



## CHILDREN AND LEARNING OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY SUB-COMMITTEE 13 February 2020

**Subject Heading:**

**Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy and Service Update**

**SLT Lead:**

**Robert South**

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**Policy context:**

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The aim of the strategy and approach is to better support children and young people vulnerable to the risk of exploitation in line with the communities theme.

In terms of the Places theme, an outcome in the Havering Plan is for the borough to be safer and this approach is consistent with delivering that outcome.

**Financial summary:**

**The subject matter of this report deals with the following Council Objectives**

Communities making Havering	X
Places making Havering	X
Opportunities making Havering	□
Connections making Havering	□

**SUMMARY**

As with many other London boroughs, Havering is increasingly seeing the effects of serious youth violence and criminal gang activity impacting on our children and

young people. Children across Havering are being exploited and the borough and its partners have developed an “adolescent safeguarding” approach across a spectrum of 10-18 year olds (up to 25 with SEND) focussing on risk to children and young people outside of the familial context. This report updates on the progress made to date and the next steps.

Our approach is preventive, multi-disciplinary and long term, to better safeguard children and young people vulnerable to a range of exploitation factors. Our strategy is to improve current interventions by bringing services together whilst seeking to plan and intervene earlier in the longer term. This two-fold approach is consistent with the Ofsted improvement plan and Community Safety partnership priorities.

## RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note the content of this report as an update on the borough’s approach to multi-disciplinary adolescent safeguarding.

## REPORT DETAIL

### **Strategy on adolescent safeguarding**

Across the partnership, during 2019 we re-assessed our collective approach to addressing serious youth violence. One of the key recommendations from the Ofsted inspection of June 2018 was to improve our response to children at risk outside of the home. The Council has a statutory duty under the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to produce an annually refreshed community safety plan. Addressing serious group violence and knife crime are key priorities within the Havering Community Safety Partnership Plan (2017-20). The second Serious Group Violence Strategy for the Borough was agreed by Cabinet in April 2019 and is the first to specifically include Knife Crime. A report “safeguarding adolescents from serious youth violence and exploitation in Havering” was agreed by Cabinet in June 2019, providing resources to develop and Adolescent Safeguarding service in the borough and deliver the actions in the Serious Group Violence Strategy in relation to young people. This report provides an update on that approach.

Locally, we have developed a strategy, via multi-agency workshops to ensure multi-disciplinary input. The strategy and workplan contain the following priority areas:

- Prediction: develop analysis of key data sets to support effective prediction, prevention, intervention and disruption that respond to young people’s risk factors;
- Leadership: provide oversight and challenge for the development of strategy and programme;
- Prevention: conduct appreciative enquiry and gap analysis of current policy and practice in work with young people across the partnership including application

of systemic, relationship-based, restorative and strength-based practices to prevent harm and exploitation of young people;

- Intervention: scope the design of multi-disciplinary offer and integrated working methods that respond to the changing needs and risks of young people;
- Disruption: build on available disruptive techniques to develop outreach and place-based interventions that reduce the involvement of young people in violence and crime;
- Communication and workforce development: create a communication and workforce development plans that meet the needs of professionals who work with young people at risk.

Multi-agency workshops took place in late 2019 to develop a practice guide to support implementation of the adolescent safeguarding strategy using best practice from across Havering. Groups of young people were also central to the development of the practice guide.

### **Engaging young people**

We continue to successfully engage with a diverse group of young people. In late 2019 the borough was represented at a discussion panel focussed on knife crime hosted at Havering College. Sessions have been held with the Youth Council and also pupils attending the Olive Academy, to seek their views on potential funding opportunities and our strategy to improve adolescent safeguarding. Engagement workshops will continue as the strategy is implemented.

### **Operational developments**

In operational terms, early identification and increased support are key to increased likelihood of prevention of violence and criminal exploitation. We are currently coming to the end of a consultation process with staff and will shortly be recruiting specialist staff, in addition to commissioning a training offer for the partnership. Our approach is consistent with the strategy noted above and will focus over the next phase as follows:

- Prediction: use of business intelligence and data from across agencies, held and analysed in one place, to identify risk factors much earlier and therefore be able to offer targeted support and engagement with children and families. We will respond to the needs of adolescents with SEND and mental health factors, who may be at higher risk of abuse. Other known risk factors include the use of social media and substance misuse by the young person and / or in the family.
- Prevention: a universal offer to schools and communities, with some targeted engagement work for example to address prior trauma in a young person's life. We will respond to peer networks, pull factors, and the influence of individuals and groups that cause harm to adolescents and can increase the vulnerability in relation an increase in the risk of exploitation. We were successful with a funding bid to The Home Office in relation to youth crime and have significantly increased our "reach" to over 2,000 children in schools with knife / crime safety workshops and assemblies throughout 2019. The project is coming to an end in

March 2020 and over 40 children have received specific intervention as a result of the project.

- Intervention: specialist multi-disciplinary interventions with young people and families, including speech and language support, CAMHS services, clinical psychology, targeted youth work, systemic work, police support, schools and other settings to work towards diversion and engagement form part of the offer of the new integrated adolescent safeguarding service.

The integrated Adolescent Safeguarding Service will come under a single management arrangement, comprising:

- Youth services, including targeted youth services
- Youth offending service
- New adolescent safeguarding team
- Child Exploitation coordination, working across this team and social care
- Clinical health posts
- Data analysis to enable earlier identification of children vulnerable to criminal exploitation.

The new structure, subject to consultation with staff and successful recruitment, is intended to be embedded by March 2020.

### **Partnership working**

A multi-agency strategic partnership adolescent safeguarding strategy group is now formally established, chaired by the Director of Children's Services with engagement with community organisations, police and health representatives. All have been instrumental in the design of our adolescent safeguarding service and implementation of the strategy. A series of task and finish groups, comprised of members of the group in currently in operation, to support progress in strategy implementation.

The Community Safety Team led a successful violence reduction summit on 27<sup>th</sup> November 2019, across the three borough area of Barking and Dagenham and Redbridge and including all partners. The Children's Commissioner for England, the Chair of the London Violence Reduction Unit, young people from the borough and parents of victims attended and provided powerful content at the event. The Adolescent Safeguarding Strategy as outlines in this report was also launched at the event, marking the next stage of implementation of our approach to intensify safeguarding of adolescents in the borough.

## **IMPLICATIONS AND RISKS**

### **Financial implications and risks:**

**Legal implications and risks:**

There are no apparent legal implications in noting this report.

**Human Resources implications and risks:**

The recommendations made in this report do not give rise to any identifiable HR risks or implications that would affect either the Council or its workforce.

**Equalities implications and risks:**