

People's Scrutiny Committee Safer Communities Annual Report 2022/23

Appendix 3 – Interventions to Disrupt Serious Violence in East Sussex

The Council's whole systems approach to Child Exploitation provides support for children and parents/carers who are at risk of, are experiencing child sexual or child criminal exploitation.

1. SAFER Family Keywork

1.1 SAFER keyworkers work intensively with children and their families when there are risks associated with child sexual and criminal exploitation. The team works collaboratively with multi-agency partners and takes a holistic whole family approach. It considers all elements of extra familial harm and the impact for the young person, their peers, family, and community. SAFER keyworkers partake in contextual safeguarding assessments, deliver consultations, and provide specialist resources to professionals and developed a service directly focussed on parents and carers.

1.2 Q1 data shows the following impact for children on SAFER:

- 31% of children saw their RAG rating reduce or they were removed completely.
- 5% of children had a missing episode in June 2023, reduced from 17% in April 2023.
- 18% of children were arrested in June 2023
- 13% of children worked with in June 2023 had a school exclusion.
- 73% of children saw their school attendance improve or remain the same.

2. Collaboration Against Child Exploitation (CACE)

2.1 CACE is a 7-week educative programme for parents/carers that raises awareness of the risks associated with criminal and sexual child exploitation. The course aims to empower parents/carers to safeguard their children by providing accurate information on a variety of relevant topics and offering a platform whereby they can link in with other parents/carers who have similar lived experiences. Educative groups are run county wide and we also offer monthly support meet ups in various locations. There is no eligibility criteria; any parent/carer/family member affected by child exploitation is welcome to come along.

2.2 CACE works collaboratively with a wide range of professionals who help co-facilitate and attend sessions such as the Youth Justice Service, ESBAS, Sussex Police, U25s Substance Misuse Service.

2.3 In addition to the groupwork intervention, Parent Mentors with lived experience provide direct support to parents/carers through the facilitation of parent support groups. Parent mentors also run a 24 hour telephone line, email and social media accounts.

2.4 To see the CACE work: <https://vimeo.com/833476310/b89020e4da?share=copy>

3. Habitual Knife Carriers Project

3.1 The Habitual Knife Carriers Project is an innovative partnership response between East Sussex Children's Services and Sussex Police to identifying and working with children where there are significant risks and concerns about knife carrying.

3.2 The project delivers a range of support including 1-1 work, detached out-reach and contextual safeguarding responses to specific locations and peer groups. The cohort of children is identified using The Habitual Knife Carrier (HKC) matrix. This is an innovative intelligence tool developed by Sussex Police, which uses police data to identify people with an increased risk for carrying a knife and/or involvement in knife crime. It is refreshed quarterly to ensure that the most current intelligence and information is informing the matrix. Peer-mapping carried out by partners also enables the project to work with children on the periphery of these risks.

3.3 A significant majority of the children on the matrix are already open to statutory services and the 1-1 work is dovetailed with statutory services. This ensures that it fits with existing safeguarding structures and where possible existing child-practitioner relationships are utilised, so that interventions are based on relationship-based practice. This is particularly important for these children, many of whom are experiencing exploitation, can be guarded, and who need time and consistency to develop trusted relationships with adults. Information from the matrix is used to inform assessments, plans and interventions and a range of services and interventions are available to children. These support desistance and offer constructive alternatives to violence. There is an additional financial resource that comes with this work enabling increased capacity for interventions to focus on supporting children in accessing positive and diversionary activities and extending the support to them on a voluntary basis when assessed as appropriate. A Virtual Reality headset resource that depicts a stabbing scenario has also been purchased. This has been used in creative ways with small groups of children, as well as children and parents together and has proven to be an engaging tool that has promoted discussion and debate as part of interventions.

3.4 Regular partnership meetings are held to review current intelligence and information and consider disruption and enforcement actions where necessary. The sharing of information between the partnership means there is the ability to be flexible and respond rapidly, and to develop additional contextual safeguarding responses in order to target the contexts in which children are at risk. This includes specific locations as well as peer groups. For example, detached outreach services have been sent out to identified hotspot areas, both to gather information about what is happening and to promote engagement and positive relationships with children, rather than just displacement and/moving children on. Anecdotally it is known that knife-carrying is often a norm within a peer group, and, through the partnership, peer-mapping exercises are undertaken. Examples of work include developing and delivering group sessions to support peer groups in accessing diversionary activities and harness the positive aspects of the peer group.

3.5 An independent evaluation of the project completed by the National Children's Bureau in July 2023 focused on the 44 children who had been supported by the project between April 2022 and March 2023 (see Appendix 4). Analysis of crime data in relation to these children indicated a reduction in violent offending following the support of the partnership project. Overall, there was a 76% reduction in the number of occurrences of violent crime that these young people were linked to as offenders, or suspects after referral, compared with the 12 months prior. A similar reduction was seen in the number of knife related offences that children were linked to. The majority of children linked to a knife

possession offence 12 months prior to the referral had not been linked to any further occurrences since. These findings reinforce separate analyses conducted by Sussex Police using slightly different measures.

3.6 Case study interviews undertaken as part of the independent evaluation uncovered several ways in which children's well-being changed during their participation, potentially supporting long-term behaviour change. Notable changes included a positive shift in children's outlook and motivation, with both children and their support workers indicating optimism about the future. Changes in children's lifestyles were also identified in the case study interviews, particularly building structure and routine and accessing positive and diversionary activities.