

Overview and Scrutiny



Safer Stronger Communities Select Committee Supplementary Agenda

Wednesday, 13 March 2024

7.00 pm

Civic Suite

Lewisham Town Hall

London SE6 4RU

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This meeting is an open meeting and all items on the agenda may be audio recorded and/or filmed.

Part 1

Item		Pages
4.	Multi-agency response to child exploitation <i>Reason for lateness:</i> the information included in this supplement was not provided in the main report. <i>Reason for urgency:</i> the enclosed information is necessary to enable the topic to be properly considered and thus for the Committee to complete its work programme for the 2023/24 municipal year.	3 - 6

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Safer Stronger Select Committee Additional Responses

1. Please can you provide the numbers of people profiled and risk assessed under MACE since it began and/or an annual breakdown (please also include its previous iteration as the Concern Hub in 2020-2021 and 2021-2022)

Multi Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE)

2022 – 2023: 93 children.

2023 – 2024: 80 children (*this does not include data for March Q4*)

Concern Hub

2020 – 2021: 77 children.

2021 – 2022: 53 children (*this data is until Jan 2022 as the transition to MACE began*)

2. I understand that pre-MACE and MACE panels are co-chaired by police colleagues but what is the level of involvement of police on eg. decision making, risk assessment and intelligence sharing / gathering? How does the co-chairing function work in practice?

The co-chairing arrangements rotates between the LA and the police monthly. For individual children presented to Pre-MACE/MACE the police prepare research and intel ahead of the panels and present this information to assist with the risk assessment and decision making. To ensure that the panel operates from a safeguarding lens, the Chairs have devised a series of safeguarding and quality assurance questions (see below) to enhance the risk assessment and decision making which the lead chair for each panel will take partners through.

Safeguarding/QA questions (*Has an 87A/ been submitted for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)/ Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) concerns? Is there a non-crime exploitation report on CRIS (588)? Has a strategy meeting been held? Did the correct police unit attend? NRM been considered? What was the outcome of the strategy e.g. Section 47 or S17 assessment. Does the young person (YP) have any additional needs (SEN, EHCP or CAMHS) If the child/YP is placed out of area, do we have local police CET input? What recent concerns have police identified from research/intel? Is the YP known to have missing episodes? If so, how frequent are they? Is there a grab pack? Have Return Home Interviews (RHI's) been offered/completed when they return? What is the YP's rationale for their missing episodes? Is the YP known to or open to Violence Reduction Team (VRT?) Is the YP known to Youth Justice Service (YJS) and under what threshold?*)

3. Section 1.0 of the MACE TOR lists its members. Do any other people sits on the MACE /join MACE meetings eg. external organisations / stakeholders etc?

The MACE panel is also attended by external organisations which include Redthread who are a hospital-based youth intervention service that provide valuable intelligence to the panel about themes and trends that they see in hospitals where children are seen as victims of violence which sometimes overlaps with them also being victims of exploitation.

Safer London colleagues also attend the MACE panel and share their themes, trends, services, and initiatives to support children and their families who are victims of exploitation.

4. Can you tell us of any punitive outcomes e.g further monitoring, civil orders, criminal orders, stop and search or arrests as a result of or influenced by the work of MACE – please can you illustrate whether these outcomes differ against the different risk categories.

In response to intelligence shared at MACE, contextual safeguarding responses have been coordinated across the partnership to reduce and manage extra familial harm risks to children in the borough. These responses also expand beyond safeguarding individual children to safeguarding a wider cohort.

For example, the work of the MACE has influenced the police & courts progressing Slavery & Trafficking Risk Orders which safeguard all children from perpetrators of modern slavery offences compared to the issuing of a Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) that will only safeguard an individual child. Depending on the circumstances one or the other type of action may be more appropriate.

Each child that is referred to the Pre-MACE/MACE will receive a bespoke safeguarding response based on their needs.

For example, a child whose risk assessment is ragged as an amber or red will be allocated a Child Exploitation Police Officer who will investigate the exploitation risks alongside the social work safeguarding activity. A child whose risk assessment is green will be safeguarded via traditional safeguarding processes such as case reflections & guidance from the inhouse Contextual Thinking Space, which is led with the expertise of the Safe Space Practitioners, strategy meetings, case mappings, interventions from external organisations such as Safer London, Barnardo's, which feed into assessments and planning with a harm reduction approach being the focus.

For a child affected by youth violence or gangs they are offered intervention from colleagues in the Safer Communities Violence Reduction Team.

5. On the [partnership functions page](#) of the Lewisham safeguarding Children partnership website, it references an independent scrutineer. Can you tell us who this independent person is? How often have they met with the Chief Exec,

Mayor et al and can we see any of their reporting related to scrutinising the work of the partnership?

David Goosey is the independent scrutineer. He regularly attends the tactical MACE and strategic MACE board to offer scrutiny and advice to partners to assist with improving strategic and operational planning and service delivery. His input is recorded in the minutes from the MACE meetings and where these translate into actions for the partnership, they are added to the action tracker for monitoring and progression.

6. Where do referrals to MACE come from (eg information/referral source) and what is the basis of the referral (eg police intelligence/disclosure from young person etc)

Referrals into the MACE typically come from Social Workers for children receiving a statutory service from Children's Social Care. This would be following a referral into the MASH from any referrer with safeguarding concerns for a child in relation to extra familial harm. For open cases a referral to MACE can happen at any time new intelligence is shared or a disclosure from a child is made. However, this will usually be following an initial strategy meeting which should be the first response to any safeguarding concern for a child where threshold of significant harm is likely to be met.

All referrals go to Pre-MACE in the first instance for screening and quality assurance of operational safeguarding responses. All children RAGGED as a red at Pre-MACE will be escalated to MACE for partnership awareness and oversight.

7. The MACE TOR sections 8.0-10.0 makes reference to a child's right to safety, recognising protected characteristics and specific needs including SEND, as well as observance of GDPR and privacy. Please provide further details on MACE's welfare and safeguarding remit and can you set out the information sharing parameters around this.

The MACE purpose statement sets out the partnership commitment to keeping children safe which includes recognising and holding in mind those with protected characteristics (see below)

The MACE is committed to promoting Anti-Racist, Anti-Discriminatory & Anti-Oppressive practice. This includes challenging biases, adultification, micro-aggressions and all forms of prejudice. Collectively, the MACE seeks to achieve and uphold these standards and practices by creating safe spaces in which to discuss and consider children and young people whilst challenging itself and others when these standards are not being upheld (i.e., calling out racism, discrimination and biases); by incorporating inclusive language which doesn't victimise or blame young people & by encouraging and promoting cultural competence and cultural sensitivity at all times.

In addition, the Pre-MACE/MACE risk assessment and quality assurance questions explicitly explore whether a child has a neurodiverse or SEN condition that would increase their vulnerability and risk to extra familial harm.

Please refer to paragraph 10 for GDPR and privacy protocol.

- 8. Are the resultant plans centred on building safety for and around young people? To what extent do plans rely on policing, criminal orders, dispersal of young people, secure care, out of area placements, child protection plans etc**

As mentioned in section 4 each child will receive a bespoke offer which is centred around building safety and reducing harm. This can include a range of tactical responses from policing, family courts and partner agencies.

- 9. Bristol City Council was recently found to have licensed an application, the Think Family Education (TFE) app, that enabled safeguarding leads and pastoral teams in education settings to access information from the Council and Avon and Somerset Police, including about a child's or their family's contact with police, child protection and welfare services. Please can you confirm whether Lewisham Council is using any system (application or otherwise) that collects such information similar to what TFE collects.**

Lewisham are not currently using any system or application the same or like Bristol City Council.

- 10. Related to question 18 and 10.0 of the TOR, how does the Council ensure it adheres to GDPR and privacy protocols in relation to collection and sharing of sensitive information? How is consent obtained and what ethical considerations are followed?**

The Council are guided by the London multi-agency information sharing guidance and Working Together guidance to ensure that information is only shared in accordance with the pan London documents or justified as set out by the guidance if consent needs to be overridden due to safeguarding concerns. In addition, Council employees complete mandatory GDPR training and refresher courses to ensure practice is in line with GDPR protocols.

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