

<b>Subject:</b>	<b>Harmful Sexual Behaviour &amp; Schools</b>		
<b>Date of Meeting:</b>	<b>13 September 2021</b>		
<b>Report of:</b>	<b>Deb Austin</b>		
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<b>Ward(s) affected:</b>	<b>All</b>		

**FOR GENERAL RELEASE.**

**1. PURPOSE OF REPORT AND POLICY CONTEXT**

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to update the committee on the work that has been implemented with schools and partners in the summer term of 2021 related to concerns around young people and Harmful Sexual Behaviours.

**2. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

- 2.1 That the committee notes this report and its contents including the next steps.

**3. CONTEXT/ BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

- 3.1 Over recent years, council teams and services supported by local community voluntary sector organisations such as Wise, RISE and Survivors Network have provided a range of support to education settings to improve their whole school approaches to gender equality and their ability to safeguard pupils and students and prevent sexist and sexual bullying and harassment, peer on peer abuse and other harmful sexual behaviours. This has included a training offer, PSHE education materials, small group and 1:1 interventions and Theatre in Education tours. Materials and guidance to support some areas of this work are hosted on [www.BEEM.org.uk](http://www.BEEM.org.uk)
- 3.2 In early April 2021, there were a number of referrals to the Front Door For Families made by a small number of secondary schools related to peer-on-peer Harmful Sexual Behaviour. Many of these were of an historical nature. It appears these referrals were triggered by the murder of Sarah Everard and the subsequent social media response including the Everyone's Invited campaign. There was also student led protests in two schools related to this.
- 3.3 In response, regular multi-agency meetings were held throughout the Easter Break and the summer term to manage the safeguarding issues and co-ordinate referrals. These 'Harmful Sexual Behaviours: recognition and response' meetings included representatives from the police, schools, social work and other relevant council and community and voluntary sector teams and services. These meetings

resulted in ensuring a robust and sensitive response through the schools, police and Social Care. The schools have fed back that the young women involved felt listened to and supported.

3.4 In July 2021 [Ofsted review of sexual abuse in schools and colleges](#), This concluded; 'This rapid thematic review has revealed how prevalent sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are for children and young people. It is concerning that for some children, incidents are so commonplace that they see no point in reporting them. This review did not analyse whether the issues are more or less prevalent for different groups of young people, and there may well be differences, but it found that the issues are so widespread that they need addressing for all children and young people. It recommends that schools, colleges and multi-agency partners act as though sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening, even when there are no specific reports.'

3.5 The group acknowledged, as does the recent [Ofsted Report](#) that more needs to be done to challenge existing misogynistic attitudes and the resulting harmful sexual behaviour experienced by girls in our schools. Therefore, the following actions were taken in the summer term:

- The Education Safeguarding Lead with the Head of Safeguarding met with all Secondary School Safeguarding Leads to discuss the issue, to ensure a consistent approach across the city.
- Information about resources and organisations that could support work to prevent and respond to harmful sexual behaviours was compiled and disseminated to schools. This included information on the role of the police and social work in decision making and links to relevant Department for Education guidance. It also reminded schools of support available from local services such as Wise, Survivors Network and the School Wellbeing Service.
- The secondary PSHE materials on gender stereotyping, consent, healthy relationships, sexist and sexual bullying, sexual exploitation and violence were reviewed to ensure they are up to date. Two well-attended PSHE network meetings were held to share and develop practice in this area of the curriculum. Two secondary schools have carried out student engagement activities to support the PSHE curriculum review.
- Links were made to the Violence Against Women and Girls agenda with the aim to ensure responses are coordinated alongside existing Corporate Plans
- Conversations with Family Coaches and Parenting Teams took place to ensure interventions that look at healthy relationships, consent and male privilege are strengthened with contemporary resources shared.

3.6 The Harmful Sexual Behaviours: recognition and response' meetings will continue into the autumn term with the following planned for the next academic year:

- Public Health will be working pan-Sussex to develop a response and a campaign
- The Safeguarding Education Lead with the Head of Safeguarding will meet with primary schools to discuss issues relevant to that age group

- Police are reflecting on their early intervention Reboot programme to include interventions in their work and restorative justice is being considered where appropriate to support to work in this area.
- The PSHE Service will continue to provide resources and training to ensure opportunities are provided for exploration and learning in this area in a way which avoids victim blaming and engages boys and young men. This will include a review of teaching and learning about pornography.
- Local authority guidance, reporting and recording of sexist and sexual bullying and incidents will be reviewed as part of the Anti-Racist Schools Strategy and work to review the recording and reporting of racist and religiously motivated incidents.
- Local survey data will be used to support forward planning. There is an aim to use the Safe and Well School Survey to include feedback on the work we have been doing.
- The Working Group will use the [NSPCC Harmful Sexual Behaviour Self Evaluation Tool](#) to demonstrate good practice in this area and to develop an Action Plan where there are any identified gaps.

3.7 Schools have identified a need for 1-1 support provision for boys and young men who are not receiving support through other routes, such as police, social work, youth offending. Interventions for perpetrators are being addressed through the Domestic Abuse, Sexual Violence and Abuse & Violence against Women & Girls (VAWG) Joint Unit, Brighton & Hove and East Sussex, via the Pan Sussex DV/SVA action plan, which is due to be finalised very soon.

#### **4. COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT & CONSULTATION**

4.1 Consultation and engagement, through the Working Group, is happening with Schools and Partner Agencies including the CVS across the city.

#### **5. CONCLUSION**

5.1 There has been a quickly mobilised multi-agency response to the concerns around Harmful Sexual Behaviour. Schools have engaged well in the process and this work will continue through the Working Group to address issues around Healthy Relationships, Male Privilege, Toxic Masculinity and Consent.

#### **6. FINANCIAL & OTHER IMPLICATIONS:**

6.1 Financial Implications:

This report provides an update on work that has been implemented with schools and partners in the summer term of 2021 and as such has no specific financial implications for the Council. Any additional services or support identified via the Pan Sussex DV/SVA action plan or by the working group may require extra

resources to be made available. Decisions on how this will be funded will need to be made when the recommendations are known.

*Finance Officer Consulted: David Ellis*

*Date: 1/9/21*

### 6.2.1 Legal Implications:

From September 2021 schools and colleges should implement advice provided by the Department for Education: *Sexual violence and sexual harassment between children in schools and colleges: Advice for governing bodies, proprietors, headteachers, principals, senior leadership teams and designated safeguarding leads*. The advice sets out what sexual violence and sexual harassment is, how to minimise the risk of it occurring and what to do when it does occur or is alleged to have occurred. The advice highlights best practice, statutory guidance and the legal framework. It is for individual schools and colleges to develop their own policies and procedures in line with their legal obligations, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010, especially the Public Sector Equality Duty, and their local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements. The recent national Ofsted report found that prevalence of often unreported sexual harassment and online sexual abuse for children and young people is so widespread that it needs addressing for all children and young people. It specifically recommends that schools, colleges and multi-agency partners act as though sexual harassment and online sexual abuse are happening, even when there are no specific reports. As set out in the body of this report an effective approach requires a multi agency response. In 2021 the Home Office published the Tackling Child Sexual Abuse Strategy. The first principle of the strategy is that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and that a whole system approach is required. The national strategy includes a commitment to educate children and young people about healthy relationships and the digital world, including through the roll-out of Relationships, Sex and Health Education and the Media Literacy Strategy. The Ofsted report identifies that a carefully planned and implemented RSHE curriculum, sanctions and interventions to tackle poor behaviour and provide support for children and young people who need it, training and clear expectations for staff and governors, and listening to pupil voice, are central to addressing the issues. It is also essential to understand that some of what may be reported is a crime. The government has committed in their 2021 strategy to child and adult victims and survivors have access to the support services they need, including being better supported throughout the criminal justice system.

*Lawyer Consulted: Natasha Watson*

*Date: 31.8.2021*

### 6.3 Equalities Implications:

Equalities impact assessments for staff and for children and families were completed in 2015 as part of the service redesign and the assessment for children and families is in the process of being reviewed.

### 6.4 Sustainability Implications:

- 6.5 Brexit Implications:
- 6.6 Any Other Significant Implications:
- 6.7 Crime & Disorder Implications:
- 6.8 Risk and Opportunity Management Implications:
- 6.9 Public Health Implications:
- 6.10 Corporate / Citywide Implications:

## **SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION**

**Appendices:**

**Background Documents**

