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**Missing, Exploited and Sexual Abuse Sub Group (MESA)**

**Purpose**

The MESA Subgroup is the strategic subgroup of the Darlington Safeguarding Children Board (DSCB) which has oversight of missing children, child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse in Darlington. It focuses on meeting the needs of children and young people who go missing from home, care and education and those at risk of sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. The group leads on the production and implementation of multi-agency strategies, action plans, audits, policy, guidance and raising awareness.

The DSCB arrangements were reviewed as part of the Ofsted inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers in June 2015. Ofsted made a recommendation to:

‘Ensure that the wider community is better aware of the risks of sexual exploitation faced by children and young people in Darlington, including what to do if they have concerns.’

**Objectives**

* The MESA and DSCB have a clear understanding of the numbers and circumstances of children/ young people going ‘missing’ in Darlington, those at risk of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and sexual abuse.
* To ensure there are effective information sharing and evaluation mechanisms in place through quality assurance activity and performance management.
* To ensure there are agreed definitions of ‘missing’ children in place and procedures in place.
* To ensure that there are clear criteria/ thresholds for children at risk of child sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and that referrals receive relevant, co-ordinated multi-agency response.
* To make proposals for multi-agency service development to identify and reduce the incidence of missing children/ CSE and sexual abuse through awareness raising campaigns such as DfE and local campaigns.
* To establish and update relevant strategies, policies, procedures and practice guidance
* To liaise and work jointly with the Training, Communications and Voice of the User sub group on sharing information/ intelligence/ learning from audits to update and maintain CSE training.
* To contribute to the communications strategy development and review to ensure awareness raising of CSE and sexual abuse.
* To engage children and young people to enable the MESA and DSCB to understand the concerns/worries and reasons why children go missing/CSE.
* To include the feedback from children and young people to inform service development work.

All strategies developed will be aligned to other strategies and procedures that address some of the issues that explain why children and young people go missing (such as abuse, bullying, forced marriage, trafficking) and the risks such young people face whilst missing (sexual exploitation, sexual abuse, drug and alcohol misuse) and work jointly with Practice Development and Procedures subgroup.

**Accountability**

There is an expectation that all members of the sub group encourage an effective, collaborative approach to working together and that this way of working should take place in a responsive manner.

MESA subgroup members will continue to adhere to their own agency’s requirements with regard to legal, statutory and public duties. Members of the sub group are accountable to their organisation for any single agency actions and their completion.

**Reporting Arrangements**

A Chair’s report relating to the agreed work plans and the activities of the group will be reported to each Board meeting.

The sub group chair can raise or escalate issues directly with the Independent Chair as appropriate.

**Core Membership**

Detective Superintendent (Durham Constabulary)

LSCB Business Manager (LSCB)

Head of Review and Development (DBC)

Sex Education and Relationship Officer (DBC)

LAC Education Co-ordinator (DBC)

CATE Project (Barnardo’s)

Strategic Co-ordinator for Sexual Violence (Durham Constabulary)

LSCB Development Officer/LADO (LSCB)

Senior Youth Offending Officer (YOS)

Team Manager, LAC (DBC)

Health Co-ordinator for Young People and LAC (CDDFT)

Switch Manager (DBC)

Senior Residential Social Worker (DBC)

Recovery and Reintegration Manager (DAAT)

Detective Sergeant (Police)

Anti-Social Behaviour Manager (DBC)

Children’s Accommodation Manager (DBC)

Youth Workers (DBC)

PCSO (Police)

**Responsibilities of Sub Group Members**

* To commit to attending scheduled sub group meetings and other relevant additional meetings that are arranged
* To ensure where members are unable to attend, an appropriate deputy attends in their place
* To commit to disseminating key messages in relation to missing children, child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse across their settings and organisations.
* To actively seek the views of children, young people and the wider public and feedback into this group and into the broader LSCB service development
* To work collaboratively to monitor the progress of action plans and identify further actions, as appropriate
* The LSCB Business Unit will monitor closely feedback from members on circulated documents. Members need to ensure all feedback is received in a timely manner, to ensure the work of the LSCB can be undertaken in an efficient and effective manner.
* To contribute to the development of relevant work that will enable the DSCB to achieve its outcomes.
* To work towards objectives as agreed by the DSCB.

**Frequency/ Quoracy**

The sub group will meet bi-monthly.

No business shall take place at meetings unless 4 members are present. This should include either the Chair or Vice Chair and 3 representatives from 3 different agencies. The meeting will be cancelled if quorate is not met. The group will monitor membership to ensure the work plan is progressed effectively.

**Attendance**

There is an expectation members’ attendance at meetings will be at least 80%. Information about attendance at the LSCB and sub groups is included in the LSCB Annual Report. If a member of the group misses two consecutive meetings without sending a deputy the Chair will write to the Board member of the agency concerned requesting an explanation as to why there has not been attendance, if necessary, the Chair will request that the agency reviews their representation and identifies an appropriate representative.

**Feedback on Documents**

To ensure the group works efficiently, when members are asked to feedback on documents a clear deadline will be given. Following the deadline and inclusion of amendments it is assumed that the document is agreed and it will go to Board for final comments/sign off.

**Chairing Arrangements/ Responsibilities**

**Chair-** Detective Superintendent

**Vice Chair-** Specialist Family Support Manager (DBC)

The Chair has responsibility for:

* Chairing of meetings and agenda setting
* Ensuring the accuracy and appropriate sharing of the minutes
* Approving the development and appropriate sharing of any action plans
* Monitoring the progress of any action plans through to completion
* Producing reports for presentation to each Board meeting.
* Contribute to the development of the annual report.