



Borough of Telford and Wrekin

Full Council

Thursday 13 November 2025

Annual CSE Report

Cabinet Member:	Cllr Lee Carter – Leader of the Council Cllr Shirley Reynolds – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People, Education, Employment & Skills
Lead Director:	Anthea Lowe - Director: Policy & Governance
Service Area:	Policy & Governance
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Wards Affected:	All Wards
Key Decision:	Not Key Decision
Forward Plan:	Not Applicable

1.0 Recommendations for decision/noting:

Full Council is asked to:

- 1.1 Restate its commitment to continue its work, through co-production with lived experience consultees and partners as appropriate, to respond to the challenge of CSE within our Borough;
- 1.2 Note the Annual Report in respect of 2024/25 attached at **Appendix A**;
- 1.3 Note the continued steps taken by Telford & Wrekin Council, being the first in the country to publish an annual report of this nature, to raise awareness of CSE;
- 1.4 Note the continued commitment of Telford & Wrekin Council, as set out in the Annual Report, to maintain the specialist team of practitioners to provide support to children and young people at risk of CSE, being one of only a small number of authorities nationally to have such a dedicated team;
- 1.5 Note that the approach of Telford & Wrekin Council has received national recognition and that the recommendations made by Baroness Casey have adopted the actions taken by the Council to be implemented at a national level;

- 1.6 Note that Telford & Wrekin Council is one of 8 local authorities chosen to pilot a new approach to the National Referral Mechanism, a process by which individuals at risk of modern slavery are provided with comprehensive support; and
- 1.7 Note the work the Council is doing to share learning within the local government sector.

2.0 Purpose of Report

- 2.1 The purpose of this report is to provide Members with the Annual CSE Report 2024/25 which is built upon data from the Council and partner organisations. The Annual Report provides all statutory safeguarding organisations and other stakeholders with data and information that allows for continuous challenge of our procedures and practices.

3.0 Background Information

- 3.1 In 2018, the Council commissioned an independent inquiry, chaired by a former judge, Tom Crowther KC, into CSE within Telford. The Chair published his report in July 2022 in which he made 47 recommendations (comprising 148 actions) across the Council, West Mercia Police, the NHS and West Mercia Police & Crime Commissioner.
- 3.2 Immediately upon publication of the report, the Council accepted all of the recommendations and two days later confirmed that it would be working with individuals with lived experience of CSE. These individuals are also professionals working in the field of CSE, modern slavery and human trafficking.
- 3.3 Within the initial report published by the Tom Crowther KC, several of the recommendations related to the preparation of an annual report. This report is prepared jointly by partners; the Council, West Mercia Police and NHS and also involves input from schools. The report in respect of 2024/25 is attached at Appendix A.
- 3.4 Telford & Wrekin Council is the only local authority that carries out work of this nature and publishes it in this way. That being the case, it is not possible to undertake any sort of benchmarking in respect of CSE data. Officers are very clear that this work on the CSE data has proved invaluable in getting a breadth and depth of understanding of CSE in the borough based upon clear evidence. It

has enabled the Council to adapt its approach to ensure resources are targeted to those areas where it is shown they are needed most. The Council, and its officers, are of the view that the benefit that this work brings is such that every authority should be required to take similar action and it is noted that this forms one of the recommendations from Baroness Casey.

- 3.5 The Terms of Reference for the Inquiry provided for a review to be carried out by the Independent Chair two years following publication of his original report. The Council wrote to the Chair in December 2023, six months earlier than anticipated by the Independent Chair, inviting him to return to the Borough to commence his review. The Chair published his 2-year review report on 12 July 2024. In it, the Chair recognised that CSE is a national concern, stating that Telford was not in a “category of uniquely unfortunate places but rather that CSE had occurred, and will occur, in other towns across the country”. It is clear from national activity that this remains the case.
- 3.6 The Chair also recognised that Telford, is “now an admirable model – for holding up a mirror to itself...and taking bold action, with the most important of objectives – safeguarding children from CSE”.
- 3.7 Members should note that, in 2024, Ofsted found that Telford & Wrekin Council’s Children’s Services were Outstanding and reflected that the work of the Council’s Children Abused Through Exploitation (CATE) team was a key strength of the Council’s safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.8 In summer 2025, a Joint Targeted Area Inspection (JTAI) was undertaken looking at safeguarding arrangements across the Telford & Wrekin Partnership. A JTAI is an inspection which is jointly carried out by Ofsted, the Care Quality Commission and His Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary and Fire & Rescue Services. That inspection found good practice in relation to Safeguarding and also highlighted the work to support young people at risk of exploitation, stating:-

“Children at risk of exploitation receive an effective response from a specialist police officer and the children abused through exploitation (CATE) team. Specialist

workers in the CATE service are passionate about the work they do. They build relationships that empower children to access support and reduce risks effectively. Exploitation risk assessments are thorough, detailed and completed in consultation with young people and partner agencies.....Safety planning is explicit and included in plans. Information-sharing is a strength in this service and, although the risk is dynamic and situational, awareness of the risks to young people is increased by this intervention.”

- 3.9 Notwithstanding the above, the Council remains committed to continuous improvement within the local government sector and has met with other authorities who are in the first stages of embarking on an Inquiry into CSE within their own areas. Additionally, the Council has fed into work on a national level to provide some local government context to the work being undertaken nationally.
- 3.10 Since the last report was presented in February 2025, the Council has been selected as a pilot authority for the purpose of the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) in respect of children and young people. Currently, the NRM is operated by the Home Office with decisions as to outcomes for those considered to be at risk of modern slavery being made at that national level. The pilot scheme is trialling a devolved decision-making approach which sees decisions about each individual being made at a local level. It is anticipated that this will speed up decision-making for the NRM which, in turn, enables victims, and those at risk of modern slavery, receiving appropriate support in a more timely manner.
- 3.11 If a decision is made to accept a case onto the NRM, it provides the individual with access to a wide range of support services tailored to their individual circumstances including access to a counsellor, sexual health victim services, housing (when needed), legal support and much more.
- 3.12 As mentioned above, the government commissioned Baroness Casey to undertake an audit into the activity being taken, across the country, to respond and address CSE. Her audit report concluded with a number of recommendations, some of which adopt the approach being taken within Telford & Wrekin and reflect some of the work that Telford & Wrekin Council has carried out for some years. For example, Baroness Casey made recommendations to

address cross-border taxi licensing and to mandate the publication of data similar to that contained within our Annual Report.

- 3.13 It should be noted that, as the reporting period is for the financial year 2024/25, the Annual Report does not yet reflect the recommendations from Baroness Casey as her report falls outside the reporting period being published in June 2025. However, from next year, the Annual Report will also reflect activity relating to the recommendations contained within Baroness Casey's report.
- 3.14 The Council is one of only a few authorities in the country which has a specialist team of practitioners providing support to children who are at risk of exploitation (in all forms) and, as can be seen in paragraph 3.8, this is an approach which is recognised as providing strong safeguarding arrangements.
- 3.15 One of the recommendations set out in the Inquiry was that the Council should maintain the resources in this specialist team (the CATE team). It can be seen from the Annual Report that this team continue to be maintained. Further, through the Medium Term Financial Strategy, the Council will be seeking to ensure that the funding to maintain the CATE team remains in place. It will also seek to ensure funding remains in place to continue funding the work carried out in response to the Inquiry and to support local survivor-led charities who provide support to victims and survivors of CSE.

4 Council Priorities

- 4.1 The recommendations in this report align with the following Council priorities:-
- Every child, young person and adult lives well in their communities;
 - All neighbourhoods are a great place to live; and
 - A community-focussed, innovative council, providing efficient, effective and quality services.

5.0 Financial Implications

- 5.1 There are no direct financial implications arising out of this report. All costs associated with the work linked to this work, including the specialist CATE team, are met from within existing budgets. Any cost implications associated with the

additional recommendations from Baroness Casey will be considered as part of the MTFS for future years. Similarly, the funding to support the ongoing work required in response to the recommendations made by the Inquiry will also be considered as part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy for future years and the usual annual budget-setting process.

6.0 Legal and HR Implications

- 6.1 There are no direct legal implications arising out of this report. Where required, legal advice is sought in relation to specific matters and in relation to the discharge of the Council's safeguarding responsibilities.

7.0 Ward Implications

- 7.1 There are no direct ward implications arising out of this report although the work undertaken by the Council in response to the Inquiry is Borough-wide.

8.0 Health, Social and Economic Implications

- 8.1 The work undertaken in response to the Inquiry has a positive impact on the health and wellbeing of those who are at risk of CSE.

9.0 Equality and Diversity Implications

- 9.1 The contents of the Annual Report identify demographic data which allows the Council, and partners, to have a better understanding of any equality and diversity implications in relation to the discharge of safeguarding functions.

10.0 Climate Change and Environmental Implications

- 10.1 There are no direct Climate Change and Environmental Implications directly arising from this report.

11.0 Background Papers

[Agenda for Full Council on Thursday 14 July 2022, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

[Agenda for Full Council on Thursday 13 July 2023, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

[Agenda for Full Council on Thursday 18 July 2024, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

[Agenda for Full Council on Thursday 27 February 2025, 6.00 pm - Telford & Wrekin Council](#)

12.0 Appendices

A Annual CSE Report 2024/25

13.0 Report Sign Off

Signed off by	Date sent	Date signed off	Initials
Legal	04/11/25	04/11/25	RP
Finance	04/11/25	05/11/25	MLB