

Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board and Newcastle Safeguarding Adult Board Response to the Joint Serious Case Review Concerning Sexual Exploitation of Children and Adults with Needs for Care and Support in Newcastle-upon-Tyne

On behalf of Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB) and the Newcastle Safeguarding Adult Board (NSAB), we would like to give thanks to the Lead Reviewer, David Spicer, and the review team for their dedication and hard work in pulling together and producing a report of such a high standard and monumental scale. We would also like to extend our gratitude and deepest thanks to those young people and adults who found the strength and courage to contribute to the Review which has provided us with a real insight into the heinous nature of these crimes.

This overview is the joint response of both the safeguarding boards to the Serious Case Review they commissioned in relation to sexual exploitation in Newcastle, and supports the publication of the full review report.

The narrative in the review highlights the calculated and persistent determination of perpetrators over a long period of time to exploit women and girls through horrific acts of abuse, violence and manipulation and the targeting and grooming of some of the most vulnerable young people and adults with a dismissive disregard for the criminal justice system.

Some of the key learning points which have already been carefully considered include: the complex nature of sexual exploitation; the extreme and long-lasting impact it has on victims; that sexual exploitation happens to adults as well as children and difficulties in identifying and preventing exploitation. Working with victims has also reinforced the importance of intense and long-term support for them to gain their trust and also to help them understand their experience and so enable them to talk about this. The primary aim being to support and protect victims from further exploitation and to help them so far as possible to rebuild positive lives.

The learning from this Review and from Operation Sanctuary has already been embedded in Newcastle through the development of enhanced service provision, particularly the development of the Multiagency Sexual Exploitation Hub. The learning has also enabled the raising of awareness and the development of greater understanding of the nature and impact of sexual exploitation. Actions taken have made a positive difference to the way agencies identify, respond and prevent sexual exploitation and to how best to support victims, which has led to exceptional victim focused practice. This practice is being acknowledged independently and nationally.

One of the strongest messages emerging from the Review is the need to have a better understanding of perpetrators, not only in preventing their activities but also understanding their motivation. A common theme in reviews of this kind is the lack of meaningful engagement of perpetrators and often when they do it is to protest

their innocence and derogate the victims. This however should not prevent attempting to develop an understanding of what has led them to offend and what might have helped prevent their offending in the first place.

Whilst the Review has considered victims of sexual exploitation resident to Newcastle, the learning is equally important to practitioners, partners and politicians across the country. It is hoped that the recommendations for improvement, many of which have already been implemented, can be shared more widely to further protect people at risk of sexual exploitation, and to influence and shape services and national system reform.

The review reinforces the message to everyone that **if you do not recognise sexual exploitation of children and vulnerable adults in your area it is because you are not looking hard enough.**

Developments in this city illustrate that determination and multi-agency victim focused services have made a significant difference and because of this review others need to learn from this important work in Newcastle

“The future – I take each day as it comes.... I have proved everyone wrong. I am learning to manage. There are people I can get in touch with. I know support will always be there for me.”

Helen Lamont, Vice Chairperson, Newcastle Safeguarding Children Board



Helen Lamont

Vida Morris, Independent Chairperson, Newcastle Safeguarding Adults Board



Vida Morris

22.02.2018