

Tackling child sexual exploitation

A resource pack for councils

Foreword

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a terrible crime with destructive and far reaching consequences for victims, their families, and society. It is not limited to any particular geography, ethnic or social background, and all councils should assume that CSE is happening in their area and take proactive action to prevent it.

This is not just a job for the lead member for children's services or the local director of children's services. This pack is aimed at elected members at all levels. We all have a role to play in keeping children safe, and councils cannot stamp out CSE without the help of the wider community. Councillors have a key role to play in this, and should not be afraid to raise these issues within the communities they represent.

Recent inquiries have again highlighted the scale of the problem, and local agencies risk seeming unaware of the true extent of CSE in their area. It is vital that all partners work closely together to develop and implement robust, coordinated activity at all stages of a child's journey, from identification to protection to treatment. Councils and their partners must use evidence and information to understand what is happening locally, develop a strategic response, support victims and facilitate police disruption activity and prosecutions.

Recent events have shown that all areas need to be prepared to respond to this challenge effectively, and there are many good examples of effective work to be found around the country for local government to share and learn from. It is vital that we learn from both mistakes and successes, and the case studies in this resource pack showcase

some of the work that is already underway to improve local practice. These cover initiatives such as community engagement, regional work across local authority boundaries, building effective multi-agency partnerships and commissioning independent audits of local practice.

We have also included a summary of the key learning to emerge from recent inquiries and reviews, and advice on key lines of enquiry for councillors to pursue when assessing the quality of local practice. The resources in this pack will be updated regularly, so please do check www.local.gov.uk/cse for the latest information – including some online resources that have not been included in this pack.

Child sexual exploitation is a sensitive and complex issue and I understand that it is not an easy subject to talk about, but it is essential that we do. No council can assume that this is not happening in their area, and no councillor should assume that someone else will make sure that the necessary responses are in place. Tackling child sexual exploitation must be a priority for all of us, and the resources in this pack highlight the very real difference that councils can make in preventing this awful crime – and the crucial role of councillors within this.



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Child sexual exploitation: an introduction

What is child sexual exploitation?

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (eg food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet or mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child or young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social, economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

What is the scale of CSE?

Recent high profile court cases, local inquiries and reports have raised awareness of the extent of child sexual exploitation. The Independent Inquiry into CSE in Rotherham estimated that 1400 children had been sexually exploited over the 16 year period covered by the Inquiry. Ann Coffey's report into CSE across Greater Manchester identified 260 'live' investigations into CSE in June 2014, with 14,712 recorded episodes

of children missing from home and care between January and September 2014.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner's two year Inquiry into CSE found that a total of 2,409 children were known to be victims of CSE by gangs and groups between August 2010 and October 2011; the equivalent of every pupil in three medium sized secondary schools¹. It is generally agreed that these figures are an under-estimate. With each new inquiry that is published, we are becoming more aware about the extent of CSE and the scale of this horrific form of abuse in our communities.

Why do I need to be aware?

CSE has a devastating impact on children, young people and their families. It should be a concern for everyone. CSE is largely a hidden crime, and raising awareness of this type of abuse is essential to preventing it and stopping it early when it does happen.

Councils play a crucial, statutory role in safeguarding children, including tackling child sexual exploitation. However, they cannot do this alone. It needs the cooperation of the wider community and our partner agencies. Councils can use their links with police, schools, health professionals, and community and faith groups to highlight the signs and ensure people know where to turn if they have concerns. We know child sexual

¹ Berelowitz, S. et al (2013). "If only someone had listened" The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report. London: Office of the Children's Commissioner. Rochdale Oxford www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743

exploitation is a difficult and unpleasant subject to discuss, but having these conversations is crucial to stamping it out.

Statutory responsibilities

The statutory responsibilities of local agencies, including councils, are set out in the 2009 supplementary guidance on CSE. The 2011 National Action Plan further clarifies these, and also brings together a range of commitments from national and local partners². Statutory requirements from these documents include:

- mechanisms should be in place to collect prevalence and monitor cases of CSE
 - CSE is assumed to be present, and is prioritised if believed to be a significant issue
 - preventative activity should be put in place, helping those being exploited and targeting perpetrators
 - Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) should have specific local procedures to cover CSE (eg a strategy).
 - children and young people should be involved in the drafting of CSE strategies
 - assess and identify patterns of exploitation (problem profiling) and amend interventions to reflect the local picture
 - training should include warning signs of CSE, how to report concerns, how to safeguard and how to prevent
 - training should also include advice on evidence gathering
 - awareness-raising activities should be aimed at young people and the general public, including where to obtain help and how to report
 - LSCB sub-groups should be established to lead on CSE, with close links to other groups (eg trafficking, missing children)
- LSCBs should ensure there is a lead person in each organisation to implement guidance
 - arrangements should be in place for either a dedicated coordinator or co-located team
 - arrangements should be in place for cross border working across neighbouring local authority areas
 - there should be periodic audits of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

² 2011 DfE National Action Plan www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-action-plan

Key lines of enquiry for all councillors

Evidence indicates that CSE is prevalent across the country, occurring in both rural and urban areas with perpetrators and victims coming from a range of social and ethnic backgrounds. All Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and councils should assume it is happening in their area, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary³.

The experiences of Rotherham go to demonstrate the key role that the leader of the council, the lead member for children's services, scrutiny committees and all councillors have in questioning and challenging responses to CSE in their local area.

The 2014 Communities and Local Government (CLG) Select Committee report, "CSE in Rotherham: Some Issues for Local Government"⁴, also highlights the vital role of scrutiny in challenging officers and the executive when there is evidence of a problem which the council has failed to address. All councillors should ask questions and ensure that plans are in place to raise awareness of CSE, understand what is happening, develop a strategic response, and support victims of exploitation and help to facilitate policing and prosecutions.

The following section suggests 'key questions to ask' of officers, the LSCB or other agencies, along with suggested points to look out for. It is not intended to be exhaustive,

3 [Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation 2009, Statutory Guidance \[www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance\]\(http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance\)](http://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance)

4 The Communities and Local Government Committee, (2014). Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham: Some Issues for Local Government. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomloc/648/648.pdf

and local approaches will of course vary, but instead aims to provide prompts to enable discussions about how the issue is being addressed locally.

1. What is the extent and profile of CSE in our local area? How do we know?

It is impossible to develop an effective response to CSE without a detailed understanding of the scale and nature of the problem locally. Learning from national studies can be a useful aid, but cannot substitute for an in-depth understanding of local trends. The LSCB should have a clear process in place for mapping the extent and profile of CSE in its area. The mapping process should include a profile of children identified as at risk, a profile of offenders and an understanding of 'hotspots' or vulnerable locations.

2. Do we have a local CSE strategy and action plan? Are these multi-agency and how is progress monitored? How does this link to other plans and strategies?

The need for local areas to have appropriate policies and procedures to tackle CSE is a common theme of national research and guidance. These must be specifically tailored to the needs of the local area, and should

provide a framework that allows all agencies (including the voluntary sector) to identify their role and understand how others will contribute to tackling CSE locally.

It is not enough to simply have a suite of plans in place – it is vital that they are working effectively, have full buy in from all agencies and are regularly reviewed and updated. Elected members should consider what mechanisms are in place to ensure that strategies are actually implemented in practice, and how their impact is evaluated. This is where council scrutiny panels or committees can play an important role in questioning strategies, plans and progress. It is also important to consider the extent to which CSE features in other council plans and strategies, and those of partner agencies. Is there sufficient join up with the overall CSE action plan and strategy?

3. How effective is the Local Safeguarding Children Board? Are all agencies engaged at a senior level, and is CSE an area for priority focus?

CSE cannot be tackled by one agency operating alone. They will hold only partial knowledge of the issues, and will be unable to deliver anything more than a partial response. Effective responses must be built on a holistic understanding of the problem, which will only come through a shared commitment to partnership working. A multi-agency response does not develop naturally, it must be systematically embedded at all levels and fully integrated through multi-agency forums and work plans.

The LSCB is the key body for fostering and co-ordinating this multi-agency work, and an ineffective LSCB will have a major impact on the extent to which a local area is able to tackle CSE in a coordinated way. This relies on full engagement from all partners at a senior level, and elected members should

question the extent to which this is the case in their local area. Do key partners such as the police and health provide consistent, high level representation at LSCB meetings, or do they regularly send junior substitutes? Statutory guidance, for example, is clear that the chief officer of police must be included on the LSCB. Is this case locally, and how often do they attend? How strong is voluntary sector engagement? To what extent are partners involved in the Board's wider work, chairing subgroups or taking actions. Is this a true partnership, or does one agency dominate proceedings?

Most LSCBs will also have a CSE subgroup of the main Board, or a subgroup that considers CSE as part of a wider remit – perhaps linked to missing children, or trafficking. Neither approach is preferable to the other, but it is important that the LSCB is able to demonstrate that the subgroup's work is both focussed and effective. The CSE sub-group should provide the LSCB with regular updates on actions taken and impact.

4. Does the relevant scrutiny panel receive the LSCB's annual report, and use this to challenge local priorities and outcomes?

Council scrutiny processes are a vital tool in holding the local partnership to account, and the annual report of the LSCB is a key document to consider when assessing the effectiveness of local work to tackle CSE. Reports should be outcomes focused, with a clear assessment of progress over the past year and identification of key priorities for the year ahead. These should be considered carefully by scrutiny members, and the panel should hold the Independent LSCB Chair to account for delivery.

5. What other multi-agency forums exist to facilitate joint working?

At an operational level, it is important to consider what other multi-agency forums are in place to encourage a holistic, coordinated response. Some areas have implemented regular multi-agency practitioner meetings with a specific focus on CSE, which can be a good way to keep a focus on local trends and profiles of both victims and offenders. Many areas have also introduced multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH) or similar, which co-locate partner agencies to encourage quicker and more effective information sharing from the point that a referral is received.

No individual system or structure should be seen as a silver bullet in improving responses on CSE, but it is important that members understand how these processes are contributing to wider strategic objectives and consider the impact that they have on local practice.

6. How is CSE incorporated into local training programmes, and who is able to access this training? Does this include training for a wider cohort than just those professionals working directly with children and young people, such as licensing officers, environmental health officers or elected members? Are outcomes measured, and are changes made as a result?

Tackling CSE requires all partners to understand how to identify children at risk, respond appropriately when concerns arise, and ultimately ensure that children are protected. A sustained programme of single and multi-agency training is central to this, and it is vital that knowledge is comprehensively disseminated across all channels of identification and response.

Local areas should think creatively about who should access this training, rather than simply focusing on social workers, teachers, health staff or police officers who work directly with children. Licensing officers, for example, will benefit from a working understanding of CSE risks when considering licensing applications; environmental health officers may identify potential victims of CSE when inspecting takeaway outlets; and some councils have begun to offer CSE training to all elected members. This is not to imply that this is the right approach for all areas, but there should be a clear understanding of the rationale behind offering (or not offering) training to specific groups.

The LSCB should have oversight of the local training offer, and members should question how this is operating in practice. Do all partners attend multi-agency training sessions, or is one agency conspicuously absent? Importantly, is there a robust mechanism in place for monitoring the outcomes of local CSE training beyond simply counting who attends each session? What has changed as a result?

7. Is an awareness raising programme in place for children, families and the wider community? Is this reaching the right people?

As with any form of child abuse, statutory services cannot tackle CSE without the support of the wider community. Social workers and police officers can only respond to issues that they are aware of and while

professionals such as teachers and health workers have a key role to play in identifying children at risk; it is within families and the wider community that many of the key risk indicators will first come to light. It is vital that everyone is aware of the signs of CSE and knows how to refer concerns through to the relevant agency. A coordinated awareness raising campaign is an essential means to achieving this.

Any awareness raising programme must be informed by a full understanding of the local context around CSE, and should be effectively targeted to take account of local profiles of victims and offenders. In some areas, this may involve a concerted effort to engage with particular ethnic groups; in others it may involve a targeted approach in particular wards. Members should question which groups, if any, are the particular focus for awareness raising around CSE and the rationale behind this and whether members can facilitate in engaging with particular communities.

Parents and carers should be central to an awareness raising programme, and should be equipped to understand the key risk factors that their children may exhibit. Awareness raising must also be targeted at children and young people themselves, most often through schools, to ensure they have a full understanding of the risk factors and the support available to them.

8. What support is available to current, potential and historic victims of CSE?

An effective awareness raising campaign will naturally increase the number of children and young people identified as potential or actual victims of CSE, and may also encourage adults who were abused as children to come forward for support. It is vital that sufficient services are in place to provide for the needs of these groups, and members should question what is currently available – and

whether there is sufficient capacity to meet expected demand.

CSE can have a devastating impact on a child's life, and victims may present with extremely complex needs. Services must be in place to meet these needs, and may include:

- individual therapeutic work
- group based therapeutic work
- family counselling
- youth work support
- education, training and employment support
- sexual health and relationship education
- drug and alcohol support
- supported placements.

This list is not exhaustive.

Learning and recommendations from recent inquiries

In 2014 the spotlight was again shone on local level accountability in tackling CSE, with the Independent Inquiry into CSE in Rotherham highlighting widespread failure to address sexual abuse across multiple agencies. In October 2014 the Coffey Report was published, reviewing the approach to CSE in Greater Manchester. It highlighted local gaps in services and made recommendations to agencies and government about the progress still needed to address sexual exploitation across Manchester.

November 2014 also saw the publication of the Ofsted thematic inspections of eight local councils. The thematic inspections came about as a direct consequence of the Rotherham Inquiry, and made recommendations to improve local practice. The Communities and Local Government Select Committee Inquiry into CSE in Rotherham also underlined lessons for local councils, making a number of recommendations, particularly about the role of council scrutiny.

Here we identify key issues raised in these reports that all councils should be aware of, alongside some of the themes outlined in the final report of the Children's Commissioner's inquiry into CSE in gangs and groups. We have also included learning identified by the National Working Group (NWG), a third sector organisation formed as a network of over 2500 practitioners working to tackle CSE, gleaned from a review of recommendations from a large number of CSE research reports and inquiries.

The recommendations below are not an exhaustive list, but draw together common findings:

- focus on victims
- engaging with all communities
- better awareness raising and education for professionals and the wider community
- training for all professionals
- professional attitudes and use of language
- leadership, challenge and scrutiny
- coordinated, strategic responses and performance management
- disruption and prosecution.

Focus on victims

Ongoing support services

Ongoing support and therapeutic interventions that children affected by CSE may need is a recurring theme. Interventions should not be offered on a short-term basis but for extended periods of time. Interventions may include formal counselling or informal outreach based project work. Ofsted found that referral pathways to access therapeutic support were not always well developed and that CSE cases working with victims should not be closed too soon. The Coffey report suggested that further research is needed on the availability of counselling services for victims and those at risk of CSE. Councils should make every effort to reach out to victims of CSE who are not yet in touch with services and LSCBs should work with agencies to secure the delivery of post-abuse support services.

Ensuring all possible victims are considered

The Coffey report suggested that local strategies and action plans should include references to boys and young men, ethnic minority groups and groups with learning difficulties, to ensure that they are represented and not ignored in any local response, strategy or action plan. All victims of CSE must be considered in local responses.

Missing children

Ofsted raised concerns about children who go missing, concluding that not enough children were having a return interview following a missing episode. It was also found that information was not being cross-referenced, particularly if there were short missing episodes, from school for example, where children were only missing for a part of the school day, which is a CSE risk indicator.

Engaging with all communities

The Rotherham Inquiry made it clear that the council had failed to work with and engage local minority ethnic communities and in particular the women of those communities on the issue of CSE and other forms of abuse.

Both the Manchester and Rotherham reports made a series of recommendations about engaging with all communities. For example, LSCBs and all partner agencies should improve their methods of communicating with, engaging and working in partnership with all communities, including socially advantaged, disadvantaged, white and minority ethnic communities to raise awareness of CSE and address the issue of underreporting of CSE and abuse. Councils and their partners need to engage with local community organisations such as women's groups, youth groups and religious groups. Learning should be disseminated to parents to help build the resilience of children and young people and prevent them from becoming victims or offenders in online and street grooming circles.

It is important to treat parents as equal partners in most instances, to improve the understanding of CSE and minimise the risk to children and young people.

Better awareness raising and education: for professionals and the wider community

More information needs to be provided to the public and professionals about CSE. Those people in frontline community roles, such as pharmacists, school nurses, bus drivers, housing officers, shopkeepers, hoteliers and taxi drivers, should be made aware of the signs and what to do if they suspect CSE. Awareness raising campaigns also need to be clear that CSE affects both boys and young men as well as girls and young women. Councils and their partners should engage the media in a more proactive way to raise awareness about CSE and the effect on victims. Ofsted's report commended the level and type of awareness raising campaigns to safeguard children in the areas it inspected.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner recommended that relationships and sex education must be provided by trained practitioners in every educational setting for all children and young people. This must be part of a holistic/whole-school approach to child protection that includes internet safety and all forms of bullying and harassment and the getting and giving of consent.

Leadership, challenge and scrutiny

The Rotherham Inquiry found that "the Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board and its predecessor oversaw the development of good inter-agency policies and procedures applicable to CSE. The weakness in their approach was that members of the Safeguarding Board rarely checked whether these were being implemented or whether they were working." The report drew attention

to the vital importance of the challenge and scrutiny function of the LSCB and of the council itself to ensure robust responses to tackling CSE.

The Ofsted thematic inspection report highlighted that, in areas where CSE had been made a priority, local strategies were better developed and linked in to other key local strategies, such as gangs and licensing. Senior leaders and politicians generally had a better understanding of the issues in those areas, and elected members were recognised as challenging and scrutinising the work of professionals effectively. Ofsted suggested that in areas where the LSCB CSE strategy was underdeveloped and the financial and resource implications of tackling CSE were unknown: “elected members must urgently improve the quality and level of scrutiny and challenge to ensure that local authority senior leaders and partners are coordinating an effective response.”

The CLG Select Committee Inquiry recommended that any council where there are credible allegations or suspicions of child abuse must investigate them and conduct a review of the response and local approach. The report also raised a number of concerns about the role of scrutiny in Rotherham, citing that nobody had checked the quality or actual implementation of strategic plans. The Committee noted that, particularly where councils have a single party predominance or where there may be strong and dominating personalities, the role of scrutiny is essential. The scrutiny function should be separated from the executive of the council to ensure there is robust challenge when there is evidence of an acute problem which the executive and lead officers have failed to address. There were also concerns about the skills and level of training for executive councillors, who were not challenging low quality reports by officers.

In our ‘Key lines of enquiry’ section of this report, we suggest questions that lead members, scrutiny chairs and all councillors should be asking of their officers and partner agencies to ensure that CSE is being addressed effectively at the local level.

Professional attitudes and use of language

The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry and report recommended that the use of the term ‘child prostitution’ should be removed from all government documents and strategies. The recent Coffey report also recommended that there should be no references to child prostitution in any documentation. This dated language has been found in a number of areas and councils should review all of their documentation related to CSE and ensure that references to child prostitution are removed.

Coordinated, strategic approaches and performance management

Councils and LSCBs require a strategic approach, with coordinated, joined up local responses to address CSE. Recommendations include joint commissioning arrangements for CSE, sexual assault, rape and domestic abuse support services; common thresholds for interventions across agencies; clear referral pathways; pooling of budgets across the police, council children’s services and health services.

Ofsted’s thematic inspection raised concerns that not all local areas were collecting and sharing the information needed to have an accurate picture of CSE in their area. There was a lack of evaluation about how effectively CSE cases were being managed, and therefore this could not be used to improve current practice. Ofsted highlighted a number of concerns, including: not using formal child protection procedure in cases where children and young people were identified at risk of CSE; screening and assessment tools not being used consistently; management oversight of cases not being consistent and children in need plans not being robust enough. They also suggested that dedicated CSE teams did not necessarily mean that children received improved services, as specialist CSE support was also needed in addition to a social worker.

There are a series of recommendations from the recent reports for LSCBs, including:

- The LSCB should develop locally agreed clear information sharing protocols to ensure that children at risk can be identified at an early stage.
- LSCBs must undertake scoping activity in the local area to identify the level of need in their area and ensure that service provision effectively supports young people who experience both running away and CSE.
- Every Local Safeguarding Children Board should review their strategic and operational plans and procedures against the seven principles, nine foundations and the See Me, Hear Me Framework of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's final report, ensuring they are meeting their obligations to children and young people and the professionals who work with them. Gaps should be identified and plans developed for delivering effective practice in accordance with the evidence. The effectiveness of plans, procedures and practice should be subject to an on-going evaluation and review cycle.
- CSE should be included in local performance frameworks to ensure it is a priority for all agencies.
- Governance arrangements should be clear between the Health and Wellbeing Board, the Community Safety Board and the Local Safeguarding Children Board, to ensure a coordinated approach and ownership of the local response.

Training for all professionals

The National Working Group Network report, citing Barnardo's recommendations, suggested that training should be developed for frontline staff in services for children and young people to recognise the warning signs and risk factors of child sexual exploitation and how to respond using child protection procedures. This should include understanding the elements of grooming and coercion so that a child or young person's behaviour is not dismissed as rebellious or somehow consenting to the abuse. It should also include an understanding of the sexual exploitation of Black, Asian and minority ethnic victims and different types of victim-offender models. Information about the behaviour of people who sexually offend should also be incorporated into training and awareness-raising activities.

Ofsted suggested that existing training for professionals was of a high standard, but wasn't always reaching or targeting the right people. Councils were not found to be evaluating the impact of the training to find out whether it was making children and young people safer. Some staff, such as those working in education were not always attending or being given training. The report praised councils where the training was compulsory for elected members and professionals who work with children and young people, and saw a more coordinated approach to tackling CSE in those areas where this was the case.

Disruption and prosecution

Reports have raised concerns regarding the number of allegations made about CSE and perpetrators and the number of associated prosecutions. There are a number of recommendations for the police, the Crown Prosecution Service and others, but for councils it was made clear that not all areas are making best use of the full range of powers available to them to disrupt offenders.

For example some areas were not issuing abduction notices where they may have been appropriate to safeguard children from sexual exploitation. Multi-agency working and information sharing across partners, including with the police, was seen as a vital approach to improve disruption activity.

Child sexual exploitation: myth vs reality

Recent media attention on specific cases of CSE has led to sector wide concerns that stereotypes and myths about this crime could lead to a narrow focus on one particular form of CSE. The danger of this is that attention can be diverted from crimes which do not appear to match that model, with the risk of victims not receiving the help they need.

There are many myths surrounding CSE and the examples used here are taken from the interim report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's (OCC) Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups. They are all real, though the names have been changed⁵.

10 myths and the reality

Myth #1:

There are very few 'models' of CSE

Reality: The grooming and sexual exploitation of young people can take many different forms. CSE can be carried out by individuals (lone perpetrators), by street gangs or by groups. It can be motivated by money ie commercial sexual exploitation, which involves the exchange of a child (for sexual purposes) for the financial gain of the perpetrator or for non-commercial reasons such as sexual gratification or a belief in entitlement to sex. It can occur in a wide range of settings, but the common theme in all cases is the imbalance of power and the

control exerted on young people. The stories below highlight just some of the different models that exist.

Sophie's story

'Sophie's' mum, Linda, has been known to a local violence against women service for a number of years because of the violence she has experienced from multiple partners. Sophie is a white British young woman and she was 13 years old when Linda met Ray. Ray, who was also white British, moved in with Linda and was violent towards both her and her children. Ray began to invite his friends around to the house. They, in turn, were abusive to Linda and her children. Following this, Ray offered Sophie as a sexual commodity to his friends on a regular basis, and threatened Linda and Sophie with violence if Sophie did not comply.

Site visit 4 evidence

⁵ The myths in this report were put together for a 2013 briefing in conjunction with the NWG Network: Tackling CSE and the Office of the Children's Commissioner. Berelowitz, S. et al (2012) "I Thought I was the Only One. The Only One in the World" The Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups Interim Report. http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_636

Teegan's story

'Teegan', a white British young woman, was sexually exploited from the age of 12 years old. From the age of 13 Teegan was taken by a Turkish man to a variety of 'parties' across England that she reports were in nice houses and in some cases described as 'mansions'. In these houses Teegan would be raped by several men, from a range of ethnicities, who were paying to use her. Teegan described a book being available with photographs and ages of all of the girls being sexually exploited by this particular group. Men could choose which girls they wanted. Teegan reported men paying those who were exploiting her up to £500 for an hour with her. Groups of men could also request one girl to share between them over a night, where the rape of the girl would be filmed. The operation involved men working the streets to pick up vulnerable girls, forming 'relationships' with them by grooming them and then passing them on to the men who controlled the business. If Teegan ever refused to comply, she would be beaten and her family threatened. Following the abuse, Teegan took several overdoses, was placed in secure accommodation, and self-harmed by cutting and ligaturing sometimes on a daily basis. Teegan described the abuse that she experienced as serious and organised, and is unwilling to make a formal complaint for fear of repercussions from those involved in the operation.

CSEGG interview with a young person

Sahida's story

'Sahida', a 17-year-old British Pakistani young woman, made an allegation of sexual abuse against a family member. As a result she was threatened with a forced marriage. Sahida's family claim they want to remove her from the country to curb her 'wild behaviour'. Following these threats Sahida began spending time with older males, described by professionals as 'Asian', and was moved to multiple locations by them. Sahida is now pregnant as a result of the sexual exploitation she has experienced. Family members have physically assaulted Sahida as a punishment for the pregnancy.

Call for evidence submission

Myth #2:

It only happens in certain ethnic/cultural communities

Reality: Both perpetrators and victims are known to come from a variety of ethnic and cultural backgrounds. CSE is not a crime restricted to British Pakistani Muslim males or white British girls, despite media coverage of high profile cases. Site visits carried out by the OCC inquiry identified perpetrators and victims of CSE from a wide range of ethnic backgrounds. A thematic assessment by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre identified that "Research tells us that the majority of known perpetrators in the UK of this crime are lone white males".

However, it is important that councils and partners do not shy away from confronting the reality of CSE in their area. Through the LSCB, a clear profile of local need should be developed that clearly identifies the prevalence and profile of sexual exploitation taking place. If a particular group or community is disproportionately involved in the abuse of children and young people, this must be acknowledged and tackled.

Myth #3:
It only happens to children in care

Reality: The majority of victims of CSE are living at home. However, looked after children account for a disproportionate number of victims and can be particularly vulnerable. An estimated 20-25 per cent per cent of victims are looked after, compared with 1 per cent per cent of the child population being in care. This does, however, leave around 80 per cent per cent of victims who are not in the care system.

Myth #4:
It only happens to girls and young women

Reality: Boys and young men are also targeted as victims of CSE by perpetrators. However, they may be less likely to disclose offences or seek support, often due to stigma, prejudice or embarrassment or the fear that they will not be believed. They may feel that they are able to protect themselves, but in cases of CSE physical stature is irrelevant due to the coercion and manipulation used.

Randall's story

'Randall' is a 15 year old boy, of mixed ethnic heritage, and described by professionals as 'exploring his sexuality'. He is said to be unaware of safe routes to meeting other gay young people. Professionals report Randall has been seen hanging around at bus stops. He has disclosed to professionals that he has been targeted by groups of men who are grooming him to exchange sex for alcohol, cigarettes and acceptance. Professionals are working with Randall to try to keep him away from areas of risk, but they are aware he continues to go missing and are unable to account for his whereabouts on all occasions.

Site visit 8 evidence

Myth #5:
It is only perpetrated by men

Reality: There is evidence that women can be perpetrators of this crime too. They may use different grooming methods but are known to target both boys and girls. In relation to group and gang related CSE, the OCC inquiry found that the vast majority involved only men and, where women are involved, they are a small minority. Where women or girls were identified as perpetrators, their role was primarily, though not exclusively, to procure victims. Women and girls who were perpetrating were identified during the inquiry's site visits tended to be young, had histories of being sexually exploited themselves and of abusing others in tandem with the group or gang that had previously sexually exploited them. Women and girls directly involved in sexually exploiting children were either in relationships with men who were perpetrators or related to, or friends with, men and boys who were abusers.

Myth #6:
It is adults abusing children

Reality: Peer-on-peer child sexual exploitation happens too and this can take various different forms. For example, young people are sometimes used to 'recruit' others, by inviting them to locations for parties where they will then be introduced to adults or forced to perform sexual acts on adults. Technology can also play a significant role, with young people known to use mobile technology as a way of distributing images of abuse.

Rebecca's story

Rebecca is a 15-year-old black British girl, and has reported she was forced by a group of girls to have sex with a boy in the girls' toilets at their school; otherwise they would beat her up. The group of perpetrators were made up of three 14-year-old girls and one 14-year-old boy, all of whom were black British. One of the girls is described as the 'instigator' of the assault. Another girl filmed the assault on her mobile phone. The assault took place as part of a pattern of ongoing bullying of Rebecca. She was anally raped by the 14-year-old boy. She had never had sex before this assault.

Police Case File Submission

Myth #7:

It only happens in large towns and cities

Reality: Evidence shows that CSE can and does happen in all parts of the country. CSE is not restricted to urban areas such as large towns and cities but does in fact happen in rural areas such as villages and coastal areas. High profile police operations in areas as diverse as Rochdale, Cornwall and Oxfordshire are clear examples of this. Young people can also be transported between towns, cities, villages etc., for the purpose of being sexually exploited and this is known as trafficking within the UK (an offence punishable by up to 14 years imprisonment).

Myth #8:

Children are either victims or perpetrators

Reality: The OCC inquiry found that around 6 per cent per cent of victims reported in their call for evidence were also identified as perpetrators. It is important to keep in mind that, although children may appear to be willing accomplices in the abuse of other children, this should be seen in the context of the controls exerted by the perpetrator.

Mitchell's story

'Mitchell' is a white British 17 year old boy, and has been known to the youth offending service for several years. From the age of 12 Mitchell was seen spending time with white British men, some of whom were believed to be sexually exploiting young women in the local area. Some of these older males bought Mitchell trainers, taught him how to comb his hair in particular ways and how to speak to girls. The older men also introduced Mitchell to some of the girls that they were sexually exploiting. At one point, he was found locked in a garage where one of the older males had brought young female victims of abuse. Mitchell gradually became involved in the sexual exploitation of young women in the local area, and would pass them onto his older peers.

Site visit 2 evidence

Myth #9:

Parents should know what is happening and should be able to stop it

Reality: Parents may be unlikely to be able to identify what is happening: they may suspect that something is not right but may not be in a position to stop it due to the control, threats or fear of the perpetrators. There can be risks to parents when seeking to protect their children and they can need support as well as their children. In some cases, there can be an overlap with abuse within the family and this could be a reason why parents do not intervene.

Myth #10:**Children and young people can consent to their own exploitation**

Reality: A child cannot consent to their own abuse. Firstly, the law sets down 16 as the age of consent to any form of sexual activity. Secondly, any child under-18 cannot consent to being trafficked for the purposes of exploitation. Thirdly, regardless of age a person's ability to give may be affected by a range of other issues including influence of drugs, threats of violence, grooming, a power imbalance between victim and perpetrators. This is why a 16- or 17-year-old can be sexually exploited even though they are old enough to consent to sexual activity.

Local case studies

Blackburn with Darwen Council: Engage Team

Background

Operation Engage was a police led operation set up in 2005, focusing on an area of Lancashire where there were a large number of missing children. Operation Engage worked with a total of 30 children, all girls, over a period of three years. The team built up ongoing, trusting and supportive relationships with the young people, who over time disclosed a range of sexual and violent abuse. All of the children (bar one) were looked after, and mostly cared for in children's homes.

The project

In 2008 the Engage Team, a co-located multi-agency response to tackle CSE, was established by Blackburn with Darwen Safeguarding Children Board to continue the work initiated under Project Engage. The team are co-located in one building and key partners are social care, police and health. Voluntary sector service providers are also a key delivery partner. The team consists of: one team manager; six young people's workers (from the council, Barnardo's and Brook); one social worker; one administrator; two nurses; one PACE worker (Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation, parent support worker); one Princes Trust worker; one detective sergeant; four detective constables and one missing from home coordinator (police). Many external partners are also involved in the work of the team, with virtual support for the wider group of partners who have weekly team meetings eg youth offending, schools, the women's centre, drug and alcohol service and licensing services.

The team has developed over time, becoming more specialised in CSE services from 2009 onwards. Understanding of patterns of abuse, risk factors and warning signs of CSE has developed over time and the team approach reflects this. Since April 2014 the team has additionally been responsible for all interviews when a child returns from a missing episode. The team are independent of the care planning pathway process for 11 -18 year olds, and only involve social workers when there is a clear need, for example where there are cases of neglect at home. CSE demands a non-stigmatising response, so young people's workers are the preferred main point of contact.

The team has access to information on databases from all agencies; the information is shared openly (and legally) in order to protect children. The team reports are always reported up to the LSCB. A work culture where everyone has a genuine voice, where all agencies are equal partners, works well in Blackburn with Darwen; there is no single dominating partner and everyone has ownership of the issues.

Impact

Current key challenges for the team are to ensure that they remain child focussed and non-stigmatising, whilst also aligning processes, such as the recording and evidencing required by social work procedures. Incorporating processes, without letting services be dictated by that process has been a key challenge, avoiding delays in supporting the child or loss of the sensitive approach.

The team has achieved a number of successful prosecutions, resulting in a total of 700 years in custody for perpetrators. This accounts for sexual offences specifically, and does not include other disruption activity such as prosecution for offences such as drugs related charges or abduction order notices. Prosecutions are led by police staff in the Engage Team. The Engage Team worked with the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to assess how they could gain convictions using robust evidence, and consequently the team now looks for evidence which supports the young person's story, rather than identifying the gaps and weaknesses. A young person's key worker will prepare the child for the court process, throughout the case, including post-trial; and a PACE worker provides support for parents. The team have a 98 per cent success rate. Over time the team are now predominantly dealing with grooming offences; concentrating on prevention and disruption activity.

The Engage Team Manager, Nick McPartlan, advises that "senior leaders and politicians need to be open, honest and transparent and demonstrate flexibility when addressing the abuse. Political sign-up, resources and capacity are vital."

Further information

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Calderdale Council: Co-located specialist CSE team and daily intelligence sharing meetings

Background

In Calderdale, prior to June 2014, children who were identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation were experiencing different levels of service provision across the first response and locality teams. Communication between the key agencies involved in service delivery was sometimes a barrier in ensuring young people received a swift joint approach to address their needs. The agencies delivering relevant services were based in different locations and not always available to respond immediately.

The project

Since June 2014, police officers and social workers have been co-located in a specialist CSE team at the police station. Other key agencies such as The Children's Society's 'Safe Hands', health, youth services and the youth offending team are also part of the virtual team. Daily briefings are held and any intelligence is shared immediately so robust action can take place to ensure children identified at risk of CSE are safeguarded. The roles and responsibilities of the police officers and social workers within the team are clearly set out, as are the responsibilities of the key partner agencies working with the team. The wider operational group of partner agencies now attend a weekly meeting so that all information can be shared in a more timely and effective way.

Impact

The new approach has led to a number of improvements in local work to protect children and young people from CSE:

- all new cases are discussed at the next daily briefing and multi-agency decisions are made regarding the appropriate action to be taken

- fewer transfer points are promoting greater consistency in services for children and young people
- there is improved communication and joint working between social care, the police and the voluntary sector service provider and an increased number of joint visits between the three key agencies
- the continuity of shared intelligence and response delivered by social care staff within the team has improved
- the team provides CSE expertise, support and where required, joint visits to children on the local CSE Matrix who have remained with other social care teams
- there is CSE social care support and guidance in respect of thresholds regarding young people who are on the CSE Matrix
- the team ensures that all operational group recordings and intelligence is shared with other social care staff and recorded on the child's electronic file
- social care staff are now a part of the preventative programme delivered to other agencies.

Many of the actions being taken in Calderdale are recent processes, and results and improvements in processes are already being seen. The council and partners acknowledge that there are still areas for further action including the continual review of team, the processes in place and resources available and needed.

Further information

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Essex Safeguarding Children Board: CSE champions

Background

Essex Safeguarding Children Board (ESCB) formed a strategic group with neighbouring local authorities, Southend and Thurrock, to ensure a joint approach to child sexual exploitation (CSE) across the County.

One of the key outcomes from the strategic group was to develop a CSE champion role, and each organisation was subsequently asked to nominate a lead within their agency.

The project

The key features of the CSE champion's role are to:

- keep up to date with developments, policy and procedures in relation to CSE
- act as a point of contact for disseminating information from the ESCB
- provide advice and signposting in relation to individual cases.

The CSE champions are expected to be familiar with the Essex CSE risk assessment toolkit, know how to submit intelligence to Essex Police, cascade the learning from the CSE champions training and provide ongoing updates to their teams.

Impact

There have been about 300 CSE champions trained from various organisations across Essex; some organisations have more than one champion because of their size.

Currently the format of the champions training comprises a full day, with the first half delivered by local practitioners from the Essex Police child sexual exploitation triage team and the Essex County Council CSE lead. The afternoon session is delivered by a psychotherapist who focuses on brain science, understanding perpetrators and making sense of responses of victims.

Going forward, Essex intends to make this a half day training session facilitated by the police and council with input from a voluntary sector organisation. The training will be more focussed on how to apply the tools available in Essex and will be a practical session using case studies.

One of the biggest outstanding challenges is being able to meet the demand for training, particularly as it is being delivered by operational staff and therefore has to fit in with the demands of their day job.

The champion role is an important mechanism for the ESCB, helping to raise awareness about CSE, the Essex risk assessment toolkit, and the importance of submitting the right intelligence to the police. Champions also act as a key communication route through the agencies to staff teams and the community.

As a way of providing ongoing support, the ESCB has recently completed four CSE Champions networking forums in each quadrant area, which have been well attended. This is part of the ongoing commitment to supporting CSE champions in their workplace.

Further information

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Greater Manchester: Project Phoenix, It's not okay campaign

Background

Project Phoenix emerged from the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership in April 2012, following a scoping exercise into existing practice in relation to child sexual exploitation. The project was partly a response to high profile cases in Rochdale, Stockport and other parts of the country and recognition from all partners that a more effective joined-up approach was needed to tackle CSE. Project Phoenix was Greater Manchester's single, collaborative approach which aimed to improve the response to CSE strategically, operationally and tactically.

The project

Phoenix is a key priority for the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities' (AGMA) Wider Leadership Team. The Phoenix Executive Board is chaired by the City Director for Salford City Council and the Board feeds directly into the AGMA Wider Leadership Team and the Greater Manchester Leaders' Forum. Tackling CSE is also a priority for the Police and Crime Commissioner and Greater Manchester Police.

The main objectives of Phoenix are to:

- raise standards across all partners in dealing with CSE
- improve cross-border working between local authorities in Greater Manchester

- improve consistency across Greater Manchester
- achieve buy in from all key partners
- raise awareness of CSE with the public, professionals, businesses, young people, etc
- encourage people to report concerns in relation to CSE.

Under Phoenix there are now specialist CSE teams in place in each of the ten districts of Greater Manchester. Each team works with young people being sexually exploited and offers a joined-up, multi-agency response. Prior to Phoenix, there were only two such CSE teams in the region. Phoenix provides advice, support and guidance to these teams to ensure that all professionals are working to a consistent set of standards and procedures to improve services offered to victims and those at risk of CSE.

Impact

One of the main achievements of Phoenix has been to develop and roll out a consistent approach to measuring a young person's risk of CSE. Regardless of where a young person lives in Greater Manchester they will receive the same CSE assessment, meaning that all local authorities and key partners are talking about the same thing when it comes to CSE risk.

The scoring system of the tool allows for professional judgements to be made and is child focussed. The information can be collated and sent to LSCBs in a consistent way and is used to develop a better picture of the scale of CSE across Greater Manchester. The project has also developed local information sharing protocols, education guidance and guidelines around disruption activity.

According to Damian Dallimore, Project Phoenix Manager, "Since its inception in 2012 Phoenix has made great strides in the services we offer to young people affected by CSE and their families. To do this we need the support of the public, professionals, businesses and young people, to contact us with any concerns they may have in relation to young people being targeted and exploited in this way and I would encourage everyone to have a look at our website www.itsnotokay.co.uk where you can find out more about CSE as well as help and advice about where to report it and steps you can take to ensure young people are kept safe."

Further information

The Project Phoenix website, including campaign materials and a range of resources for young people, parents and professionals can be found at: www.itsnotokay.co.uk

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Pan-London Operating Protocol for CSE

Background

The Metropolitan Police Service (MPS) first set up a London wide CSE team in 2012, and the Pan-London Operating Protocol to tackle CSE emerged from the work of this regional team. Detective Superintendent Terry Sharpe chaired a multi-agency group and researched best practice in tackling and disrupting CSE from other areas, and those who had managed successful disruption and prosecution of offenders.

The project

The Pan London Operating Protocol brought together a set of procedures on how to tackle CSE for all 32 London Boroughs, to ensure a consistent approach was being taken across the capital. The Protocol was originally trialled in the summer of 2013 to ensure it was fit for purpose and the final version was launched in February 2014 in London's City Hall. The primary aim of the Protocol is to safeguard children and young people across London from sexual exploitation, and all London boroughs and LSCBs are signed up to the Protocol.

The Protocol is designed to raise awareness, safeguard children and young people and enable identification of perpetrators of CSE and to bring them to prosecution. To do this local interventions and disruptions are being put in place. It can often take a long time to gain the trust of a victim to get them to disclose what has happened to them, so in the meantime creative disruptions are put in place to stop or prevent the abuse from happening. For example a CSE investigation into one perpetrator led to their vehicle registration number being added to the police database. As a result the perpetrator was pulled over and firearms were found in the back of their vehicle. The perpetrator is now in prison, but is not aware that he was stopped as a result of a child sexual exploitation investigation.

The Protocol has established three categories of CSE. The first category, Level 1, is used when there is suspicion of CSE, but no evidence as to what is happening. This is recorded on the police system, so that if there are further suspicions at a later point in time, then there is more evidence to support the case. The information also helps to identify perpetrators and potential 'hotspots.' Level 1 cases are dealt with by local borough police officers or the appropriate statutory agency who is best placed to provide clarity regarding these suspicions. Details of children and young people and with suspected perpetrators are entered onto the Police National Database (PND). Therefore, if a frontline officer finds a young person in a known 'hotspot' area for CSE, or if they stop a car and have concerns, they will be able to take the appropriate action to safeguard the child even when no offences have been disclosed. The level 1 category was not previously recorded by the police in London on a crime recording database, as no crime has been known to be committed at this stage. Level 2 and 3 cases are more serious and dealt with by the centralised MPS CSE Team.

Impact

The Protocol is helping to raise awareness of CSE, particularly amongst frontline police officers. Two videos have been shown to all frontline officers, including telephone staff handling 101 calls. This includes a video outlining the warning signs of CSE. The mnemonic 'SAFEGUARD' has also been created to help officers remember the warning signs along with an app that can be downloaded to assist in remembering the signs. The second film highlights the approach taken by Thames Valley Police in the 'Operation Bullfinch' investigation and shares a victim's perspective of how she was dealt with by the police during her ordeal. This is followed up with a one hour training session, which all frontline Met police officers have attended.

The Protocol has led to improved awareness of CSE amongst the community, particularly with hoteliers and other local businesses such as taxi firms. For example, the London Borough of Waltham Forest has recently launched 'Operation Makesafe,' a partnership initiative with the local business community to identify potential CSE victims and, where necessary, to deploy police officers to intervene before any harm occurs to a child or young person. Operation Makesafe has involved an awareness raising marketing campaign and training for local hoteliers, off licences and taxi firms, to recognise the CSE warning signs and what action should be taken if CSE is suspected. As a result of the training a local firm agreed to donate marketing materials, such as hotel door adverts, posters and car mirror hangers for taxis, for free.

According to Detective Superintendent Terry Sharpe “senior level engagement across partner agencies in delivering the protocol makes a big impact in tackling CSE.”

Further information

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The Pan-London Operating Protocol can be found at: <http://content.met.police.uk/Article/Launch-of-The-London-Child-Sexual-Exploitation-Operating-Protocol/1400022286691/1400022286691>

Portsmouth: CSE strategy and awareness raising campaign

Background

The Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board set up a CSE subcommittee in 2012 and tasked the council in early 2014 with developing the local CSE strategy. The strategy has been implemented across partners alongside a local CSE action plan and risk assessment tool.

The project/strategy

In conjunction between the Portsmouth LSCB and the Safer Portsmouth Partnership, a marketing campaign was launched in 2013, using a web based approach and traditional billboard and bus adverts to promote ‘Is this Love?’ The campaign looked at the aspects of a healthy relationship, highlighting the concerns about both domestic abuse and sexual exploitation of young people. The campaign also tied into the Safer Portsmouth Partnership priority of addressing high rates of domestic abuse in the area, particularly amongst young people. It is important to distinguish CSE from other forms of abuse such as domestic violence, however, there may sometimes be links and similar indicators, so all teams in Portsmouth are joined up to ensure appropriate information sharing and plans are in place to safeguard children and young people identified as at risk of abuse.

In addition to the publicity work, a theatre based production for young people, Chelsea’s Choice, was run in Portsmouth secondary schools to help young people explore the risks and warning signs of CSE. In early 2014 an awareness campaign was also delivered across local services including GPs and the police, this included a CSE conference for local agencies.

A risk assessment tool was developed as part of the local action plan, based on the Derby Model, and adapted to the local circumstances. This was recently implemented for local agencies to help identify children at risk of CSE. Spot the signs training was also delivered to professionals across the partner agencies. In early 2014 a local CSE strategy was developed; the strategy is a short document, used as a practical tool for front line workers, particularly to give local context to the CSE action plan. The CSE sub-committee of the Portsmouth Safeguarding Children Board has also established a multi-agency operational panel to ensure the coordination of the identification, assessment, and planning for children and young people at risk of or experiencing CSE.

Impact

As a result of the specific local focus and joined up approach to tackling CSE; there have been huge improvements in identification and support for children and young people at risk of CSE.

In Portsmouth a Joint Action Team, with co-located services including social workers, police, health, a domestic abuse worker, targeted youth support worker and Barnardo’s, lead on

working with young people identified as being at risk of CSE or trafficking, as well as children and young people who have returned from a missing episode. The work of the team feeds directly into the multi-agency CSE operational group comprising health, police and children's services. The group regularly shares information on the age profiles of victims, gender and ethnicity information, as well as whether children are looked after by the local authority and any professional from any team can raise concerns they have about a specific young person. Details of suspected perpetrators, locations of concern and disruption work are also shared within the group. The meetings give the police the opportunity to share 'soft information' of interest, for example where shops may have been selling legal highs.

The Portsmouth CSE strategy provides direction and filters down to the front line to give focus on CSE, and has influenced changes in practice, for example the risk assessment toolkit is being updated to reflect recent national level developments in CSE. The CSE action plan and strategy is in the process of being refreshed to ensure that it incorporates the wider approach to missing, exploited and trafficked children and young people. Portsmouth Council, the LSCB and the police have also been working on an improved data gathering process for children who go missing. Incidences of children who go missing are currently under-reported, and the council and key partners are working to understand the levels of need of children who have been trafficked.

The refresh of the CSE strategy and action plan is examining in closer detail the impact and outcomes of the local approach, for example, many local indicators are moving in the right direction but the committee is now evaluating impact to establish whether the improvements are a direct result of the local action plan, awareness raising and disruption activities.

Nicola Waterman, Strategy Manager, says that "commitment of all partners is essential in developing a CSE strategy and action plan. Involving all partners from the outset, particularly where there are a number of health agencies, is vital."

Further information

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Slough Council: Licensing 'splinter' group

Background

In late 2013, Slough LSCB and Thames Valley Police agreed to work together on a CSE awareness raising campaign for licensed premises. A 'licensing splinter' group was established, linked to the CSE sub-group and consisting of representation from Slough Borough Council licensing team, an Engage worker (CSE specialist team) and a Thames Valley Police Inspector. The group continues to meet on a bi-monthly basis; their work is strongly supported by councillors and forms a key part of the overall communications package on CSE awareness raising.

The project

In late 2013, the licensing group wrote a short article about CSE, which was published in the Slough Taxi & Private Hire Newsletter. CSE has consistently featured in subsequent newsletters to re-enforce awareness, and taxi firms and ranks are a key focus for the 'Licensed Premises' working group. CSE is now mainstreamed into the work of the council licensing team, which has been significant in helping to maintain momentum on issues such as delivery of a CSE

presentation to the Pub Watch Scheme members in December 2013. The three teams involved in the working group set about coordinating premises visits in specific areas, and team members unfamiliar with CSE were trained and briefed on the key messages and action to take. A script with consistent messaging was developed to relay to local businesses. Thames Valley Police and the licensing team have now visited all local hotels and B&B's. The Engage team and police community support officers visited other local businesses and the council's food and safety and trading standards officers are also raising awareness at fast food outlets and other retail outlets during routine inspections.

During visits to local businesses, awareness raising packs were distributed. Hotels and B&Bs received a Say Something If You See Something (SSIYSS) poster, Children's Commissioner CSE indicators, a letter from the Slough LSCB Chair and a Barnardo's leaflet.

Impact

Following each 'wave' of visits, the team completed an evaluation detailing exactly which premises were visited and noting the time it took, who they spoke to and comments about the discussions with businesses and any concerns or questions that were mentioned.

- During 2013 there were 24 joint visits to hotels and B&B's, 44 packs were distributed.
- 261 joint visits were made to local businesses.
- Hotels contacted 101 to share concerns about CSE on three occasions.
- The number of visits in the two years up to December 2014 has now risen to 441.

The SIYSS posters and full awareness raising packs that the team put together, including the letter from the Chair of the LSCB, enabled a professional and credible range of information to be presented to the hotel trade. Over the summer of 2014 the team revisited premises in particular 'hotspot' areas, including hotels. The team took out posters and enquired to find out if they hotels had been displaying them and how staff members were being involved in being alert to CSE.

A multi-agency approach, embedded via the 'splinter group', has delivered enormous benefits, enabling a sharing of resources without placing a large capacity strain on a single agency. By visiting premises and hotels, publishing articles and having a better, wider presence across the town, the licensing working group has increased the degree of conversation within the communities about the issue of CSE in Slough.

In May 2014 the Engage team at Slough Council received an award from the National Working Group: Tackling Sexual Exploitation Network, for their work to address CSE. The council's licensing team was also recognised in early 2014 with a Berkshire Environmental Health Officers Award for Achievement for their work on raising awareness of CSE.

Further information

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The NWG Network and The Children's Society have developed a campaign pack supporting local safeguarding children boards to work with retail, transport, and leisure and hospitality businesses to protect children in their communities from child sexual exploitation. The resources are available at: www.nwgnetwork.org/resources/resourcespublic?cat=74

Stoke-on-Trent City Council: Commissioning an independent review of CSE and missing children services

Background

Stoke-on-Trent City Council has always taken a proactive approach to analysing the work being done to protect and support vulnerable children and young people and was keen to learn how they could improve their practices and processes in this area.

A third sector organisation, Brighter Futures, is commissioned to deliver services for young people at risk and victims of sexual exploitation in Stoke-on-Trent. The service, known as Base 58, was due to be re-commissioned by March 2015. In February 2014, the decision was made to examine the existing service provision, looking at the strengths and weaknesses of the wider CSE multi-agency system, and assess where there were improvements needed. Brighter Futures was additionally contracted, alongside Base 58, to follow up children who had been reported missing, with workers making contact with young people who had been reported as missing within 48 hours of their return.

The authority commissioned a review of its CSE and missing children service which took place between May and July 2014. In August 2014, 'The Child Sexual Exploitation Service and Missing Children Service for Young People in Stoke-on-Trent; A Review' was published.

The project

The CSE and missing children service review was commissioned by children and young people's commissioners; with the public health team and the Stoke-on-Trent Safeguarding Children Board supporting the review.

The proposal for the review went to the LSCB for their approval and commitment. The process took a total of 8 months from the initial proposal to the final report. The design of the review included an assessment of best practice and benchmarking of the CSE and missing children services. Chanon Consulting in conjunction with the University of Bedfordshire was deemed to be the most appropriate bid, due to the academic rigour and credibility of the proposed approach.

The approach entailed a paper review of policies and procedures, as well as numerous qualitative and quantitative methods. Focus groups were conducted with practitioners, commissioners from the children and young people's service, police, managers, and third sector providers. Children in care were involved, as was the Chair of the LSCB. In addition, case studies of children and young people who had been using the services were also provided.

Outcomes

The report highlighted significant good work and practice, particularly concerning the council's joined-up work with safeguarding partners. In addition, there was praise for the recognition by agencies that CSE continues after 18, with support for young people transitioning to adult services; and mention of the efforts made with schools to raise awareness of the issues.

Recommendations for further work were also noted, with the need to address some minor issues, as well as longer term goals for the CSE and missing children service and suggestions for improved multi-agency working. Quick wins included the creation of a CSE coordinator post. The review has resulted in an action plan which has been put together and is being taken forward. The action plan is owned jointly by all agencies on the LSCB executive. The current CSE and missing children service has been extended for 12 months to enable the council to

ensure that it gets the recommendations of the report right, and to implement any necessary CSE service and wider system re-design.

Amanda Owen, strategic manager for safeguarding and quality assurance at Stoke-on-Trent City Council, says: “We take the issue of child sexual exploitation extremely seriously. That is why, as part of our overall strategy to prevent CSE in the city and to protect our vulnerable young people, we commissioned this independent review. The report has left the city in a very good position to improve services.”

To fully benefit from a review of CSE services and strategies, councils and LSCBs should:

- be prepared to take an honest look at the services delivered
- be absolutely honest and transparent about arrangements, for example with the public, the media and all key stakeholders
- consider whether a review is being conducting for the right reasons. Are you willing to redesign and improve your services as an outcome of the review?
- ensure that the review is undertaken by professionals with an understanding of the effect of CSE on children and is undertaken with academic rigour.

Further information

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The final report is available at: www.beds.ac.uk/__data/assets/pdf_file/0011/449948/CSE-Missing-Service-Review-Stoke-on-Trent.pdf Christine Christie, July 2014, The Child Sexual Exploitation Service and Missing Children Service for Young People in Stoke on Trent: A Review. Chanon Consulting and The University of Bedfordshire.

West Midlands Region: Regional standards, pathways and self-assessment

Background

The West Midlands region recognised the cross boundary nature of CSE and the need for a robust response, so in 2011 set up a CSE strategic group. The group was established on a metropolitan area regional level involving the seven local councils and the respective police force in the region, as well as voluntary sector and health representatives. The group focussed on the common challenges of tackling CSE and what could be done together. The councils involved included: Birmingham City Council; Coventry City Council; Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council; Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council; Walsall Council; Wolverhampton City Council and Solihull Metropolitan Borough Council as well as the West Midlands Police. There was recognition of the cross boundary nature of the threat and the need for a robust and consistent regional approach to CSE, to avoid a postcode lottery of service provision across the West Midlands.

The project

In 2013 a task and finish group, chaired by a local authority chief executive, was set up to create a consistent and child centred approach to responding to CSE across the region.” The group developed 15 regional standards and pathways for tackling CSE. Guidance was also developed for front line practitioners and managers to support the implementation of the

regional standards and pathways. It is anticipated that the regional standards will be added to each member LSCB's safeguarding procedures manual. (The pathways, standards and self-assessment tool can be found online at www.local.gov.uk/cse)

The aim of the approach was to create a consistent and child centred approach to responding to CSE across West Midlands Police Force area, underpinned by the See Me Hear Me framework developed by the Office of the Children's Commissioner. There are still locally tailored pathways in each council area, dependent on local level circumstances, but a more unified regional level approach is in place, for example through a regional induction pack for the workforce on missing children, trafficking and CSE.

Impact

Implementation of the standards and pathways was managed at the local level, with LSCB Chairs playing a key role in monitoring the progress and impact of the regional standards. A self-assessment framework assisted LSCBs with local implementation, and also enabled the identification of common areas for improvement across the seven LSCB areas; a regional workshop for practitioners and managers was held to support with implementation.

As a result of the common pathways and standards, and self-assessment screening tool, Solihull MBC has found that they are now much better at identifying victims of CSE. There has been a significant increase in the number of young people identified as at risk of harm from CSE since the screening tool was embedded, with an increase of 104 per cent of children identified at risk between May 2013 and October 2014.

Key learning from the regional approach suggests that:

- effective data collection is critical to the delivery of a robust response and to regional problem profiling
- a regional response does not replace the need for robust, coordinated action at a local level
- establishing a regional approach needs a commitment to extra resources and capacity to ensure timeliness and understanding and embedding of the approach
- senior buy in is needed for influence and impact
- sound governance arrangements were crucial to embed the standards and pathways when partners were at different stages of implementation.

Liz Murphy, former Safeguarding Children Business Manager at the Solihull LSCB highlights that "our aim has been to create a consistent response to CSE across the region and, most importantly, to use feedback from children and young people to develop and embed a multi-agency response that recognises and responds to children and young people as victims, and actively involves them in the safeguarding process. In addition we wanted to ensure sufficient emphasis on the disruption and prosecution of offenders."

Further information

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The See Me Hear Me West Midlands campaign website, developed by Dudley MBC as part of the communications plan for the regional framework can be accessed at:
www.seeme-hearme.org.uk/

Key resources and further reading

The online CSE resource for councillors available at: www.local.gov.uk/cse includes many further resources, key links, recommended reports and reading, and more details on our case studies included in this report. Below are a number of key resources:

- Berelowitz, S. et al (2013). “If only someone had listened” The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report. London: Office of the Children’s Commissioner. Rochdale Oxford www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743
- Alexis Jay (2014). Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013. www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham
- Ann Coffey, (2014). Real Voices: Child Sexual Exploitation in Greater Manchester. An Independent Report by Ann Coffey MP. www.gmpcc.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/02/81461-Coffey-Report_v5_WEB-single-pages.pdf
- Ofsted, (2014). The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn’t Happen Here, Could It? www.ofsted.gov.uk/sites/default/files/documents/surveys-and-good-practice/t/The%20sexual%20exploitation%20of%20children%20it%20couldn%20%E2%80%99t%20happen%20here,%20could%20it.pdf
- The Communities and Local Government Committee, (2014). Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham: Some Issues for Local Government. www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmcomloc/648/648.pdf
- It’s not okay: www.itsnotokay.co.uk/ Part of Project Phoenix, Greater Manchester
- See me hear me: www.seeme-hearme.org.uk/ Part of the West Midlands campaign, adapted from the Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s final report and recommendations.
- Pan London Operating Protocol to Tackle CSE and related resources <http://content.met.police.uk/Article/Launch-of-The-London-Child-Sexual-Exploitation-Operating-Protocol/1400022286691/1400022286691>
- Office of the Children’s Commissioner, CSE Warning Signs and Vulnerabilities Checklist. www.local.gov.uk/c/document_library/get_file?uuid=72f54483-f97b-4f0e-a815-c969509cb27f&groupId=10180
- Barnardo’s www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_work/sexual_exploitation.htm
- Tackling CSE Helping Local Authorities to Develop Effective Local Responses http://www.barnardos.org.uk/tackling_child_sexual_exploitation.pdf
- The Children’s Society <http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/policy-and-lobbying/children-risk/child-sexual-exploitation>

- The APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults and the APPG for Looked After Children and Care Leavers (2012). Report from the Joint Inquiry into Children Who Go Missing from Care.
www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/u32/joint_appg_inquiry_-_report...pdf
- National Working Group, Tackling Sexual Exploitation www.nwgnetwork.org/
- NWG Network (2014) Summary of Recommendations: A summary of all recommendations from a series of reports, inquiries, serious case reviews and research.
<http://www.nwgnetwork.org/resourcefilepublic.php?id=1206&file=1>
- Blast – project to support boys and young men <http://mesmac.co.uk/blast>
- PACE (Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation) www.paceuk.info/
- University of Bedfordshire: International Centre researching CSE, violence and trafficking
www.beds.ac.uk/intcent
- MsUnderstood www.msunderstood.org.uk/

Appendices

Key risk factors and warning signs of child sexual exploitation

CSE is not limited to any particular geography, ethnic or social background, and all councils should assume that CSE is happening in their area and take proactive action to prevent it.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner included in its interim report, a 'key warning signs and vulnerability checklist' to identify those at risk of CSE and for those who may already be victims of abuse.⁶ There is no set formula for identifying CSE and therefore the lists should not be seen as exhaustive.

The following are typical **vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse**:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality)
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Gang-association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang-associated CSE only)
- Attending school with children and young people who are already sexually exploited
- Learning disabilities
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- Homeless
- Lacking friends from the same age group
- Living in a gang neighbourhood
- Living in residential care
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence
- Young carer.

6 Berelowitz, S. et al (2013). "If only someone had listened" The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report. London: Office of the Children's Commissioner. Rochdale Oxford www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are **already being sexually exploited**:

- Missing from home or care
- Physical injuries
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Involvement in offending
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
- Absent from school
- Change in physical appearance
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from their family
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations
- Poor mental health.
- Self-harm
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

The Barnardo's 2007 Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework⁷ identifies a range of risk factors for CSE. These should not be seen as an exhaustive list, but include:

- Disrupted family life;
- A history of abuse and disadvantage;
- Problematic parenting;
- Disengagement from education;
- Going missing;
- Exploitative relationships;
- Drug and alcohol misuse;
- Poor health and well-being

⁷ Barnardo's Pilot Study 'Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework' (SERAF) (2007). The framework is used as a risk assessment framework by many local agencies. http://www.barnardos.org.uk/barnardo_s_cymru_sexual_exploitation_risk_assessment_framework_report_-_english_version-2.pdf

Overview of key prosecutions

The following list of prosecutions is not exhaustive, but helps to give an overview of the range of towns and locations that have seen high profile CSE cases. The list does not contain all prosecutions, for example cases where perpetrators have been prosecuted for other offences as part of disruption activity e.g. drugs or firearms offences.

Year	Area	Number of convictions
1997	Leeds	2
2003	Keighley	2
2006	Blackpool	2
2007	Oldham	2
2007	Blackburn	2
2008	Sheffield	2
2008	Oldham	2
2008	Manchester	2
2008	Blackburn	2
2009	Sheffield	1
2009	Blackburn	2
2009	Skipton	2
2010	Rochdale	4
2010	Nelson	2
2010	Rochdale	9
2010	Preston	2
2010	Rotherham	5
2010	Derby	9
2010	Cornwall	6
2011	Burnley	4
2011	Blackburn	4
2012	Rochdale	9
2012	Telford	2
2012	Derby	8
2012	Oxford	7
2012	Reading	4



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