priority to support more families and children to look after themselves, stay safe and well.

### **Link to Other Overview and Scrutiny Activity**

67. Children and Young People who go Missing from Home and Care in Staffordshire Select Committee Report (May 2019) –  
<http://moderngov.staffordshire.gov.uk/documents/s123201/Children%20and%20Young%20People%20who%20go%20Missing%20from%20Home%20and%20Care%20in%20Staffordshire.pdf>

### **List of Background Documents/Appendices:**

[The Care Act and Whole-Family Approaches, 2015.](#)

[Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, 2014.](#)

[Preventing Gang Involvement and Youth Violence - Advice for Commissioners](#)

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