

**JOINT CSE REVIEW GROUP  
2024 ANNUAL REPORT**

## INTRODUCTION

1. This report is the second annual CSE report presenting data and information in relation to CSE in Telford & Wrekin, and the activity taking place to respond to CSE and safeguard those at risk. The reporting period for this report is April 2023 to March 2024.
2. In July 2022, Tom Crowther KC, the Independent Chair, of the Independent Inquiry into CSE in Telford (IITCSE) commissioned by Telford & Wrekin Council, published his report which contained 47 recommendations and 148 specific actions.
3. Recommendations 1 to 5 required the publication of an annual CSE report and other recommendations set out other information to be included in this report.
4. A first annual report was published that focussed on three years data from 2020/21 to 2022/23 to ensure a robust baseline.
5. In July 2024, the IITCSE chair, Tom Crowther published a 2-year review of his assessment progress against the 47 recommendations of his IITCSE Report. Of Recommendations 1 to 5 his review report commented:

***'This data collection and analysis not only meets what I contemplated in Recommendation 1, it goes beyond it. In my view, the stakeholders have taken the Recommendation as a foundation and have gone further, creating a framework for data sharing and analysis which is plainly relevant not only to the direction of support and disruption resources, but also to a greater public understanding of the nature and extent of CSE within Telford. This is an extremely positive approach which shows in my view a wholehearted adoption of the spirit of the Recommendation'***<sup>1</sup>

### Recommendations 1 to 5: publication of CSE DATA and information from the Council, Police, health and schools

#### Multi-agency Safeguarding Arrangements

6. Telford & Wrekin Council, West Mercia Police and the NHS Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin Integrated Care Board (ICB) have a statutory duty to instigate multi-agency safeguarding arrangements that ensure vulnerable children are protected and supported. This responsibility is discharged through the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Partnership. Membership of the partnership includes representatives from:
  - Telford & Wrekin Council including Education & Skills (representing early years, schools and colleges), Children's Safeguarding and Family Support, Licensing, and Housing

---

<sup>1</sup> [Two+Year+Review+Report+-+16+July+2024.pdf \(squarespace.com\)](#) Paragraph 109, Page 33.

- NHS Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin (ICB)
- Shrewsbury and Telford Hospital NHS Trust
- Midlands Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust
- Shropshire Community NHS Trust
- West Mercia Police
- Shropshire Fire & Rescue Service
- Probation
- Youth Justice Service
- Community & voluntary organisations.

7. Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Children Partnership works to:

- create an environment where Child Exploitation (CE), and specifically CSE, is prevented, identified, and challenged, and;
- ensure that children, young people and families whose lives are affected by CSE will receive a high level of support as well as protection, and the perpetrators are held accountable for their actions, and brought to justice.

#### Threshold Guidance

8. The Safeguarding Children Board has developed and adopted updated 'threshold guidance' to ensure that anyone who works alongside children, young people, their families and carers work together, share information and ensure that effective support is provided.
9. The guidance describes a range of different needs and the intervention that will meet that need. Consistent application of threshold for statutory intervention and early help provision is crucial in identifying and meeting the needs of families and maintaining quality of provision of support across all services.
10. This approach should ensure that all partners respond to concerns about CSE in the same way. It enables partners to understand each individual report or case, share information with partners and ensure that those who have been subject to CSE, and those at risk of CSE, are receiving the right support.
11. The document describes factors associated with CE (which includes CSE) as:
  - Running away/going missing
  - Coercion/control
  - Contacts with abusive persons and/or risky environments
  - Substance misuse
  - Education
  - Use of social media/technology
  - Emotional & physical health and sexual health
  - Accommodation and family relationships
  - Offending/criminal activity
  - Community/social isolation factors

12. The CE threshold guidance has four levels of need. For each of the above factors the guidance sets out the relevant signs and behaviours for each of these levels of risk:

**Universal** - a child or young person's needs are adequately met by universal services and no additional support is required.

**Vulnerable** - children and young people defined as needing some additional support as there are early indicators of potential exploitation. Without support, these issues may develop into more worrying concerns. An Early Help Assessment may be undertaken to identify need and the support required to be undertaken by a single agency.

**Complex** - the child or young person remains vulnerable to exploitation. They are potentially at risk of developing acute/ complex needs if they do not receive targeted intervention. A multi-agency response will be provided.

**Acute** - exploitation is known or suspected and there are urgent and immediate safeguarding concerns for the child or young person. A multi-agency response will be provided, informed by specialist assessments.

13. The threshold document sets out the concept of significant harm and how harm should be understood and managed. In the context of CSE and CE, the guidance sets out how harm outside the home should be assessed through 'contextual safeguarding'.
14. When an agency or practitioner has safeguarding concerns about a child or young person, they assess the information known to them to identify the level of risk and harm. Where the risk is assessed as 'complex' or 'acute' then this information is shared with Family Connect. As well as practitioners from partner organisations, members of the public, family and friends share safeguarding concerns with Family Connect.

#### Family Connect

15. Family Connect is the Safeguarding Children Board's Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (known as the MASH) comprising qualified professionals from the Council, NHS (including mental health services, hospitals and '0 to 19' services), West Mercia Police, Youth Justice, Probation, education, Wrekin Housing Group and the Local Authority Designated Officer (responsible for managing allegations against adults who work with children). They work to build a picture of a child or young person's safeguarding risk. This is developed from the information that comes directly to Family Connect and their own organisation's information systems. This picture is screened by qualified social workers to identify what immediate action should be taken to safeguard the child or young person.

### Child Abused Through Exploitation (CATE)

16. The Council's CATE team and 'CATE pathway' are a core part of the Safeguarding Children Board's response to CSE and CE more widely. Research has established that, using traditional safeguarding procedures which sees children being identified as children in need or placed on a child protection plan, is not always the most effective approach to support young people at risk of / suffering from exploitation. To address this, the Council's Child Exploitation Care & Support Pathway is a process for safeguarding children underpinned by a contextual safeguarding approach to understand and respond to children and young people's experience of significant harm beyond their family and outside the family home.
17. The Council's CATE Team, alongside the local Child Exploitation Police Team from West Mercia Police, take a central position within this pathway. For the children and young people where it is not appropriate for them to be supported solely by this pathway, they also receive support by statutory children's safeguarding services ensuring that they continue to receive specialised CATE team support.

### CSE Contacts into Family Connect

18. Since publication of the 2023 baseline report changes have been made to better support those who make referrals to Family Connect with concerns about CSE to improve the quality and appropriateness of those referrals and to enhance understanding of the indicators of CSE and the threshold guidance. These actions are:
  - **Review of the CATE pathway** - since an initial review in line with IITCSE Recommendation 10, the CATE Pathway has been further reviewed. Lived experience consultees played a fundamental role in challenging the Council's processes and testing the thinking around what the documents said versus what the Council did in practice. This work has led to the production of a suite of documents which set out when a child might be supported through the CATE team. It was also updated to reflect those changes brought about by other recommendations, such as the introduction of the adulthood transition meeting (known as the post-17 transition meeting) required by IITCSE Recommendation 11.
  - **Development of 'Explore More' document** – this was coproduced with lived experience consultees and practitioners. The document which addresses the potential indicators of CSE and provides wider context around the questions that practitioners can ask when receiving details of concerns about CSE to help ensure that any decisions are based upon all relevant information available at the time of referral. The Explore More is used by a wide range of people, e.g. school professionals and health professionals to enable them, when making a referral, to better articulate factors that have led to concerns about CSE.

- **Introduction of weekly consultation sessions with the CATE team to support practitioners with concerns over CSE** – these consultation meetings were established to develop practitioners’ understanding and knowledge of CSE and the CATE pathway, to drive improvement in the quality, appropriateness and outcome of CSE referrals.
  - **Introduction of anonymous referrals through an online referral form (IITCSE Recommendation 21)** – for many different reasons, an individual may not wish to provide their personal details when making a referral to Family Connect about CSE. Recommendation 21 of the IITCSE report called for the implementation of a fully anonymous online child exploitation referral reform to Family Connect. This has been implemented (<https://webforms.telford.gov.uk/form/489>) .
19. In 2023/24 there were 115 contacts about 94 children to Family Connect where CSE was reported to be a concern. This compared with an annual average of 185 contacts about 133 children across the three years of the baseline report. CSE contacts into Family Connect accounted for 1.2% of all contacts in 2023/24 compared to 1.4% in the 2023 baseline report.
  20. The data indicates that the measures described above to improve the quality of the information recorded through contacts have had impact as the ratio of contacts per child during 2023/24 was 1.2 compared to 1.4 in the baseline report. The improved quality of information provided to Family Connect has enabled better-informed decision making.
  21. In 2023/24, the Police made 42 contacts (37% of all contacts). The Council made 31 contacts (27%), schools/colleges 21 contacts (18%), NHS made 6 contacts (5%), there were 5 anonymous referrals (4%), 6 ‘individual’ contacts (5%) and 4 contacts from other agencies (3%). The proportion of contacts by the different agencies do not represent any significant change from the baseline report.
  22. Following initial screening by qualified social workers in Family Connect, the outcomes for the 115 contacts were (with figures in brackets being the average rates from the 2023 baseline report):
    - 47 or 41% (55%) of contacts were referred to another agency for early help. This support is given to a family when a problem first emerges to avoid concerns escalating, with the objective to quickly improve outcomes for the child or young person. The support provided can take many forms and might include home visiting programmes, school-based programmes and mentoring schemes. For example, a school has identified concern around a child not adhering to agreed boundaries with parents, coming home late and peer group association. This case would be referred to the Council’s Strengthening Families service for support around risks to safety and wellbeing. The Strengthening Families service will also provide support to parents.

- 14 or 11% (13%) of CSE contacts were provided with information, advice and support. This occurs when the risk of CSE is deemed to be very small. For example, a parent contacts Family Connect as they are concerned about their child's online safety and want to know how best to monitor usage and broach the issue with their child. The parent would be provided with relevant information and advice and with links to appropriate websites.
  - 54 or 47% (32%) of the contacts met the threshold for referral to CATE and/or traditional statutory safeguarding. This happens when the child who is the subject of the contact is deemed to be at significant risk of becoming a victim of CSE. For example, the child has been contacted by adults online or in person and the content of messages makes clear that the child is being targeted for grooming. In such a case, the contact is referred to CATE and/or statutory safeguarding for additional detailed assessment and allocation. This second assessment process is a very detailed analysis of the context of the referral and the child's family dynamics to ensure that the most appropriate support is provided to them.
23. Compared to the 2023 baseline report, the outcomes of CSE contacts in 2023/4 were different. Primarily, that there were more children referred to CATE (47% vs 32%) and fewer to early help (41% to 55%). That more cases were referred to CATE is symptomatic of improved quality to the information contained in referrals as a result of the process changes described in paragraph 18 of this report enabling practitioners to have a more holistic view of the child's circumstances.
24. Following this process, 34 children or young people were 'opened' to CATE and/or statutory safeguarding services because of concerns about CSE.
25. The outcome of the other children and young people that were referred to CATE and/or safeguarding by Family Connect following detailed assessment were:
- 4 were referred to another agency for single agency early help support.
  - CSE was not found to be a factor for 3 children, and the following support was provided:
    - 2 were referred to another agency for early help;
    - 1 was provided with support from statutory safeguarding services.
  - Following Child & Family assessment where CSE was a factor, 1 was referred to early help for support.

#### Children and Young People Receiving Support from CATE for CSE

26. As part of this year's review, detailed qualitative case analysis was undertaken by senior managers in the CATE and Safeguarding Service to identify which of the 34 children were a victim of CSE and those whom were at risk of becoming a victim of CSE. This analysis was based upon the definition used by the

Inquiry Chair to describe CSE. It found that 6 met the definition and 28 were at risk of becoming a victim of CSE.

27. The baseline report found that, across the three years, there was an average of 12 new confirmed cases of CSE each year and an average of 13 cases that were at risk of becoming a victim of CSE. In comparison in 2023/24, there were fewer (6) confirmed cases of CSE and more children and young people (28) at risk of CSE. This initial analysis suggests that children and young people at risk of CSE are being identified earlier and with better information shared at referral are receiving the support that they need to safeguard and support them. This will continue to be monitored with a particular focus on re-referrals.
28. Although the number of CSE contacts into Family Connect was slightly lower in 2023/24 compared to the annual average in the 2023 baseline report, as described, the number of new CSE cases opened to CATE were higher than any of the three years in the baseline report. This demonstrates the effectiveness of the new arrangements that have been put in place to support the reporting of concerns about CSE into Family Connect and this will be monitored closely moving forward.
29. The characteristics of **all** children and young people receiving safeguarding support from CATE because of CSE in 2023/24 is presented below. There are 80 children in this cohort as nearly all children and young people receive safeguarding support from CATE do so for more than 12 months.
30. Seventy one of the 80 children and young people receiving support were female. At 89%, this compares with 98% from the 2023/24 baseline report, highlighting that **both** males and females are at risk of CSE.
31. The average age of these children and young people was 15, the same as the 2023 baseline report.
32. Sixty five of these children and young people were 'White British' (81%) with a further 5 'Other White' (6%). A further 6 (8%) were of a 'Mixed' ethnicity, 3 were Black (4%) and 1 was from an 'Other' ethnicity (1%). This ethnicity profile broadly mirrors the baseline report findings and is reflects the borough's 10-to-17-year-old ethnicity profile.
33. Eleven children and young people had an Education, Health and Care Plan ('EHCP') (14% compared with 3.9% borough-wide) and 31 were in receipt of SEN support (41% compared with 15% borough-wide). SEND covers a wide variety of need and, broadly, can be categorised as social, emotional and mental health, communication and interaction, cognitive and learning and sensory and physical difficulties. A multi-agency case file audit has been carried out to aid better understanding of the way in which we can support children and young people with SEN and are at risk of CSE. This includes integration between the CATE team, Strengthening Families and SEND team, specialist training for schools' staff curriculum adaptations around healthy and appropriate relationships involving SEND pupils, and raising parent awareness.

34. Thirty-eight (48%) had persistent absence from education (attendance <90% and >50%), 14 (17%) had severe absence (<50% attendance), and 25 (31%) had satisfactory attendance. In comparison with the 2023 baseline report, there was a smaller proportion of children with severe absence (26% 2023 baseline report) and more with satisfactory attendance (26% in the 2023 baseline report). Compared with attendance in all secondary schools within the borough, school attendance of those children and young people that have been in receipt of safeguarding support from CATE because of CSE was noticeably lower.
35. Support for pupils with absences may be in the form of early help or more targeted support which can take a variety of forms, including working with other agencies, consideration of an adapted timetable to support a return to school or referral to a local authority alternative provision or targeted work with the child, their family members, care-givers, and the school.
36. There were 25 missing episodes<sup>2</sup> recorded against 9 children and young people, all of which were eligible for a return home interview. Return home interviews are undertaken to help identify any support that children and young people might need to help keep them safe. All received an interview with 96% completed in timescale (3 days) – an improvement on 91% from the 2023 baselines report. Reasons why return home interviews are not completed within the 3-day target include there being back-to-back missing episodes or when episodes occur over a bank holiday period.
37. Of the children and young people open to CATE, just over half, 41 (51%), had also been open to statutory safeguarding based on presenting needs in comparison to 59% in the 2023 baseline report. This is an important element of the CATE pathway model; a child or young person can receive specialist support from CATE and statutory safeguarding services to ensure that all children and young people are given all appropriate support and are safeguarded based on their needs.

#### West Mercia Police Criminal Justice Data

38. As part of the development of this report, details of **all** CSE cases open to CATE in 2023/24 were shared between Telford & Wrekin Council and West Mercia Police analysts to:
  - ensure that all relevant cases were known to the Police and that relevant investigations were undertaken and their outcome;
  - identify and profile suspects; and,
  - identify the location of criminal activity.
39. Following analysis, it was confirmed that all children and young people who were open to CATE for safeguarding support because of CSE were known to the West Mercia Police Child Exploitation Team in line with multi-agency safeguarding procedures. Similarly, all children known to the West Mercia Police Child Exploitation Team were known to the Council. Not all children

---

<sup>2</sup> A child reported as 'missing' to the Police by their family or carers.

known to the West Mercia Police Child Exploitation Team are at risk or a victim of CSE because a number are Child Criminal Exploitation Cases.

40. The West Mercia Police data showed that of the children open to CATE that were a confirmed victim of CSE, 80 crimes were investigated, relating to sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and / or sexual assault to the Police.
41. Against these 80 crimes, 45 suspects were identified. Analysis of these crimes has found that, to date, 8% had led to a charge, summons or a postal requisition (summons issued via post). This compares to 2% in the baseline report. The two main reasons why cases weren't pursued were:
  - 28% were halted because the victim no longer felt able to proceed; and,
  - 18% were halted because of evidential difficulties.

### CSE Suspect profile

42. Analysis of the demographic characteristics of the 45 suspects, found that the 2023/24 suspect cohort was different to the 2023 baseline report suspect profile in that, overall, the cohort was older, and more ethnically diverse. These differences illustrate that perpetrators of CSE can and do come from any background or community.
  - In terms of gender, 44 (98%) of the suspects were male and 1 (2%) was female. The 2023 baseline report found that 89% of suspects were male with 11% female.
  - In terms of age, this cohort of suspects was 'older' than the baseline report cohort. 30 suspects (67%) were aged 24 to 34 years. This compares with 34% for this age group from the 2023 baseline report. Eleven of the suspects (24%) profile were aged under 18, compared to 54% in the baseline report. Four (9%) suspects were aged 35 older.
  - Where ethnicity was identified, 18 (47%) of the suspects were 'White', 11 (28%) 'Black Caribbean', 5 (13%) 'Black Other', 2 (5%) 'Other Asian', 1 (3%) 'Indian' and 1 'Pakistani' and 1 'White and Black African'. In the 2023 baseline report, at 83%, there was a higher proportion of suspects that were 'White'.

### NRM Referrals

43. The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a framework for identifying and referring potential victims of modern slavery and ensuring they receive the appropriate support. Modern slavery is complex and may involve multiple forms of exploitation.
44. In 2023/24 the Council adopted a new policy to NRM referrals such that any child that is open to CATE has an NRM referral made. This change was in recognition that if a child has an open CATE case, then, they are *at risk* of modern slavery which is the essential criteria for a referral to the NRM.

45. As a result of the introduction of this new policy, there has been a significant increase in the number of NRM referrals made by the Council and across 2023 and 2024 (to June) there were 60 referrals compared.

#### Early Help Provision by Schools & Colleges

46. A key response to tackling CSE, is the early identification of those children and young people who are more likely be at risk of CSE so that they can be supported through early help. Schools and colleges are core to this early identification and leading the provision of early help support where there the risk to the child or young person is assessed as low.
47. The work to collate the information from schools and colleges on those children and young people who are low risk is led by the 24 organisations in the CSE Lead network. Across 2023/24, they identified a total of 182 children and young people who were assessed as being at low risk to CSE.
48. For each child or young person that was assessed as low risk to CSE, the school or college identified and recorded the CSE risk indicators. Most children and young people had multiple risk indicators. The three most stated indicators were 'contact with risky environment/person' for 137 (75%) children and young people, 'emotional and physical health' 96 (53%) children and young people, and 'lack of engagement with education' 82 (38%) children and young people.
49. The key characteristics of the 182 children and young people identified by secondary schools and colleges as low risk were:
- 125 (69%) of these children and young people were female and 56 (31%) male – there were proportionately more females in this cohort than in the baseline report (59% female).
  - The average age was 15.5 years – older than the average age (14) of the baseline report.
  - 162 (86%) of the children and young people were 'White', 9 (5%) were 'Other Mixed', 5 (3%) 'Asian' and 4 (2%) 'Black British, Caribbean or African'. This is broadly comparable with the ethnicity profile of the borough's 10 to 17-year-olds.
  - With regard to SEND 14 (8%) of this cohort had an EHCP plan (compared to 3.9% borough wide) and 65 (36%) had SEN support compared to the borough-wide rate of 15%. In comparison to the 2023 baseline report this represents an increase of 8%-points in the proportion that are in receipt of SEN support. A multi-agency case file audit has been carried out to aid better understanding of the way in which we can support children and young people with SEND and also at risk of CSE. This includes integration between the CATE team, Strengthening Families and SEND team, specialise training for school staff, curriculum adaptations about healthy and appropriate relationships involving SEND pupils and raising parents' awareness.

- Of this 182 children and young people, thirty-two of children and young people (18%) were not receiving an education. Of those that were receiving an education, 35 (23%) had satisfactory attendance. Ninety nine had persistent absence (66%) and 15 (10%) had severe absence. Support for pupils with absences may be in the form of early help or more targeted support which can take a variety of forms, including working with other agencies, consideration of an adapted timetable to support a return to school or referral to a local authority student engagement programme or targeted work with the child, their family members, care-givers, and the school.

#### Incident location

- A quarter (25%) of the identified incidents took place online. Excluding those online, the location of an additional 69 cases was described. These locations covered a very broad mix of spaces and locations across the borough. This information has been shared through the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership and CSE lead network.

#### Early Help

50. As these children and young people were identified as a low risk to CSE, they were all offered support by their secondary school or college, and/or from other agencies. Which organisation provided that support was based on the child or young person's specific needs. The majority of these children and young people, 133 (73%) were offered support from the education setting at which they were a learner, 72 received support from Police & Community Support Officers who work with schools and colleges to tackle exploitation, and 46 received support from mental health services.

#### Next Steps

51. The annual report enables partners to better understand CSE in the borough, how their practitioners are engaging with the issue, and whether the correct information is being shared between partners.
52. In response to this, investment has been made to enhance the information that is provided to the Safeguarding Children Partnership CSE and CE subgroup. Through automation, this will mean that the core information about CSE contacts including demographics and 'outcome', details on CATE cases, crimes recorded with a CSE marker, information about the 'vulnerable' cases that education settings identify and NRM referrals. This is a multi-agency meeting and as such will ensure that all partner agencies are sighted on this information regularly and can respond appropriately to the issues that this dataset will identify.

### **Recommendation 2.3: Staffing Workloads Telford & Wrekin Council CATE & West Mercia Police CE team**

53. For information on Telford & Wrekin Council CATE team workload please see paragraph 94.

#### West Mercia Police Child Exploitation Team

54. The structure of the team is currently:

- A Detective Inspector
- Two Detective Sergeants
- Eight Detective Constables – with four reporting to each of the two Detective Sergeants.
- A CE coordinator
- A Child Exploitation Analyst

55. As at March 2024, the team were undertaking 27 investigations and held a case load of 21 children.

### ***Recommendation 2.6: Details of steps taken in relation to CSE training and awareness campaigns***

*And*

**Recommendation 42 calls for a review of CSE training delivered to NHS providers and practitioners (see further information under Recommendation 2.9).**

#### Training

56. The 2023 baseline report presented an overview of a range of training courses and online modules that addressed CSE which were delivered to employees of the three statutory partners. In reviewing this material, the lived experience consultees developed a training package that set out what CSE is, the behaviours and risk factors, and the action which should be taken when a child or young person was identified who was at risk of CSE. It was agreed that the content of this package was the minimum level of knowledge that all staff across the three statutory partners should have and as such, would ensure consistency in the understanding of and response to CSE. It is important to emphasise that this training is a minimum, and that depending on role, practitioners will continue to receive other relevant CSE training of an appropriate level.

57. The core training package has been developed into an online e-learning module which has been rolled out across the Council and NHS providers through the Integrated Care Board. Within the Council, 97% of employees have completed the learning. For the NHS, 79% of the NHS Shropshire Telford & Wrekin Integrate Care Board have completed the training. 95% at the Shrewsbury & Telford Hospital NHS Trust, 27% at the Midlands Foundation

University NHS Foundation Trust and 74% at the Robert Jones and Agnes Hunt Orthopaedic Hospital.

58. In addition to this core module training, the Council and ICB have commissioned the lived experience consultees to deliver 'impact training' about CSE and modern slavery to key groups of staff. For the NHS this includes sexual health staff, school nurses, safeguarding teams, midwives, and GPs. For the Council these sessions have included the Senior Management Team, children social workers, the CATE team, and relevant front-line teams including the Council's contact centre, licensing and enforcement teams, housing and adult social care.
59. West Mercia Police have commissioned NWG Network, a charity that is focused on tackling child exploitation through working with organisations and parents and carers to deliver appropriate training on CSE in the context of modern slavery that includes the core training described above. Roll-out of this face-to-face training to all Police officers and relevant civilian staff has commenced and is initially prioritising Safer Neighbourhood Teams who work out in the community.

#### Schools and Education Settings

60. As described above, the Council has worked with the lived experience consultees to develop core content for CSE awareness raising. This has been used to train Designated Safeguarding Leads in schools ('DSLs') and CSE Leads (known as CSE DSLs) to deliver awareness raising to staff and parents.
61. All CSE DSLs have received training from the lived experience consultees on the indicators of CSE.
62. The Council are undertaking a piece of work with the NSPCC to provide further training to equip teachers further with the knowledge and skills to deliver the statutory curriculum. The start of this work has been providing training on the teaching of the NSPCC PANTS rule to early years, KS1 and KS2 and SEND pupils. This is as a result of analysis of the curriculum in schools and colleges and identifying where there was scope to strengthen both curriculum for children with SEND and for pupils in years five and six.
63. The Education Safeguarding Team on behalf of the Telford & Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership undertake cyclical and risk led safeguarding audit visits to all schools and colleges in the borough. As part of these visits, officers are testing out staff awareness of CSE, the impact of the curriculum in raising pupils and students' awareness of CSE. The officers are also monitoring the delivery of schools and colleges CSE awareness raising for parents.
64. The Education Safeguarding Team, who deliver a range of child protection and safeguarding training to schools and colleges, have updated their training materials, specifically raising awareness of child protection and safeguarding training. This is to include the core content CSE awareness materials to help to

continually raise the awareness of CSE with staff working in schools and colleges.

65. The Education Safeguarding Team have met with the lived experience consultees regularly, including to obtain their further views on the steps taken. This has helped to shape the content that should be used in schools and colleges to raise awareness of CSE with staff and parents. The approach taken by schools and colleges to raise pupils and students' awareness of CSE through the curriculum and using the NSPCC curriculum resources has been shared with the ILECS.
66. The Education Safeguarding Team on behalf of the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership will continue to undertake cyclical and risk led safeguarding audit visits to all schools and colleges in the borough. Officers will, through these visits, continue to monitor the impact of schools and colleges delivery of awareness raising to staff, parents and pupils and address any deficiencies.
67. The Education Safeguarding Team along with the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Partnership will continue to provide advice, guidance and training to school and college leaders, DSLs and CSE Leads with regards to CSE awareness raising with staff, parents and pupils. This will include ongoing work with the NSPCC which plans to focus on the curriculum for pupils at secondary schools and students attending college.

#### Awareness Campaigns

68. A key development in 2024 has been the creation and delivery of the 'Seen Something, Say Something' campaign focussed on raising awareness of the signs and behaviours associated with CSE and what action should be taken in response. This campaign was designed in consultation with the lived experience consultees to ensure that the content and material was relevant and appropriate. This was launched in March 2024 as part of national CSE Week. Core to this campaign is the message that any child and young person could become a victim of CSE and we all have a responsibility to say something if we have concerns about a child or young person being sexually exploited.
69. The campaign includes an ongoing social media campaign, articles in Totally Telford, advertising on buses and on street billboards, all of which signpost to the SaySomethingTelford.co.uk website. Since the start of the campaign, there have been over 2,000 visits to the website.
70. The website describes the signs and behaviours associated with CSE and provides details of how to either contact the Police via 999 if the child or young person is in immediate danger or how to contact Family Connect, the Council's multi-agency safeguarding hub which co-ordinates action to safeguard children (see part 1 of this report). If a person has concerns about a child or young person and wants to make a report to Family Connect anonymously, the process on the Council's website to do this has been streamlined to make this

as straightforward as possible. A link is provided on the SaySomethingTelford.co.uk website.

**Recommendation 2.7: Details of PCC funded resources and initiatives and Recommendation 40. PCC to commit to continued funding of CSE initiatives: Taxi Marshall scheme and Street Pastors.**

71. In addition to the direct funding of CSE initiatives and projects by the WMPCC, for the past four years, the WMPCC has made available funding against which the Telford & Wrekin Community Safety Partnership has bid. The Community Safety Partnership brings together representatives from the Council, NHS, Police, Probation, Youth Justice to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. Through this bidding process, WMPCC funding has been secured to support two key schemes focussed on the night-time economy to protect the welfare of adults as they leave licensed premises. These are:
72. Taxi Marshalls - an essential part of keeping people safe within the night-time economy, especially when leaving the area and looking for taxis. The Taxi Marshalls play a vital role in supporting the Street Pastors in the early intervention of potential incidents. The Taxi Marshalls also support our local approach in managing touting & 'plying for hire'. Main Activities include:
  - Controlling, supervising & segregation of passengers & vehicles;
  - Effective dispersal of night time economy users;
  - Prevention of disorder;
  - Ensuring a safety of vulnerable and lone adults;
  - Assisting the taxi trade to ensure lawful use of their vehicles; and,
  - Promotes good partnership working and best use of resources.
73. Street Pastors - volunteers who work with the police to help keep those enjoying a night out safe, whether that be providing water, a pair of flip flops or even a chat and making sure people can get home safe.
74. Crucial Crew is a multi-agency partnership event aimed at Year 6 students (10/11yrs) designed to provide them with life skills and knowledge, that will in the future help to keep themselves and others safe. The outcomes below have been identified by the Crucial Crew Steering Group (multi-agency) to enable young people to have opportunities to:
  - Become more aware of personal and peer safety;
  - Learn how to react to potentially dangerous situations;
  - Make a positive contribution to local communities; and,
  - Identify actions to reduce the risk of becoming victims of crime.
75. At its March 2023 meeting, the Telford & Wrekin Community Safety Partnership committed to fund these projects whilst the PCC continued to make funds available against which the Partnership can bid.

76. The PCC has provided funding for the following services from the PCC commissioning budget:
- West Mercia Rape and Sexual Assault Centre ‘the Branch Project’: to provide education, intervention and support to children and young people (CYP) who are at risk of or have been a victim of CSE.
  - Appointment of a Child Independent Sexual Violence Adviser Service (ChISVA)
  - Paediatric SARC to the West Midlands Paediatric Sexual Assault Service (SARC) (renamed NHS England Sexual Assault and Referral Service (SARS) which is a region-wide service providing expert care for children and young people who have disclosed sexual assault, or who may have been subject to sexual abuse.
  - AXIS To fund 1 additional Counsellor to reduce the waiting list.
  - The Commissioner is committed to establishing a new Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) in Shropshire, Telford, and Wrekin. During 2023/24, some Phase 1 work occurred in the current building to make minor improvements. There is a long-term plan for Phase 2, which will involve creating an acute medical examination room that complies with Forensic Science Regulations ISO-15189, along with non-acute medical facilities in a trauma-informed environment. Work is expected to start on the development of the new facility in 2025, funding has been sourced from the NHS and the commissioner’s capital investment budget.
77. The total investment from the West Mercia PCC in the above initiatives and services is £1.9m.
78. In 2023/24, the PCC commissioned a West Mercia Wide Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Needs Assessment. The objectives of the assessment were to shape and inform the future commissioning of services and prevention of CSE. This involved considering the statutory responsibilities of health, social care, criminal justice, and local authorities, including possible co-commissioning opportunities. A service specification is currently being developed to provide a West Mercia-wide service that considers local needs and is responsive to the continually changing landscape of child sexual exploitation.

**Recommendation 2.9: Updates as to work undertaken to improve relevant services to children within the health and education sectors**

79. As reported by Tom Crowther KC in his July 2024 report which assessed progress to implement the 47 recommendations of his July 2022 IITCSE report, significant progress has been made to address the challenges which he identified. A summary of these recommendations relating to the health and education sectors are set out below.

## Education

*Recommendation 32 All schools and colleges to review and refresh training around CSE.*

80. The Council has worked with the lived experience consultees to develop core content for CSE awareness raising. This has been used to train DSLs and CSE DSLs to deliver awareness raising to staff and parents.
81. The Education CSE Lead Implementation Officer has worked with the Severn Teaching Schools Alliance to provide training to all head teachers of nursery, infant, junior and primary schools on how to deliver the statutory curriculum to pupils in an age appropriate to help to further raise their awareness of CSE. The Education CSE Lead Implementation Officer has also provided awareness raising to secondary school and college leaders and CSE leads on the delivery of the statutory curriculum to pupils and students to further raise their awareness of CSE. This has been through curriculum mapping.

*Recommendation 33 All secondary Schools and colleges to appoint a CSE Lead.*

82. All appropriate schools and colleges have appointed a CSE Lead.

*Recommendation 34: Schools to review CPOMS policy and systems for information sharing.*

83. All schools have appropriate policies that cover their use of CPOMs.

*Recommendation 35: Schools and Colleges to carry out an annual review of site security.*

84. All schools and colleges have completed this review, and all necessary action has been taken in response to the findings which are tracked by the Education Safeguarding Team.

## Health

*Recommendation 42: Quality of CSE training delivered to NHS providers and practitioners.*

85. All training has been reviewed and through work with the lived experience consultees a core training package has been mandated across relevant NHS providers.

*Recommendation 43: Improvements to trauma-related mental health services for victims and survivors of CSE in Telford & Wrekin.*

86. Working with the Council, trauma related services have been recommissioned to ensure that the necessary therapeutic support services are in place. This links to Recommendation 18.

*Recommendation 46: GPs in Telford & Wrekin to be consulted about CSE data collection.*

87. As a result of engagement with GPs, a standard operating system has been implemented to enable CSE markers to be applied to GP records. This process has been developed in consultation with the lived experience consultees.

*Recommendation 47: GPs to implement review system for children moving to a different practice.*

88. The issue of needing a consistent approach to alerting a new practice if a child or young person transfers their care and are at risk of CSE has been shared with NHS England as well as the regional GP forum who have given support for this issue to be presented to the national safeguarding GP forum. The aim is to ensure there is a coding system in place to alert the new practice so they can offer the appropriate support from registration.
89. This has also been raised with NHS Digital and work is underway to ascertain how this may be part of the Child Protection-Information Sharing phases, and links are also being made to understand if this could link with the updated summary care record.

**Recommendation 2.10 A summary of any complaints received by any of the member authorities regarding the handling of a CSE matter. Each member organisation should publish a copy of the report on its website.**

#### Telford & Wrekin Council

90. For the purposes of transparency, in 2023/24 the Council received two complaints where CSE was mentioned as part of the complainant's submission, however, in both cases there were no elements of the complaint that directly related to CSE.

#### West Mercia Police

91. Following a keyword search of the professional standards system, for CSE, Hydrant (the name given to a police operation around CSE) and Exploit, 4 complaints were identified in 2023/24. The detail and outcome of these were:
- Dissatisfaction with the service received from West Mercia Police in regards to the actions of a police staff member in the handling of a VRR case involving the complainant. Outcome: the service was deemed acceptable.
  - Dissatisfaction with the service received from West Mercia Police in regards to the police response to the complainant's report of a missing person (child) at risk of CSE. Outcome: resolved.

- Complaint regarding the conduct of officers. The inactions include but are not limited to, no protective measure was put in place and no follow up on the concerning activities of the individuals involved the child at risk of CSE. Outcome: resolved.
- Dissatisfaction with the service received from West Mercia Police in regards to the handling of an incident by the office in charge in a CSE investigation. Outcome: resolved.

#### NHS Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin

92. No complaints have been made to any provider Trust within Shropshire, Telford & Wrekin ICB in relation to the handling of a matter relating to CSE.

#### **Recommendation 7. Ring-fencing of CATE Team resource and Recommendation 2.3 Staffing Workloads Telford & Wrekin Council CATE & West Mercia Police CE team**

93. Alongside calling for the Council to commit to the continued existence of the CATE Team within Telford at no less than its current strength in both numbers and budget (adjusted for inflation), for a period of no fewer than five years from the date of publication of the IITCSE report, this recommendation stipulates that the Council should publish information regarding the resourcing and workloads of the CATE Team as part of this report.

94. The current structure of the team is:

- 10 CATE workers (case holder)
- 1 Social worker (case holder)
- 1 Team Leader (case holder)
- 1 Group Manager

95. As to creating a benchmark for the current strength and workloads of the CATE team, the baseline has been taken as July 2022 when the IITCSE report was published.

96. In developing a baseline for the CATE team, an assessment of all cases held by the team has been undertaken and not just CSE cases. Processes have been put in place to monitor monthly the caseloads of the CATE workers by the Director: Children's Safeguarding and Family Support.

97. As of July 2022 the average caseload for CATE workers was 8.0 and in March 2024 7.3.

#### **Recommendation 18: Council to review annually all CSE therapeutic support services**

98. Following the recommendations of a review of CSE therapeutic support services completed in 2023, (see 2023 baseline report), three providers were

commissioned to provide support: the Holly Project, Base 25 and Axis. To further supplement support this support, the services of the Children's Society and Ivision Trust are promoted.

99. The framework provides support for victims / survivors as children, when transitioning to adulthood and ongoing support for victims / survivors in adulthood. Direct referrals can be made to the services – with their information published on the Council's webpage [Support for victims and their families - Telford & Wrekin Council](#).
100. Use of the service is monitored to provide an understanding of the level of need and the support that is required. Across the three commissioned providers there have been 28 referrals and 231 support sessions offered.

**Recommendation 26.1 The Council should publish annually, as part of the 'Joint CSE Review Group's' Annual Report, a taxi licensing review.**

101. It is estimated that there are around 900 taxis operating in Telford & Wrekin, of which around a third are licensed by Telford & Wrekin Council with the remainder licensed by other authorities In 2023/24 the Council received 46 complaints about the taxi drivers:
- 13 related to drivers licensed with Telford & Wrekin Council
  - 11 were about drivers licensed with other local authorities
  - 7 referred to other regulator/ taxi operator as no breach of licence conditions/ legislation
  - 15 were not investigated due to either insufficient information or because the complainant did not want to take any further action.
102. Under the Taxi and Private Hire Vehicles (Safeguarding and Road Safety) Act 2022, there is a duty on a licensing service from 31 May 2022 to refer to the relevant licensing authority and action complaints about taxi drivers in a specified time which relate to safeguarding or road safety matters. This covers relevant information indicating that a person has committed a sexual offence (regardless of whether the person was charged with, prosecuted for or convicted of the offence). All complaints referred to other authorities are followed-up by Telford & Wrekin Council Licensing team for a response on the outcome of the complaint.
103. On conclusion of a complaint, the Council can take the following actions:
- For a new or renewal application, the authority can refuse to grant a licence or put conditions / time limits on a licence.
  - Once licensed the council can suspend a licence, issue warnings, retrain drivers and revoke a licence.
104. The actions taken against complaints in 2023/24 were:
- 2 had their licence refused as they were not compliant with taxi policy;
  - 2 had their licence revoked;

- 2 received a warning due breach of licence conditions;
- 4 had their licence suspended; and,
- 2 were mandated additional training.

### Licensing Enforcement Activity

105. In 2023/ 24 the Council's licensing team carried out 14 multi-agency taxi licensing enforcement exercises. This included:
- 4 'plying for hire' exercises to identify whether or not mini cab drivers are complying with their licensing terms which forbid them from picking-up passengers without a pre-booked journey;
  - 10 vehicle stop checks to ensure that vehicles are safe; and
  - 12 checks on designated taxi ranks.
106. On all operations both the driver and vehicle are checked to ensure compliance with their licensing conditions. These include checks on the driver's identity against their licence. This has not identified any concerns about badge swapping, although advice and warnings have been given to drivers not wearing their badge in accordance with their licence conditions.
107. In addition to this activity, the Taxi Marshals carry out identity checks on all taxis picking up passengers when they are carrying out their duties in the night-time economy.