

23 March 2017

Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

Purpose

For discussion.

Summary

The LGA is a key partner on the Home Office funded Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse, delivered by Barnardo's under a four year contract until 2020. The Centre's Director, Cassandra Harrison, will be in attendance to update the Board on its current work and provide an opportunity for Members to influence the work programme over the coming years.

Recommendations

Members are asked to:

1. Note the current activity of the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.
2. Advise on future areas for the Centre's research, evaluation or practice development activity over the coming years.

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Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse

Background

1. The Home Office has awarded Barnardo's £7.5 million until 2020 to develop and lead a Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). The LGA supported Barnardo's during the initial bidding process, and is now a key partner on the Centre's Advisory Board.
2. The Centre has been established to help bring about significant and system-wide change in how child sexual abuse is responded to locally and nationally, by identifying, generating and sharing high quality evidence of what works to prevent and tackle CSA (including child sexual exploitation, CSE). It has four primary aims:
 - 2.1 Local areas across England and Wales have a confident and effective multi-agency response to CSA, based on access to evidence and information on what works.
 - 2.2 National policy on CSA is informed by the latest research and evidence produced by the Centre.
 - 2.3 Increased understanding and awareness of the scale and nature of CSA.
 - 2.4 A clear assessment of how recent changes and improvements to policy and practice have impacted on the scale and nature of abuse.
3. The initial focus of the Centre's work in early 2017 is on child sexual exploitation, but its remit over the longer-term covers all forms of child sexual abuse. Several work strands are already underway, most of which will be published within the next month. These include:
 - 3.1 Key messages from research on child sexual exploitation (some of which are already available at www.csacentre.org.uk.)
 - 3.2 Work to improve the assessment of the scale and nature of child sexual abuse.
 - 3.3 An evidence review of what works in supporting parents of sexually exploited and at risk young people.
 - 3.4 A review of the use of tools and checklists to assess risk of child sexual exploitation.
 - 3.5 A scoping study on the effectiveness of interventions with perpetrators.
 - 3.6 A rapid review and gap analysis of interventions for perpetrators of online child sexual exploitation.
 - 3.7 An initial analysis of local commissioning arrangements.

- 3.8 Mapping of existing services for victims of child sexual abuse.
- 3.9 A scoping study on the characteristics and perspectives of perpetrators.
- 4. The Centre will be launching an online consultation in April 2017, seeking views from stakeholders on its future priorities in terms of research, practice improvement and the identification and evaluation of promising practice. This meeting will provide an opportunity for CYP Board members to hear from the Director of the CSA Centre, Cassandra Harrison, and provide some initial views on the future direction of its work.

Implications for Wales ¹

- 5. The CSA Centre's remit covers England and Wales, and work is currently underway to develop governance arrangements in Wales with key stakeholders.

Financial Implications

- 6. None.

Next steps

- 7. Members are asked to:
 - 7.1 Note the current activity of the Centre of Expertise on Child Sexual Abuse.
 - 7.2 Advise on future areas for the Centre's research, evaluation or practice development activity over the coming years.

¹ The WLGA pays a membership fee to the LGA on behalf of all Welsh councils and we lobby for them on "non-devolved" issues - e.g. DWP work. The WLGA provides "top-slice" for workforce support, but none for "improvement".