

Assuring the Effectiveness of Multi Agency  
Responses to Child Sexual Exploitation in  
Greater Manchester.

Terms of Reference for Oldham workstream

8 January 2020

## Purpose

In September 2017, the Mayor of Greater Manchester, Andy Burnham, in his role as Police and Crime Commissioner launched an independent assurance exercise to explore the current and potential future delivery model of the response to child sexual exploitation (CSE) across Greater Manchester. The first report of the independent review team is to be published in January 2020 into Operation Augusta a joint police and children's services investigation into child sexual exploitation within the Manchester City area. The review team has also commenced but has not yet concluded an assurance exercise into the exploitation of children in the Rochdale area.

In November 2019, the Leader of Oldham Council, Sean Fielding and Henri Giller, Chair of Oldham Safeguarding Partnership, wrote jointly to the Mayor and the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Standards Board's independent chair Jane Shuttleworth, to request that the review into safeguarding practices in the borough of Oldham be combined into the independent review team's assurance work.

The remit of this aspect of the review will focus on historical allegations relating to child sexual exploitation and consider whether the council, with its partner agencies provided an appropriate response to protect children vulnerable to or known to be victims of child sexual exploitation. The assurance review will specifically consider, but will not be limited to, allegations that have circulated on social media of inappropriate access to young people involving shisha bars, taxi companies and children's homes. It will also, look at the extent to which historical actions and employment records have been adequately investigated in the case of known offenders previously employed within Oldham public services.

The findings of the report completed by the assurance team will be published and communication inquiries will be dealt with by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority (GMCA) on behalf of the Mayor, in his role as Police and Crime Commissioner, in consultation with Oldham Council and other partners.

## Scope

To review the practice of Oldham Council in partnership with its statutory safeguarding agencies in response to allegations of child sexual exploitation between 2011 and 2014, with particular reference to the concerns expressed in social media and elsewhere that the statutory agencies were aware of this abuse,

failed to respond appropriately to safeguard the children and subsequently covered up these failings. In addition, the review will consider specific cases that may fall outside of the 2011-2014 timeframe (as set out in points 2 and 3 below).

The assurance work will cover the work of the safeguarding agencies in Oldham during the period 2011 to 2014 (Review Period).

The scope of the review will include, but not be limited to, providing assurance in respect of the following concerns:

1. Allegations made on social media about
  - The risks posed to children from local shisha establishments during 2011-14
  - The nature and extent to which adults had inappropriate access to children and young people resident in children's homes in Oldham putting them at risk of harm during 2011-14
  - The nature and extent of the use of local taxi services to access children and young people for the purposes of sexual exploitation during 2011-14
2. Allegations or concerns expressed in relation to specific cases. The review will in particular consider complaints made in a letter by an individual complainant to the Leader of Oldham Council in November 2019 and copied to the Mayor of GMCA. about the handling of her case during 2005/06.
3. The cases of known offenders previously employed within Oldham Council and the extent to which the historical actions and employment records have been adequately investigated by the Council.
4. The review team will not review any active enquiries or on-going investigations into any of these allegations but GMP will support the review by sharing progress on Operation Hexagon.

## Methodology

This review will provide assurance through the following methodology:

### **A desktop review of all reports, audits and performance information on the management of child sexual exploitation during the review period**

- Review and evaluate all reports and information provided to Oldham Cabinet, Oldham Scrutiny Committees and the Oldham Local

Safeguarding Board on child sexual exploitation in the borough, including its prevalence prevention and detection during the review period.

- Any whistleblowing allegations made during the review period that relates to CSE or concerns about how the agencies were responding to the issue.
- LSCB Audit and thematic review evidence from the period including Annual reports, and the work of the LSCB sub groups that address the issue of CSE.
- Serious Case Reviews, OFSTED or DFE notification of cases of concern where CSE was an issue during the review period
- Details of any CSE thematic single agency audits held during the the review period.

### **Scoping the allegations made in social media postings covering the period 2011-14**

- Review of social media postings expressing concerns about the council's response to concerns in respect of child sexual exploitation during the review period
- Interviews with individuals who have made significant allegations.
- Preliminary interviews with senior officers in Oldham Council, and if required former officers
- Review of the management of known offenders previously employed within Oldham Council and the extent to which the historical actions and employment records have been adequately investigated by the council
- An initial evaluation of the evidence base for the allegations and setting out of the key lines of inquiry
- Developing key lines of inquiry based on substantive evidence

### **Gateway Reviews and the engagement of partner agencies**

- Regular gateway reviews will be built into the work programme for the review team. The first review will be undertaken by the steering group following the completion of the desktop analysis, the scoping of the allegations and development of the key lines of inquiry. This gateway review will also determine, based on the key lines of inquiry whether access to additional information and data will be required from GMP and NHS agencies
- For the first gateway review the review team will provide a report to the Steering Group. This report will determine if further work is required to provide the necessary level of assurance, including any additional key lines of inquiry. If further information is required a formal request will be

made to access data held by the statutory agencies to complete its assurance exercise.

- To facilitate access to case records, reports, correspondence and other information relevant to the review's inquiries a data processing agreement will be agreed between GMCA, the review team and Oldham Council and if required also with GMP and NHS organisations.

### **Additional Assurance**

The review team will undertake further detailed assurance work, as required, on specific cases where it is identified that children may not have been appropriately protected from sexual exploitation or where there are specific concerns in respect of the conduct of individuals employed by the council in relation to CSE.

This will include evaluation of the records for young people identified at risk of or experiencing CSE at the time and where a concern has been identified that the risk or incidence of CSE was not appropriately identified and responded to at the time.

### **The Assurance Team**

The team will report directly to Baroness Hughes, Deputy Mayor of Greater Manchester, who will act as sponsor.

The team will be led by Malcolm Newsam CBE, who will be supported by Gary Ridgway.

Malcolm Newsam is an experienced child-care expert with extensive experience of providing diagnostics, interventions and improvement support to a range of councils across the country. He has been appointed by the Secretary of State for Education as a commissioner for children's services in Rotherham, Sandwell and Northamptonshire. He was awarded a CBE in the 2017 New Year Honours for services to children's social care.

Gary Ridgway was previously a Detective Superintendent in Cambridgeshire Police and Head of Public Protection. He has pioneered proactive victim-led CSE investigations and led Operation Erle which resulted in the successful conviction of ten offenders. He now works as an independent consultant supporting the National Crime Agency, Councils and Police Forces on CSE.

## **Governance**

- This work has been commissioned by the Mayor of Greater Manchester at the request of Oldham Council and the Oldham Safeguarding Partnership.
- The team will report directly to the Deputy Mayor in relation to progress and outcomes. In 2017, the Deputy Mayor established a steering group to join her in providing governance and oversight of the assurance review. The steering group is chaired by the Deputy Mayor and is attended by the Chief Constable of Greater Manchester Police, the Chief Executive of Manchester City Council, the Chief Executive of Bury Council, the Chief Executive of Rochdale Council, senior officers from St Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre, senior officers of GMCA and the review team. The Oldham workstream will be overseen by this steering group. Oldham Council will be represented on the steering group by the Strategic Director for Communities and Reform and by the Managing Director for Children and Young People.
- There will be regular meetings chaired by the Deputy Mayor to monitor progress, tackle any concerns and agree the next milestones. Additional meetings may be required which will be arranged according to need.
- Whilst formal governance for the review is through reporting lines to the Deputy Mayor, the team will, on a regular basis engage directly with core members of the Local Safeguarding Partnership to discuss matters that relate to the review and progress on the key lines of inquiry.
- The GMCA Deputy Chief Executive will be responsible for the management of the contracts with the external team and will oversee the budget.

## **Resources and Commitments**

- GMCA, on behalf of the Mayor, will engage with partner agencies including GMP, local authorities, NHS colleagues and the Oldham Safeguarding Partnership to explain the scope of, and arrange co-operation with, the assurance team and will organise meetings as required.
- The Deputy Mayor, GMCA's Deputy Chief Executive and the other steering group members will engage as required with Oldham Council, GMP, Pennine Care NHS Foundation Trust and other relevant NHS organisations in relation to this work to ensure that a data

processing agreement is in place if required in respect of access to case records, reports, correspondence and other information relevant to the review's inquiries.

- GMP will ensure that relevant information on the progress of Operation Hexagon is shared with the review team to support their inquiries
- GMCA, on behalf of the Mayor, will be responsible for all communications in consultation with partners.
- On behalf of the Mayor, GMCA Deputy Chief Executive Andrew Lightfoot, will provide senior executive officer support to the assurance team to ensure it runs effectively and is adequately resourced.
- GMCA, on behalf of the Mayor, will provide legal advice to the assurance team as required and will provide legal input into the final drafting and publication of the report.
- GMCA, on behalf of the Mayor, will provide a note taker to be present at all interviews undertaken by the team and a minute taker for all decision-making meetings.
- GMCA, on behalf of the Mayor, will provide a secure room for the team to be based during their work at Churchgate House. Oldham Council will provide a secure room for the team to be based during their work at the Civic Centre and staff support to access information and records.