

Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015 - 2017

**Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board's
strategic commitment to tackle child sexual
exploitation**



April 2015

Building upon the effective work undertaken in developing and delivering the CSE Pathway, WSCB is committed to further developing knowledge of the prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation across the county and building a robust strategic framework to tackle the problem and keep children safe. This strategy sets out how multi-agency partners will continually be encouraged to work together pro-actively to safeguard children and young people at risk.

Foreword

This strategy sets out the commitment of Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) to undertake all actions possible to tackle child sexual exploitation (CSE), and to safeguard children and young people experiencing and/or at risk of this form of child abuse. WSCB acknowledges that this is a very complex and challenging area of our work and that it is only possible to tackle CSE through a co-ordinated multi-agency approach, where victims/potential victims are identified and safeguarded and perpetrators are disrupted and prosecuted.

This strategy has been written to support, and be supported by, the West Mercia Child Protection Procedures and the Worcestershire Thresholds Guidance. When practitioners become aware of children who are affected by, or at risk of, sexual exploitation they have a duty to comply with the West Mercia Child Protection Procedures, with specific regard for section 7.2 which relates specifically to the process to be followed in Worcestershire:

http://westmerciaconsortium.proceduresonline.com/chapters/g_step_by_step_respond_cse.html

The strategy outlines WSCB's strategic principles as the basis for its approach in tackling CSE. It also states its key priorities under the four main headings of Prevention and Education; Recognition and Identification; Intervention and Support; and Pursue and Disrupt. An action plan to deliver the key target areas for each of those priorities is included, and the delivery of this will be closely monitored and reported to WSCB. All partners own and take responsibility for the effectiveness of its outcomes and will measure the difference it makes in tackling CSE in Worcestershire

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1. Introduction

In line with national guidance, HM Government (2009) Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board seeks to develop locally a prevention, protection and investigation strategy to

- identify those at risk of being sexually exploited
- take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of particular children and young people who are being, or may be, sexually exploited, and
- Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way.

This document should be read in conjunction with HM Government (2009) Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, HM Government (2015) Working Together to Safeguard Children, WSCB (2009) Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked, and West Mercia Joint Runaway and Missing From Home and Care Protocol (Revised 2015).

2. Definition

Child Sexual Exploitation Definition

The National Working Group on Child Sexual Exploitation has developed the following definition which is utilised in UK government guidance and policy, including the Department for Education 2009, and is the definition of CSE that Worcestershire Safeguarding Children's Board have adopted:

'The 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' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child's immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.'

The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (2008)

3. National Context

"The Government deplores the sexual exploitation of children, and will not tolerate failure at any level to prevent harm....."

"Tackling child sexual exploitation must be a shared effort. Government can lead the national response. Local authorities, police, children's and health services have a statutory duty to work together to identify and stamp it out in their area."

"Dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation" (2015)

(Appendix 1)

The recently revised Working Together March 2015 states that *"LSCBs should conduct regular assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to child sexual exploitation and include in the [Annual] report information on the outcome of these assessments. This should include an analysis of how the LSCB partners have used their data to promote service improvement for vulnerable children and families, including in respect of sexual abuse. The report should also include appropriate data on children missing from care, and how the LSCB is addressing the issue."*

(Working Together 2015 Chapter 3 para 18)

4. Local Context

In Worcestershire the main response to CSE has been led through the Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) although individual agencies have also acted according to their own drivers.

WSCB launched the Child Sexual Exploitation Pathway in August 2013. This sets out a clear pathway for referrals and response to child specific concerns with operational oversight delivered through a monthly multi-agency panel.

Targeted training of staff to raise awareness and to ensure understanding of the pathway and procedures has also taken place. WSCB also makes available an e-learning module for all agencies. The WSCB Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group has responsibility for the strategic oversight of child sexual exploitation and produced its first CSE Report for the Board in November 2014

WSCB is required to both be assured and to provide assurance that large scale and organised CSE is not present in Worcestershire and that the mechanisms are in place to identify, support and protect potential victims from further harm. A great deal of work has been undertaken to develop the pathway for CSE referrals and whilst the numbers of identified victims is relatively low (as opposed to the numbers of children and young people about whom there have been concerns), we do not, however, know what we do not know as the identification of actual victims is not easy. Taking a broader view, it is clear that the focus of co-ordinated multi-agency activity has been predominantly on protection and that prevention and the pursuit of perpetrator activities are both also in need of development. This strategy therefore focuses on how WSCB progresses this work with partner agencies.

*Child sexual exploitation is not exclusive to any single community, race or religion.
There is no culture in which sexual abuse is not a serious crime*

(HM Government, 2015:4)

WSCB is committed to raising awareness of child sexual exploitation locally. As such the WSCB Missing Children, CSE and Trafficking Group is working to incorporate a national and regionally accepted dataset within performance management data to capture and collate the existing CSE picture in Worcestershire. To date, the evidence suggests that CSE exists in Worcestershire on a relatively small and generally individualised scale, with no evidence of a link to gangs, organised crime or any specific minority ethnic group. There is also no indication that disclosures or reporting have been ignored as was the case in Rotherham.

5. Strategic Principles

This strategy fully supports and accepts as our own principles the four points set out in Louise Casey's report 'Reflections on Child Sexual Exploitation' (March 2015), these being:

That **CSE is child abuse and is a crime**, and our efforts need to be directed towards perpetrators in order to detect, prevent and disrupt that abuse at the earliest stages as well as the prosecution of individual perpetrators to ensure that they face the full force of the criminal justice system for their crimes. These are not mutually exclusive activities.

That **the victims are children**, however they present themselves. They cannot consent to their abuse, all the more given that grooming itself removes any real sense of self determination from these children. There should be no scenarios in which victims are viewed as young women or as making choices.

Thirdly that **CSE is squarely a community safety issue** and local government working with police and others need to make use of community safety tactics and action to keep children safe. The regulatory and enforcement functions of the local authority are vital in preventing and disrupting CSE and in building intelligence which can help with prosecutions. Those in upper tier authorities and district authorities where responsibilities for children's social care and community safety lie in different tiers, have additional partnership challenges, but these can not be insurmountable.

Finally, that local government and the police should not fear seeking out and shining a light on sexual exploitation for fear they may be held to account for what they find. **The failure is not in the existence of CSE but in not recognising it and taking appropriate action.**

WSCB's aim is to deliver an effective system and infrastructure to address Child Sexual Exploitation across the children's partnership underpinned by the following principles:

- CSE is a form of child abuse which can involve the sexual, physical and emotional abuse of children as well as neglect
- Children do not make informed choices to enter into or remain within sexually exploitative situations, as they do so via coercion, manipulation, grooming and/or other forms of enticement
- Children under 16 years cannot consent to sexual activity with an adult, and sexual activity with a child aged less than 13 years is statutory rape
- Children who are sexually exploited will experience difficulty and/or confusion around their autonomy to make choices, and their understanding around sex, sexuality and the sexual activity into which they have been coerced
- Sexually exploited children must be treated as victims of child abuse, and not as offenders
- Help and support to families should be tailored to their individual needs and circumstances, taking into account sexuality, gender, physical disability or learning disabilities, those from ethnic communities, and those with additional language needs
- Law enforcement efforts must involve disruption of sexually exploitative activity, and target offenders as sexual abusers, who may be adult, but could also be the child's peers and/or other young people. CSE is one of those problems where silo working is actively harmful to the protection of children and stopping offenders
- It is essential that the 'voice of the child' is heard and agencies actively engage with children and young people to provide them with the opportunity to tell their own story, to seek to understand the child/young person's perspective, experience and the impact of this upon them.

6. Key Priorities

WSCB recognises the requirement to understand the scale of child sexual exploitation in the local area and to continue to develop a local 'problem profile'. In line with this WSCB's key priorities are as follows:

Prevention and Education

Overarching priority: Increasing knowledge and understanding of CSE, including the development of protective factors, across children and young people (to include victim focus), the children and young people's workforce and local communities

Key target areas:

- Undertake a public awareness campaign
- All schools to deliver a CSE awareness programme to children and young people, tailored to their age
- All staff to receive awareness training
- Develop a means of evaluating the effectiveness of the staff training programme

Recognition and Identification

Overarching priority: Providing information and tools to support the identification of potential indicators of CSE; providing and publishing agreed models of assessment; and agreed protocols for the effective sharing of information across the multi-agency partnership

Key target areas:

- Identify vulnerable children for potential sexual exploitation and develop a risk assessment framework and pathway to protect them
- Develop professional curiosity amongst front line staff to ensure they look for and act on signs of potential CSE (particularly social workers, Health workers and school staff)
- Identification of vulnerable children who have the potential to become perpetrators
- Promote the crucial importance of effective information sharing

Intervention and Support

Overarching priority: Drawing on models of recognised good practice to develop local responses; tailoring intervention and support to individuals; and mapping and publicising a range of available intervention/support services

Key target areas:

- Develop different methods/casework suited to CSE
- Develop victim and family specialised support
- Develop community safety, regulatory and taxi licensing functions (consider a Partnership Enforcement Team)

Pursue and Disrupt

Overarching priority: Being pro-active across multi agency partnerships to identify, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of child sexual exploitation through criminal or civil means

Key target areas:

- Align cross-border arrangements with neighbouring areas/regions
- Develop an ongoing problem profile, mapping hot spots and keep relevant agencies informed
- Use criminal and civil powers wherever possible to bring to justice perpetrators who exploit and abuse children

Appendix 2 outlines how these priorities will be met.

7. Governance and Accountability

WSCB has statutory responsibility for co-ordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of safeguarding arrangements in each partner agency and collectively. It will therefore hold partners to account for their individual arrangements and challenge any silo working to ensure children are properly protected from CSE and perpetrators are stopped. Full ownership and responsibility for the effective delivery of this strategy lies with individual agencies and with Board members collectively. More specifically, the Board will:

- ensure that the needs of children and young people who have been or may be sexually exploited, and their families, have been considered when planning and commissioning local services
- provide analysed and reconciled data that is shared with relevant agencies, building a composite picture of CSE in Worcestershire over time
- routinely seek assurance of the effectiveness of the CSE strategy, building its implementation into its operational planning and reporting mechanisms
- undertake regular assessments on the effectiveness of Board partners' responses to CSE and include the outcomes in its Annual Report
- monitor the sharing of information protocol to ensure this is not a barrier to effective working in CSE cases
- work with other local partnerships to co-ordinate any CSE activity, particularly Community Safety Partnerships
- work with other regional/national groups to develop a co-ordinated approach and learn from best practice
- ensure its governance structure has clear lines of accountability for CSE (see Appendix X for proposed arrangements)
- ensure that delivery of the strategy is properly supported
- provide external assurance as appropriate that CSE is being properly tackled and managed in Worcestershire

8. Monitoring and Review

The implementation of this strategy will initially be overseen by the Strategic CSE Group and then by the Vulnerable Children Sub-Group with regular reporting to WSCB. Key measures of its effectiveness will include evidence of:

- Prevention being managed through staff awareness of CSE – knowing how to spot it and taking appropriate action
- Knowledge of the perpetrators and hot-spots
- Responding to CSE victims in a timely and suitable manner to meet their needs and wishes

The strategy will be reviewed annually by WSCB, or updated more frequently if required, to ensure it is making a difference to the children and young people of Worcestershire involved in CSE

Appendix 1

Policy and Legislation

1. "Dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation" March 2015 Government Response

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation--2>

2. HM Government (2009) *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation* 2009

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/278849/Safeguarding_Children_and_Young_People_from_Sexual_Exploitation.pdf

3. HM Government (2015) *Working Together to Safeguard Children*

https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/419595/Working_Together_to_Safeguard_Children.pdf

4. HM Government (2003) *Sexual Offences Act* 2003

<http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2003/42/section/3>

5. WSCB Safeguarding Children Who May have been Trafficked 2009:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/pdf/WSCB%20-%20Safeguarding%20Children%20who%20may%20have%20been%20trafficked%20WSCB%202009.pdf>

6. Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board Guidance, Policy and Procedures:

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/safeguarding-children/information-for-professionals/guidance-policy-and-procedures.aspx>

7. Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/anti-social-behaviour-crime-and-police-bill>

WSCB Guidance for Practitioners *Child Sexual Exploitation*

Practitioner guidance can be found at:

http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/downloads/file/550/practitioner_guidance_august_2013

Appendix 2

WSCB Action Plan for Implementation

Appendix 3

Child Sexual Exploitation Useful Resources:

1. "Research into gang-associated sexual exploitation and sexual violence; Interim Report", Beckett, H et al (2012) pub: University of Bedfordshire

http://www.beds.ac.uk/_data/assets/pdf_file/0008/215873/GASV_Interim.pdf

2. "If only someone had listened", Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, Final Report (November 2013) Sue Berelowitz, et al

http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743

3. Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation

<http://www.paceuk.info/>

4. National Child Sexual Exploitation Awareness Day:

<http://www.stop-cse.org/national-child-exploitation-awareness-day/>

5. National Working Group Network for Child Sexual Exploitation

<http://www.nwgnetwork.org/>

6. Just Whistle (no date) *Prevention Protection and Investigation* (on line)

<http://www.justwhistle.org.uk/index.php/home/whats-on/prevention-protection-and-investigation>

7. National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (2008) *Sexual Exploitation Intervention Diagram* (on line)

<http://www.nationalworkinggroup.org/what-is-child-sexual-exploitation/sexual-exploitation-intervention-diagram>

Appendix 4

Models of Grooming and exploitation

Grooming

Grooming may take place face to face and can occur over a long period of time or relatively quickly. Grooming using the internet and mobile technology is increasingly common. Along with the significant risk in the use of mobile phones, including Bluetooth technology, perpetrators target children and young people through online sites, games and through picture messaging and texting.

Child sexual exploitation can occur in a variety of settings and may involve one or more person. Barnados has identified three different sexual exploitation abuse models . Examples of quotes from young people are also included below.

Abuse model 1

Inappropriate Relationships

This usually involves one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial - or control over a young person. The young person may believe that they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with the abuser.

Abuse model 2

Boyfriend model and Peer exploitation, also known as party model

The abuser grooms the victim by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafes/fast food outlets or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual sexual relationship develops but later turns abusive.

Victims are required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men and threatened with violence if they try to seek help. They may also be required to introduce their friends as new victims.

Abuse Model 3

Organised exploitation and trafficking

Young people are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced/coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'sex parties' and young people who are involved

may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised buying and selling of young people by perpetrators.

Organised exploitation varies from spontaneous networking between groups of perpetrators to more serious organised crime where young people are effectively 'sold'. These activities are described as 'internal trafficking' or 'trafficking for child sexual exploitation.'

Victims of sexual exploitation may also be used as agents to recruit other children and young people and in some cases a young person may be both a perpetrator and a victim of CSE.

Sexual exploitation can be group and gang associated. Group associated exploitation refers to the number of perpetrators involved.

Gang Associated CSE

Research undertaken by Beckett et al (2012) outlined key features of gang-associated sexual violence and exploitation that are unique to, or exacerbated by, the gang environment:

- Using sex as a means of initiating young people into a gang;
- Sexual activity in return for (perceived) status or protection;
- Young women 'setting up' people in other gangs;
- Establishing a relationship with, or feigning sexual interest in, a rival gang member as a means of entrapment; and
- Sexual assault as a weapon in conflict.

*"Research into gang-associated sexual exploitation and sexual violence,"
(2012)*

Examples of quotes from young people

1. 'I was 12 maybe a wee bit older, and I remember my mummy run out of drink and she says to me, there was fellas in the house and she says to one of them to take me up the stairs and she got me to go with this man for a bottle of vodka for her.'
(Beckett 2011)

2. 'There was a guy running parties for sex. What was described to me was someone initially looking after you, taking you out, buying you clothes, looking after you, giving you lots of emotion and care. Then there were parties where other girls were there and it became a going upstairs with one person type of thing, but then it

came down to being the only girl with four or five men and it became quite frightening. There was also a separate pornography side to it, and they were getting pulled in to that as well.' (Beckett 2011)

3. 'We have a young woman at the moment who is Eastern European and was trafficked here and continues to be exploited by people. She lives with her parents but we reckon she is being sold on a regular basis. Well, she says she lives with her parents but we aren't entirely sure if they are her parents. She is saying she is 17, but we suspect she's more like 14.' (Beckett 2011)

4. Sexual exploitation that involves one or multiple perpetrators who are themselves gang associated and where the CSE takes place as a form of introduction or inter-gang related violence. (Office of Children's Commissioner 2012)



Worcestershire Safeguarding Children Board
www.worcestershire.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren

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