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as it does not reflect current policy.**

Involving children and young people in developing the services they receive: *Street Safe* Lancashire

Area: North West

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Brief description

Listening to and involving children and young people in the development of the services they receive is not an 'add-on' but at the heart of what Lancashire does. Although work with victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation poses challenges, the views of children and young people who have experienced abuse are being effectively used to influence policy, procedure and practice across Lancashire. The *Street Safe Lancashire* programme is at the forefront of this work.

Overview – the provider's message

'Sexual exploitation of children and young people is completely unacceptable. The Lancashire Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) is determined to prevent child sexual exploitation, protect those who are vulnerable and pursue those who abuse. Lancashire has had a tactical response to child sexual exploitation since 2007. Lessons learnt from the victims' experiences have helped shape how professionals in Lancashire work with victims and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation. This is making a discernible difference to improve the lives of this vulnerable group of children, young people and their families and we are glad to share our work with others to support the development of good practice across the country.'

This work is supported by the LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation sub group and Standing Operating Protocol and Strategy to ensure that as a partnership we assess, challenge and provide an effective service to reduce harm and threats posed to children and young people.

Kathryn Grindrod, Lancashire LSCB

The good practice in detail

Lancashire has systems in place to promote opportunities for young people to influence the shape of safeguarding services. The youth council has exceptionally good links with the cabinet and scrutiny committee and these connections help to translate the views of young people across the county into action. For example, the views of young people have been

harnessed effectively to tackle some of the most difficult and challenging areas of safeguarding and child protection work, such as targeted work to engage victims of child sexual exploitation.

What needed to change?

Lancashire recognised at an early stage that the victims' perspective and learning from their experiences is essential to respond effectively, particularly when working in complex situations with children who sometimes seem unwilling to cooperate or understand the abuse they are subjected to. Against an increasing background of research and practice guidance about this form of child abuse, Lancashire ensures that strategic and operational responses to child sexual exploitation are informed by a better understanding of the experiences of the children and young people who have been victims. It has used the unique insights of these victims to challenge the attitudes of professionals and expand the knowledge base which guides their practice.

The *Purple Monsters* leaflet tells practitioners 'how Not to work with young people', is full of personal stories, comments, poems, pictures, advice, and guidance developed by children and young people, and, is already influencing practice.

What has Lancashire done?

'During the period April 2011 and March 2012, over 700 child sexual exploitation referrals were received. All of these referrals were dealt with by our dedicated workers located across the area in four multi-disciplinary teams. Workers from *Street Safe Lancashire* provide direct support for children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation, and the service is reaching approximately 300 children and young people annually. These children and young people sometimes resist help and support from professionals.'

Lancashire has established four dedicated multi-agency child sexual exploitation teams across the area. Through the collaborative work of all agencies via the LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation sub group, Lancashire has harnessed the views and experiences of children and young people to influence frontline practice. Children and young people who experience child sexual exploitation are given the opportunity to feedback on the services they have received. Lancashire has ensured that these opinions have informed the Child Sexual Exploitation LSCB Strategy and Action Plan, including the content of staff training, which has improved the quality of front line service delivery.



The *Street Safe Lancashire* programme is at the forefront of this work. Each young person who has received a service from *Street Safe Lancashire* has had the opportunity to contribute their views and knowledge in various ways such as in one-to-ones, group fora, in writing and pictures. More children and young people are engaging with support services and feedback from many of the young people involved has

confirmed that the support they have received has helped them to come to terms with their experiences and feel valued again.

The Purple Monsters group enables young people who have faced grooming and sexual exploitation to come together and share their opinions and influence the services supporting them and other young people in similar situations. The group has designed a booklet for professionals about 'how NOT to work with young people'. The booklet is full of personal

The LSCB training on child sexual exploitation to professionals incorporates some of the resources created by the young people, their opinions, quotes and lessons from their experience.

stories, comments, poems, pictures, advice, and guidance developed by children and young people. *The Purple Monsters* booklet is already influencing practice leading to increased identification and engagement with vulnerable children and young people.

Standing Tall After Feeling Small is a booklet for professionals written by children and young people who have run away from home or have faced child sexual exploitation. This booklet has enabled the participation of those young people who attended *Purple Monsters* meetings as well as many others for whom that was not possible. It includes contributions

from children who have previously been difficult to engage, hard to reach or presented challenging behaviour.

Young People and parents have been requested to speak at conferences or have their material (poems, statements, quotes) used by others at fora for professionals, parents and young people.

All child sexual exploitation victims are given the opportunity to speak to an independent worker about their experience of being involved with the multi-agency teams. These debriefs provide feedback to the multi-agency teams about how their current interventions and practices are received by victims. This is helping professionals to determine what is working well and what needs to be done differently to improve the way services are delivered.

What difference has this made to the way services are delivered to children in Lancashire?

The views of children and young people who have experienced abuse are being used to influence the shape of policy, procedure and practice across Lancashire.

The Child Sexual Exploitation LSCB Strategy, Standard Operating Procedures and Action Plan have been reviewed in light of the views of children and young people who receive child sexual exploitation support services. Lessons learnt from the work undertaken with the *Purple Monsters* and other debriefing work with victims of child sexual exploitation are now embedded within the LSCB training. The LSCB training on child sexual exploitation to professionals incorporates some of the resources created by the young people, their opinions, quotes and lessons from their experience. As a result, professionals are increasingly aware of the presence and impact of child sexual exploitation across the area and more children and young people are accessing services and getting the support they need earlier.

Street Safe Lancashire has also delivered targeted programmes to young people who have been identified as potential perpetrators of child sexual exploitation. This proactive response is leading to increased identification of vulnerable children and young people who may become victims or perpetrators of abuse to divert them away from crime. A number of young males who were identified as being at risk of becoming perpetrators of sexual exploitation have engaged and worked through a structured programme of intervention. The programme has challenged their learnt behaviour, poor understanding and views of relationships with females. The group has designed its own leaflet to educate its peers in the wider community about attitudes towards young women, and to provide information that will help young men build resilience and make positive informed choices.

Provider background

Lancashire has a resident population of approximately 278,200 children and young people aged 0 to 19 years. They make up just under 24% of the total population of the county. In January 2011, 14% of the school population was classified as being of an ethnic group other than White British, with the largest minority ethnic group being of Pakistani heritage (6%). The School Census (May 2011) reported 11% of pupils with English as an additional language.

To view national guidance search *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation* (DCSF guidance 2009).

Are you thinking of putting these ideas into practice; or already doing something similar that could help other providers; or just interested? We'd welcome your views and ideas. Get in touch [here](#).