



Learning Briefing

Learning Briefing - resulting from an escalation regarding the response to a CSE case

Key Factors

- John is a 17 year old male who lives at home with his parents
- John was not previously known to social care
- John's GP referred to social care as John had disclosed that he is paid for sex and to perform in pornographic films. He had some mental health difficulties and self-harm in the past (low moods) and denies drug/alcohol use. The GP felt he was being sexually exploited and there were no protective adults in his life
- John had told his GP that he did not want his parents to know anything about what he does and that he thought his work was beneficial to himself and undertaken of his own free will
- A Single Assessment was undertaken. John shared that he is a self-employed escort for males and females aged 25-70 and engages in companionship through to penetrative sex. He first became involved in an 'agency' age 16 undertaking camera work. He advertises himself as aged 18. He uses condoms and has a safety plan with friends. He is working to get money for a helicopter licence and a deposit for his own home
- The Single Assessment recommended no further action as John appeared informed, mature and articulate. The Single Assessment states that John is making informed decision about his 'employment route' and his 'profession' and is achieving well. Parents were not consulted as per John's wishes.
- The Team Manager did not agree with the recommendation of no further action and convened a strategy discussion with the police and the GP. It was agreed to undertake a Section 47 investigation but not to contact with John's parents. Follow-up strategy concluded that the multi-agency agreement was that John did not meet the threshold for child protection, he has clear strategies for keeping safe and is aware of the risks. 'Despite John being a child there is no further action for social care'
- Re-referred to social care by Base on the basis of concerns from sexual health clinic. The referral was not accepted due to there being no new information and recently the case was closed following assessment
- Base escalated via the Resolution of Professional Differences Policy. Health, social care and police agreement that case should be re-opened and a strategy discussion/section 47 investigation undertaken as the previous intervention had not considered key aspects

Learning/discussion points

- The multi-agency assessment referred to John's 'profession' and his 'chosen employment route'. He was referred to as making 'informed choices' and 'consenting'. At age 17 John is still a child and therefore should have been viewed as a vulnerable young person who is being sexually exploited
- Would the same decision have been reached if John was a girl? Do we view gender differently in sexual exploitation situations?
- At 17 John is still a child. Was it right to accept his request that his parents were not contacted? As a parent, grandparent or carer would you not want and expect to be informed of something so significant for a child you care for? What right do we as professionals have, to take away a parents opportunity to protect and safeguard their own child?
- What impact does someone who is articulate, mature and clearly able to explain themselves and their thinking have on us as professionals? Are we more likely to be influenced into their way of thinking?
- The fact that John came into this 'profession' was due to being part of an 'agency' aged 16 and undertaking photographic work. This should have been investigated as this could be linked to other children and young people being sexually exploited
- Although the strategy discussions were seen as multi-agency, they did not involve education or sexual health. These organisations should always be included if involved with a child or young person

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