



We Need to Get it Right

A Health Check into the Council's Role in Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation



A report from Overview & Scrutiny





A Health Check into the Council's Role in Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation

Acknowledgement – The front cover is from “The Vanishing”, a Children’s Society publication. Children from a children’s home in Birmingham developed the content and a staff member drew the art work. Thank you for allowing us to use the picture.¹

¹ www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/the_vanishing_booklet.pdf



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Reports that have been submitted to City Council can be downloaded from www.birmingham.gov.uk/scrutiny.



Glossary of Terms

BSCB	Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board
Care First	The Council's computer system for social care case management
CMOG	Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Operational Group
CPS	Crown Prosecution Service
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DSL	Designated Safeguarding Lead
FCAF	Family Common Assessment Framework
FCASE	Families and Communities Against Sexual Exploitation
FOI	Freedom of Information
HMIC	Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary
LAC	Looked After Children
MASE Meeting	Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Meeting
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MWN UK	Muslim Women's Network UK
NWG	National Working Group on Child Exploitation
OCSET	Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team – West Midlands Police
PACE	Parents Against Child Sexual Abuse
PSHE	Personal Social Health Education
Quartet	Leader of Council, Cabinet Member for Family Services, Chief Executive, Director of People
Return Interview	Interview carried out after a missing child has returned home / to their placement
WMP	West Midlands Police
WMPCC	West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner
WMPVVP	West Midlands Preventing Violence against Vulnerable People



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Preface

By Cllr Anita Ward

Chair Education and Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee



For far too long, Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) was a hidden issue, but following the recent number of high profile cases across the country the problem has been exposed and we can no longer pretend that it does not exist within our society.

After careful consideration, and having concluded that if it was happening in areas like Derby, Oxford, Telford & Rochdale it was in all likelihood happening in Birmingham, members of the Education and Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee determined that if, as a local authority we were to adequately protect our young people from CSE, we could not shy away from this inquiry, uncomfortable as it was.

The key question for the inquiry was "what needs to be strengthened in the way the City Council prevents and deals with CSE?" Members of the committee have spent 11 months examining issues relating to CSE in Birmingham, during which time we heard some distressing evidence. This included some horrifying examples of abuse in the city. We have included many of these, not to shock, but to show the range of challenges being faced in protecting victims, and dealing with offenders.

We learnt that policies, procedures, and teams with a greater focus on CSE have been developed. We were impressed by some of the positive work being done by the City Council and its partners in working to protect Birmingham's young people from such an abhorrent crime and the positive work by frontline staff who are supporting these young people to rebuild their lives.

The focus of the report is the City Council's role in tackling CSE, but we learnt about the importance of consistent, joined up multi-agency working too. The focus of activity must be on dealing with offenders, targeting locations, protecting victims and prevention. The Committee's report contains a number of recommendations to both the City Council and partner agencies to improve the way CSE is dealt with. We will hold them to account on delivering on those recommendations

It is important to emphasise that our inquiry was well underway when the Jay Report was published and should not be seen as a knee jerk reaction to that. However, given the findings of that report, our inquiry and recommendations are all the more timely and relevant. Ofsted also published a report on CSE, as this went to print which says:



“In areas where there have been high profile criminal investigations, the experience has galvanised the local authorities and their partners into trying to ensure that past failings are never repeated.”

My aim is for this report is to galvanise action now. We cannot and should not wait for a high profile case to rear its head in Birmingham. Much has been achieved already here, but there is more to be done. This systematic abuse of children requires our full attention.

In conclusion, I would like to thank all those who took the time to give evidence to the inquiry and for their openness in doing so. We met some amazing people in this city who are working tirelessly to protect our most vulnerable children. We could not have completed this inquiry without their insights and advice and I hope the recommendations within this report will enable us, collectively, to tackle CSE head on.

I would like to thank Benita Wishart and Iram Choudry for their work and time in supporting the inquiry and to committee members who spent a long time working on this issue.



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Summary of Recommendations

	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
A	Delivery of training and awareness raising on Child Sexual Exploitation		
R01	<p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The "see me hear me" web site² be further developed and a concerted awareness and empowerment campaign for action is delivered for the public (communities, families and children);• The City Council and partners work with and build the capacity of a broad range of the city's communities to encourage identification and reporting of CSE;• Resources and sign-posting to online awareness for parents are promoted³;• Awareness includes online risks of grooming, the role of the Child Exploitation and the Child OnLine Protection Centre (CEOP)⁴ and how to locate and use the report abuse button.• The Cabinet Member Children and Family Services explores how this can be delivered and funded jointly with partners.	Cabinet Member Children and Family Services	February 2015 - Action plan April 2015

² www.seeme-hearme.org.uk/

³ www.paceuk.info/support-for-parents/

⁴ CEOP is a National Crime Agency Command at ceop.police.uk/



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R02	<p>That the Cabinet Member and BSCB encourage schools to ensure that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CSE is integrated into Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) from year 6 upwards into ALL schools in the city and to encourage best practice in understanding and dealing with CSE in schools; • Healthy relationships and girl's empowerment (e.g. by using the "free being me" resources Girl Guiding campaign) is integrated into PSHE teaching in all years; • All teaching includes appropriate provision for boys; • All schools promote safety online including smartphone tracking; and • All school Head Teachers and recognised Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are written to, raising the issue, asking for a collaborative approach in tackling CSE and for key staff to attend training; and they adapt and agree the new model safeguarding policy from the BSCB. 	Cabinet Member Children and Family Services	April 2015
R03	That Governor Support Team reviews safeguarding training provided in the light of this report. ⁵	Cabinet Member Children and Family Services	April 2015
R04	<p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All frontline staff and managers of caseloads in Children's Social Care including agency staff attend training on CSE. This should include definitions, the grooming line, symptoms and action including what can be done to disrupt / bring charges against and prosecute perpetrators. Particular barriers to disclosure of CSE by black and minority victims should be included in this.; • There is mandatory training on missing children and the escalation system. 	Cabinet Member Children and Family Services	July 2015

⁵ www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham



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	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R05	<p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> BSCB continues to provide and promote training to its partners including health organisations in the city, the West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Police; Partner organisations include CSE training within Level 1 and Level 2 safeguarding training. 	Chair Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board	July 2015
R06	<p>That business forums and networks are identified to work with to ensure broader understanding of CSE and to support the roll out of the <i>"Say Something if You See Something"</i> campaign and guidelines with particular a focus on the hospitality industry and taxis in order to increase awareness and reporting.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Children and Family Services</p> <p>Chair BSCB</p>	July 2015
R07	<p>That:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> CSE awareness features as part of induction training for all new councillors; For all current councillors there is compulsory awareness training on safeguarding including CSE; Regular training updates are also made available. 	Leader	<p>April 2015 (initial feedback)</p> <p>December 2015</p>
B	Policies and procedures		
R08	<p>That the policies and procedures across the City Council ensure CSE is properly dealt with by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Adopting and working to the West Midlands Regional CSE protocol; Making better use of Care First (the council's system for case management) to record and analyse and share CSE cases ensuring it is dynamic and reports can be pulled out; Improving feedback from Children's Social Care referrals. (Feedback is meant to be provided in specified timescales which does not always happen); Establishing CSE champions in key teams including each of the Safeguarding and Family Support hubs who have more in-depth training (and can cascade training to the team) and can act as advisor to the team; Reviewing policies and procedures to ensure that parents are seen as equal partners in dealing with CSE and to consider 	Cabinet Member Children and Family Services	<p>April 2015 – Initial Feedback</p> <p>November 2015</p>



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
	<p>implementing the relational model developed by PACE;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reviewing the council's response to young runaways to ensure it meets the requirements of the new statutory guidance on missing children⁶; and • Developing and embedding a robust missing strategy with clear accountabilities, reporting to the BSCB and an escalation system that is fully understood and effectively implemented; and to investigate the protocol for information sharing when children are classified as absent by the police; and address missing from school as a significant safeguarding risk. 		
R09	<p>That the City Council, West Midlands Police and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board make greater use of licensing to tackle exploitation by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengthening the BSCB's role in supporting agencies including licensing and trading standards and West Midlands Police to use the resources and capacity to best effect; and • Licensing Committee reviewing the statement of licensing and use of powers to assess if it is possible to be more proactive in achieving the objective of: "the protection of children from harm" [e.g. in use of licensing conditions / provision of training /ensuring a clear process for reporting and developing a whistle blowing process to empower license holders and taxi drivers etc. to be proactive in reporting concerns.] 	<p>Chair Licensing Committee</p> <p>Chair BSCB</p>	July 2015

⁶ www.gov.uk/government/publications/children-who-run-away-or-go-missing-from-home-or-care



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	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R10	<p>That it is demonstrated that this area of work (including children's services, third sector commissioning and other key departments such as Legal Services and Licensing) is adequately resourced including that:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It is mainstream funded not reliant on annual funding agreements and that third sector contracts abide by the compact; • Commissioning of services specifically for dealing with victims of CSE, in particular, is improved so that they are in place in good time, prior to the beginning of the financial year; • The level of resource for return interviews, plus the intensive support required to prevent reoccurrences has been risk assessed; • A review of the level of administrative support in social work teams and for the CSE Co-ordinators is undertaken to ensure this is not affecting ability to manage caseloads; • A review of the staffing and caseloads of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) team is undertaken; • Partners review how to resource a Child Safeguarding Licensing Officer post/role. 	<p>Cabinet Member Children and Family Services</p> <p>Deputy Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Commissioning, Contracting and Improvement</p>	<p>April 2015</p>
R11	<p>That when the City Council commissions services, safeguarding, including CSE, be built into the service specification and monitoring by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that any contract which will involve direct working with children and young people, families and homes and transport services includes an appropriate level of requirement around CSE (e.g. information and training, procedures, and active involvement in multi-agency strategy and Family Common Assessment Framework meetings); and • Providing reassurance that the school nurse contract due to be re-commissioned by Public Health will include these provisions. 	<p>Deputy Leader</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Commissioning, Contracting and Improvement</p> <p>Cabinet Member for Health and Wellbeing</p>	<p>April 2015 – Initial Feedback</p> <p>November 2015</p>



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R12	<p>That in order to manage the specific risks of looked after children:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The corporate parenting strategy is reviewed to ensure it includes proper reference to CSE; • The Corporate Parenting Board provides clear demonstrable actions that CSE is a priority and that the vulnerability of looked after children to CSE is understood; • Appropriate risk assessments continue to be carried out when placing children in residential care and that decisions are needs based and not resource based; and • That there are appropriate policies and procedures (in both internal and external homes) and that staff have the confidence and tools to ensure day to day vigilance and action relating to CSE; and to ensure that these issues are considered in the children's home redesign. 	Cabinet Member Children and Family Services	<p>April 2015 – Initial Feedback</p> <p>November 2015</p>
R13	<p>That Legal Services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and assess what can be done to: strengthen the disruption of suspected perpetrators in the Civil Courts; support victims through to prosecution; and increase conviction rates and successful use of warning letters and civil orders, in association with WMP and CPS; and • Review the powers available to disrupt suspected perpetrators and develop a planning tool for disruption for Birmingham, building on the tool kit developed in Derbyshire. This needs to then be used and embedded in Children's Social Care. 	Deputy Leader	April 2015 – Initial Feedback
C	Multi-Agency Working		
R14	<p>That the Chair of Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Takes further steps to embed the CSE strategy and implementation of the action plan by holding partners to account and ensuring they take appropriate action; • Continues to provide challenge as required to schools following the analysis of the annual section 175 audits; and • Evaluates the effectiveness of multi-agency working including the Strategic CSE Sub-Group, CMOG, Multi-Agency Sexual 	Chair BSCB	<p>April 2015</p> <p>July 2015 – Changes sustained</p>



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	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
	Exploitation meetings etc. (Not MASH – see Recommendation 16).		
R15	<p>That all Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board partners improve the shared understanding of CSE cases by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring there is consistency and all officers and partners are working to the soon to be agreed West Midlands Regional CSE operating protocol; • Developing systems to ensure sharing information across the region to enable a full multi-agency problem profile can be updated and shared to ensure patterns and associations relating to victims, offenders and locations can be examined; • Using intelligence and analysis to improve understanding of what tactics and approaches work best; and • Ensuring those providing intelligence and evidence receive appropriate feedback. 	<p>Regional CSE Co-ordinator</p> <p>Chair BSCB</p>	<p>April 2015 – Initial Feedback</p> <p>July 2015</p>
R16	<p>That reports be provided on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The operation of the MASH: workloads, impacts, lessons learnt, and funding (after 6 and 12 months of operation); • Membership of and participation within MASH, including the role of health, the third sector and family support workers; and • Data sharing between the MASH partners. 	<p>Cabinet Member Children and Family Services</p> <p>Chair BSCB</p>	<p>April 2015</p> <p>September 2015</p>
R17	<p>That after six months of operation (March 2015) there is a review to consider if a dedicated multi-agency child sexual exploitation hub should be developed alongside MASH that could provide end to end (case identification through to prosecution) support and action.</p>	<p>Cabinet Member Children and Family Services</p> <p>Chair BSCB</p>	<p>April 2015</p>
D	Tracking		
R18	<p>That the Quartet regularly tracks improvements in this area as it relates to the City Council.</p>	<p>Quartet [Leader, Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services, Chief Executive and Strategic Director for People]</p>	<p>On-going</p>



	Recommendation	Responsibility	Completion Date
R19	That an assessment of progress against the recommendations made in this report be presented to the Education and Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2015. The Committee will schedule regular progress reports until all agreed recommendations are implemented.	Cabinet Member Children and Family Services	April 2015



1 Introduction

1.1 The Evidence We Heard Was Harrowing

- 1.1.1 The Committee heard harrowing evidence and we make no apology for including that evidence in the report as we want to ensure that everyone understands what child sexual exploitation (CSE) is. CSE is a horrendous crime that deliberately betrays the trust of a young person and can lead to them being trapped in a situation where rape and other mistreatment happens by one or more abusers. Such imprisonment is not always caused by a locked door, but by the terror of possible retribution, or just because they still think their so called boyfriend/girlfriend "still loves them."
- 1.1.2 We heard of many cases where lives have been put back on track due to timely interventions and we also heard of many examples of, at best, frustration with the systems in place, and at worst failure of procedures, multi-agency working or a lack of resources. The Committee feels that whether or not these were isolated incidents or indications of broader systemic failure, leaving one child vulnerable is one child too many.

1.2 Thanks to Those Making a Difference

- 1.2.1 Before we start we have to formally record our thanks and gratitude to so many people in Birmingham, as well as across the country, who are working tirelessly to protect children in this city. Many people we met were passionate in fighting to get services and protection in place for children. Listening to the evidence was harrowing enough for us, and we commend those who do this as part of their day job. Our children would be much more vulnerable without you and we hope that this report accurately reflects some of the fabulous work that is being done.

1.3 A Health Check

- 1.3.1 However in supporting that positive work, we also need to be honest about the challenges we still face. There have been a number of high profile CSE cases in the news over the last few years, for example, in Derbyshire, Oxfordshire, Rochdale and, just recently, the inquiry into systemic failure in Rotherham carried out by Professor Jay.⁷ Our report was planned at the end of 2013, and so is certainly not a kneejerk reaction to that hard-hitting report, but it did further encourage us to report on what we heard in detail, aiming to reflect the views of those we listened to.
- 1.3.2 In the light of the Professor Jay report into Rotherham, we have been asked about the nature of our evidence and the validity of our findings. We have called this a "health check" to distinguish it

⁷ Jay, A (2014) *Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 – 2013)*. At: www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham



from a full scale investigation such as the Jay report, or the Serious Case Review carried out in Rochdale. At no point have we asked to look at individual files and neither have we sought to take a historical perspective. Its aim was to take an overview of the problem and to consider what is currently in place today, in Birmingham, to prevent CSE occurring to children, to protect them and to deal appropriately with the abusers. The objective is to help get policies, structures, and implementation right.

- 1.3.3 The Committee has concluded that there is CSE in the city, although there has been no single high profile court case. This is supported by the West Midlands Police Chief Constable who, following questioning about the Jay report at the West Midlands Police and Crime Panel in September 2014, said:

To be really clear, we do know of this as an issue here in the West Midlands.⁸

- 1.3.4 We learnt, as well, that CSE does not stop at local authority boundaries and that victims and perpetrators cross these virtual lines. There have been cases in the media which have included Birmingham children or Birmingham perpetrators.⁹ An alleged recent Coventry gang, for example, included a Birmingham resident.¹⁰ Exploitation starting elsewhere can turn up in Birmingham, such as the trafficking of girls by a gang in Telford to be abused in Birmingham.¹¹
- 1.3.5 We are aware that CSE is an issue that affects the whole country. Birmingham and the West Midlands do have challenges, but so it appears do many other places. Exploitation has no boundaries and can happen anywhere.

1.4 The Inquiry

- 1.4.1 The key question was:

What needs to be strengthened in the way the Council prevents and deals with child sexual exploitation and in its working with partners?

- 1.4.2 The Inquiry was carried out by the Education and Vulnerable Children (EVC) Overview and Scrutiny (O&S) Committee, chaired by Councillor Anita Ward, with much evidence gathering being carried out during 2013/14 and the Committee of 2014/15 finalising the report. The Committee also invited some representation from Social Cohesion and Community Safety O&S (the Chair, formerly Cllr Zaffar and latterly Cllr Khan plus Cllr Roberts before his transfer over to EVC).

⁸ WMPCP Meeting September 2014

⁹ www.derbytelegraph.co.uk/Virgin-paedophile-driven-school-police-station/story-20922329-detail/story.html;
www.peterboroughtoday.co.uk/news/local/court-paedophile-who-groomed-14-year-old-peterborough-girl-jailed-1-5364955

¹⁰ www.coventrytelegraph.net/news/coventry-news/ten-charged-coventry-sex-gang-5429952

¹¹ www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-shropshire-22379414



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- 1.4.3 The majority of the evidence gathering was carried out in public sessions and we are grateful to all those who assisted with that process (see list of witnesses in Appendix 1). In addition Barnardo's Birmingham Space and FCASE project¹² provided a training session open to the whole Committee. There were a number of visits and Members also attended seminars. Finally, many further conversations and emails within and outside the City Council provided clarity and examples.
- 1.4.4 As the evidence has been gathered over a period of a year we accept that some progress may have been made in this time. We tried to secure updates before the publication of this report, but recognise that we may not have captured all the progress made in this fast changing arena.
- 1.4.5 In spite of the plethora of evidence we heard, there are many more people we would have liked to meet. The direct voice of victims is missing from this report as we did not think being confronted with a group of councillors would be entirely beneficial. If there are opportunities to remedy that in the next year we would welcome the opportunity to do so. In addition, we will take the opportunity to talk formally to more frontline workers; schools and police and school panels; and third sector organisations such as St Basils who deal with vulnerable children and the SAFE project with sex workers; the Youth Police and Crime Commissioners who we know identified this as a priority; workers supporting the Traveller community; disabled children's advocates; and the Regional Anti-Trafficking Network.
- 1.4.6 As a result we are not intending that this be the last word on CSE from Scrutiny. Our intent in publishing this is to raise awareness of CSE activity in Birmingham, to note some of the improvements that have been put in place to protect children and to put into the public domain some of our concerns.
- 1.4.7 The case studies are reported as we were told them, with a couple of the more detailed ones coming from third sector submissions and publications. give an indication of the types of Birmingham children we were told about, but we acknowledge that our inability to understand the full picture and, often, what happened to the child is troubling.
- 1.4.8 This issue is so serious that we sought assurances that Birmingham as a whole was being proactive and not waiting for someone else to shine the spotlight before being reactive. We were told of a lot of very positive and proactive activity that is taking place and the Committee hopes that over the next 12 months this can be replicated across the whole of the City Council and across all partner agencies. However, we do want this report to act as a wake up call so many more councillors, officers, partner agencies, communities and children themselves start to rule CSE in rather than assuming "it only happens to others". CSE should be considered in every assessment of a child.
- 1.4.9 We welcome the commitment the Cabinet Member gave to tackling CSE and reviewing case files to City Council in September 2014. We expect feedback on many of the queries raised in the report and action on the recommendations.

¹² Families and Communities Against Sexual Exploitation is funded by the Department of Education



Why Now?

- 1.4.10 Since the Committee was established in June 2012, CSE has been an area of concern but it was felt it was appropriate to wait until a CSE Co-ordinator had been appointed and had time to make some progress. By the time of publication the post will have been in place for some 18 months and we were pleased to hear that this has been made a permanent post and mainstreamed (having been funded initially by the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board).
- 1.4.11 In the last three or so years a number of key documents had been published nationally raising the profile and setting out good practice.¹³
- 1.4.12 The background to this report is, of course, a children's social care service which has been underperforming for a long time. Although improvements are being seen, it is still facing some difficult challenges, such as social worker recruitment and retention.¹⁴ CSE is just one pressure on the service, but the OFSTED report of May 2014 set out some concerns about how CSE is being managed.

OFSTED REPORT MAY 2014

Inspection of services for children in need of help and protection, children looked after and care leavers and Review of the effectiveness of the local safeguarding children board

- a) "There is a lack of strategic planning and coordination for children and young people who go missing from education, home and care or who are at risk of sexual exploitation. A significant number of children (144) are currently missing from education and are believed by the local authority to have moved abroad. As a consequence, there can be no assurances about their safety and wellbeing."
- b) "Systems to support agencies in identifying children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation are in place. However, there is no evidence to demonstrate that the multi-agency response is appropriately robust and that children and young people are suitably protected as a result. In some cases seen where young people have been at risk of sexual exploitation, effective action has not taken place to ensure that these children are adequately protected."
- c) "...in eight cases, emergency placement decisions were based on resource considerations rather than on the needs of the young person. This resulted in young people being placed prematurely in semi-independent hostels and residential provision without being

¹³ For example: www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-action-plan;
www.barnardos.org.uk/CSE_practitioners_guide_v2_hr.pdf;
www.barnardos.org.uk/tackling_child_sexual_exploitation.pdf;
www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743;
www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/68/68i.pdf

¹⁴ BCC (15 September 2014) *Capital & Treasury Management Monitoring Quarter 1 (April to June 2014)*. Report to Cabinet



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appropriately prepared. Outcomes for these young people are poor, which results in an escalation in missing episodes, placing some at risk of both child sexual exploitation and increasing offending behaviour."

- d) "BSCB does not receive data on children missing from home, care or education and receives insufficient data on child sexual exploitation. This is a deficit of significant magnitude, not least because it shows that the local authority and partners do not collect, collate and analyse this information in a systematic way. As result, partners cannot be assured of the whereabouts or safety of these young people."
- e) "The child sexual exploitation strategy agreed by the Board in January 2014, has not yet been implemented and this delay means that agencies are not yet working together effectively to provide the appropriate level of safeguarding support to children and young people who are risk of/or are suffering sexual exploitation."

1.4.13 As we were finalising the report an inspection of West Midlands Police carried out earlier in the year was also published.¹⁵ It concluded that within the police experiences were mixed.

Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Police National Child Protection Inspections: West Midlands Police

"Although West Midlands Police has a small central team, it does not have dedicated local specialist teams to investigate child sexual exploitation. Child sexual exploitation is investigated by officers in the child abuse investigation team (CAIT). In the cases examined by inspectors, the police response was mixed. The service was generally good if the risk was clearly identified by another agency However, five of the nine cases of child sexual exploitation examined were assessed as inadequate. Signs of risk were missed, lines of enquiries were either not followed up or took too long, and there were failures to respond to information and intelligence and to pursue offenders."

"Inspectors assessed the handling of 9 of the 11 cases of children missing from home as inadequate."

"Overall, the force's response to tackling child sexual exploitation has been slow, with inconsistent practice across the force area."

"We recommend that West Midlands Police takes immediate action to review its plans for identifying, disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators involved in child sexual exploitation."

¹⁵ HMIC (October 2014) National Child Protection Inspections: West Midlands Police 2 – 13 June 2014



2 What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

2.1 Definitions

2.1.1 CSE is a form of child abuse. The nationally accepted definition is below.

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. 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.¹⁶

2.1.2 The Association of Chief Police Constables (ACPO) additionally adds:

A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation.¹⁷

2.1.3 The City Council's early help team suggest that CSE tends to be a "course of conduct" rather than an isolated incident.

It involves relationships based on a deliberate imbalance of power. A person under 18 is sexually exploited when they are coerced into sexual activities by one or more person(s) who have deliberately targeted their youth and inexperience in order to exercise power over them.

¹⁶ (The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People, 2008)

¹⁷ www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation/#definition-of-cse



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- 2.1.4 When we started investigating the words “receive something” we found that in Birmingham the actual gifts could be as cheap as a bag of sweets or chips, a bottle of beer or some drugs. But for many of the children what they are craving, and sometimes think they are receiving, is “love and affection.” Although a smartphone may be seen by a victim as a generous gift its purpose may be in the abuser’s ability to then track a child using the GPS function built into the phone.
- 2.1.5 Grooming can occur over a course of many months or in just a short time. In one case in Birmingham that led to prosecution the grooming of a girl who was missing from home happened over a period of five days.¹⁸ Grooming is “not a specific form of child sexual exploitation but should be seen as a way in which perpetrators target children and manipulate their environments. It is an approach to exploitation and may be the beginning of a complex process adopted by abusers. Grooming can be defined as developing the trust of a young person or his or her family in order to engage in illegal sexual activity or for others to engage in illegal sexual activity with that child or young person.”¹⁹
- 2.1.6 But all such definitions obscure the real crime which one West Midlands Police (WMP) officer explained is rape and serious sexual assault.

CRIME CHARACTERISTICS:

In simplified terms, this crime consists of three stages: ‘find’, ‘groom’ and ‘abuse’. When not recruiting new victims via existing ones, offenders typically search for targets in public places. After initiating conversation, they obtain the child’s name, age and contact details. Grooming starts immediately and can continue during and after abuse. Both positive and negative grooming manipulations are used, such as flattering victims, providing free drink, insulting and threatening them. The actual abuse occurs at various locations, including parks, cheap hotels and ‘party’ flats. Victims may be abused by a single offender, multiple offenders at once, or numerous men in quick succession. Levels of repeat victimisation are high, leaving many victims embroiled in the cycle of abuse for weeks, months, even years.²⁰

- 2.1.7 Throughout the report we refer to anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday as a child. Whilst it is acknowledged that teenagers would wish to be referred to as ‘young people’ the term ‘child’ in this context helps professionals stay focused on the fact that they are children being abused and not young adults making positive choices.²¹

¹⁸ www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/sick-birmingham-duo-plied-girl-1704107

¹⁹ www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a_to_c/child_sexual_abuse/#a36

²⁰ www.ucl.ac.uk/jdibrief/documents/cse/GROUP_BASED_CHILD_SEXUAL_EXPLOITATION__2-Crime_overview_

²¹ www.swindonlscb.org.uk/wav/Documents/CSE%20Handbook.pdf



2.2 Who is at Risk and What Are the Signs?

2.2.1 There are many things which can make a child vulnerable to exploitation. First and foremost is low self-esteem. If a child feels they matter and are important it is easier to say “no.” The screening tool now being used by all agencies cites the vulnerabilities below. We were told about the additional risks that children with disabilities and special needs face, especially those with learning difficulties, on the autistic spectrum or with poorly developed executive function.

Table 1: Vulnerability Factors

Low self esteem	Breakdown of family relationships
Unsuitable/inappropriate accommodation	Emotional abuse by parent/carer/family member
Isolated from peers/family/social networks	Physical abuse by parent/carer/family member
Lack of positive relationship with a protective/nurturing adult	Family history of domestic abuse
Sexual abuse (during childhood)	Family history of substance misuse
History of Local Authority Care	Family history of mental health difficulties
Involvement of criminal activities	Lack of awareness/understanding of being safe

2.2.2 In general families, carers and practitioners should be mindful about signs of changed behaviour or examples of the indicators below. Other risks include a child with poorly developed problem solving skills and association or witnessing of gang related activities.

Table 2: Signs and Indicators for Frontline Practitioners and Clinicians

Self harm	Bullying (Victim and Perpetrator)	Late presentation (Injury or illness)
Low self esteem	Repeated sexually transmitted infection (STI) testing	Missing/Running away
Rapid change in appearance	Pelvic inflammatory disease	Repeated school absence
Sexualised behaviour	Repeat pregnancy	Mental health problems
Disruptive/Challenging / criminal behaviours	Repeat alcohol abuse	Suicidal thoughts
Revolving door (Representing to police and A&E Departments)	Drugs and solvent abuse	Unexplained injuries
	Physical injuries	

2.2.3 The multi-agency policies and structures referred to in chapter 3 provide the framework within which individual professionals, agencies and third sector agencies need to work. Common use of these basic screening tools is necessary and is, we were told, becoming more embedded. We noted the advice of one health professional:

If you have a gut feeling something’s not OK then refer. Very subtle things can raise alarm bells. If our staff feel anxious I tell them to refer.



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2.3 CSE Can Happen to Any Child

- 2.3.1 "CSE is non-discriminatory", we were told. Recent media attention has focussed on one model of grooming – perpetrators focussing on looked after girls. The high profile cases have largely drawn explicit attention to the girls being "White" and the perpetrators "Asian".
- 2.3.2 Our evidence has shouted out that exploitation can happen to anybody irrespective of where you live or your family circumstances. We have heard about girls across the city; some from unstable family backgrounds or in care, but others from previously stable and loving homes, including one who we were told went to school in an affluent part of the city. It can happen to white children as well as black and minority ethnic children. It happens in this city to boys too. WMP told us that it does disproportionately affect some of our communities, but that all are at risk. The example below is not a Birmingham case, but it helped Committee members to understand the complexities of CSE and how important it is not to make assumptions. It is, therefore, included here.

Emma's Story

Emma (a pseudonym) is now 24 years of age but was a victim from the age of 12. Emma's story started when she went to a shopping centre with friends at weekends. Lack of confidence and low self-esteem are very often a factor for teenagers and children who are groomed but Emma is from a loving and attentive family and was not vulnerable in any way. The initial approaches were from young boys, not adults, but as time went on she was introduced to older teenagers and then adult men. During the time she was being abused, Emma believed she was having a fantastic time but it was also the worst time of her life, all at the same time. The exploitation went on until Emma was 15. Since then a number of grown women have come forward with the same allegations against the same men and the police are investigating. It was easier to say "yes" than to say "no" – if victims try to say "no" they are likely to be detained and raped, and to say "yes" is often the quickest way to escape the situation. There was no education for young girls on how to avoid sexual exploitation-the perpetrators were smartly dressed, had nice cars and were nice looking - and this was never warned against.

Emma felt the professionals were no help. They gave her condoms and warned her to avoid getting pregnant, but she was not helped to escape the abuse. Their approach made Emma feel that what was happening to her was quite normal, but in fact it wasn't – she was being exploited. If she had told someone that a family member was regularly raping her and then giving her drink and drugs, professionals would have helped and immediately removed her from the situation, but in the case of CSE there was no professional help. In the end her parents removed her to another country to try and rescue her. This was not the end of Emma's problems as the psychological damage and the breakdown of trust with her parents took many years to repair.

"The important things are education and prevention. Once a child has been raped it is too late. It is not acceptable in this country in this day and age that children are being tortured and that men are acting out their sexual fantasies on children. It is not normal and we should not accept it".

Source: WMPCC Seminar: 8th Oct 2013



- 2.3.3 The Muslim Women's Network UK (based in Birmingham) has carried out research into the Sexual Exploitation of Asian Women and Girls called *Unheard Voices*.²² The 35 case studies the research is based on included many in Birmingham. Overwhelmingly, the abuse in the cases were highly organised and of the group grooming model. It concluded that there are currently victims who are ignored in the reporting of and dealing with CSE victims because they do not come forward or are not seen as someone that CSE could happen to. The report indicated that the Muslim victims they identified had particular vulnerabilities relating to shame, honour and forced marriage which made it particularly difficult to speak out or seek help. Shaista Gohir, Chair of the Muslim Women's Network UK, urged other black and minority ethnic (BME) groups to carry out similar research within their own communities to identify unheard voices.
- 2.3.4 The evidence also shows that exploitation can be carried out by anyone. Media reporting of perpetrators linked to Birmingham indicate that many are white, and we have been told of at least two cases when women were grooming. In the light of accusations of officials in Rotherham ignoring evidence of a "deep-rooted problem of Pakistani-heritage perpetrators"²³ we have been asked if this has occurred in Birmingham. We do not have evidence of that. But, we do need to put on record that we did hear a historical allegation that some of the men preying on children in a children's home were "Asian". We understand that interventions were put in place (such as following children to parks and challenging adults who appeared to approach them inappropriately and passing details of car registration plates and sim cards to WMP). The Committee feels that it is most important that this allegation is not thought by others to be the only type of exploitation in the city as it was one example that the committee were made aware of during the evidence gathering for this inquiry.
- 2.3.5 To focus attention on just one community would be to let down many other children in the city. Once there is any assumption made that perpetrators are likely to come from just one group then exploitation by others and warning signs get ignored or not seen for what it really is. In making incorrect assumptions, one puts children across the city in danger. However, the Muslim Women's Network UK's evidence was that, on the whole, perpetrators tend to prey on victims from their own communities as they are most accessible.
- 2.3.6 The Committee considered that the media was more likely to highlight one model of grooming above others. It may then follow that a known perpetrator profile reflects the cases that have had media attention as identifying the same patterns gives practitioners and others the confidence to refer. A report back from the Police and Crime Commissioners summit on CSE suggested that this is problematic:

²² Unheard Voices –www.mwnuk.co.uk/resourcesDetail.php?id=97

²³ Alexis Jay (2014) Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997 - 2013



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As CSE occurs in all communities and across all ethnicities by stereotyping the typical offender the public only look for certain types of grooming and only question certain relationships.²⁴

- 2.3.7 However, to ignore tackling any robust evidence of prevalence in any community through a fear of racism cannot be tolerated, but, as the Leader of the Council, Sir Albert Bore said in regards to Trojan Horse, the only way to resolve this big issue is to work with all communities in the city.²⁵

Myths

- 2.3.1 Both the Crown Prosecution Service and the National Working Group (into CSE) have highlighted a number of myths and stereotypes that can be very unhelpful. Some of those relevant to this topic are indicated below.

Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) Myths

Sexual exploitation is only perpetrated by certain ethnic/cultural communities

Perpetrators of sexual exploitation come from a range of different backgrounds and it is not restricted to one ethnic or cultural community. There is more than one type of perpetrator, model and approach to child sexual exploitation by gangs and groups. It invalidates the experience of victims abused by perpetrators from other backgrounds and risks such abuse being overlooked. What all perpetrators have in common, regardless of the differences in age, ethnicity, or social background, is their abuse of power in relation to their victims.

It only happens to girls and young women

Boys and young men are also at risk of sexual abuse and exploitation. It implies the boy or young man is not telling the truth and invalidates the experience of the victim.

Sexual abuse and exploitation does not happen to children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic (BME) backgrounds

Victims of child sexual abuse and exploitation come from a range of ethnic backgrounds and are not restricted to just one ethnicity. What is common to all victims is their powerlessness and vulnerability, not their age, ethnicity, disability or sexual orientation. It implies that children and young people from BME backgrounds are not telling the truth and invalidates their experience. It also risks such abuse being overlooked.²⁶

²⁴ [www.westmidlands-](http://www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/media/236764/cse_uni_of_bham_connectjustice_report_final_summary_july_2013.pdf)

pcc.gov.uk/media/236764/cse_uni_of_bham_connectjustice_report_final_summary_july_2013.pdf

²⁵ m.lgcplus.com/5073133.article

²⁶ www.cps.gov.uk/legal/a_to_c/child_sexual_abuse/#a36



Myth Busting by the National Working Group on Child Exploitation (the NWG)

Myth: This only happens to girls and young women – No

Myth: This is only perpetrated by male offenders – No

Myth: This only happens in certain ethnic/cultural communities – No

Myth: This just happens to young teenagers – No

Myth: This only happens to looked after 'vulnerable' children – No

Myth: This only happens in large urban towns and cities – No

Myth: There are very few forms it can take – No

Myth: Parents should know what is happening and should be able to stop it – No

2.4 Evidence and Numbers

Under-reporting

2.4.1 Unfortunately, the evidence base is not good enough at present in the city. The CSE Co-ordinator and the police have been drawing up profiles, but this is a crime that is overwhelmingly under-reported. Additionally the City Council's evidence to Parliament points out that "data collection around grooming and CSE is ... challenging ... as it is not collected at the front door as a presenting issue."²⁷ We believe that the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH - see section 3.5) has improved that situation as CSE assessments are now carried out at the front door.

2.4.2 The first point to make about numbers is that the Le Grand Review described unidentified risk as a:

Serious potential problem confronting Birmingham's Children's Services: that of possible unidentified risk to vulnerable children. We received many comments from partners and others about the obstructions they encountered when making referrals to Children's Services. It was suggested to us that, as a result, there may be many children in Birmingham at risk who have not been properly identified as such, or, if they have been, their risks have not been properly addressed.²⁸

²⁷ www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/68/68vw04.htm

²⁸ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/297748/Birmingham_report_25.03.14.pdf



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- 2.4.3 This unidentified risk will apply to victims of CSE as well as other children at risk. For CSE victims, even when support workers suspect a problem and are actively working with a child, it can take a whole year to obtain a disclosure. As we have seen with Operation Yew Tree it may take decades before someone discloses that they have been abused or exploited.
- 2.4.4 The data held about CSE is unlikely to provide a complete picture of the extent of CSE in the city of Birmingham for various reasons, including for example, victims of CSE often do not consider themselves to be victims and so do not report what is happening to them. However, as public and professional awareness surrounding CSE increases, it is anticipated that there will be an increase in the reporting/referral of cases of CSE.

Data source

- 2.4.5 The data below has been collated by the City Council's CSE Coordinator. This includes cases that have been referred from MASH or referred internally, for example, via social workers. The information and Early Help CSE dataset is kept through Family Common Assessment Framework (FCAF) coordinators based at the MASH.
- 2.4.6 The City Council does not hold information on "Universal Services", which are programmes delivered by the voluntary sector, schools, and Youth Offending Services around prevention of CSE. Data in these cases is not referred via the MASH.
- 2.4.7 The referral pathway for concerns around CSE, as well as the assessment process to safeguard children from CSE in Birmingham, is set out within the Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Board (BSCB) procedures as well as their Strategy and Action Plan 2013.
- 2.4.8 The CSE screening tool has been implemented by the BSCB's board. Associated actions for these services includes referrals into the MASH if presenting concerns are medium or significant. Where concerns are referred to the MASH, children and young people will then be assessed using a nationally recognised CSE assessment tool.
- 2.4.9 The figures held by the City Council include information about "Early Help". This relates to young people who have not been escalated up to the CSE Coordinator but are receiving intervention through the Family Support Teams following the CSE screening where they are displaying vulnerability factors. Those young people are still screened and reviewed, and will be escalated to a Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meeting if risks increase. A multi-agency CSE meeting would be held where there are medium or high risk concerns according to the CSE tool referred to above, with the intention of deciding upon the best course of action. This may include steps such as the implementation of a disruption plan. Early Help²⁹ is considered by the City Council and the BSCB to be a key factor in dealing with and trying to prevent cases of CSE.

²⁹ http://www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk/images/Early_Help_definition_-_final_draft_2.pdf



Numbers at Risk

2.4.10 In September 2014 there were 132 young people known to be currently vulnerable to or experiencing CSE.³⁰ This figure is broken down as follows:

- 47 considered as victims of CSE; (medium or significant risk factors identified);
- 23 considered vulnerable to CSE that have been raised with the CSE Coordinator (displaying vulnerability factors);
- 13 current ongoing assessments with young people to assess their level of risk and pitch the level of response required;
- 49 children receiving the Early Help offer.

2.4.11 Totalling those figures gives 83 children who are being assessed, who are vulnerable to CSE or are considered victims of CSE (plus 49 receiving Early Help gives 132).

2.4.12 Significant and medium risk indicators include:

- Periods of going missing over night or longer;
- Entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults (not car theft);
- Unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothes or other items;
- Multiple callers/contact – With unknown adults/older young people;
- Disclosure of sexual/physical assault followed by withdrawal of allegation;
- Has been sexually assaulted; and
- Accident and emergency hospital attendance because of alcohol/drug misuse.

2.4.13 Vulnerability factors include:

- Unsuitable/inappropriate accommodation/sofa surfing;
- History of Local Authority Care;
- Involvement in criminal activities and/or at risk of gang involvement;
- History of Child Protection involvement in relation to neglect, physical or emotional abuse; and
- Family history of domestic abuse and/or substance misuse and/or mental health difficulties.

³⁰ FOI Number - 11402



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2.4.14 Details of the 83 considered to be at risk or victims of CSE or undergoing assessment are below. As noted previously all that can be reported on is what is known.

Table 3: Profile of the known 83 children considered victims or at risk or undergoing assessment from multi-agency records, 5/9/14

Characteristics	Breakdown of known multi-agency profile
Gender	80 are female and only 3 are male.
Age	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1 is under 13 years • 57 are 14 - 16 years • 25 are 17 or older
Ethnicity	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 39 are White British • 40 are from black and minority ethnic groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ Asian – 17, ◦ Dual Heritage – 11 ◦ Black Caribbean – 7 ◦ Other – 5 • 4 have no data
Care Status	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 44 are Looked After Children (11 have a Full Care Order and 33 are being cared for on a voluntary basis (called a section 20))

2.4.15 The data above shows that it is not a problem for girls only; but it does show a substantial under-representation of boys amongst the known at risk children. Nationally it is thought that one in five victims of CSE might be boys, although this has been difficult to assess.³¹ Given these statistics and the demographics of Birmingham it is crucial that all training and awareness raising makes reference to the likelihood of black and minority ethnic children and boys being victims. Conversely, children known to social services are over represented in those known to be at risk or victims of CSE. In one way that is unsurprising as they are the children who are most scrutinised. There is also a strong linkage with missing children. We are told that 70-80% of all “high risk missing notifications” received from WMP mention known CSE indicators in the information received.

2.4.16 The FCAF coordinators are now based at the MASH with an Early Help Offer. Working with practitioners, they have identified a further 49 additional children (as noted in section 2.4.10) who have vulnerabilities to CSE, but have not been deemed high risk enough to be escalated up to the CSE Coordinator. They are receiving a programme of intervention around their potential vulnerability to CSE to prevent escalation through the Family Support Teams.

³¹ www.natcen.ac.uk/media/539627/16144-su-cse-rapid-evidence-report-v4.pdf; www.nuffieldfoundation.org/sexual-exploitation-boys-and-young-men-exploratory-study; www.barnardos.org.uk/hidden_in_plain_sight-4.pdf



- 2.4.17 Therefore, there are a total of 132 children in Birmingham (or possibly in the care of the City Council, if living out of city) who are at risk of being exploited or are being exploited. This figure is a snapshot from 5th September 2014 and is always changing. The CSE and Missing Operational Group (CMOG), for example, had identified 15 further young people for discussion in September.
- 2.4.18 Table 4 indicates children at risk of CSE who have been identified in the city over time. It indicates the numbers of children referred to a MASE meeting due to concerns that they were, or had been, at risk of sexual exploitation.

Table 4: Referrals for MASE Meetings 2011-14

	Number of children
Referrals for multi-agency CSE meetings between April 2011 - March 2012	45
Referrals for multi-agency CSE Meetings between April 2012 - March 2013	90
Referrals for multi-agency CSE meetings between April 2013 - March 2014	58
Referrals for multi-agency - CSE Meetings from April 2014 to 24 September 2014 (Year to date)	42

- 2.4.19 There is a serious CSE problem in Birmingham, as with many other places around the country, but not enough is currently known around the totality of the problem of CSE in the city based on current available information. The under-represented nature of boys within the data held or understood by partners in Birmingham, demonstrates that more work is needed to raise awareness with frontline professionals, universal services, community and schools of those risk indicators and associated responses in supporting this particularly hidden group of young people.
- 2.4.20 West Midlands Police are currently working with the 7 local authorities in the force area to produce a 'Multi-agency CSE Problem Profile'. This will help increase understanding, although given the hidden nature of this crime it will still not show the whole picture. We were not shown any mapping of the problem across the city. However we were told by West Midlands Police that every ward in the city has got risks and potential and every area has a story around CSE: victim, offender or location.

2.5 Models of Grooming

- 2.5.1 There are a range of different approaches or models of CSE, which tend to involve initially building a caring relationship with the child. Typical quotes from a ChildLine report³² are below.

³² www.nspcc.org.uk/news-and-views/our-news/nspcc-news/12-11-12-grooming-report/caught-in-a-trap-pdf_wdf92793.pdf



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Children's Views of Groomers

Getting attention from him was nice.

No-one has shown interest in me like this before, he made me feel special and told me I was special and that I was the only one he wanted to be with.”

He makes me feel special because he pays attention to me and I like that because no-one else does.

I had no one to talk to.

Me and my parents weren't getting on and I had no friends I could trust.

2.5.2 Typical models of grooming are:

- Inappropriate relationships with older adults
- “Boyfriend” model with older man working alone
- Organised exploitation involving groups or gangs
- As part of initiation into gangs
- Peer on peer grooming
- Online exploitation.³³

2.5.3 However, perpetrators' behaviour may not always be neatly categorised. The serious case review referring to the Little Stars Nursery involved “an offender who, whilst grooming young girls on the internet was also abusing a young child in the nursery, confirming the challenges involved in categorising offenders in terms of risk.”³⁴

2.5.4 Barnardo's set out the grooming line which shows the deliberate strategies that abusers use to target, build trust and then utterly betray that trust. We were told that in grooming there is never an intent for a long or loving relationship. One practitioner explained the process, below.

When getting to know someone the perpetrator might give the young person a mobile phone and use lines like “You can speak to us at any time.” We were told how quickly they learn about the young person and their families and the arguments with their parents. Perpetrators will build on this. They learn where parents work and about siblings and best friends. They build a relationship until

³³ Children Society evidence

³⁴ www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk/images/BSCB2010-11-3.pdf







the young person thinks it is boyfriend and girlfriend. Then it changes and the child is expected to pay back through sexual activity with the perpetrator and then friends and others. It grinds children down. They feel dirty, ugly, worthless and may get diseases and pain. The perpetrator isolates them so will have no one else to go to. If they try to get out the perpetrator knows everything about them. Threats are common, such as “your little brother will get stabbed”.

- 2.5.5 Grooming involves putting in or exploiting a wedge between a child and their parents or carers so that the child will not listen to the reasoning of those who care for them, but becomes dependent on the abuser. Once in an abusive relationship a child will feel very isolated. There may be an element of “debt bondage” – you owe me back for what I have given you, and controlling or violent behaviour to ensure the child cooperates. It is often not until the end of this grooming line that victims realise they are being groomed and it can be too late. By the end of the grooming line the perpetrator may well be receiving financial gain for making a victim available.
- 2.5.6 Perpetrators can persuade children to bring others forward to be abused. A year 11 child might be asked to make friends with a particular year 8 child, especially if they have lost their value to the perpetrator by being too old and they might even be paid to bring in younger victims. Children can be blamed for this– but they are still victims, generally being co-coerced into this position.



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The Grooming Line

			
Targeting stage	Friendship Forming Stage	Loving Relationship Stage	Abusive relationship Stage
<p>Observing the Child/Young person</p> <p>Selection of Child/Young person</p> <p>Befriending-being nice, giving gifts, caring, taking an interest, giving compliments etc</p> <p>Gaining and developing trust</p> <p>Sharing information about young people between other abusive adults</p>	<p>Making young people feel special</p> <p>Giving gifts and rewards</p> <p>Spending time together</p> <p>Listening and remembering</p> <p>Keeping secrets</p> <p>Being there for them</p> <p>"No-one understands you like I do; being their best friend</p> <p>Testing out physical contact-accidental touching</p> <p>Offering protection</p>	<p>Being their boyfriend/girlfriend</p> <p>Establishing a sexual relationship</p> <p>Lowering their inhibitions e.g. showing them pornography</p> <p>Engaging them in forbidden activities e.g. Going to clubs, drinking, taking drugs</p> <p>Being inconsistent-building up hope and then punishing them</p>	<p>Becomes an "unloving sexual relationship"</p> <p>Withdrawal of love and friendship</p> <p>Reinforcing dependency on them-stating young person is "damaged goods"</p> <p>Isolation from family and friends</p> <p>Trickery and manipulation-"you owe me"</p> <p>Threatening behaviour</p> <p>Physical Violence</p> <p>Sexual assaults</p> <p>Making them have sex with other people</p> <p>Giving them drugs</p> <p>Playing on the young person's feelings of guilt, shame and fear</p>

(Taken from Barnardos' Bwise2 Sexual Exploitation pack)



2.6 Why Don't We See It?

Organisational Culture

Case Study

Child A came from a violent family – her brothers and father were very violent. She grew up not liking herself and secretly self-harmed. At the age of 15, child A became sexually active out of choice. She had sexual relationships with boys her own age and a bit older and became known as a “slag” at school by other pupils. One day child A went to a local park with some boys and other girls and was raped by three men.

They also filmed her ordeal. No-one believed anything child A said, including what had happened to her because she was seen as a “trouble maker” at school. The men that had abused her started to offer her money, drugs and alcohol. Eventually she started to view them as her friends.

However, she was regularly raped and beaten by them and then would also suffer more violence at home. The offenders would encourage each other to rape and abuse her. Child A did not seek help as she felt this was her destiny and was also extremely scared of her abusers. She believed they were so dangerous that they would kill her and her family. Child A struggles now with serious sexually transmitted diseases, health implications and addictions.

Source: Muslim Women's Network UK, *Unheard Voices*, page 106

2.6.1 Victims are unlikely to disclose for a range of reasons and for some professionals they do not fit a standard model of asking for and being grateful for support. Worse, without training or understanding professionals can dismiss it as a “choice” or as in the example above, not believe it. We have a concern from the evidence that we heard that professionals are not uniformly seeing CSE for what it is.

2.6.2 For much of the process the child does not recognise themselves as a victim and they may not act as victims are assumed to act. They may resent, be angry and reject support and intervention from family, the police and social workers. We learnt just how easy it might be for a Police Officer or social worker to walk away if told to “**** off” by a child if practitioners do not have proper training, understanding and support. The Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) report into child protection in West Midlands Police found that:

In [one] case supervisors recorded that a 13-year-old girl who frequently went missing was making ‘a lifestyle choice’, although it was clear from police systems that she was being, or was at high risk of being, sexually exploited.³⁵

³⁵ HMIC (October 2014) National Child Protection Inspections: West Midlands Police 2 – 13 June 2014



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- 2.6.3 If professionals see children as making a lifestyle choice or choosing to put themselves at risk then children do not get seen as victims of crime. Crucially, information does not then get shared.
- 2.6.4 Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE), in their evidence, shared some of the comments they have heard (in their national work, not specific to Birmingham) and which should not be used as they shift the blame from the abuser to the victim.

Inappropriate views held (PACE)	
"Feral"	"Habitual liar"
"Highly sexualised"	"She's asking for it"
"Predatory"	"Promiscuous"
"Prostitute"	"Lifestyle choices"
"Tarted up"	"Prostituting herself"
"Wiling participants"	"Trouble is they enjoy it"

- 2.6.5 Referring to Rotherham, Caroline Lucas MP said:

Shockingly, sexually exploited children were labelled as prostitutes by those to whom they turned for help. I think that that shaped the response, because the word "prostitute" suggests consent and volition.
- 2.6.6 Cllr Jess Phillips at the September 2014 West Midlands Police and Crime Panel meeting suggested:

The thing we have to address for every single police officer and every single social worker are our own personal and values judgments. If these 1400 girls in Rotherham had been cars you can bet that more would have been done at local tasking and more would have been done at regional tasking. But they were girls; just girls. ...we need to look at the values and judgements of our police officers and social workers. That they see children when they look at these girls; see vulnerable people... not people who are "asking for it."³⁶

Choice and Consent

- 2.6.7 One of the barriers to dealing with this as abuse is that it can be seen, initially at least, as consensual by both the victims and by adults who are meant to be protecting them. One of the issues discussed has been the age of consent for sex.

³⁶ Webcast: www.coventry.public-i.tv/core/share/open/webcast/0/0/560/144458/144458/webcast/start_time/2126000



What is the age of consent?

The **Sexual Offences Act 2003** states that the age of consent for sex is 16 years old in England and Wales. It is not intended that the sexual offences legislation be used to prosecute mutually consenting sexual activity between under 16s, unless it involves abuse or exploitation. To protect younger children, the law says children aged under 13 years can never legally give consent, so any sexual activity with a child aged 12 years or under will be subject to the maximum penalties.

The legislation also gives extra protection to young people aged 16 to 17 years. It is illegal to take, show or distribute indecent photographs, pay for or arrange sexual services, or for a person in a position of trust (e.g. teachers, care workers) to engage in sexual activity with anyone under the age of 18 years.³⁷

2.6.8 However, what we have heard time and time again is that “children cannot consent to their own abuse.” So whatever a child’s age, whether or not they believe they are willingly consenting to sexual activity, exploitation can never be consensual.

Disclosure

Case Study Child not Identifying themselves as a Victim

Child B was 14 years old when she started her relationship with her boyfriend, a few years older than her. He was known locally for dealing in drugs. He bought her lots of gifts and told her that he really loved her and wanted to marry her. He even told her that he was prepared to run away with her just so he could marry her. He eventually started taking her to his flat and ordered her to provide sexual favours for his friends. Child B is nearly 16 years old now and drinks and smokes heavily to try and block out what she has to endure regularly at her boyfriend’s flat. She says she cannot refuse because she will get “slapped around”. Child B has also started to self-harm and has been diagnosed with depression by her GP who is unaware about what she is going through. She will not leave her boyfriend because she says she really loves him and believes that he adores her and will marry her

Muslim Women’s Network UK, *Unheard Voices*, page 119

2.6.9 Why do children find it difficult to disclose? The nature of this abuse is that for much of the time the victims may feel that the abuser is a boyfriend, or at least someone interested in their care. As we were told: “They don’t see it; their heads are messed up.” Further, analysis of online peer support sites covering abuse, exploitation and neglect suggests the issues are:

³⁷ www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/briefings/definition_of_a_child_wda59396.html



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- An emotional barrier, e.g. shame, embarrassment, not being able to face telling, finding it hard to find/say the words;
- Worry about the family knowing, loyalty to family and the impact on family members;
- Thinking their situation was not problematic enough to disclose to others;
- Threats from the abuser; and
- Fear of not being believed if they were to tell.³⁸

2.6.10 The research by the Muslim Women's Network UK suggests the biggest barrier to Asian girls and women reporting is blackmail involving shame and honour. The *Unheard Voices* research reminds us how difficult it is to break away from a perpetrator. In their research, breaking free happened through:

- Disclosure to a friend, teacher or voluntary organisation;
- Family members discovering the abuse;
- Teacher spotting the signs and asking questions;
- Victim coming to the attention of the police who then suspected CSE;
- Referral made to a group supporting victims; and
- Victim moved out of the locality.

³⁸ Cossar, J t al (2013) *'It takes a lot to build trust' Recognition and Telling: Developing earlier routes to help for children and young people*. For the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England At: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_747



3 Multi-Agency Working

3.1 It's Everybody's Business

3.1.1 Keeping children safe from sexual exploitation is everyone's business, although different roles are played and agencies have their own statutory responsibilities. The response should never be what one manager suggested: "But that is not the job of xxx!" One witness told us:

There doesn't seem to be a joined up approach – our Ofsted report bore that out. We are all accountable.

3.1.2 Each agency holds a part of the safeguarding jigsaw and often it is only when all the information is shared that the whole picture is seen and patterns are identified. No serious case review has ever criticised partners for too much information sharing. There is only benefit to information sharing and action planning. Each agency needs to play their role and be accountable to others for this. This chapter and the next look at how these agencies work together and specific roles they play. The statutory guidance *Working Together to Safeguard Children*³⁹ sets out the principles for how agencies should work together, including two principles which need to apply in dealing with CSE:

- Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility: for services to be effective each professional and organisation should play their full part; and
- A child-centred approach: for services to be effective they should be based on a clear understanding of the needs and views of children.

3.1.3 The Children's Commissioner has set out a See Me Hear Me framework⁴⁰ which all partners should work to and which have been adopted in the new regional CSE Regional Framework. This includes principles of effective practice:

- The child's best interests must be the top priority
- Participation of children and young people
- Enduring relationships and support
- Comprehensive problem-profiling
- Effective information-sharing within and between agencies
- Supervision, support and training of staff
- Evaluation and review.

³⁹ Working Together to Safeguard Children - A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children (2013)

⁴⁰ Berelowitz, C et al (2013) *If Only Someone Had Listened Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups*



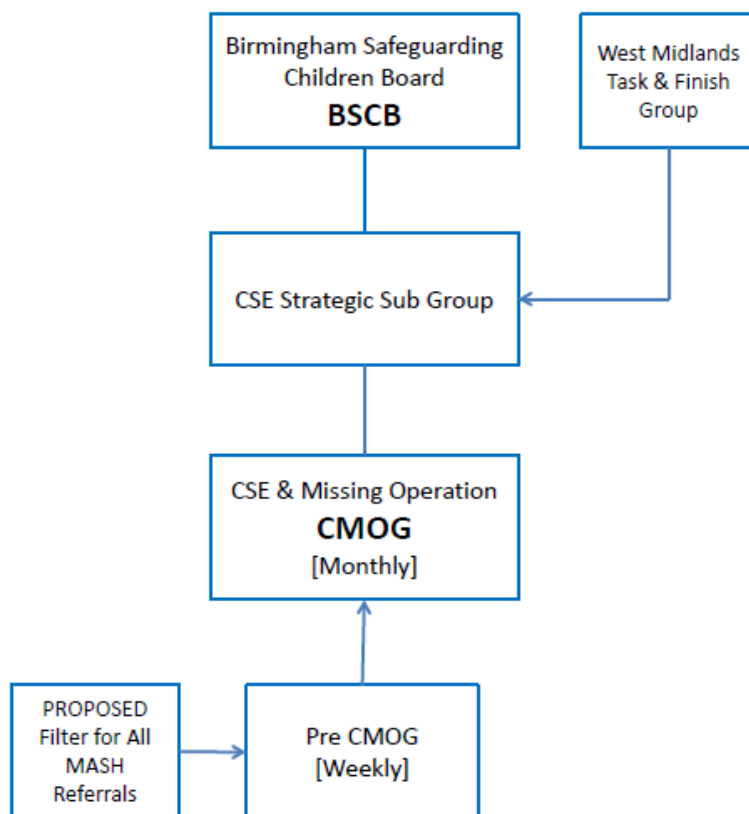
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3.1.4 It is critical for any progress to be underpinned within the multi-agency setting with effective and informed collaboration at the core. We were told that to reduce CSE risk, threats and harms then

We need the key agencies absolutely and systematically on the case, with clear referral pathways, good analysis, effective and authoritative decision-taking and relentless follow through.

3.1.5 This should be the focus and the key structures for multi-agency working to achieve this are shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1: Multi-Agency Structures for Managing CSE



3.2 Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB)

3.2.1 The BCSB is a statutory body which brings together key partners in the city. The BSCB is an independent body, whose role includes monitoring the effectiveness of the various agencies working in Birmingham to protect children. This includes West Midlands Police and Birmingham City Council. Its responsibilities include developing inter-agency safeguarding procedures and managing serious case reviews. It has set out a series of principles for all agencies to adhere to in responding to a child who has been, or is at risk of being, sexually exploited:



- Children and young people cannot make an informed choice to be sexually exploited or to continue to be exploited: their acquiescence is moulded by coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation. This applies regardless of whether the young person has reached the age of consent;
- Sexually exploited children and young people will be treated as victims of abuse;
- The primary concern of the practitioner is to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child or young person; and
- The child or young person will be supported to participate as fully as possible in the decisions that affect them.⁴¹

3.2.2 The September 2013 Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention and Intervention Strategy and Action Plan was written in consultation with partners and ratified by the Birmingham Safeguarding Children's Board. It sets out a robust plan of action to mobilise partnership skills and experience to understand and eradicate the risk and reality of child sexual exploitation to children in Birmingham. This requires each of the partners to own the action plan and deliver against it and report back. We got the impression this was not yet happening consistently.

3.2.3 The BSCB has updated and drawn up the procedures for dealing with CSE and in September 2014 published what appears to be a useful and accessible web based manual.⁴²

3.2.4 The BSCB puts on multi-agency training, which brings together practitioners from different areas of work, and is a very positive outcome from the BSCB. At the time of writing the BSCB structure was undergoing change and we trust this will enable the Board in the future to hold all agencies to account for how they are undertaking and dealing with CSE.

3.2.5 One perspective given to us is that the effectiveness of BSCB in holding partners to account to deliver the strategy has been undermined by a range of regional and local factors including the police transformation programme and misunderstanding about the responsibilities and accountabilities of the regional groups, and the local BSCB in making decisions and deciding on appropriate approaches.

3.3 Birmingham's CSE Co-ordinator

3.3.1 A lynchpin role is the Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator who was appointed as a 12 month fixed term secondment in April 2013, funded initially by the BSCB. This has been a crucial appointment. We were pleased to hear during the course of evidence gathering that this post is now mainstream funded by the City Council and due to the work load a second co-ordinator was in place in September 2014. A data analyst for this team was due to be appointed too.

⁴¹ www.proceduresonline.com/birmingham/scb/chapters/p_ch_sexual_exploit.html#Protection

⁴² www.proceduresonline.com/birmingham/scb/



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3.3.2 The CSE Co-ordinator's role includes:

- Collating multi-agency data to provide information about the location of hotspots and of trends identified;
- Co-ordinating awareness raising, training and prevention services for young people, parents and carers, professionals, the voluntary sector and schools;
- Assisting in the development of the city's strategic response and coordinating the operational response; and
- Supporting the safety planning of victims and the disruption of perpetrators.⁴³

3.3.3 The role is not to manage cases and nor does it enable other agencies or officers of the City Council to transfer their responsibilities.

3.3.4 The co-ordinator, in addition, escalates safeguarding concerns through partners where responses do not safeguard victims and this has been key in recognising the risk and status of CSE victims. Since the appointment of the co-ordinator progress includes:

- Introduction of a performance and audit framework;
- Amendment of the Governance arrangements;
- Updated procedures in accordance with the new CSE strategy and action plan;
- CSE screening and risk assessment being embedded into practice within partner agencies;
- Collation of a dataset of those young people at risk of CSE onto a spreadsheet; and
- The development, at the time of writing of a CSE Champion structure within key services in Birmingham.

Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Meetings (MASE)

3.3.5 One of the key roles for the CSE Co-ordinators is chairing Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meetings. These devise plans to safeguard individual victims (victim safety plans) and preserve evidence and plans for the prosecution and disruption of perpetrators and agree action to include long term intensive direct work with the individual child. Between 2009 and 2013 there were approximately 80 independently chaired MASE meetings per annum. Between January and September 2014 there have already been 120 MASE meetings held.

3.3.6 To enable accountability and transparency, notes and action plans from those meetings are important. We were concerned to hear during the inquiry that without secretarial support the Co-ordinators have to chair, as well as minute, these complex multi-agency meetings. As we were finalising the report we were pleased to be told that administration support had been put in place in October 2014.

⁴³ BSCB (2013) Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention and Intervention Strategy



3.4 Multi-Agency Groups

Strategic CSE Sub-Group

3.4.1 This strategic sub-group, sitting under the BSCB, is chaired by the City Council's Head of Safeguarding. It focuses on the trends and patterns and examines location, victims and offenders. It might be worth reviewing membership as a third sector organisation said they would welcome representation around the table. This Chair is also a member of the Board in order to feedback on developments relating to CSE and to be open to scrutiny. Its purpose is:

- To monitor and review multi-agency management of child sexual exploitation and ensure effective arrangements are in place to tackle issues within Birmingham;
- To govern the implementation and development of the CSE Co located team in Birmingham and to ensure that service level agreement is in place for provision of resources between partner agencies;
- Take lead responsibility for implementing the multi-agency action plan to minimise sexual exploitation in Birmingham and to take a strategic lead for this work in the City;
- To identify and overcome barriers to effectively tackling the issue of child sexual exploitation, in supporting victims and prosecuting and disrupting perpetrators;
- To make appropriate recommendations to the BSCB to ensure that effective services are delivered to tackle child sexual exploitation in the City; and
- To set up and monitor a multi-agency practice group (CMOG).⁴⁴

Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Operational Group (CMOG)

3.4.2 A practitioners' group (CMOG) focuses on risk assessing children going missing and/or at risk of sexual exploitation and agreeing actions that need to be taken for individual cases. It is chaired by a Detective Chief Inspector from WMP. The City Council is represented by Legal Services as well as Children's Social Care.

3.4.3 It is too soon to draw conclusions from the CMOG, but our evidence suggests there have been weaknesses including:

- A lack of detail included on the risk assessments by practitioners;
- An insufficient range of multi-agency partners attending, plus sporadic attendance;
- No attendance register so no way to hold agencies to account;

⁴⁴ BSCB (2013) CSE Strategy



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- There are poor to non-existent arrangements for minute taking at pre-CMOG and CMOG meetings. Apparently agencies are each sent their actions separately and feed into their own processes;
- Actions are deferred from one meeting to the next with no apparent progress;
- The communication lines between MASH (the front door – see section 3.5) and CMOG are unclear to some partners. Some partners are unclear as to who has the power to direct actions and how one escalates problems and in which direction; and
- Not enough data is said to yet be coming out of the CMOG.

3.4.4 The Committee believes that getting this structure right is crucial in protecting children, but that further work urgently needs to be done. As a starting point the third CMOG chair in its short life has recently been appointed. We sincerely hope that she is able to stay in this post for some time and embed its work. There needs to be consistency in who chairs these meetings. It is clear that accountability, action and tracking arrangements have not been robust enough. Key details of cases and shared evidence and existing interventions as well as agreed actions need to be taken and shared. Only in this way can agencies be held responsible for progress made. Early feedback on new arrangements has been positive.

3.5 Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

3.5.1 Established in July 2014 the MASH is the long anticipated and much welcomed co-located multi-agency team for child protection, domestic abuse, sexual exploitation and early help referrals.⁴⁵ The aim is that the MASH will improve the quality and timeliness of screening, information sharing, and decision making by MASH partner agencies, leading to better outcomes. The multi-agency project team consists of police, BCC Children's Services, and health representatives. In September 2014 Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid joined MASH and at the time of writing we were told that a rota of designated safeguarding leads were due to start with them imminently.⁴⁶ The multi-agency aspect of this is key to success.

3.5.2 If someone has concerns about a child's welfare they can refer directly onto the MASH (**Tel: 0121 303 1888**). It takes referrals from any sources: the child themselves, professionals, the police, health workers, family members and members of the public.

3.5.3 The aim of the MASH is indicated in the slide from the launch road show:

⁴⁵ MASH has replaced the Information, Advice and Support Service (IASS) and the Bridge.

⁴⁶ Extract taken from MASH Progress Briefing – 11th July 2014



- 3.5.4 There was an initial almost 50% increase in contacts through this front door compared to 12 months previously, although previously children missing or involved in domestic abuse were not counted. There were over 600 referrals each week during August 2014 and this increased as anticipated once the school term started.
- 3.5.5 WMP, children services and health partners carried out a dip sample of 400 cases through the front door prior to going into the MASH. They found cases that would now “scream CSE”, but this was not recognised at the time. It is hoped that the MASH arrangements will resolve this. Stephen Rimmer’s early assessment has been positive: ⁴⁷

It ... means that Birmingham – for the first time in many years – is managing risks to children and vulnerable people on the basis of a comprehensive picture, such is the credibility of the MASH in terms of referrals.⁴⁸

Early Help

- 3.5.6 Early help is embedded in the MASH through the use of the Family Common Assessment Framework (FCAF). FCAF coordinators are now based with the MASH. The key aim of adopting an FCAF model was to stop families having to explain their situation and story again and again to professionals and to find a more effective way for the statutory and third sector to support them. It is a process that is carried out with children and families and not to them and is a way of getting support into families before a case has to be dealt with by children’s social care (and a child in need or child protection process). If more than one agency is (or should be) involved with a child an FCAF approach should be instigated with a lead agency (such as a school or health visitor or a third sector such as Barnardo’s). They co-ordinate a meeting with all agencies and the family to put together an intervention plan. They continue to meet to monitor this and then close down when issues are resolved. MASH meetings can feed into the FCAF process.

⁴⁷ West Midlands Strategic Preventing Violence to Vulnerable People Lead

⁴⁸ PVVP Update 10, 19/9/14



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- 3.5.7 Even before the MASH was established the FCAF team were screening everyone coming into the service against the BSCB CSE screening tool. Two children a day were identified as being at risk, presenting vulnerabilities or actually being exploited. As noted previously, at the time of writing, 49 CSE cases were held within the family support teams.
- 3.5.8 The FCAF co-ordinators have integrated CSE into their effective multi-agency training and are looking to develop resources such as a pack on CSE and a series of short instructional videos on line to educate and support practitioners. In terms of dealing with children they advocate a therapeutic model, putting a child's safety first. Their advice is to look at behaviours and provide interventions to change those and help to stabilise a situation. Once that has happened a disclosure is more likely. They advise on the thresholds between an FCAF and children's social care and can escalate cases. They also feel that being able to step a case down to an FCAF can be therapeutic as gives some control back to the child.

Case Study: FCAF Interventions

Child C's mother raised concerns with children's services when she discovered her daughter had been using social media to contact unknown males. Child C was a vulnerable young person, raised by a mother who was misusing drugs and displaying violent behaviour on a regular basis. At 9 Child C first had sex with a boy at school and she ran away from home at the age of 12 and was subsequently groomed by a woman who had found her in a bus stop. She was given shelter, drugs and alcohol and was subsequently sexually assaulted by five men. Following child protection proceedings she was sent to live with an older sibling. Even though she had been removed from the geographical area she was still considered to be at risk of CSE. The child and the older sibling and family worked well with social care and as a result the case was stepped down to the locality family support team to offer ongoing support and monitoring of CSE risks.

Intensive support was put in place for Child C to support her following a Family CAF process. A Family Support Worker visited weekly to work with Child C around keeping safe and emotional stability whilst awaiting a specialist CSE service and the school made weekly counselling available. This intervention has been sufficient to enable Child C to settle well.

- 3.5.9 The FCAF team is now an integral part of the MASH. We were told that only 3.6 full time FCAF Co-ordinators had gone into in the MASH to cover the whole of the city. Given the valuable early help work that they enable and the advice and training they provide to practitioners we are concerned this may be insufficient. Think Family⁴⁹ funds will continue to fund 3 additional FCAF triage staff to work on Think Family and, at the time of writing, they were looking to place additional one at the MASH. We would ask that resources for early help within the MASH be reviewed in developing the three year budget for the Directorate.

⁴⁹ Birmingham's name for the Troubled Families Initiative. www.birmingham.gov.uk/think-family



3.6 West Midlands Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People (PVVP)

3.6.1 Birmingham is not an island. In terms of exploitation abusers do not respect local authority boundaries. We were therefore pleased to see that the seven West Midlands authorities and the late Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), Bob Jones, committing to work together to tackle violence against vulnerable people, which includes CSE.

3.6.2 A West Midlands Strategic Leader for Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People (PVVP), Stephen Rimmer, has been seconded in from the Home Office for two years and the role is funded by all the partners. A high level PVVP Board has been established to address violence across the area; and he has been working to develop a West Midlands wide hub to co-ordinate intelligence information and data; and introduce clearly defined standards of operating practice with regard to CSE that would be consistently applied. One aim is to develop co-located CSE teams across the region as part of a Pan West Midlands CSE Strategy.

3.6.3 The Board's action plan includes:

- **Governance, Capacity and Outcomes:** Includes capacity within key organisations, agreeing outcomes and developing a problem profile.
- **Prevention:** Includes work with schools, early help, community engagement and mobilisation
- **Protection:** Includes developing shared operating standards for CSE, working with health and developing a multi-agency hub
- **Justice:** Includes working with Criminal Justice System partners, including work with the police, Crown Prosecution Service and courts and improving victims' experiences
- **Capability:** Includes Public Protection Intelligence Hub, leadership, supporting frontline workers, training and development and risk management

3.6.4 There has been a regional CSE group consisting of officers from the seven West Midlands authorities working collaboratively to develop and implement shared standards. Whilst this inquiry was ongoing (June 2014) the West Midlands CSE Framework and Standards went live. The shared framework aims to improve the response to CSE across the region, and to improve working together across agencies and areas, particularly recognising that many victims are moved around different areas.

3.6.5 We are impressed at the intent of all the local authorities to work together and standardise the way they record information and hope that if this can be embedded that this will be an important step forward.



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3.7 Is a Multi-Agency CSE Hub Required?

3.7.1 The September 2013 CSE strategy stated that:

Without the commitment of a multi-agency child sexual exploitation hub within Birmingham the intensive resources required will not be met.⁵⁰

3.7.2 We feel that MASH is a huge step forward and thank each of the partners for committing resources. Given the increase in referrals we feel that resources need to be kept under review. Concerns had been raised with us as to the extent to which health was embedded in the MASH, but at the time of writing we were somewhat reassured that there were two full time health representatives embedded, plus managerial support. The health component to MASH is, at the time of finalising the report, being reviewed by providers and in partnership with commissioners in light of the resource implications demonstrated through the early weeks of MASH.

3.7.3 Overall success depends on the right action being taken following a referral from MASH. We feel there could be a danger of CSE not being prioritised, however, as the MASH has a broad remit. The Oxfordshire Kingfisher Project model (also police, children's social care and health) offers a focus solely on CSE and an end to end approach – from identifying risk to supporting victims through the court process.

3.7.4 We understand there are benefits to all safeguarding work coming together, as, we have noted that, for example children who live with domestic violence are more at risk of grooming. But we will be seeking reassurance that CSE is not being subsumed by other safeguarding pressures and that a case management process from start to finish is required.

3.7.5 The HMIC report raised a concern that:

The strategic framework will not deliver the desired outcome unless there is a greater commitment to a multi-agency response at an operational level (for example, through specialist multi-agency child sexual exploitation teams.⁵¹

3.7.6 We, therefore, recommend an assessment of the MASH six months from launch about what a dedicated CSE multi-agency team would or would not offer compared to what is in place. We would like six monthly updates as to resources committed, effectiveness of multi-agency working, caseloads and capacity.

⁵⁰ BSCB (2013) *CSE Prevention and Intervention Strategy*

⁵¹ HMIC (October 2014) National Child Protection Inspections: West Midlands Police 2 – 13 June 2014



4 Organisational Roles

4.1 Overview

- 4.1.1 The process for dealing with a child at risk of CSE or being abused does depend on the level of risk identified. It should fit alongside and complement existing approaches to safeguarding children, whether that is a Family Common Assessment Framework (FCAF) and early help interventions or following a child in need assessment or a child protection assessment. Each agency has specific roles to play. However, practitioners need to share some common understandings and ways of doing things and the multi-agency training provided by the BSCB is valuable. One practitioner suggested a mantra for all practitioners (and others) should be “Never assume. Assess!”
- 4.1.2 This short chapter considers the City Council and the police, but examples throughout the report point to the role of communities, the third sector, schools and the health service.

4.2 Local Authority

- 4.2.1 The Children Act 1989 makes the City Council’s responsibilities to children very clear:
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.
- 4.2.2 Councils have specific statutory duties regarding assessing children and following the child in need and child protection duties. They have a role on leading on some of the multi-agency working for CSE, namely managing the MASH and co-ordinating the FCAF process.
- 4.2.3 Section 3.5.7 referred to the screening process. If this indicates a risk of CSE a multi-agency strategy is organised. This is meant to feed into (or trigger or escalate) the different levels of working from using an early help approach to child protection. We welcome the work that has gone into getting the screening tool in place, but it has been suggested that a more robust tool could be used. The Derby SCB toolkit was suggested as best practice and there would appear to be greater clarity on that about the level of risk and the actions required.⁵²
- 4.2.4 Some practitioners have suggested that the standard social work model and interventions do not work robustly enough for CSE as they tend to focus on protecting the child from harm within the family. In addition, a social work model that focuses on protecting the child may not give adequate weight to the need to deal with an offender through prosecution or disruption. We were told that the “test” for deciding if a safeguarding plan is needed is based on the child protection model of familial abuse. CSE, however, is extra-familial. One practitioner told us of this test being used to

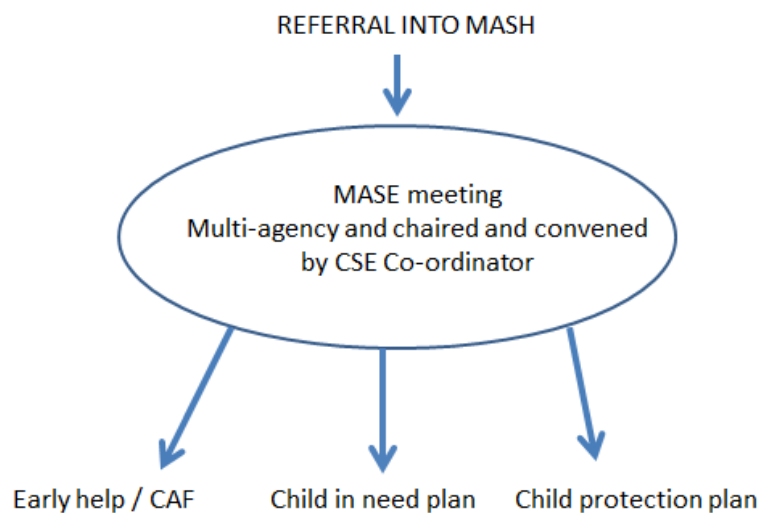
⁵² www.derbyscb.org.uk/scb7.asp



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conclude that a safeguarding plan was not necessary on the basis that the child is safe within the home. If a case fails to hit the threshold for intervention the result is instead a Child in Need (CinN) Plan. The, problem we were told with CinN plans is that any agency can decide to close a case without reference to the multi-agency team around the child.

Figure 2: Safeguarding processes



- 4.2.5 The City Council uses a case management system called "Care First". We are told that this needs to be further developed to be able to generate intelligence relating to CSE.
- 4.2.6 The City Council also acts as corporate parent to looked after children. The Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services and the Chief Executive has specific responsibilities; all councillors have a role to play and agree to do so when they sign the oath of office; and the Corporate Parenting Board takes an overview. Getting all these responsibilities right as the data in chapter 1 indicates that looked after children are over-represented as known CSE victims.
- 4.2.7 The City Council also has responsibilities around regulatory services, contracting and procurement, school improvement and other frontline services for residents, which have a bearing on this area
- 4.2.8 The City Council's Legal Service supports the formal child protection process. They can also lead on civil orders to protect children and this is considered further in Chapter 7.

4.3 West Midlands Police (WMP)

- 4.3.1 WMP play a vital role in dealing with CSE in keeping children safe identifying, disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators. As often is the case we were told that police attitudes had changed following a case involving organised grooming in 2008 that was successfully taken to court but got little media attention. This started to change how victims were dealt with by the police. Some



steps were taken to avoid accusations of lifestyle choices or asking children inappropriate questions about/or consent and choice and treating them in the same way as older victims.

4.3.2 We were told that if children come into custody the system is now better geared up to assess if they are victims themselves. For example, if they are caught stealing on a week day we are told that they should be asked about why they are out of school and an opportunity should be taken to understand what the child's life is like. The message from the top is that officers should not just deal with what is in front of them, but should look into the life of a child.

4.3.3 The first Police and Crime Plan developed by the late PCC, Bob Jones, in 2012 set out a deliverable for 2013-14 to:

Carry out activity to understand in more detail the extent of people trafficking within the West Midlands and to maintain vigilance around children.

4.3.4 For 2014-15 this is to:

Develop tactics to tackle child sexual exploitation, modern day slavery (people trafficking) and honour based violence sexual exploitation.⁵³

4.3.5 We also welcome the approach taken by the new Police and Crime Commissioner, David Jamieson. At the first Police and Crime Panel he attended on 8th September, he said:

Over Rotherham I have been asking some searching questions of the police. "If we pretended there are no problems in the West Midlands we would not be telling the truth. There will be problems. I have asked for a number of reports on this and I will share them with the Panel when I get the contents of those reports. I want to be as open as possible because one of the major issues in Rotherham was that things were not open. They were closed. People were not discussing publicly things that they should have done, so I will be doing just that."⁵⁴

4.3.6 The force has undergone transformation with inclusion of a dedicated resource for CSE. There is now a West Midlands Police Team offering localised support across the region. The Police describe a rapid increase in identified cases of CSE and a priority need to respond.

4.3.7 The Public Protection Unit (PPU) is a central department with responsibility for the delivery of services relating to child protection (including child sexual exploitation), domestic abuse, registered sex offender management, the investigation of rape and serious sexual offences and missing

⁵³ www.westmidlands-pcc.gov.uk/your-commissioner/police-and-crime-plan/police-and-crime-plan-2014-15/

⁵⁴ www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/west-midlands-police-investigates-rotherham-style-7743389



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persons.⁵⁵ The PPU has, during the course of this year, doubled in strength to some 800 officers and staff.

4.3.8 Assistant Chief Constable Carl Foulkes has said:⁵⁶

That means around 10 per cent of the entire force are engaged in the fight. That displays our level of commitment. It's unfortunate that the HMIC inspection came just two days into new arrangements so do not reflect our exciting changes as there was so little time for them to be in place. We cannot do it alone.

4.3.9 The police CSE Co-ordinator role was re-launched in September 2014. At the time of writing, six PPU officers were conducting the co-ordinator role across the West Midlands and discussions were progressing with PPU and LPU SLT's to increase this so each Local Policing Unit has a dedicated CSE/Child Missing co-ordinator. At the same time the new Central CSE Perpetrator Team was launched. The team provides tactical support in targeting CSE suspects who are identified via WMP intelligence systems or CMOG (CSE/Missing Operational Groups) meetings. Discussions were progressing to provide the team with a dedicated intelligence arm, to assist to prioritise activities and better map offending across the Force. CSE criminal investigations will continue to be developed by Child PPU teams/officers. There is also an Online Child Sexual Exploitation Team

4.3.10 WMP are key to the success of tackling CSE in the city and the restructure should help this. We were told that other partners can sometimes be frustrated by the reluctance of WMP to provide feedback on a case, even if they have provided the evidence. WMP, we were told, need to put greater trust in the data protection, information sharing and confidentiality systems in place that partner agencies all sign up to. This includes letting agencies know of suspected perpetrators.

⁵⁵ HMIC (October 2014) National Child Protection Inspections: West Midlands Police 2 – 13 June 2014

⁵⁶ ACC Carl Foulkes quoted in Birmingham Mail, 28 October 2014. At: www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/west-midlands-police-given-six-8008310



5 Prevention

5.1 Overview

5.1.1 It has been suggested to us and in the media that a conspiracy of silence enables exploitation to flourish and perpetrators to get away with it. To tackle that head on and spread knowledge about CSE there is a need to shout about it across the city. We praise the many organisations in Birmingham that have started to tackle this, like Barnardo's SPACE, the Children's Society, the Phoenix Project, the Muslim Women's Network UK, Small Heath Community Forum, Safeguarding and Family Support Hubs and the range of bodies who have been participating in training. This needs accelerating to make sure those who feel "it's not our problem / it's not a problem here" get on board too. A list of some of the bodies the CSE co-ordinator has worked with shows the very broad needs in the city:

- Schools and Head teachers; Mental Health Practitioners; Youth Offending Service; Children's Services (including area teams); West Midlands Police; Birmingham Children's Hospital; Staffordshire and West Midlands Probation Trust; Sexual Health Clinics; Sexual Assault Referral Centre; Child Protection and Review Service; Local Authority Residential Services; Private Residential Services.

5.1.2 Firstly, we feel we need to put our own house in order and councillors as community leaders, eyes and ears within communities and local facilitators need to know what CSE is and how to raise concerns. To this end we recommend some compulsory training on safeguarding, including CSE to be part of an induction training package. We need to be sure councillors understand CSE and the role they can play in gathering intelligence (such as car registrations) and passing this on. In particular we need to be sure that all councillors understand their corporate parenting duty to children in care. Officers asked for councillor support in speaking out about CSE.

5.1.3 It is crucial that frontline staff fully understand what CSE looks like and what needs to be done. It is important that practitioners do not dismiss this as just a "life style choice" as it is not. But we start this chapter by focusing on making potential victims resilient.

5.2 Building Children's Resilience

5.2.1 We learnt how important self-esteem and recognising healthy relationships was to make children more resilient to the threat of CSE.

5.2.2 Children need to understand what healthy relationships look like and what consent means. Our attention was drawn to some national research carried out by Girl Guiding that indicates there is lot of work by all agencies to be done here. Its data indicated that a fifth of girls think it is acceptable to be told what to wear by a boyfriend or to be shouted at or called names for



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something they have done and less than a quarter of girls showed a full understanding of what an abusive relationship is.⁵⁷

- 5.2.3 The Muslim Women's Network UK also highlighted issues around the need to challenge male attitudes towards women:

Some boys think there is nothing wrong with slapping a girl and think girls deserve it.

- 5.2.4 Healthy relationship teaching, therefore, should also challenging the sexist attitudes of some boys. Many resources are available online, including specific information for girls, boys and children with special educational needs, for practitioners in the city from the National Working Group web site. It is important that whoever delivers this in schools should have some understanding of CSE.

- 5.2.5 Computer games, social media and the internet enable young people to access vast amounts of information quickly and easily, including inappropriate content like pornography. This can lead to young people building up unrealistic expectations of relationships, body image and acceptable behaviour. It can therefore be quite difficult for some young people to establish what a "healthy relationship" is, but we strongly feel that schools have a key role in ensuring sex and relationship education is discussed in a sensitive and appropriate manner

- 5.2.6 The early help team (FCAF) suggest that professionals engage the child in safety resources such as "*Cody's Choice*" and the Barnardo's app "*Wud U?*"

Schools

- 5.2.7 Schools must help build resilient and confident children. Whilst this is a shared responsibility schools have so many opportunities to do this through assemblies, form time and Personal, Social and Health Economic Education (PSHE). There is no excuse for any school not doing so, appropriately of course, and a whole school approach needs to be built.

- 5.2.8 Whilst PSHE is still not compulsory, it is best practice to incorporate healthy relationships into all years (for boys as well as girls) and to have information available for older children about CSE. A detailed PSHE resource pack has been developed in Solihull which could be shared through the Regional CSE Group and used in Birmingham. It also contains resources for one to one working for early help.

- 5.2.9 There are a number of resources available for schools. We heard about "*Chelsea's Choice*" which is an interactive theatre show for schools, portraying the boyfriend model of grooming. This is generally block purchased for a series of shows in an authority. We also heard about the work the Children's Society carries out in schools. We were told that the approach in Birmingham is to develop a long term resource that can be used in schools and by youth organisations. A company called Recre8 is developing a 20 minute film DVD and a lesson plan is being developed to go with

⁵⁷ girlsattitudes.girlguiding.org.uk/pdf/2025_Care_Versus_Control.pdf



it. This is being developed in conjunction with children themselves through focus groups. We feel it is important that this is launched in February 2015 as planned and that all routes are used to ensure that schools receive this and do not just put it on a shelf and that teachers feel adequately empowered to use this.

- 5.2.10 What seems key in any such school intervention is that there is time for workers to have one to one time with children who want more information or wish to disclose immediately following the activity. Schools using the Recre8 resource will need to bear this in mind.
- 5.2.11 In addition to building resilience it was suggested that all schools should explore the effectiveness of the tactical approach for schools after the first and every subsequent absence and, particularly any known truancy of any child.
- 5.2.12 Colleges also play an important role and further work could be carried out with them too.

5.3 Building Resilience Online

- 5.3.1 Social media provides opportunities for perpetrators to identify, contact and groom children in a way unimaginable 20 years ago. Children are accessible to offenders online, nine out of ten households have access to the internet and 12 to 15 year olds spend over 17 hours online each week.⁵⁸ It also enables both them and the abuser to hide behind different personalities.
- 5.3.2 The NSPCC explain that this type of abuse involves grooming children online (such as through chat rooms, social networking websites, email and texting) for the purpose of sexually abusing them.⁵⁹ This can involve getting them to take and share indecent photos, display sexualised acts which are shared through recording or live web cam and agreeing to meet them in order to sexually abuse them. The CEOP risk assessment makes it clear that this grooming can happen very quickly nowadays.

Case Study: Child D

17-year-old Child D, was befriended over Facebook by two men who were both friends. One of the men wanted to date Child D and convinced her into meeting him. When she met him he appeared to be in his early 30s rather than 18 years old which he claimed to be. He continued to contact her online and coerced her into sending naked photographs of herself online. Child D was made to believe she was in a relationship with this man. However, he then started to blackmail her and threatened to post her photographs online and send them to her family unless she agreed to have sex with him and his friend. Child D confided in one of her friends and the police were contacted.

Source: Muslim Women's Network UK, *Unheard Voices*, page 119

⁵⁸ ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/CEOP_TACSEA2013_240613%20FINAL.pdf

⁵⁹ www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/keeping-children-safe/online-safety/



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- 5.3.3 For some perpetrators this can be big business or a consuming part of their lives. Two men from Yorkshire in 2013 were found guilty of grooming 55 boys with the CPS holding details of other cases which did not go to trial.⁶⁰ They are said to have contacted 2700 boys through the internet⁶¹. This also indicates the geographical scope of perpetrators, as one child was said to come from Birmingham.⁶²
- 5.3.4 Equally, another case of a Birmingham teacher and a Cannock and Reading abuser of a 15 year old Birmingham girl indicates the complicated overlap between online and "real life" abuse. In this case the abusers befriended the girl in chat rooms online and met up with her in a local hotel. However some of the footage of sexual activity was then streamed for other abusers to see.⁶³
- 5.3.5 We heard about a huge range of social media sites and were particularly shocked by the case of a young boy (primary school) who was led into danger through his Xbox. He had been having a conversation with "friends" about the game he was playing and arranged to meet them to learn how to win. Luckily, the vigilance of his mother meant that the police got to the hotel first and found a man and a woman in a hotel room waiting to abuse him.
- 5.3.6 We were also shocked by the operating model of perpetrators using bluetooth. We were told they might go into a fast food café and send a generic message which would be picked up by anyone in there who has their blue tooth switched on saying something like "you're looking good today. I really like that top". It only takes one young person to think "they are talking about me." By looking around and seeing who seems to be smiling about it and responding the groomer would tailor his responses and then maybe go and introduce themselves. The groomer then lures the child in. What teenager would not mind a "boyfriend" with a car to pick them up from school? We were told that social apps could be used to identify the precise location of an individual and give someone the opportunity to pretend that they had met the prospective victim by accident.
- 5.3.7 The additional vulnerabilities of children with special educational needs and disabilities was also mentioned when e-safety was raised with us.
- 5.3.8 Parents, carers and schools need to be vigilant and drive home messages about online security to children. This does require some understanding of the latest tools. After being informed about the above examples, we recognised that we didn't understand the latest online risks and the current power of the internet. We asked Frank, a 15 year old work experience student for some advice for parents and children. His view, and it is a personal view, not a professional one, is included below.

⁶⁰

www.cps.gov.uk/yorkshire_humberside/cps_yorkshire_and_humberside_news/op_klan__2_paedophiles_plead_guilty_to_abusing_young_boys/

⁶¹ www.theyworkforyou.com/lords/?id=2013-10-15a.479.0&m=101084

⁶² www.wearebarnsley.com/news/article/3911/married-paedophiles-admit-to-grooming-young-boys/

⁶³ www.telegraph.co.uk/news/uknews/crime/10128169/Former-teacher-streamed-sex-footage-of-underage-girl-on-to-web.html



Keeping your child safe
A Personal View by Frank, Aged 15

"One major point for parents with young children is that you can block what websites they can visit or use! Also it's important that a young child doesn't have an iPad or laptop of their own. If you do have a family computer make sure it's in a lounge or open room where what they are doing can be monitored. Remember that on Facebook, chatting sites or places where you can chat online (e.g. Xbox Live) and other social media sites there is always a "block communications" button which you can press anytime such as when you feel unsafe or uncomfortable due to what someone is saying.

Parents should also make sure that their young child DOESN'T have an account on Facebook (Messenger IS a part of Facebook and is just an independent app for Facebook messaging), Tumblr, Kik, Skype, Snapchat, Instagram or Twitter, 'Why?' Well these are all forms of social media where your child could be contacted by anyone.

Some tools that forbid children under 13 to create an account: Facebook, Steam, Snapchat, Tumblr, Apple.

You can also find parental controls on Xbox which can stop a child from talking to people who they don't know. Parents should be wary of some of these new messaging apps and sites like Kik, where anyone can contact anyone without needing to send a friend request or anything! You can still block unwanted people on Kik, but you can still message anyone at anytime.

Snapchat is the most dangerous when it comes to Child Sex Exploitation as the site is about two people sending pictures between each other which last from 1-10 seconds but you can screenshot any Snapchat which means that they have the image forever, and you can probably guess what that could lead to!

Skype is another popular social media site. This does include messaging, but is mainly a place for live chats using a webcam. This can be of serious concern as any two people if they are friends on Skype can at any time Skype each other. This is a problem for very obvious reasons. Even though Skype has no age limit the site is still a concern when it comes to younger users.

If you do have an Apple device then you probably know about FaceTime, which is just the same as Skype but you can call anyone and there's no blocking (I believe) and it uses your Apple account. All of this can be linked to Apple as most of these apps started and are used on Apple devices (Apart from Skype and Facebook which can be accessed on lots of devices).

Remember to peek your head round the corner or check on your young children when they are on social media or gaming just to check what they are saying and who they are talking to! For all you know your child could be planning to meet up with one of their online friends who says



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they're the same age but in fact could be about a 30 year old paedophile.

Also if your child is old enough to have a Facebook you should check that they know everybody on their Facebook and have spoken to them or seen what they're like in real life. If they have never seen them in real life then ask them why, and ask them where they met them online! The reason you want to check that they've heard their voice is because even if you haven't seen their face or what they look like, it's very hard to make a convincing child's voice, especially if they are being loud!

Parents should always remind children that if they do feel threatened by the comments which they have been sent then they should contact the police or CEOP (www.ceop.police.uk/Ceop-Report/) and report it to them at once!"

- 5.3.9 Both schools and parents have responsibilities to educate children as to the risks and to understand how to respond appropriately to inappropriate approaches. CEOP is an online national crime agency project which, as noted above, has a "report abuse" button monitored by the police. The website also has many really good resources (such as short videos) which explain the nature of exploitation.

5.4 Building Parents and Community Resilience

- 5.4.1 There needs to be a greater understanding of CSE by adults too, not just parent and carers. Practitioners and a broad range of voluntary, community and faith leaders who work with children, plus the general population need to understand the issue. Councillors also need to know about CSE and their corporate parenting responsibilities and training needs to be put in place for them so they are confident in dealing with it. Greater awareness across the city would help build an environment where this crime is known for what it is and that children at risk and inappropriate activity are flagged.
- 5.4.2 We heard of a number of local organisations who were working to educate communities. If partners can do more to support and spread this work we would hope that this would increase reporting of offenders and disclosures of victims.
- 5.4.3 We would agree with the West Midlands Lead on PVVP and the new Police and Crime Commissioner that:

We have to get to the point where it is the communities themselves who are confident enough, with our support, to say to perpetrators "our community is not putting up with this."⁶⁴

⁶⁴ PVVP Update 10 19/09/2014



- 5.4.4 There are many different resources that have been developed to raise awareness. It was noted above that the West Midlands authorities have launched a *See Me Hear Me* website. Whilst this is a starting point which we really welcome it would benefit from development – such as routes through for the seven authorities and links to some more of the great resources that already exist.
- 5.4.5 During 2013 WMP ran Operational Sentinel to improve the service given to vulnerable victims, including improving tackling of CSE. This included training within the police and also awareness raising for the public. A second operation is being planned.
- 5.4.6 There needs to be a concerted awareness raising campaign over the next year– with strands to meet the needs of children and parents, community, voluntary and faith sector and professionals. This enables children to better protect themselves, it provides them with a language to be able to understand and articulate their concerns. It enables adults to spot the signs and to know where to ask for help or where to direct a child to. We were told that as well as using ‘tried and tested’ community leaders, practitioners need to work to find representative community leaders who can work with all members of the community.
- 5.4.7 All the key statutory partners need to work together in Birmingham to deliver this, including the BSCB, the City Council, and WMP, and it will require wider buy in. The West Midlands PVVP Action Plan indicates an intent to have a regional campaign in early 2015 to raise awareness and promote route to support.⁶⁵ In addition, a national “Stop CSE Day” is planned for 18th March 2015.⁶⁶ We would ask the City Council and all the agencies that deal with this to work together to use that date (or agree another) to, again, get the message out and signpost where to go for help.

5.5 Building Practitioner Awareness and Action

- 5.5.1 Overall, whichever agency is involved, there should always be awareness of the potential for CSE. Practitioners need to know how to share the information and discuss the situation. For this group particularly, awareness is not enough – they also need to know how to make a good referral and what they need to do to protect a child.
- 5.5.2 The horror of the crime can get in the way. We heard the term “professional helplessness” being used. It is not that practitioners are unwilling, but they may feel they just do not know how to support or deal with victims. It was also suggested that sometimes CSE is like opening a Pandora’s Box which practitioners would rather keep the lid on. Instead, we were told that they should have to “think the unthinkable.”

Schools

- 5.5.3 We had insufficient opportunity to talk to schools, but are aware there is much good practice in ensuring robust relationship and sex education is on the curriculum. We feel that the worst

⁶⁵ PVVP Update 10 19/09/2014

⁶⁶ www.stop-cse.org/



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response a school can have to this issue is to suggest that CSE does not affect their pupils. We have been told this does happen; sometimes even in the face of the evidence. We were told that "teachers are not identifying sexual exploitation issues". One agency said it was difficult "to get engagement with schools as many thought this was not an issue for them." More worryingly, there was a suggestion that some schools may not engage as it could harm their reputation.

- 5.5.4 We do feel strongly that all teachers need to understand what exploitation is and to recognise some of the symptoms. In addition, the Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in every school needs an understanding of risk, multi-agency responses and referral mechanisms. Safeguarding governors also need to be aware of this and to be able to hold the school to account on this. Although we are aware of events and training available to teachers in the city we were told training for teachers in respect of CSE was very sporadic. There is, therefore, a need for further training and we suggest that the matter should be pursued through the Primary and Secondary School Head Teachers' Forums with the suggestion that work takes place at District and Ward level. If there is any resistance from particular schools they needed to be able to justify why they did not wish to engage on this topic.
- 5.5.5 Schools have to carry out a Section 175 audit each year for the BSCB which asks for a self-assessment on whether:
- The school offers regular briefings to parents and children on e-safety which includes online exploitation (commercial and sexual exploitation)
 - The PHSE Curriculum incorporates issues such as internet safety, anti-bullying, homophobia, child sexual exploitation and abuse. This includes lessons on keeping safe and recognising behaviour that is not acceptable based on guidance given in the Framework for Personal, Social and Health Education.
- 5.5.6 The BSCB received the self-assessment from 97% of schools in the city. Those schools that failed to respond have been referred to OFSTED and will be visited by Birmingham Audit. We believe that schools who do not appropriately tackle safeguarding and CSE should never be defined as outstanding by OFSTED.
- 5.5.7 We were told of the school and police panels that exist across the city which ensure good relationships are built and data is, therefore, shared more easily. Schools not taking part in these panels should be encouraged to do so and it is an issue local authority governors and local councillors should raise.
- 5.5.8 It has been suggested that the police are an untapped resource in terms of building awareness and resilience. Schools and also community groups can ask neighbourhood police teams to work closely with them and attend sessions or be around after to enable disclosures.

Health

- 5.5.9 Health plays an extremely important part in protecting children. A child may disclose directly to a GP; a sexual health services nurse may notice that a girl has suffered from more than one urinary



tract infection or unwanted pregnancy; or an accident and emergency (A&E) doctor may notice and act upon the older “boyfriend” or “uncle” who insists on staying with a girl during a consultation. Health professionals have a unique role to play. They can identify risks, signpost and be involved through multi-agency working in protecting the child. On-going training to ensure a consistent response is important here, as with all practitioners. They also are key in protecting children. A report from the Children’s Commissioner said that 85% of identified victims of CSE had self-harmed, or attempted suicide as a result.⁶⁷

- 5.5.10 We were told of concerns about misdiagnosis, especially in the case of learning disability, mental illness and mental incapacity. There are some fears that children diagnosed with autistic spectrum disorders such as Asperger’s are in fact suffering from post-traumatic stress disorder, and another case where diagnosed mental illness has been used to explain a young person’s “story telling”.
- 5.5.11 Health is a complex area. We did not try to interrogate the plethora of provider and contractor health services in the city. We did, however, aim to get a flavour of how health organisations work with the City Council on this issue. There are also some very good publications supporting the role of health organisations.⁶⁸
- 5.5.12 We were very pleased to hear that a Health Link Group formed by the health community providers and commissioners has been established. The Health Link Group supports the work of the CSE coordinator and the BSCB, police, Children’s Services and third sector partners across the city. It meets quarterly and has the support of the NWG for using best practice sharing of learning and raising standards of practice across health providers.
- 5.5.13 It helps ensure all partners are engaged and enables good two way communication between health and the city’s CSE co-ordinator and West Midlands Police. This is the first of its kind in the country and is seen as a model of good practice.
- 5.5.14 Good practice we heard of included:
- Birmingham Community Health Trust, for example, has a safeguarding plan which is monitored monthly and has provided a leaflet on CSE to all staff. They have developed action plans around CSE to ensure practice is embedded. Their children’s workforce have been targeted for specific training but all safeguarding training contains information and advice around CSE signs and referrals as it is a whole staff issue;
 - They ensure that all their nurses have had training in safeguarding and exploitation. This is being embedded into induction onwards to ensure that they all know what to look for and how

⁶⁷ Children’s Commissioner (2012) *I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world: The Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups, Interim report.* At: www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_636

⁶⁸ www.nwgnetwork.org/media/pdfs/Shine-a-Light.pdf; www.gov.uk/government/publications/health-working-group-report-on-child-sexual-exploitation



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to react. They recognise that all staff need this, not just those who are mainly in contact with children;

- B&S Mental Health Trust ensure that they keep an eye on children of their clients, especially when doing home visits; and
- All staff at Whittall Street Clinic (dealing in sexual health issues) are trained to risk assess all under 16s using the "spotting the signs" document and any concerns are referred to children's social care and organisations such as Barnardo's Space. If they do not get a response from children's social care they have an escalation policy and will contact the CSE co-ordinator or even the police.

5.5.15 We have some concerns about the inconsistent coverage of school nurses and were told that there is a national shortage. We understand that they have a key safeguarding role to play in schools, especially secondary. However, school nurse provision across the city's education providers varies in its origins of provision and its support of the professional development of its nurses. Many are employed through Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust. Given the additional vulnerabilities of children with disabilities and special needs we were pleased to hear that the Trust is developing nursing champions in special schools who will be trained to identify signs of CSE.

5.5.16 We understand that Public Health will be undertaking a procurement process for school nursing and have been told that the key objective of this contract is to improve school attendance. The Committee believes that the aim of the school nurse role needs to be reconsidered and that safeguarding and involvement in multi-agency working should be integral to this and needs to be embedded in the specification and monitoring of the contract, as we are told is planned. We were pleased to be told that the commissioning process for sexual health services has made great efforts to ensure that safeguarding, sexual exploitation, violence and coercion is a priority in the specification and the tenders. This will increase the dedicated resource coming from sexual health.

5.5.17 On this topic we also worry that there are children who do not have access to this type of external source of help and advice. Maybe they are being home educated, have recently moved into the area or otherwise have no school place, or are not in mainstream provision. All schools need adequate school nurse provision and their work should explicitly include safeguarding.

5.6 Building Business Resilience

Overview

5.6.1 The Children's Commissioner's inquiry into CSE identified hotels, bed and breakfasts (B&Bs), shops and food outlets as key locations in which abuse takes place.⁶⁹ CSE can pose risks for business especially, the leisure, food and tourism industries and the Committee considered taxis and hotels in particular. To safeguard both children and reputation the City Council, BSCB and WMP need to

⁶⁹ Children's Commissioner (2012) I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world:



work in partnership with businesses in the city and ensure they are using powers to protect, not to inadvertently put children at risk.

- 5.6.2 The Children's Society and the National Working Group have developed the *Say Something if You See Something* campaign with local businesses. Covering the hospitality, retail, transport and leisure industries it helps tackle CSE taking place on their premises. The campaign and toolkit helps staff in these industries to recognise the signs that sexual exploitation is taking place and sets out what action they can take in response. We understand that *Say Something if You See Something* has been used in Birmingham, but it is a tool and approach that needs to be owned, driven and implemented through a multi-agency approach.
- 5.6.3 We are aware of some excellent practice elsewhere in the country, notably Sheffield where the Licensing Committee and police work closely to promote good practice to businesses, to provide advice to business and to seek to impose and enforce licensing conditions.
- 5.6.4 The Licensing Committee has a role to play in their oversight of premises selling alcohol, sex entertainment venues and taxi drivers. The fourth licensing objective under the Licensing Act 2003 is to protect children from harm.

Taxis

- 5.6.5 In the light of many of the high profile CSE cases elsewhere where taxi drivers had been involved it is timely to review procedures in Birmingham. Obviously, Licensing needs to consider how their approach best safeguards children. For us the greater challenge was that we feel there needs to be strong partnership working with taxi firms and drivers as they do act as the eyes and ears of the community. They need to know what to look out for and how to report suspicions. Even carrying a child as a paying fare for another adult to a venue where they will be abused means that trafficking legislation can be used. (Trafficking is not just an international crime, but the same legislation can be used in taking a child to another city, or just to another neighbourhood). Drivers need to be aware of this and what to do if they have suspicions as they would not want to fall foul of this and risk imprisonment. We commend the workshop held by Muslim Women's Network UK and Small Heath Community Forum with taxi drivers as we went to print.
- 5.6.6 Birmingham has, we were told, one of the most robust systems in place when it comes to the employment of taxi and private hire drivers. Licensing has the ability to suspend or revoke licenses on the "balance of probability" (although a magistrate can overturn this). They cannot do this just because a driver is hanging around where children congregate or near a children's home. However they can summon a driver in for an interview, but concerns need to be raised with them. The Licensing Officer had never, as far as they could recall, had any concerns raised by Children's Social Care. Frontline staff need to know how to report concerns (about taxis and other licensing issues) directly to Licensing, and WMP should review procedures for sharing such information. Legal Services were, at the time of writing, developing a process and form for this. This needs to be agreed and used by practitioners. If a licence is revoked because of sexual offences, the age of the victim is not recorded. This should be reviewed.



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- 5.6.7 Taxi drivers, too, need a mechanism to be able to be the “eyes and ears” of communities. Licensing and the BSCP partners should look into the development of a whistle blowing system (possibly anonymous and online) to enable drivers to report suspicions/illegal activity etc.
- 5.6.8 There is a strong case for a regional approach as taxi drivers can work in Birmingham, but be registered elsewhere. We suggest that the licensing conditions and procedure for both Hackney Cabs and private hire drivers is reviewed to determine if there is a way to ensure safeguarding is robust. We were told that a basic training session is being introduced for all new licensees and will be rolled out for drivers as they renew their licenses. We welcome this and suggest that a trainer with CSE experience is involved in this.
- 5.6.9 The annual newsletter for taxi-drivers is a good mechanism for communication and the next two editions should include a suitable article about CSE. Developing a positive relationship with drivers and the drivers' trade association could lead to in-taxi advertising about how to get help with phone numbers in the back of cabs and leaflets available.
- 5.6.10 The Law Commission have, earlier this year, published a response to a consultation they had undertaken into taxis and private hire vehicles and a draft Taxi and Private Hire Bill has been published. These propose allowing “non-professional drivers” to use private hire vehicles when the vehicles are not “on duty”. We reflect the serious concerns of the Licensing Committee and we too “consider that ... this opens the door to abuses by unscrupulous drivers that would pose a reputational risk to Birmingham as a licensing authority.”⁷⁰ The Committee urges the Chair of Licensing and the Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services to reiterate this to the Law Commission.
- 5.6.11 Finally, we would like reassurance that safeguarding is fully written into the council's taxi contracts, whether that be home to school transport or transporting children in care to and from case conferences.

Hotels

- 5.6.12 A particular concern for us was hotels as we heard that one model of CSE was “hotel parties”. On the crime triangle (mentioned in section 6) hotels and B&Bs are a key location due to their ease of use, anonymity and relative privacy
- 5.6.13 We looked at some of the user review web sites and a few hotels caused us unease as possible signs of CSE could be seen, reoccurring over time. Users complained about a lack of oversight of the hotel, drug dealing and men hanging about in car parks and entrances; no attention to cleanliness and condoms being left in rooms or outside; pornography left in rooms; teenagers running about or even a room appearing to be the local youth club; people coming and going through the night; the smell of marijuana; and screaming coming from rooms. Not all of this did refer to children and none of this, of course, proves CSE, but it does indicate that in some hotels

⁷⁰ Licensing Committee July 2014.



CSE could probably occur unchallenged. Further, we were told by a practitioner that one of the hotels we raised concerns about was used for the abuse of one girl. Although the hotels concerning us were mainly at the budget end of the market, no hotel can afford to be complacent as at least one upper end hotel has been named to us, too, as a place a girl was taken to be abused.

5.6.14 We commend Travelodge for their approach, highlighted in the case study.

Case Study: Travelodge – Best Practice

Travelodge have understood the risks that CSE poses to children and to the reputation of the company and have taken rigorous steps to ensure it does not occur on their premises. Firstly they have good policies in place. For example, walk in bookings have to show photographic identity and posters urge staff to call 999 if they have a suspicion that sexual abuse is taking place. Secondly, they have implemented a rigorous training package, including for receptionists and housekeepers who can spot things no-one else does. They have backed this up by giving staff access to a support line in conjunction with NSPCC. Thirdly, they monitor patterns of behaviour over their whole estate to see if there is evidence of unexpected behaviour, such as frequent use of hotels near to the post code a card is registered and will not accept further bookings if there is evidence of fraud and prostitution. There is a Board level commitment to bar bookings relating to CSE, but better feedback from the police is required. They have concerns about data protection, but are developing a data sharing protocol with the Metropolitan Police.

5.6.15 It was suggested to us that CSE is like bedbugs in that neither are talked about. It is a problem for the whole industry; and the only way to resolve and prevent it is by talking and sharing good practice, but that no-one wants to admit it is happening or could happen to them. Overall, given the vulnerability of hotels there cannot be complacency about children's safety. In the light of this report we would like all procedures and training to be reviewed to ensure that nothing more can be done to ensure safety of children in hotels and B&Bs and to develop effective business engagement to tackle CSE.

5.6.16 The Committee feels it is important to work with all relevant networks and forums working with hotels and other relevant leisure businesses to ensure that their procedures and training all demonstrate good practice. We understand that CSE may have to be introduced as part of a wider discussion on safety as a CSE label may currently put managers off. If the data sharing protocol being developed by Travelodge is successful we would urge WMP to adopt it and for partners to find a way to get other hotels to adopt this too. The recent Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act gives police new powers to request data from hotels, enabling them to be more proactive in their surveillance and disruption. Committee would welcome an update on how these powers are being used.



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Licensing

- 5.6.17 As noted, one specific aim of the Licensing Act 2003 is to protect children from harm. The original BSCB strategy of 2013 notes the need for an improved interface between the Licensing Officer, the CSE data set and information sharing via MASE meetings and the WMP.
- 5.6.18 Under the Act responsible authorities have to be notified of any new Licence applications or any variations to an existing licence and any objections they make need to be properly considered. Without a Safeguarding Children's Licensing Officer in post there appears to us to be a gap. The benefit of this post would be a specific officer making representations based on their risk assessment of a location or type of venue or a licensee which would enable Licensing Committee to make better decisions. The lack of an officer making representations in order to protect children from harm is a risk that needs to be reviewed by all partners at the BSCB.
- 5.6.19 There appears to be a difference in opinion as to where the resources should come from and during the inquiry we came up against differing expectations about the role the BSCB should have and whether or not they could be a responsible body. We are told that the ring fenced licensing account does not cover the costs of any responsible body carrying out that role. At the time of finalising the report we were assured that discussions would clarify and resolve this issue.

Licensing in Coventry⁷¹

Coventry SCB has a Safeguarding Children Licensing Officer who is responsible for overseeing licence applications and scrutinising each one thoroughly. They are responsible for providing advice and guidance to licensees on matters relating to the protection of children from harm. Where licence applications do not meet the needs of protecting children, the Safeguarding Children Licensing Officer works with the licensee to help do so within the 28 day objection period. If this fails however, a representation will be put forward to the Licensing Authority explaining reasons for doing so.⁷² There is a particular focus on premises where they believe alcohol could be sold to customers under the age of 18 years; entertainment is provided which is of an adult/sexual nature; a member of staff has previously been convicted of serving alcohol to a minor or is on the Sex Offender's Register; there are activities specifically for children; or there is gambling.

Licensing In Sheffield⁷³

Sheffield has built on the *Say Something if You See Something* approach and developed an effective partnership between the Child Safeguarding Board and South Yorkshire Police. They are

⁷¹ www.coventrylscb.org.uk

⁷² www.coventrylscb.org.uk/files/Statement_of_Licensing_Policy.pdf

⁷³ NWG Annual Conference 2014



proactive and believe that the Licensing Act 2003 has powers that need to be used to protect children. Really positive work has been done with hotels who have been receptive. They have used a working in partnership approach: "We need you to help protect children and you wouldn't want your premises to be used for this would you? Think about the reputational and financial risks to the business." They have met with the Chamber of Commerce's Hospitality Trade Group and delivered free training. Building trust did take some time and required going to meetings, answering phone calls etc.

Over 30 hotel managers and 350 hotel staff have received training.⁷⁴ The training they provide suggests the type of CSE signs that can be spotted in hotels such as: what to look for e.g.:

- Paying in cash;
- Complaints of noise;
- High traffic to a room such as a number of men visiting a room at regular intervals as a perpetrator may have arranged for men to visit the room where a child is being sexually exploited;
- Teenage girls loitering in public areas/external areas of premises;
- Guests with local address renting a room or frequent visitors to the hotel who do not appear to have a reason for being there;
- Guest rooms with a lot of condoms/condom wrappers, drugs/drug paraphernalia, especially if child known to have stayed too (housekeeping can be invaluable reporters); and
- Guests who do not have any luggage or ID.

To protect their businesses hotels can embed some good practice including verifying ages of guests, keeping refusal records and incident logs, having police reporting protocols, regular training and to develop a "trigger plan" – what we would do if this happens.

In Sheffield the Local Safeguarding Children Board Licensing Officer goes to licensing hearings and makes representations. She often asks for licensing conditions. There cannot be a blanket condition, but if they can demonstrate that there is not a big costs involved (e.g. by free training) conditions can be seen as reasonable and have a huge impact. One example was an application for a sauna. Licensing Committee set a condition to ensure all employees showed two types of identification (to ensure they were over 18), and a National Identity number and proof of eligibility to work in the UK. In that case the sauna withdrew their application. Another condition was imposed on a club where the DJ would bring in children through the back door. They ensured that there was a rigorous control of admission by age.

⁷⁴ Safeguarding Sheffield Children Board Newsletter Summer 2014



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Community Safety Partnership in Durham⁷⁵

The Safe Durham Partnership's alcohol seizure procedure, which over a two year period has identified 2200 children as consuming or being in a group where alcohol was being consumed and removed it. In addition 300 adults have been found with these under 18s in possession of alcohol and they have all received letters about the proxy provision of alcohol. Their details have also been recorded which "will serve as an early warning system forming part of an intelligence picture around Child Sexual Exploitation."

- 5.6.20 Licensing Committee is, at the time of writing, consulting on a Statement of Licensing Policy. The Committee requests that the policy is strengthened in regards to CSE to both set out some basic expectations (as Chester and West Cheshire have done⁷⁶) or, in so far as the law will allow, set out expectations about conditions. We know there are limitations to conditions that can be set, but there are opportunities to see if the safeguarding conditions could be stronger.
- 5.6.21 In addition, through the West Midlands CSE Group working collaboratively, Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council is leading on developing a toolkit for Licensing. We welcome this and wish to receive feedback about its development and adoption in Birmingham.
- 5.6.22 We were also told that there should be strong communication between councillors and Licensing and WMP. Councillors should understand how to submit intelligence to WMP and ensure that Licensing have the information to aid putting conditions on and enforcing them.

Using Statutory Powers

- 5.6.23 Licensing can set conditions for some hotels, but only if they are serving alcohol or have an entertainment licence. Many of the hotels the Committee had concerns about were not licensed. There is, however, in Birmingham a Joint Licensing Task Force which we were told carries out periodic joint visits and partners will use appropriate powers so owners have to improve and know that they are not operating "out of sight, out of mind." West Midlands Fire Service can, for example require a temporary closure to improve fire standards or a hotel can be pursued for tax avoidance or illegal alcohol sales. It is important that all partners support this and also ensure that someone who has been trained to spot the signs of CSE joins in these visits. We also suggest that user review sites such as Trip Advisor are used to help identify premises where a visit may be needed, as well as intelligence gained from return interviews (see 6.5.5).
- 5.6.24 Statutory agencies' use of hotels and B&Bs concerns us and it is an area where Scrutiny should carry out further work. It was suggested that there is a lack of co-ordination across the City Council when it comes to placements of vulnerable people with the homelessness team and

⁷⁵ democracy.durham.gov.uk/documents/s40082/Alcohol%20Misuse.pdf

⁷⁶

www.cheshirewestandchester.gov.uk/your_council/policies_and_performance/council_plans_and_strategies/review_of_licensing_polices.aspx



children's services and those managing registered sex offenders placing people in accommodation. There needs to be a better system of sharing intelligence.

- 5.6.25 Youth homelessness is a major risk factor and can also arise due to the wedge that CSE can drive between a victim and their family. We were informed that during 2013/14 75 unaccompanied children had been placed in B&Bs and hotels due to homelessness, although this appears to have been stopped during 2014/15. Ten premises were used, some of which were hotels which the Committee had concerns about. At the time of requesting information for this inquiry, however, there were no unaccompanied children in hotels/B&Bs.
- 5.6.26 We were assured that all B&Bs used by the homelessness team are licenced as houses in multiple occupation (HMOs) and that new providers are assessed. The homelessness team also carry out unannounced visits of hotels, particularly if any concern is raised by a resident. The homelessness team and the HMO licensing team do work very effectively together, we were told. We have also been told that known sex offenders would never be placed in accommodation with children. However, licensing for HMOs does not include safeguarding requirements. The City Council should explore using an accredited provider system as it would enable the authority to take immediate action if terms are breached. Certainly this is an area where contract specification, monitoring and enforcement needs to be placing safeguarding centre stage.
- 5.6.27 Currently, there is no "problem" profile about hotels. The BSCB and City Council should agree how this can be developed and where responsibility for this should sit.

Prevention Next Steps

- 5.6.28 This is a complex area, but is one where improvements can reap real rewards. Key areas for improvements are identifying and sharing details across the City Council of all current travel and accommodation contracts which are for children and risk assessing these; developing a joined up approach to placements within the City Council; making strong use of contract conditions; developing a hotel problem profile; and the City Council and all partners risk assessing each placement of a child.
- 5.6.29 Concerns were also raised that any staff who work by themselves in hotels and B&Bs and have access to room keys should be required to have an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearance, but that DBS were not accepting this. Doormen and bouncers at entrances to venues are security industry association vetted. The Committee intends to write to the Security Industry Association and Skills for Security to ask what their training includes about safeguarding and CSE and to urge them to include this if not.
- 5.6.30 A single corporate approach needs to be developed which puts safeguarding at the centre of how the directorates and BSCB work with such businesses.



6 Protecting Children

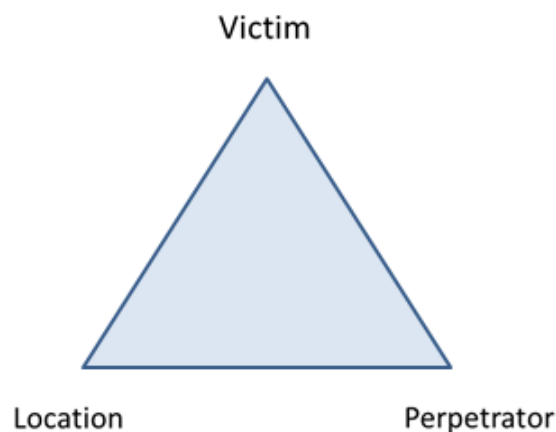
6.1 Overview

6.1.1 This section considers steps to protect children and the specific needs of groups with additional vulnerabilities and services are explored: children in care ("looked after children"), children involved in gang activity, children who go missing and those who have been offending.

6.1.2 There are other specific groups too. For example, we know that some educational and behavioural issues increase children's vulnerabilities and increase their likelihood of grooming. We think it particularly important that professionals working with children with special educational needs and disabilities understand CSE. Around a third of the children the harmful sexual behaviours team work with have autism or other learning difficulties which indicates the difficulties this group might face in recognising appropriate, healthy relationships. We would also have liked to look in more depth at the needs of homeless children.

Dealing with CSE needs a focus on victims, offenders and locations. This can be seen as a crime triangle.

Figure 3: The Crime Triangle



6.1.3 If all three exist a crime occurs; remove one and a crime can be prevented and a child protected. Crimes can be avoided:

- If a victim is removed (either through forced removal or because they choose to step away from a situation);
- If a perpetrator is removed – by jailing them, removing them from a locality by e.g. by the use of an injunction or removing their ability to travel, such as a licence; or
- If a location becomes undesirable or is closed down due to police or regulatory pressure.



6.2 Third Sector Role

- 6.2.1 We were told that third sector agencies have been at the forefront of dealing with victims as they have been able to adapt quickly to changing circumstances. We have certainly been incredibly impressed at the relentless work done with victims and families in Birmingham by the Barnardo's Space Project, the Children's Society Streetwise project, the Spurgeons' Phoenix Project and Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE).
- 6.2.2 Barnardo's Birmingham Space and FCASE project provides support for children (under 18 years old) who are living in Birmingham and are in vulnerable situations which may lead to abuse and sexual exploitation. It works directly with children in Birmingham who are abused or are at risk. It also carries out awareness raising events for practitioners and children. In 2013/14 it processed over 150 referrals and worked with 190 children directly one to one or in intensive small groups and raised the awareness of almost a further 180. Of the children worked with directly almost all were aged 14-18, the biggest group being 14 and 15 year olds. There were some boys. Around half were white and half were other minority ethnic children. Funding comes from the City Council and the Community Safety Partnership, but predominantly from Barnardo's itself.

Case Study: Barnardo's Space One to One Working

Child E was referred by a Safeguarding Social worker to Barnardo's Space on in 2013. Child E is a 13 years old girl. Information provided on the referral included the following:

In 2013, Child E was referred to Social Care after she was discovered meeting a group of young males (aged up to 18). Child E had made contact with them initially through 'blackberry messaging' and did not know of them before meeting up a few months previously. Gradually, she has been introduced to more people in the social group. There were concerns that she was being sexually exploited.

In the previous year, Child E went with 9 males to park, and after a 'dare', gave a boy (a few years older) oral sex.

Child E was assessed as high risk of CSE. The Needs Assessment outlined the following Work Plan:

- To build trust and confidence;
- To increase knowledge of sexual health issues;
- To support Child E to move to safe situations and to stay safe;
- To support Child E to develop positive and non- abusive relationships; and
- To inform Child E about key risks (in particular in relation to sexual exploitation) and to support her in dealing with these.



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Starting three months after referral, ten sessions took place over a three month period. Child E identified the areas she wanted to work on. Following an introductory meeting to explain the service, and obtain consent the themes covered in these sessions included:

- How much am I at risk?
- Understanding what makes a positive relationship.
- Decision Making
- Sick Party DVD learning about how young people are sexually exploited
- Grooming Line
- Risk and Keeping Safe
- Sexual Health & pregnancy

Child E said at the end of the work:

“Space has made a big difference to me. I now think about the choices that I make. It was fun doing the work and I liked everything about working with M.”

As importantly, the risk to Child E was felt to have decreased.

Conclusions

6.2.3 The BSCB strategy notes that “The use of the voluntary sector proved crucial in engagement and risk management.” The third sector has, we were told:

a uniquely trusting relationship with young people. Feedback from young people from RIs shows that only 5% would contact the police and 10% would contact Social Care. The third sector can reach parts that council services can't.

6.2.4 Talking, however, to third sector partners we heard of more than one case when they could not get the statutory agencies to deliver the services they need to in a timely manner. The third sector are vital in dealing with CSE in the city. However, we were told that sometimes the third sector organisations do not know until well after the end of the financial year if they are to be recommissioned for another 12 months. We also have concerns about unacceptable delays in payments for third sector organisations. The City Council has signed a compact which sets out guidelines and principles which supports good practice, better and effective working relationships between public authorities and the voluntary and community sectors. These principles should be



followed when working with the third sector.⁷⁷ Given the funding and resources they bring to the table, the City Council should see the third sector as more equal partners in dealing with CSE. This can be done by better join up across partnerships to jointly fund services for more than one year at a time.

- 6.2.5 Commissioning of services for dealing with victims of CSE needs to be improved so that they are properly resourced, longer term, and in place in good time, so that agencies do not have to work at risk at the beginning of the financial year.

6.3 Working with Parents and Families

- 6.3.1 CSE differs from child sexual abuse as the abusers are generally from outside the immediate family. This means that families can be seen as part of solution rather than part of the problem. Parents need to be able to identify signs of their children being at risk. They also need support if their child is being groomed.

- 6.3.2 An organisation which does this is Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE) works across the country with parents and children affected by CSE to ensure a family-centred approach in preventing CSE. They are currently supporting a handful of cases in Birmingham and would like to extend this. Support ranges from a national 9-5 helpline, to network days to ensure parents do not feel so isolated, emotional support, and practical support through the court process. They also advise professionals.

- 6.3.3 Often the outcome of the grooming process is that victims become deliberately estranged or isolated from their families. Groomers' lines may include:

“They don't love you like I do. They cannot care about your happiness if they are trying to stop you seeing me. You know I always have time for you when they never do.”

- 6.3.4 However, parents (as well as carers for looked after children) can play a vital role in both protecting their children and gathering evidence. A PACE survey indicates that the majority of professionals working with children feel that support and information to parents is key in preventing CSE, but half do not feel that parents have the right information to protect their children from CSE.⁷⁸ Parents too can gather intelligence such as car registrations and forensic material. We were told of one mother who has wrapped up her daughter's knickers following contact with her abuser to pass onto WMP, but then did not get any feedback as to whether or not that was useful. Inadequate feedback from statutory agencies was a recurring issue for witnesses.

⁷⁷ www.bvsc.org/birmingham-compact

⁷⁸ www.paceuk.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/YouGovReport-Parents-in-the-Picture-FINAL-for-release-19112013.pdf



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- 6.3.5 It is important that parents know how they can raise concerns and that frontline staff understand how to deal with concerns about CSE. When officers phoned the MASH number to ask whether parents can phone direct they were assured that concerns relating to a child (even if seemingly non-critical such as change of behaviour, going out, drunkenness and bad associations) will be taken from parents and that a visit to the child by a social worker will take place.
- 6.3.6 Once a child is being groomed we were told of the importance of working with the whole family, not just the victim. Elsewhere in the country they have some family workers embedded into multi-agency teams which would appear to be good practice and would be welcomed here if funding could be identified. PACE have developed a relational model which means that practitioners work in partnership with parents, facilitating and supporting them, in order to maximise the ability and capacity of statutory agencies and families to safeguard a child at risk of/being sexually exploited.
- 6.3.7 The relational safeguarding model includes:
- Maximising the capacity of parents and carers to safeguard their children and contribute to the prevention of abuse and the disruption and conviction of perpetrators;
 - Early intervention and prevention;
 - Enabling family involvement in safeguarding processes around the child, including decision making; and
 - Ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the family in recognition of the impact of CSE.⁷⁹
- 6.3.8 Working with the whole family can really help a child being abused. A case study from the Spurgeon's Phoenix Project explains how.

Case Study: Spurgeons' Phoenix Project Family Interventions

Child F was 14 at the time of the offence. She was referred from school where they had concerns about her current understanding of her own vulnerability. Child F was groomed online by a 35 year old male who she agreed to meet; he took her to a hotel and raped her. Her father had no idea that his daughter was accessing sites and chat rooms online but after his daughter was assaulted he did what he could to track online information and a mobile phone number of the perpetrator, collecting evidence to give to the police who were able to trace the perpetrator and prosecute. However, the perpetrator denied the rape and despite forensic evidence was let off with a caution. The father subsequently closed down his daughter's Facebook account and monitors her internet use more closely.

Child F's mother speaks basic English, and her father informed the Phoenix Project that he had to deal with the shock and horror of what happened to his daughter alone. He was close to breaking point due to strong feelings of guilt as he felt he had failed to protect his daughter.

⁷⁹ www.paceuk.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/Relational-Safeguarding-Model-FINAL-PRINTED-May-2014.pdf



Child F received some support after the assault and learnt about general safety issues including online skills. However, she was not able to talk about her real feelings properly: her violent sexual awakening, how 'dirty and cheap' she felt, her worry if she will be able to marry without her virginity, and how she feels from her own faith perspective. She also feels pressure from the home, often taking care of her younger siblings. She tries to please her mum and dad because she feels that they are always sad and not always available. She also believes that her dad is really disappointed with her and cannot really talk to him about her feelings, while her mum does not know exactly what happened and Child F does not have enough skill in her mother's first language to talk about it.

Child F does not like to complain though as the most important thing in her life is her family, who she loves, and knows love her. Child F does not have a friendship group outside of school. She does not particularly enjoy school but tries her hardest in her subjects, as she would like to be a Teacher.

Phoenix Project Intervention:

- One-to-one sessions/group work with Child F looking at healthy friendships/relationships;
- Bullying at school, sex education with an emphasis on emotions, sexual exploitation awareness;
- Looking at religion and today's society and her place in it. Working with school to support Child F's career plan;
- One-to-one sessions with parent's separately and then together with Child F, at the appropriate time;
- Help for her mother to access and accompany Child F to a youth group, to meet local police officers, and a women's group in the community to help her make friends and gain support; and
- Arranging for a school liaison officer to come to the home with an appropriate interpreter to support Child F and her family.

6.4 Looked After Children

Numbers

6.4.1 Time and time again we were told how vulnerable looked after children are to CSE. This is not to say there is an inevitability. The City Council is corporate parent to Looked After Children who are over-represented amongst the known victims in the city. There are around 1800 children in care⁸⁰, of whom, we believe, 170 are in residential care (with a third of those in the City Council's own children's homes and the remainder in external provision).

⁸⁰ www.chimat.org.uk/resource/view.aspx?RID=101746®ION=101632



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- 6.4.2 As with all the data about CSE across the city we may only know about the tip of the iceberg. The statistics in Chapter 2 showed that just over half of the known children currently on the list of those being exploited or at risk are looked after children.

Corporate Parent Strategy

- 6.4.3 There is currently a draft corporate parent strategy which sets out some promises to children in care and some indicators to be able to demonstrate improvement. Currently, the only reference to CSE is an indicator relating to:

Increasing the number/percentage of children who are identified as being of high risk of sexual exploitation who are receiving specialist support/service.

- 6.4.4 The Committee considers this to be insufficient and to raise more questions than it answers. First, one would hope that every one of the few children in the city at high risk has access to specialist support and if they refuse it then it is made available to their parents or carers. Second, we have demonstrated the grooming line and emphasised the importance of appropriate support at all points to stop escalation. There must be a promise and measure to children at risk, but not yet at high risk.
- 6.4.5 We recommend that when the corporate parent strategy is finalised it is updated to include CSE risks in it.

Residential Care

- 6.4.6 Once it is identified that a child requires a residential placement, the Commissioning and Brokerage Team become involved to ensure a secure placement is found for the young person. One of our concerns is that of association. The risk to a vulnerable child at risk increases if they have close contact with someone already being exploited. This may be when a child sees themselves as having a boyfriend they would want to introduce a new friend into that circle. Alternatively they may choose to bring someone else in to divert attention from themselves or because they are under pressure from the abusers to provide another victim. We were told that a compatibility risk assessment is carried out in such cases and that a child will not be placed where it is felt that there is a risk from other children in place. We were also informed that in addition to usual safeguarding procedures training, staff are required to be trained in CSE. In responding to our recommendation on procedures for commissioning places in children's homes we would want reassurance that there is a clear compliance clause requiring staff to have training on CSE and it is being followed consistently.
- 6.4.7 The Directorate informed us that within the past three years girls from one children's home were being abused by a local group of men. We know that the Children's Society was involved in trying to resolve this and that staff training was improved. However, we heard different views as to whether any of the children placed in the City Councils' own homes are currently being exploited



or at risk. With this vulnerable group the best mantra seems to be “if you cannot rule it out rule it in” and care workers, social workers and councillors in their roles as corporate parents can never be complacent about the risks. Any feedback from the Rights and Participation Unit and the Children in Care Council on this matter needs to be carefully acted upon.

Case Study – Children in Residential Care

Child G was 13 years old when she was admitted to a children’s home following a family breakdown: mother was unable to control Child G’s behaviour. Child G was heavily under the influence of alcohol and cannabis misuse and was noted to be grooming other young females to be exploited by local men. It was noted that Child G was receiving gifts of mobile phones and clothing and was seen getting into different cars following phone calls received on her mobile.

Child H was 14 years old when she was admitted to a children’s home following family breakdown, she was placing herself at direct risk by offering sexual favours to men in the local park. She met another young girl at the home who was being paid for sex with sweets. She was also found to be grooming other vulnerable young girls to do the same.

A Home Manager said they had recently met with three young female ex residents who had turned their lives around by securing jobs and going to college. When speaking to these residents they said that they did have regrets for not listening about sexual exploitation at the time, but that they fully understand now.

6.4.8 A concern was raised with us about the ability of children’s homes to be equipped to deal with high risk CSE as these children have very serious and complex needs and may need a specialist therapeutic setting to deal with psychological and mental health issues.

6.4.9 Skills, awareness and training for staff in residential care is key. We were told that:

Often workers in children’s homes are the least trained, but are dealing with the most vulnerable in society.

6.4.10 Birmingham’s residential homes (including those for disabled children) have, however, taken the initiative to train all residential staff. At the time of finalising the report we were told that around 95% of staff were trained in CSE and arrangements were being made for the others.

6.4.11 There is a small team of nurses within the Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust who are geared towards the health needs of looked after children. These staff have been trained on CSE. This is a crucial resource.

Understanding of children placed in Birmingham

6.4.12 Children from outside the city can be placed in Birmingham in homes or foster care, although they remain the responsibility of the appropriate local authority. At the time of evidence gathering 25 children from outside the city were placed in the city. The home local authority does notify the City



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Council that placements are taking place, but not the reasons behind this. As evidence to Parliament in 2012 made clear:

There is a concern because of private children's homes in the city that, whilst we are notified of a looked after child being placed by another Local Authority in the city, we are not notified of reasons why—for example; are they subject to exploitation in the authority in which they live and that is why they are moving to an external placement. The notification often comes after a child is in placement so a discussion about the appropriateness of the placement based on local knowledge is not possible. In Birmingham; there are over 50 private units.⁸¹

- 6.4.13 Given the cross border nature of CSE and the risk of association – others getting embroiled due to being drawn in by a victim – this would appear to be a weakness in the system. We feel it important to ask Children's Social Care to find out more about the background of a child being placed in Birmingham to determine if CSE is involved. This is an area where further work is required to identify how to achieve this both nationally and through the regional working.
- 6.4.14 Overall, as corporate parents with responsibility for our most vulnerable children, we were reassured that some steps are taken, but we seek ongoing reassurances that these procedures are being carried out in all cases and that they are working.

6.5 Missing Children

6.5.1 The usual definition is:

Missing child: a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.

6.5.2 However, the police now use two new definitions:

- Missing: anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character, or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another
- Absent: a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.⁸²

6.5.3 The consequence of this means that if a child's whereabouts are known, for example in a named hotel or at a usual place of suspected abuse the police would not now define this as either 'missing' or 'absent' under the police definitions. We felt that there is some tension between WMP, Children's Social Care and Third Sector organisations over this. We were told that if the police do

⁸¹ www.publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201314/cmselect/cmhaff/68/68vw04.htm

⁸² www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care__3_.pdf



not believe a child is at risk then they will not intervene, even when it would be impossible for many parents and carers to go and retrieve their child.

- 6.5.4 We know that those children and young people going missing are at increased risk of CSE. 216 young people between the ages of 0-17 were reported missing in Birmingham between the 1 April 2013 and 30 June 2013 in 327 separate missing episodes.⁸³
- 6.5.5 Statutory guidance sets out roles for the City Council, police, BSCB and others.⁸⁴ On recovering a missing child the police are meant to carry out a safe and well visit and the City Council needs to offer each of them an independent return interview (RI), held within 72 hours. The City Council has contracted the Children's Society's Streetwise project to do these to ensure children have an independent professional. It is a chance to understand why a child went missing, but also whether the professional response to it was appropriate and to reduce the chance of it happening again.

Case Study: Return Interviews

Child J is 14 years old and had been missing 8 times in 2 months.

During the last missing episode Child J was missing for four or five days. Child J had not been reported missing by her mum until the 8th time of going missing. The referral was immediately picked up as Child J had reported to her mum and the police that she had been raped whilst she was missing, but at this point would not provide further details.

A project worker from The Children's Society met with Child J at her home to complete a return interview and explore the missing episodes with her. Child J told the project worker that during the last missing episode she was with her friend Child K.

Child K is 17 years old. Child K asked Child J if she wanted to meet up with some of her friends for a drink and "a good time". They met a couple of Child K's friends who were older males. They took the girls to a hotel and were taken into a hotel room where there were 15 older men. The girls were given alcohol which was laced with drugs. Child J was then locked in the bathroom and raped repeatedly for 4 days until she was released by the men.

The return interview was crucial in gaining further information and details for the police, as well as providing a safe person for Child J to talk to. Child J and her mum were supported by The Children's Society in taking the statement forward and the project worker followed the return interview with a specific session with Child J around 'Keeping Safe and Healthy Relationships'. There have been no missing episodes reported since.

⁸³ BSCB (2013) *CSE Intervention and Prevention Strategy*

⁸⁴ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care__3_.pdf



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- 6.5.6 Return interviews provide robust early warning and early intervention tools for CSE and contribute to problem profiling triangle (see Figure 3) which has been weak in Birmingham. Return interviews have a crucial role in identifying the "unidentified risk" in the city.
- 6.5.7 The number of missing return interviews that have CSE as a concern is high. We were told that 70-80% of all high risk missing notifications received from the police mention known CSE indicators in the information received. Return interviews, therefore, play an important role in early identification of CSE risk and early intervention.
- 6.5.8 We suggest that not enough independent RIs take place. We note that the Children's Society receive just £80,000 to conduct return interviews for all missing young people in the city and offer intensive support to runaways. This equates to 2.2 full time workers for the whole of Birmingham to triage 20-25 missing referrals a week, conduct RIs on the most at risk, and provide intensive support to those young people most in need. Due to resource availability they have found that they have to triage the most serious and decide which CSE case they can prioritise for an RI and subsequently allocate for intensive support. Despite this, they say "we are committed to contacting every single missing young person who is referred to us, even if this just means providing the lowest risk young people with information about where they can get help. We are desperately concerned about the level of risk we are working with and the lack of resources we have to respond."⁸⁵
- 6.5.9 We understand that Streetwise has been awarded a further one off £83,000 until March 2015 to conduct return interviews on all high risk (traffic lighted red) missing episodes. They intend to analyse the results, including comparing impact on those that receive RIs only with those that also receive follow up intensive support from Streetwise. They will also use the opportunity to gather more intelligence using the problem triangle.
- 6.5.10 They have learnt lessons around persistence, and building long term relationships to get disclosures. They may flag issues with social workers for action or refer children onto Barnardo's Space for further support.
- 6.5.11 We also need to set on record our concern about the vulnerability of children without school places. We understand, at the time of writing, this numbered 120. Whilst we accept that not all school children without a school place are vulnerable to CSE, officers should still be mindful and aware of the signs. It was suggested to us that there is a need for services to be more proactive in clarifying the education placements of children when they come into contact with agencies and then to be proactive in notifying the local authority if they believe the child/ren to be without school places. This should include housing and homelessness services, GPs and hospital and out of hours health providers.

⁸⁵ Email



6.6 Offending

- 6.6.1 There is a strong link between being a victim of CSE and offending behaviour. We were told that the majority of children identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation are known to the Youth Offending Service and that national research suggests exploitation occurs before offending. We were pleased to visit the Youth Offending Service and its Female Gender Specific Programme (FGSP). The Service is in a good position to intervene as young people are on statutory orders or pre-court interventions, which allows a full assessment to understand the causes of their offending behaviour and to highlight vulnerabilities.
- 6.6.2 Children may often become dependent on drugs or alcohol in order to distance themselves from the abuse they have suffered or as a result of the perpetrator of CSE forcing them to use or deal drugs. Boys and young men are often seen more readily as criminals than as victims and the service is able to carry out a CSE assessment for all young people, male and female, to identify victims of and those at risk of CSE .
- 6.6.3 The FGSP programme (adopted from Oregon's guidelines for establishing a gender specific programme) is "relationship based" and consists of one to one support and some group work, all delivered by a small consistent group of female workers from the Youth Offending Service and seconded Barnardo's staff. They have embedded the CSE screening tool and so consider the potential for all the cases they deal with. The programme aims to build resilience, provides the young people with mentoring support (via Barnardo's) and a range of skills to help them move forward in a positive manner to keep themselves safe. The service has strategic and operational links with the CSE co-ordinator and relevant CSE meetings.
- 6.6.4 We were also told that a number of young people on the programme would not have been identified as having problems or identified as victims of abuse or neglect as they were primarily in the system due to offending. Due to the holistic nature of the FGSP, the staff are able to build relationships with the girls and very often disclosures of abuse and exploitation do come to light, which are shared with Children's Services and police. The aim of the programme is to ultimately reduce or stop re-offending, promote healthy relationships and keep young people safe.
- 6.6.5 Those who are identified as victims of CSE include young people who are first time offenders as well as more persistent offenders. The team are advocates of early intervention as they felt a lot of the "damaging" behaviours were already entrenched by the time a young person comes through the youth justice route. The Committee would concur.
- 6.6.6 They also run a Sexually Harmful Behaviour Service, which takes referrals from children as young as six to those who are under 18 years. Children are referred from a number of agencies including children's services, police, health and school professionals if they are displaying abusive sexual behaviour to someone else, such as rape, inappropriate touching, and distributing sexual images. The Service undertakes evidence based assessments and proven interventions and works with over 100 young people each year. A multi-agency thematic inspection led by HMIP (Probation) was



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carried out in May 2012. Findings included good inter-agency working with evidence of effective planning within structured safeguarding and risk management arrangements; capable and committed child-focused workers who have high aspirations for young people; the specialist Sexually Harmful Behaviour Service was noted as an "excellent, unique resource", delivering services through a range of methods with good outcomes.

- 6.6.1 The team fired a warning shot about how easy access to pornography and a lack of positive role models about relationships and how women are treated are leading to a culture where poor sexual behaviour is seen as acceptable:

We need to ask ourselves what we're doing to our children?

6.7 Gangs

- 6.7.1 Street gangs can be linked to CSE, although exploitation is not the reason for a gang's existence. There are over 40 gangs in Birmingham, we were told, and girls' involvement in gangs is risk factor for CSE. The Gender Specific Unit and Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid (BSWA) both have experience of this group of children. Girls have particular vulnerabilities caused by involvement in gangs, whether as girlfriend" to a gang member or a sister.

Case Study: Gangs

Child L, arrested as a first time offender in 2011, was given intensive support by the project team. Eventually, she disclosed to the workers that she had been a victim of gang rape as part of an initiation into the gang. It took approximately a year to build up her confidence and intense support to build her back up again. She needed to know that she was supported and safe and believed. She also admitted that she was regularly missing from both school and home. This was how she coped with the trauma. She was no longer engaged in education as a result of the traumatic abuse she had suffered. Child L continued to have contact with the Gender Specific programme following her completion of her statutory order. To date, she has successfully completed college and works part time with a view to applying to university.

- 6.7.2 BSWA has run a pilot programme and the understanding from this needs to be used. They were commissioned to undertake specialist work around street gangs and young women by Birmingham Community Safety Partnership, (through Ending Gang and Youth Violence funding). They said

This work uncovered issues of child sexual exploitation as a much larger problem than we had anticipated.

- 6.7.3 This work was funded to deliver:

- "She" – a theatre production in partnership with Birmingham School of Acting;



- Peer mentor support programme from year 10;
- Intensive 1-1 support programme from age 11-29; and
- Education and awareness amongst young women & agencies

6.7.4 The work shows a complex web of power and networks, but girls, mainly, might be expected to act as a drug mule or store weapons or perform sexual acts on other gang members. This pilot once again demonstrated that many girls did not recognise when they were being groomed. They didn't always recognise that "she" in the play was them. They thought "I'm in control. This is what he does for me. There's no way I will get caught up in any trouble. I get to go to McDonalds, Kentucky and the ice cream parlour. It's OK!" But when BSWA carried out the interventions and broke it down the girls recognised "she" was her and that running with gangs brought risk as well as reward. BSWA also got disclosures.

6.7.5 Although the other areas of work above touched upon CSE, it was the one to one work that really uncovered the shocking levels of abuse that young girls in particular are subject to, and particularly those who are enmeshed with street gangs. It was suggested to us that this is not recognised as CSE because the perpetrators themselves are so young.

6.7.6 On the face of it this seems to have been a very effective pilot. However, as it was a pilot, and not withstanding the work of the GSP, we do have concerns about whether the important work of safeguarding children involved in gangs is being supported in other ways.

6.8 Therapeutic Interventions

6.8.1 Mental health services, counselling and therapy can help at all points in the rollercoaster of grooming. It helps build resilience, protect children at risk, and help overcome long term damage once out of risk. It is therefore key.

6.8.2 Abusers seek out vulnerabilities in children. The importance of access to mental health services for children cannot be underestimated. A school who deals with low self-esteem or early signs of behaviour change by offering counselling can nip a problem in the bud. This can make a child more resilient and less vulnerable to grooming.

6.8.3 The current child and adolescent mental health service (CAMHS) and the Therapeutic and Emotional Support Service (TESS - an emotional well-being service for children looked after by the City Council) currently play a role. Yet we were told that there needs to be more services to support young people with emotional needs and that the current lack of services in Birmingham will impede efforts to help the children recover from trauma. We would like reassurance that the commissioning for mental health services for under 25s will address this. A therapeutic programme with young people has to be systemic, addressing the broad lives of a child including school and family.



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- 6.8.4 We heard of one boy who had been in foster care following abuse. We were surprised to hear that counselling and therapeutic interventions do not get routinely offered to children. He had received no therapeutic intervention, until he abused a foster "sibling". Children like him are vulnerable to exploitation and struggle to believe things would change if they told someone. These children may need intervention when they come into care, especially if relationships have broken down with parents and carers. We were told that there is a lack of after-care, support and counselling for victims which needs to be addressed.
- 6.8.5 In addition to therapeutic interventions practical support needs to be made available to children. A report on prostitution, which also considered the implications for children who have been abused for financial gain, noted, for example the importance of secure housing and making sure that 16-18 year olds do not fall through the system. The report also notes that education has often been disrupted and so education and support into training or back into education can be invaluable in getting young people back on their feet.⁸⁶
- 6.8.6 Committee will ask for a follow up report on support available for victims in Birmingham including therapeutic support for victims and families; transition to adult services and joining up for vulnerable adults (especially for any CSE victims leaving care); peer mentoring; and witness intimidation of families.

⁸⁶ www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/97778/responding-to-prostitution.pdf



7 Perpetrators

7.1 Who Are They?

- 7.1.1 Firstly we learned that there isn't a profile for a typical groomer and they are not necessarily a "dirty old man in a mac". A groomer is likely to be friendly, a good communicator and listener, an acute observer (which means they can identify weak spots or 'hooks' very quickly), is skilful with young people and manipulative and clever.⁸⁷
- 7.1.2 We did not find out enough about the perpetrators of these crimes and would want to understand more about how many people are known or suspected of involvement and more about them such as their gender, ages, ethnicity and localities. To reiterate section 2.3 this crime can be carried out by anyone and to shine a light on just one community or type of person puts other children at risk. For example we were told of one intervention with three girls who realised that they were all being groomed by the same boy. However, as he was an A* student everyone's first thought was "it cannot be him." Women can also be offenders.
- 7.1.3 The aim has to be to make Birmingham a city where abusers know they cannot freely operate and to wish for the same across the country. To achieve this requires each and every one of the partners in the city to work as best as possible to gather and share intelligence and use this to disrupt and prosecute. All stakeholders have a role here from frontline workers and parents and carers as well as Police Officers.

7.2 Legal Measures and Disruption

- 7.2.1 There are three areas for taking legal action in cases of CSE. First, is the standard child protection route which can include secure accommodation and care orders. Second, are criminal prosecution and third is the use of civil orders.
- 7.2.2 The police can also use a broad range of their powers to get in the way and try to interrupt grooming or abuse. Disruption can mean picking up a perpetrator on any breach of the law, such as tax disc, minor drugs possessions etc. so they know that the police are keeping an eye on them or they can be locked up for drunk driving. As the BSCB guidance says:

The prosecution and disruption of perpetrators is an essential part of the process in reducing harm. It is the responsibility of the police to gather evidence, investigate and interview perpetrators and prepare case files for consideration by the Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) with the intention of obtaining the successful conviction of offenders.

⁸⁷ Barnardo's training



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- 7.2.3 Legal interventions can provide a twin track approach. Successful prosecutions are generally reliant on victim's disclosure, forensic evidence, evidence from technology such as mobile phones and CCTV. It can take a long time to complete the court process during which the victim needs to be kept safe, and it can be difficult for them to move on with their lives with the threat of a court case hanging over them. If evidence is robust enough prosecution should always be pursued.
- 7.2.4 There is, therefore, also a need to increase use of civil court orders as this can be swifter and decisions are made on the balance of probabilities. The types of orders include civil injunctions, gang injunctions, Anti-Social Behaviour Injunction (ASBI), legislation used for domestic violence, police protection orders and emergency protection orders. Child disruption notices (formerly "harbouring notices") can stop an adult associating with a child and so can be used to stop perpetrators picking up children outside children's homes.
- 7.2.5 Given this complex nature, numerous teams within Legal Services deal with specific parts of the law dealing with CSE. We would welcome reassurances that there are mechanisms for sharing information and meeting victims' needs in a co-ordinated manner within the Department. At the time of writing we were told the boundaries were being pushed and test cases had been identified to go to the High Court and work was being undertaken to secure wardships for a small number of children. A multi-agency approach between Legal Services, WMP and the CSE Co-ordinator was developing.
- 7.2.6 The City Council can also use court procedures to remove the victim not the perpetrator, which is not ideal. However, it may be necessary to keep a child safe, by getting order for secure accommodation which is valid for up to three months. When we heard evidence there was one child placed in secure accommodation due to CSE. At the time of writing the CSE strategy (Autumn 2013) there were three children subject to a Secure Accommodation Order and a sample of cases then suggested that:
- Disruption planning seemed to focus on the disruption of victim behaviour not Perpetrator behaviour, utilising out of area placements and Secure Accommodation Orders – although there have been some successful and Unsuccessful prosecutions and use of Harbouring Notices and S2 Abduction Warnings.**
- 7.2.7 At the time of writing the Public Protection Unit in WMP were investigating 57 live criminal investigations into CSE and a further 130 cases were being looked at where there are concerns that CSE is involved.⁸⁸ Whilst the police have pursued some offenders (through, for example, harbouring notices), Legal Services have, historically, not brought any charges against offenders. To take action solicitors need to gather and assess evidence and although time has been made

⁸⁸ www.west-midlands.police.uk/latest-news/news.aspx?id=1593



available for social workers and practitioners to discuss cases, to date progress on this has been slow.

- 7.2.8 Legal Services officers acknowledge that child protection remedies have proved insufficient and so have been working to redress this. Members were, therefore, delighted to hear when finalising this report, that the High Court has granted some injunctions to prevent a number of men from approaching under 18 year old girls in public. The case had been taken by the City Council with the support of WMP to protect a girl in the care of the local authority who had been found at a hotel with different men at different points in time.⁸⁹
- 7.2.9 A range of different options need to be developed to make the most of legal remedies. This can be pulled into a toolkit that makes clear what action can be taken, what is needed, who needs to act and what outcome is expected. We were directed to the Derbyshire toolkit as an example of good practice.
- 7.2.10 The Committee welcomes the fact that a further two cases are now being finalised to test legislation in the courts.
- 7.2.11 Moving forwards, the following steps need to be taken:
- Frontline social workers and practitioners need to look beyond the immediate protection of the child and understand the role they need to play in offender disruption, enforcement and prosecution. We recognise that, for some, there can be a tension between safeguarding a child and dealing with perpetrators to make all children safer. However, civil orders do protect a child. Practitioners should, whenever appropriate, ask for specific information from children at risk, such as names of the people they were with, a taxi driver's firm and a time and location, the name of a shop where alcohol was purchased and what an individual actually did. This may require further training;
 - Frontline social workers and practitioners need to be given a procedure for sharing relevant information with Legal Services. Independent Reviewing Officers (linked to each case of child protection / child in care) provide oversight and challenge. Briefings and training for them should be available so they can encourage pursuing offenders and sharing information in this way;
 - Work with WMP to ensure that frontline police officers prioritise sharing intelligence and making a statement when asked to by Legal Services; and
 - Ensure consistently good information sharing between WMP and Legal Services. If the police decide there is not enough evidence to pursue a case, or the CPS inform a Police Officer that a court case would not be successful, a process needs to be put in place to ensure this information is shared with Legal Services so they can take the lead on a civil legal remedy.

⁸⁹ www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/five-birmingham-men-banned-approaching-8008740; cypfbirmingham.wordpress.com/2014/11/19/injunctions-obtained/



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7.3 Prosecutions

7.3.1 We are still unclear as to the extent of prosecutions to date and being prepared. In part this is because the categories of crimes that involve CSE are very varied and within the Crown Prosecution Service do not come up with a CSE marker.

7.3.2 We have noted some cases in this report (including the successful case against an organised grooming gang in 2003) and the internet has revealed some further cases such as:

- Male nursery nurse jailed for internet grooming as well as offences within the nursery in 2013;
- Male operating alone, previously jailed for sexual offences, convicted of contacting girls through social media and by phone and coercing them into sex, 2014;⁹⁰
- Conviction of Police Officer who groomed a girl, 2014;⁹¹
- Jailing of a male shop keeper for grooming of a 12 year old, 2011;⁹² and
- At least two convictions for sting operations when men were led to believe they were meeting someone underage for sexual activity. One concerned a Bolton man in Birmingham and one a Birmingham man in Tamworth – again emphasising cross boundary nature of this crime.⁹³

7.3.3 Notwithstanding evidence of some prosecutions, the conclusion drawn in the CSE prevention and intervention strategy was that:

...perpetrators of these horrific crimes remain at liberty and continue to target other children. The absence of prosecutions of these offenders is startling. Partner inaction may indicate that there is sometimes a reluctance to use the statutory powers available to them and this is unacceptable.

7.3.4 We were also told by one witness that they felt there was an emphasis on securing successful prosecutions in other parts of the country which was not evident enough in the West Midlands. The voice of young people, as well as effective, co-ordinated multi-agency planning is key to prosecuting those offenders who are targeting vulnerable children.

7.3.5 The West Midlands Crown Prosecution Service CPS has also pulled together a specialist team: since 2012 all its rape and sexual abuse specialist lawyers and dedicated caseworkers have been located together in Birmingham. They describe this now as a high performing flagship unit. Conviction rates for rape and sexual offence in general are 66% and 80% respectively. Some of the good practice they highlighted included:

⁹⁰ www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/midlands-news/birmingham-paedophile-jailed-grooming-underage-6911058

⁹¹ www.birminghammail.co.uk/news/local-news/birmingham-policeman-jailed-sexual-activity-6489108

⁹² www.thefreelibrary.com/MAN+GROOMED+12-YEAR-OLD+GIRL.-a0254296566

⁹³

www.theboltonnews.co.uk/news/northwest/10980999.Accrington_teacher_spared_jail_after_he_was_caught_in_paedophile_sting/



- Linking in with police leads to ensure there is early referral to build strong cases;
- Providing charging advice which is then overseen by the same reviewing lawyer until conclusion of the trial;
- Using Counsel or Advocates in rape cases who are approved to conduct this business;
- Working closely with Advocates and trying to ensure the same Advocate is briefed throughout the case;
- Deploying para legal assistants to provide witness support at court;
- Seeking support for these approaches from the judiciary;
- Often involving local lawyers from an early investigative stage in giving advice and guidance;
- Working with police, Independent Sexual Violence Advisors (ISVAs) and witness services to ensure victims and witnesses are given the benefit of special measures to assist them with giving evidence e.g. giving evidence by TV link or behind a screen; and
- Building strong links with the region's ISVA's.

7.3.6 The CPS web site and policies now show an understanding of working with victims of CSE and the need to overcome stereotypes and poor cultures (see for example, section 2.3.1). This is to be built on as all specialists are to receive on-going training regarding CSE.

7.3.7 The CPS note that there are current agreements and 'Memorandums of Understanding' that are in place between stakeholders to share information and that this is a vital tool that they already use in bringing perpetrators to justice. But they note:

These lines of communications have to remain open and accessible to all so that the prosecution process is not frustrated by bureaucracy. It is vital from the outset that CPS is able to consider relevant material held by third parties to comply with our duty of disclosure under the Criminal Procedure and Investigation Act 1996, and to avoid raising expectations of victims if we later discover the same material contains undermining information. It is vital that we obtain all available information from the outset of cases to ensure that cases can proceed smoothly through the criminal Justice system. Sometimes this is a time consuming process.⁹⁴

7.3.8 It is difficult in complex cases of CSE, without undertaking an in-depth investigation to know where the blockages really are in the justice system. However, in spite of the above steps being taken we were told about a couple of West Midlands' cases when the informants felt the CPS was to blame for a lack of success.

⁹⁴ Email



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- 7.3.9 Certainly, we have had requests from partners that CPS share lessons learnt on why cases do not make it to court. There seems to be a lack of knowledge and understanding about this amongst some agencies dealing with victims.

Next Steps Legal Remedies

- 7.3.10 It can also be frustrating for the police and courts if victims retract evidence. It was suggested that this may happen as there is not yet enough confidence in police that victims will be safeguarded. Therefore, more work needs to be put into developing pathways for victims in high risk situations.
- 7.3.11 An information sharing protocol now exists between Children's Services and WMP which Legal Services helped develop. A specialist disclosure team within Legal Services helps ensure that WMP has any information that the City Council holds to aid them with prosecutions.
- 7.3.12 Overall, we are not yet sure how effectively all agencies are working together to achieve legal protection and justice. For the sake of the children at risk or currently being sexually abused we would ask the city's Legal Services, WMP and the CPS to collectively review if any further steps can be taken together to share information on cases and to increase the number of successful court actions. This may also need to be underpinned with continuing professional development about the meaning and complexity of CSE.



8 Progress, Challenges and Recommendations

8.1 Meeting the Challenge

- 8.1.1 The aim of this report has been to build a culture of awareness and proactive action with partners and communities in Birmingham.
- 8.1.2 In general, we heard of good practice in all types of organisations, but there is always room for improvement. In addition, in the course of the inquiry we heard of a few cases when appropriate action had not been taken at the right time or of attitudes that mean action will not be taken. The Committee feels that whether or not these were isolated incidents or indications of broader systemic failure, leaving one child not adequately protected is one child too many.
- 8.1.3 This report should act as a wake-up call as it is important for everyone to understand that CSE is occurring in Birmingham and can occur within any part of the city or community and to boys as well as girls. Public sector organisations (including the City Council, West Midlands Police and the other blue light organisations, health providers and commissioners, schools and colleges), and third sector organisations who work with communities and families need to acknowledge this and act. Priority needs to be established from the top in such organisations, but understanding and action needs to be embedded throughout.
- 8.1.4 We need to ensure reporting increases and expect zero tolerance of this crime. We need to ensure victims have the confidence to come forward and offenders are reported. By working together and redoubling all of our efforts, we want a clear message to be sent to perpetrators that they cannot work with impunity in Birmingham.
- 8.1.5 We cannot and will not wait for a high profile Rotherham, Rochdale, Derbyshire or Oxfordshire case before CSE in Birmingham is taken seriously by all. To achieve this we set out a number of recommendations later in this chapter. The Committee intends to track progress to ensure this report does elicit action. As one practitioner said:

These young people are the adults of our future. **THEY ARE WORTH IT.**

- 8.1.6 The Committee also endorses the recommendations of *Unheard Voices* by the Muslim Women's Network UK.⁹⁵

⁹⁵ www.mwnuk.co.uk/resourcesDetail.php?id=97ref



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8.2 Progress

- 8.2.1 The Committee concludes that much progress has been made to get a framework in place over the past two years that can safeguard children. Notable progress includes the BSCB strategy and action plan; the restructure of organisations (the City Council and WMP) to enable CSE to be tackled; putting in place two CSE Co-ordinators, funded by mainstream People Directorate funding; the focus by West Midlands PVVP Board and the development of pan-West Midlands standards; and the use of CSE screening tools by the City Council, many health organisations and other bodies. Importantly, good progress has been made against the BSCB 2013 action plan. The Committee reiterates its view that there are some fantastic champions for CSE within the City Council and partner agencies. Without their hard work, children would be at greater risk.
- 8.2.2 We were also reassured to hear that at a West Midlands level, following the Rotherham report that
- No-one is remotely complacent about these threats, both historic and current, facing some of our young people across the region.⁹⁶**
- 8.2.3 However, there is still a long way to go. First, the Committee is not yet assured that the criticisms in the 2013 CSE strategy and the 2014 Ofsted report into safeguarding (see sections 3.2.2 and 1.4.12) have been fully overcome. Second, many examples of great practice in Birmingham have been referred to throughout this report, but the Committee is not yet convinced that these approaches are embedded in all organisations or that organisation's approaches are consistent, regardless of which officer is dealing with a case or providing advice. Third, not enough people "get it" yet. Until CSE is better understood by children themselves, parents and carers, practitioners and communities, perpetrators will remain hidden. Overall, the Committee was not assured that there was enough effective action being taken. In part, this is because although there is a multi-organisational approach, it still needs to be better joined up.
- 8.2.4 We recognise that the BSCB now does have a CSE strategy and did initially fund the CSE Co-ordinator, both of which have been major steps forward. In spite of that, the Committee feels that further work needs to be done to hold partners to account in dealing with CSE.
- 8.2.5 We are pleased that much work has been carried out to ensure that there is a standardised approach across the West Midlands and also in setting up multi-agency working. However we do require further assurances that all partners are playing a robust enough role; and have the resources and capacity to deal with the current and future case loads.

⁹⁶ PVVP Update 10 19/7/2014



8.3 Working with Children

8.3.1 We identified some of the principles of working with children to tackle CSE and suggest that there are currently challenges in meeting these. The cultures of the City Council and the partners in Birmingham need to be developed to ensure principles of:

- **Child centred:** Various Serious Case Reviews should have taught practitioners to look beyond an initial situation to understand the life and viewpoint of a child. In the case of CSE looking beyond the behaviours to understand why things are happening is important;
- **Working with and not doing to:** Professionals need to work with the children involved until they can see the risks and can discuss options available, and not just do things to them. One practitioner explained that they validate the experience of young people by letting them take away the report about themselves and being involved in the needs and the risk assessment;
- **Accessible services:** Children do not just face risk or tough decisions 9-5 and it is important that they do have access to someone to help them at such times. One practitioner said:

We leave our phones on after hours. Doing that may stop that girl making the wrong choice. But there need to be enough people to leave their phone on after hours.

- **Long-term relationships with professionals:** As with other types of child abuse CSE involve a breach of a child's trust. It is important that long-term relationships with professionals are able to flourish and provide assurance that actions are followed through. A stable children's social care workforce would help make a difference. This is a current risk;
- **Professional persistence:** We were told of examples where practitioners would visit numerous times, every week, with constant rebuttals until, finally, trust was built. We were also reminded that organisational norms, such as striking a client off after two missed appointments, does not fit the needs of this group of vulnerable children; and
- **The right services at the right time:** A range of preventative, protective and therapeutic interventions need to be available for children. These should include gender specific services.

8.4 Challenges

8.4.1 Firstly, awareness, understanding of CSE needs to increase for professionals, communities, families and children themselves. This needs to go beyond the media stereotyping and needs to encourage action. As councillors have specific responsibilities for Looked After Children, all need to understand how to raise concerns about individual children (through the MASH) and also to ensure that if they have concerns about, for example, locations they know how to contact the appropriate people e.g. WMP local team, CSE Co-ordinator and Licensing officers.



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- 8.4.2 Councillors are leaders within their communities and have an important role to play in raising awareness of CSE and signposting to support. It is felt there is, on the whole, a lack of awareness and understanding regarding CSE amongst Councillors and especially how it affects corporate parenting responsibilities.
- 8.4.3 In terms of children's social care we heard a number of concerns from many different partners. The types of issues and frustrations raised about the Directorate included:
- Difficulty in getting a social worker allocated quickly to a child;
 - Social workers may have a range of experience, but not enough expertise to pick up the issues around CSE;
 - A repeated feeling of having to fight at times to get cases investigated properly and to keep cases open;
 - Children's Social Care closing cases that other professionals feel should be open;
 - Inadequate response;
 - In discussion there were anxieties expressed about the speed of feedback from children's social care when referrals have been made. Although this is meant to occur within set timescales (24 hrs or 5 days) partners did not always find this was happening. (We hope that, at least at the stage of referral, the MASH processes is improving this); and
 - Partners suggested they do the risk assessments but do not see interventions following through.
- 8.4.4 **A joined up council with a shared aim to protect children:** We are not the first Committee to say the City Council needs to be more joined up and nor will we be the last. For example, various parts of the City Council make placements into accommodation – homelessness, children's social care, sex offenders. To what extent are contracts reviewed collectively; are terms included about safeguarding and is information shared on a live basis as to who has been placed who could pose a risk and who is vulnerable?
- 8.4.5 We have been particularly mindful of the frustrations that third sector organisations have expressed about both the City Council and West Midlands Police. In particular, they cited specific cases when an appropriate or **timely response** was lacking. As is often the case with both large organisations it seemed to reflect more on getting the right or wrong person rather than the procedures themselves being wrong.
- 8.4.6 **Information sharing** with a purpose is crucial in protecting children. For example, we were told that better sharing of information, such as known hotspot locations, would help in risk alerting professionals to children who might be at risk. We were told that sharing of information is not always proactive enough. For example, if WMP have not got enough evidence to charge a perpetrator does a conversation automatically take place with Legal Services as to what the City Council could do about it using civil orders?



- 8.4.7 We have been told that the **data** on CSE needs to be improved. Care First is the database of Children Social Care's case loads. It needs to be developed to make it easier to pull out information and share it to examine patterns relating to victims, offenders and places, such as parks and takeaways. It needs to be developed into an improved data base that is evidenced, trackable, and sharable.
- 8.4.8 We were told that improvements still need to be made in developing a full multi-agency evidenced understanding the current CSE picture. Currently, there is dependence on a single spread sheet held by the CSE co-ordinator, plus partners' individual case files and assessments. There needs to be a collective evidence base that can be up dated at the click of a button. This will enable a more robust understanding so that resources can be targeted much more effectively. This would also help to identify and prosecute offenders. Moving forward it should be possible to use the intelligence and analysis in a much more informed way and actually learn which tactics and approaches do work and those which do not.
- 8.4.9 We heard frustrations around the **quality of referrals** both from officers and external partners. It seems as if a lot more work has still to be done with agencies across the city to ensure that referrals are good quality. We were told that too many referrals lack information and so get sent back for further details to be added. Any professional referring into the MASH does need to be able to complete the referral form fully and enable a risk assessment to be made on that child at the multi-agency CSE meeting. Insufficient information will delay. Appropriate training and the rolling out of CSE champions to support practitioners would support that.
- 8.4.10 As with much in safeguarding **thresholds** are an area of tension when one agency believes a case should be dealt with at a higher level, but the local authority deems it is not so. For example, a practitioner wanting Children's Social Care to take responsibility rather than managing a child through an FCAF. [We are hoping that the MASH will help to appropriately allocate cases based on a more detailed understanding of risks.]

Case Study: Challenges in Agreeing Thresholds

Child M was referred to the Children's Society Streetwise project aged 16 for a return interview, which was promptly undertaken. She is a persistent missing person and regularly goes missing three to four times a week. At the interview they found that Child M was living with an older relative who wasn't coping with Child M's behaviour. Child M has learning difficulties, and also a diagnosed mental health problem for which she is prescribed anti-psychotic drugs. Whilst going missing she mixes with homeless people, who supply her with alcohol and street drugs and tries to coerce her into dealing as well. This includes heroin and crack. She has admitted to being sexually active with the men. Whilst missing she does not take her prescribed drugs, so that her behaviour becomes erratic, even delusional and hallucinatory. Streetwise referred her for urgent action to the children's social care team and initially the social worker said there was no risk and that Child M tells stories. Streetwise persisted and Child M was eventually placed in an out of city foster home, but this broke down within a fortnight as the foster carers couldn't cope with her



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behaviour. She is now back with the relative and the problems persist.

Streetwise had tried for two months to call strategy and review meetings, but felt frustrated by lack of progress. One meeting held could not go ahead because the social worker and his manager did not turn up; only the chair and Streetwise were present. Streetwise say that the police do not believe Child M's claims of CSE and that the social worker questions their assessment of the level of risk. The council's Safeguarding Manager and CSE Co-ordinator have supported in trying to escalate this issue but with no result.

A MASE meeting was finally held but only after high level complaints were made to the Director of Children's Services and the Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board Business Manager. Child M was finally sectioned under the Mental Health Act and placed in a specialist mental health unit. It took over 3 months for a mental health assessment to be done and at the time of being told about this the section 47⁹⁷ child protection investigation was not complete. A safeguarding plan was finally in place. During the delay that accompanied this case Child M, in a delusional state, was charged with attempted robbery of a packed and busy city centre betting office and so is now likely to have a criminal record that could affect her for the rest of her life.

8.4.11 To reiterate, tackling CSE and making sure all children in the city are better protected requires actions – each partner playing its role. A particular area we would like to see concerted action on is taking action against perpetrators.

Resources and contracts

8.4.12 "It's underfunded and precarious," a practitioner suggested. CSE is a hugely resource intensive area of work for the city. The 2013 CSE Prevention and Intervention Strategy sets out resources that were specifically made available for CSE in 2013/14, but in addition to this will be mainstream resources for social workers, police investigation, the CPS etc. It was suggested by some witnesses that this table does not include all funding brought to the table by non-statutory agencies.

Table 5: Resources for CSE 2013/2014

Organisation	Contribution £,000
Barnardo's	100
Department for Education	100
Third Sector	47
Community Safety Partnership	66
City Council	96
Children's Society	120
TOTAL	529

Source: BSCB CSE Strategy and Action Plan. Contribution of health has not been included.

⁹⁷ Of the Children Act 1989



- 8.4.13 We have some specific concerns about the adequacy of resources. One officer did admit that:
- Responses to young people at risk of sexual exploitation are undermined by resource constraints.**
- 8.4.14 In this inquiry we have noted areas of concern relating to resources. For example, if cases of missing children have to be triaged to prioritise return interviews we will be missing valuable opportunities for intervention. We have not been assured that adequate therapeutic support is available for children. The closure of youth provision may be having unconsidered consequences for CSE. In addition, there may be other areas where additional resources could improve the way CSE is managed. Parent support workers, for example, could help build both resilience and evidence.
- 8.4.15 Officers are a hugely important resource. We were told about the time it can take to build a trusting relationship with a professional to enable disclosure and tackling the problem. We heard of the real benefits of long term relationships between a child and a key professional and continuity of care. We do have some fears that the work force challenges being faced in Children's Social Care will mean that opportunities may be lost for children.⁹⁸
- 8.4.16 We were reminded that proper interventions and support can pay back dividends. For the gender specific project, keeping one child out of the care system can pay for the whole team. Reducing budgets in this area of work could lead to some unintended consequences.
- 8.4.17 At the time of writing a three year budget was being drawn up for children's services. It is imperative that sufficient resources for tackling CSE are made available in this, including money to continue and expand the work of the third sector.
- 8.4.18 As more services seem to be contracted out to help meet the budget challenges, the Committee recommends that all specifications and contract monitoring arrangements are checked for relevance for safeguarding requirements. Contracts let directly by Children's Social Care would, one hopes, include this, but we would ask for assurances. However, other contracts which might be focused at children (such as in Public Health) or directly with families or in homes (such as contracts relating to council house management) must all include the appropriate set of requirements for safeguarding and CSE. This might include a requirement for staff to have training; adoption of procedures to follow and even active involvement in a multi-agency process such as the FCAF. We would ask that the Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services and Commissioning, performance and the third sector both take action on this.

⁹⁸ For example report to Cabinet 15 September 2014 showed that there 25% of frontline posts are vacant.



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8.5 Recommendations

8.5.1 **The focus of activity must be on relentless implementation of the operating model, particularly around effective multi-agency working, so that Birmingham is bearing down with increasing impact on victims, locations, institutions and offenders. Progress on the recommendations below should be measured on contribution to achieving this key aim.**

A Delivery of Training and Awareness to Enable Action

A properly planned and co-ordinated local campaign targeting a wide range of organisations, communities and businesses.

Public and Communities Awareness Raising

RO1 That:

- The "*See Me Hear Me*" web site⁹⁹ be further developed and a concerted awareness and empowerment campaign for action is delivered for the public (communities, families and children);
- The City Council and partners work with and build the capacity of a broad range of the city's communities to encourage identification and reporting of CSE;
- Resources and sign-posting to online training for parents are promoted;¹⁰⁰
- Awareness includes online risks of grooming, the role of the Child Exploitation and the Child OnLine Protection Centre (CEOP)¹⁰¹ and how to locate and use the report abuse button.
- The Cabinet Member Children and Family Services explores how this can be delivered and funded jointly with partners.

Schools Awareness Raising

RO2 To encourage schools to ensure that:

- CSE is integrated into PSHE from year 6 upwards into ALL schools in the city and to encourage best practice in understanding and dealing with CSE in schools;
- Healthy relationships and girl's empowerment (e.g. by using the "free being me" resources Girl Guiding campaign) is integrated into (PSHE) teaching in all years;
- All teaching includes appropriate provision for boys;

⁹⁹ www.seeme-hearme.org.uk/

¹⁰⁰ www.paceuk.info/support-for-parents/

¹⁰¹ CEOP is a National Crime Agency Command at ceop.police.uk/



- All schools promote safety online including smartphone tracking; and
- All school Head Teachers and recognised Designated Safeguarding Leads (DSL) are written to, raising the issue, asking for a collaborative approach in tackling CSE and for key staff to attend training; and they adapt and agree the new model safeguarding policy from the BSCB.

RO3 That Governor Support Team review safeguarding training provided in the light of this report.

Practitioner Empowerment

RO4 That all frontline staff and managers of caseloads in Children's Social Care including agency staff attend training on CSE. This should include definitions, the grooming line, symptoms and action including what can be done to disrupt / bring charges against and prosecute perpetrators. Particular barriers to disclosure of CSE by black and minority victims should be included in this. There is mandatory training on missing children and the escalation system.

RO5 That BSCB continues to provide and promote training to its partners including health organisations in the city, the West Midlands Fire Service and West Midlands Police; and that partner organisations include CSE training within Level 1 and Level 2 safeguarding training.

Business Resilience

RO6 That business forums and networks are identified to work with to ensure broader understanding of CSE and to support the roll out of the "*Say Something if You See Something*" campaign and guidelines with particular a focus on the hospitality industry and taxis in order to increase awareness and reporting.

Councillor Awareness Raising

RO7 That CSE features as part of induction training for all new councillors; for all current councillors there is compulsory awareness training on safeguarding including CSE; and regular training updates are also made available.

B Birmingham City Council

Policies and procedures within the City Council

- RO8 That the policies and procedures across the City Council ensure CSE is properly dealt with by:
- Adopting and working to the West Midlands Regional CSE protocol;
 - Making better use of Care First (the council's system for case management) to record and analyse and share CSE cases ensuring it is dynamic and reports can be pulled out;
 - Improving feedback from Children's Social Care referrals. (Feedback is meant to be provided in specified timescales which does not always happen.);



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- Establishing CSE champions in key teams including each of the Safeguarding and Family Support hubs who have more in-depth training (and can cascade training to the team) and can act as advisor to the team;
- Reviewing policies and procedures to ensure that parents are seen as equal partners in dealing with CSE and to consider implementing the relational model developed by PACE;
- Reviewing the City Council's response to young runaways to ensure it meets the requirements of the new statutory guidance on missing children; and
- Developing and embedding a robust missing strategy with clear accountabilities, reporting to the BSCB and an escalation system that is fully understood and effectively implemented; and to investigate the protocol for information sharing when children are classified as absent by the police; and address missing from school as a significant safeguarding risk.

Making Better Use of Licensing Powers

R09 That the City Council, West Midlands Police and Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board make greater use of licensing to tackle exploitation by:

- Strengthening the BSCB's role in supporting agencies including licensing and trading standards and West Midlands Police to use the resources and capacity to best effect; and
- Licensing Committee reviewing the statement of licensing and use of powers to assess if it is possible to be more proactive in achieving the objective of: "the protection of children from harm" [e.g. in use of licensing conditions / provision of training /ensuring a clear process for reporting and developing a whistle blowing process to empower license holders and taxi drivers etc. to be proactive in reporting concerns.]

Resources

R10 That it is demonstrated that this area of work (including children's services, third sector commissioning and other key departments such as Legal Services and Licensing) is adequately resourced including that:

- It is mainstream funded not reliant on annual funding agreements and that third sector contracts abide by the compact;
- Commissioning of services specifically for dealing with victims of CSE, in particular, is improved so that they are in place in good time, prior to the beginning of the financial year;
- The level of resource for return interviews, plus the intensive support required to prevent reoccurrences has been risk assessed;
- A review of the level of administrative support in social work teams and for the CSE Co-ordinators is undertaken to ensure this is not affecting ability to manage caseloads;
- A review of the staffing and caseloads of the multi-agency safeguarding hub (MASH) team is undertaken;



- Partners review how to resource a Child Safeguarding Licensing Officer post/role.

Safeguarding at the heart of contracts

R11 That when the City Council commissions services, safeguarding, including CSE, be built into the service specification and monitoring by ensuring that any contract which will involve direct working with children and young people, families and homes and transport services includes an appropriate level of requirement around CSE (e.g. information and training, procedures, and active involvement in multi-agency strategy and Family Common Assessment Framework meetings); and providing reassurance that the school nurse contract due to be recommissioned by Public Health will include these provisions.

Protection of Children in Care

R12 That in order to manage the specific risks of looked after children:

- The corporate parenting strategy is reviewed to ensure it includes proper reference to CSE;
- The Corporate Parenting Board provides clear demonstrable actions that CSE is a priority and that the vulnerability of looked after children to CSE is understood;
- Appropriate risk assessments continue to be carried out when placing children in residential care and that decisions are needs based and not resource based; and
- That there are appropriate policies and procedures (in both internal and external homes) and that staff have the confidence and tools to ensure day to day vigilance and action relating to CSE; and to ensure that these issues are considered in the children's home redesign.

Legal Remedies and Offenders

R13 That Legal Services review and assess what can be done to: strengthen the disruption of suspected perpetrators in the Civil Courts; support victims through to prosecution; and increase conviction rates and successful use of warning letters and civil orders, in association with WMP and CPS; and review the powers available to disrupt suspected perpetrators and develop a planning tool for disruption for Birmingham, building on the tool kit developed in Derbyshire. This needs to then be used and embedded in Children's Social Care.

C Multi-agency working

Multi-Agency Working in Practice: Safeguarding is never someone else's responsibility

R14 That the Chair of Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board:

- Takes further steps to embed the CSE strategy and implementation of the action plan by holding partners to account and ensuring they take appropriate action;



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- Continues to provide challenge as required to schools following the analysis of the annual section 175 audits; and
- Evaluates the effectiveness of multi-agency working including the Strategic CSE Sub-Group, CMOG, Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meetings etc. (Not MASH – see Recommendation 16).

Intelligence and Analysis

R15 That all Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board partners improve the shared understanding of CSE cases by:

- Ensuring there is consistency and all officers and partners are working to the soon to be agreed West Midlands Regional CSE operating protocol;
- Developing systems to ensure sharing information across the region to enable a full multi-agency problem profile can be updated and shared to ensure patterns and associations relating to victims, offenders and locations can be examined;
- Using intelligence and analysis to improve understanding of what tactics and approaches work best; and
- Ensuring those providing intelligence and evidence receive appropriate feedback.

MASH progress

Whilst we welcome the recent launch of the MASH it is too soon to assess its effectiveness in this area.

R16 That reports be provided on:

- The operation of the MASH: workloads, impacts, lessons learnt, and funding (after 6 and 12 months of operation);
- Membership of and participation within MASH, including the role of health, the third sector and family support workers; and
- Data sharing between the MASH partners.

R17 That after six months of operation (March 2015) there is a review to consider if a dedicated multi-agency child sexual exploitation hub should be developed alongside MASH that could provide end to end (case identification through to prosecution) support and action.

D Tracking the Progress of Recommendations

BCC Leadership

R18 That the Quartet¹⁰² regularly track improvements in this area as it relates to the City Council.

¹⁰² Leader, Cabinet Member for Children and Family Services, Chief Executive and Strategic Director for People



Reporting Back to Scrutiny

R20 That an assessment of progress against the recommendations made in this report be presented to the Education and Vulnerable Children Overview and Scrutiny Committee in March 2015. The Committee will schedule regular progress reports until all agreed recommendations are implemented.



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Appendix 1: Witnesses

The witnesses who formally presented to the Committee are shown in the table below.

Witnesses	
Presenter	Organisations
Shaista Gohir	Chair, Muslim Women's Network UK
Stephen Rimmer	West Midlands Preventing Violence Against Vulnerable People lead
Jane Held, Simon Cross	Chair & Business Manager, Birmingham Safeguarding Children Board
Liz Murphy	WM Executive Board for CSE / Solihull MBC
Tim Bacon	Head of Public Protection Unit, West Midlands Police
Bryan Thomson, Junior Patterson	Operations Manager & Homes Manager, BCC
Elaine Webster	Head of Service, BCC
Leon Bonas	CSE Co-ordinator, BCC
CLlr Barbara Dring,	Chair, BCC Licensing Committee
Chris Neville	Head of Licensing, BCC
Jenny Mahimbo	Programme Manager, Children's Society
Tom Duffin	Partnership Worker, PACE Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation
Debbie Southwood and Marrian Web	Children's Services Manager, Assistant Director Children's Services, Barnardo's Space
Nasheima Sheikh and Fiona Douglas	Birmingham and Solihull Women's Aid
Jerome O'Ryan	Solicitor, Legal Services, BCC
Rakesh Mistry and Andy Merker	Commissioning and Brokerage Manager, BCC
Garry Billing	Assistant Director, BCC
Julia Davey and Jon Needham	FCAF Area Co-ordinator, CAF Co-ordinator, Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), BCC
Wendi Grizzle	Team Manager, BCC Children's Social Care (and team)
Claire Edwards	Head of Child Safeguarding, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust
Fiona McGruer	Associate Director of Operations, Birmingham and Solihull Mental Health Foundation Trust
Meg Boothby and Jara Phattay	Whittall Street Clinic
Jackie Keegan	Nurse, Birmingham Community Healthcare NHS Trust.
Emma Danter	Phoenix Project-Surgeons

Member Training and Visits

Member CSE Training session	Provided by Safina Bi of Barnardo's Space
Visit to the Gender Specific Project (Youth Offending Team)	Dawn Roberts, Interim Assistant Director (and team)
Visit to Travelodge	Claire Shinton, Head of Safety



Appendix 2: Who to Contact

If you have concerns about the safety of a child please do raise your concerns with someone.

Immediate danger

If you ever think a child is in immediate danger phone the police on 999.

Referral to the MASH

Anyone who has concerns about a child's welfare should make a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). The telephone number is: 0121 303 1888.

You should first phone to talk this through with someone at the MASH and then follow through by completing and sending a detailed and accurate multi-agency referral form found on the BSCB or the council's website:

www.lscbbirmingham.org.uk/index.php/birmingham-multi-agency-safeguarding-hub-mash

www.birmingham.gov.uk/child-referrals (this includes a "what makes a good referral guide").

Out of hours the contact is the Emergency Duty Team on 0121 675 4806.

Barnardo's Space

The Barnardo's Birmingham Space and FCASE works with children vulnerable and abused through sexual exploitation. It can be contacted on 0121 359 5333.

National Children's Advice Agencies

There is a free 24hr NSPCC helpline on 0808 800 5000.

Children and young people who need to talk can contact ChildLine 24 hours a day on 0800 1111 or visit: www.childline.org.uk



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Other Birmingham Support

Service	Brief Description	Telephone
Brook Advisory Service	Sexual health advice for under 25s	0808 802 1234
St Basil's	Services for young people homeless or at risk of homelessness	0300 30 30 099
Healthy Gay Life	Works with men and boys to promote sexual, mental and social health and well-being	0121 440 6161
Education Welfare Service	Promotes regular school attendance and investigates reasons for poor attendance	0121 303 8900
Children's Rights and Participation	Rights and advocacy service for children in care	0121 303 7217
Rape and Sexual Violence Project	Works with survivors of sexual violence and abuse. Provides sexual violence councillors and independent sexual violence advocates	0121 643 0301
The SAFE Project	Promoting health and well-being of women involved in the commercial sex industry	0121 440 6161
Spurgeons Phoenix Project	CSE project in East Birmingham working with children and families at risk of CSE and carrying out awareness raising of CSE	0121 678 8816

Resources for Practitioners

Currently all National Working Group on CSE (NWG) resources are available to all Birmingham practitioners. Their web site is: www.nwgnetwork.org/resources. Resources include:

E learning CSE awareness package

Resources to teach safety to children:

- Cody's Choices- Girls
- Deans 'Choices – Boys
- Olivia's Choices – children with learning disabilities (soon to be released)

As the choices range is visual and interactive programme it is also suitable for children with ADHD / ASD

Barnardo's have also released a new resource called Real Love rocks with separate approaches for primary and secondary. This teaching is designed for both boys and girls and comes with train the trainer sessions. www.barnardosrealoverocks.org.uk/



Resources for Families & Communities

Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation have, in partnership with Virtual College, launched an interactive online package for parents on the signs of child sexual exploitation. It takes less than half an hour to complete and can be found at:

www.paceuk.info/the-problem/keep-them-safe/

A parent with any concerns that their child is being exploited or is at risk, can call the PACE national support team on 0113 240 3040 (during Mon-Fri office hours). They can talk through your immediate concerns, help a parent to assess the level of danger their child is in, and signpost parents to local agencies. See more at:

www.paceuk.info/support-for-parents/telephone-support/#sthash.CYV4q7bH.dpuf

Online

The **Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre** (CEOP) is police-led and part of the national crime agency. Further information is available at:

www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

Online problems / threats can be reported at: www.ceop.police.uk/Ceop-Report/