

## **Jack Serious Case Review - Statement from David Niven, Independent Chair of the Bradford Safeguarding Children Board**

“Bradford Safeguarding Children Board commissioned this review to identify what learning was needed from all the agencies who were involved with Jack and his family since his terrible experiences began in 2010. Even though knowledge of online risks and the dangers it can pose to young vulnerable people was limited at the time these crimes began, there were opportunities to intervene that were not taken. Having identified these, the Board accepts the recommendations of the review and has already challenged relevant agencies to address them.

“All but one of the 20 men convicted in this case were from outside Bradford. This illustrates the national and international dimensions of safeguarding in the online world. It shows how we need to work with agencies outside the district and that there needs to be clear national guidance on how to best protect young people online.

“Online grooming and sexual exploitation is now among the highest priorities for agencies charged with safeguarding and there is a need to continually assess our approach to online safety within the context of an ever-changing online environment. Currently, there are around 400 plus arrests every month and over 100,000 “non-contact” offenders identified by the police national lead. We know that three to four-year-olds spend over 8 hours a week and 12 to 14 year-olds spend over 20 hours a week online nationally which shows how clear the potential risks are.

“The Board is committed to scrutinising the implementation of the Review’s recommendations and recently held a successful conference on online safety that proved both educational and productive.

“We are much more aware of the responsibilities that frontline services must have and the Board will oversee the action plans that are now in place to combat these challenges.

“Jack and his family endured considerable trauma and no one would wish that on others. Each agency has examined the part their staff played and the systems they have in place to protect young people. As the knowledge of the risks has increased over the last 5 years and the volume of legislation now reflects that improved awareness. Frontline workers from all agencies are putting that knowledge to good use through practice, better assessments and educational initiatives for young people, parents, staff and the wider community.

“Sadly, we cannot give any assurances that online grooming will stop, as we can’t control or predict the behaviour of predatory paedophiles who are as yet unidentified, but we can make the risk of it happening as low as possible.”

ENDS

28 June 2017