

## **Stocktake report into progress made in tackling child sexual exploitation in Oxfordshire**

The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) has today (23 July 2015) published the report it commissioned outlining progress made by agencies in tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) across the County.

This report highlights the good progress made by all organisations in providing specialist support services for victims of CSE; bringing more perpetrators to justice through the use of new disruption methods; ensuring schools, academies, Further Education colleges, and the wider community understand how to spot the signs of children at risk of exploitation; and demonstrating the impact of changes by the NHS to bring school nurses into every secondary school, train the range of different NHS professionals and work together to support the victims of abuse.

The report was commissioned following the publication of the Serious Case Review (SCR) A-F in March 2015 and was required by the Children's Minister and Ministers from the Home Office and Department of Health who wrote to the Independent Chair of the OSCB requesting an update on the impact of services to tackle CSE across Oxfordshire on children and families. Between March and June 2015, the OSCB was supported by Sophie Humphreys, a government advisor who was independently appointed by the Children's Minister, she has provided an independent commentary of the stocktake report, which is also available on the OSCB website.

The Independent Chair of the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board, Maggie Blyth said: "The partnership in Oxfordshire has moved a long way together to address the problem of CSE, identify collective solutions and produce some tangible evidence of impact."

"This has led to other improvements to help children, such as tackling self harm, neglect within families and female genital mutilation. There is much stronger engagement from NHS organisations, policing, schools and the faith, community and voluntary sectors working with parents and children and with district authorities and the county council to provide solutions."

The stocktake report also describes the need to continue to prevent abuse and exploitation and notes there are five areas in particular that require further work. These include the regulation and use of taxis; a greater understanding of who the perpetrators of CSE are; and the commissioning of services to provide help and therapy for children into adulthood.

Ms Blyth added: "Oxfordshire County Council has set a high bar for ensuring the children it is responsible for are transported safely, but maintaining such standards requires robust oversight. District councils as licensing authorities need to share information about drivers, delegate enforcement powers and require taxi drivers to complete safeguarding training as part of any knowledge test.

"Likewise, NHS organisations and adult social care need to work together to make sure that similar approaches to supporting victims of abuse, as those used in the

## ***Press Release***

Kingfisher team, are made available to adults who disclose historic abuse. And above all Thames Valley Police with the support of the partnership needs to continue to investigate and bring the men who commit these crimes to justice.”

### **Key findings of the report**

- The stocktake report finds evidence of good progress across agencies in tackling CSE in Oxfordshire. This means getting the basics of child protection right and relies on strong and persistent leadership.
- The perpetrators of CSE are clever at targeting vulnerable children. More understanding is needed of perpetrator profiles
- The regulation of the contracts to transport vulnerable children across Oxfordshire and the licensing of taxi drivers should be more robust
- Specialist interventions are needed for those adults who disclose abuse they experienced as children
- Working with communities is key to tackling CSE.

### **Ends**

**Notes to Editors:** Copies of the Independent Chair’s statement and a link to the full stocktake report and Sophie Humphrey’s commentary are available on the OSCB website <http://www.oscb.org.uk/case-reviews/>

**Background to the OSCB:** Local Safeguarding Children Boards were established by the Children Act 2004 to help make sure key agencies work together to keep children safe. The Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB), is the means by which organisations come together to agree on how they will cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The OSCB consists of 32 representatives, representing local authorities, the NHS and police, among others.

### **Biography for the Independent Chair of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB):**

Maggie Blyth took up the role of Independent Chair of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) in May 2014. Maggie has a background in education, initially qualifying as a teacher, but managing services within social care and criminal justice during the 1990s across the Thames Valley and in Inner London. Between 2001 and 2005 she had policy oversight of the youth justice system across England and Wales as Head of Practice for the National Youth Justice Board for England and Wales. Since 2005 Maggie has held a ministerial appointment as an independent Member of the Parole Board for England and Wales.

**Contact: Kay Bishop, Business Manager, Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board**

**Tel: 01865 815849 Mobile: 07786 692370**