

**A Strategy to Safeguard Children and Young  
People at Risk of or Experiencing Sexual  
Exploitation in Reading 2014 – 2017**



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## 1. Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse that requires effective multi-agency partnership working to safeguard those who are being abused and those at risk of being exploited. CSE cannot be dealt with solely by individual local authorities, police divisions or public health authorities each operating in their own silos. Offenders and victims cross administrative boundaries and so should the collective response of the LSCB to safeguard the children of Reading.

This strategy builds upon the Statement of Intent produced by Thames Valley Police in February 2013 and has been further developed as part of the work of the Reading LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Steering Group.

This strategy is also informed by the following reports:

- Professor Alexis Jay OBE, *Independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham (1997-2013)*, Rotherham Borough Council, 21 August 2014;
- *Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation; supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children*, Department for Children and Families, August 2009
- *I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world*, Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (CSEGG), Interim Report, November 2012;
- The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it? Ofsted, November 2014
- 'Real Voices', Child exploitation in Greater Manchester and independent report by Ann Coffey, MP October 2014

This 3-year strategy builds on the progress that has already been made in Reading to ensure that we are effective in **Preventing** CSE from happening, **Protecting** those who may be at risk, to **Pursue** and **Disrupt** those who may be posing a risk to children and to ensure victims of CSE are supported in their **Recovery**.

Throughout this document the term 'child' has been used to describe any child or young person aged 0-18 years. Whilst it is acknowledged that teenagers would wish to be referred to as 'young people' the term 'child' in this context helps professionals and the public stay focussed on the fact that they are children being abused and not young adults making positive choices.

## 2. Definition

The sexual exploitation of children and young people can take many forms and this strategy uses the definition set out in the Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation 2009:

*'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 them performing, and/or another or others performing on them sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can be via the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without 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'*

(DCSF, HMSO 2009)

## 3. National Context

In December 2011, the Department for Education informed all Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) that the national 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan', was a follow up to the 'Government Guidance on safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation' issued in 2009.

In July 2012, 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan: progress report' was published and a 'Step by Step Guide' for practitioners was issued by the Department for Education

The Action Plan published by the Department for Education cited the expectation that LSCB's will implement a local action plan to:

- map the needs of their own area
- monitor ongoing prevalence and responses to child sexual exploitation within their area, making use of existing monitoring tools
- Develop an effective local strategy ensuring there is a co-ordinated multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation;

- increase understanding of child sexual exploitation, in the professional and wider community
- safeguard and promote the welfare of groups of children who are potentially more vulnerable;
- consider whether it is appropriate to set up a working group or sub-group on child sexual exploitation, either on a short term or standing basis, and appoint a lead officer who provides a co-ordinated response across statutory authorities and the voluntary sector
- Develop links with neighbouring authorities and meet them on a formal basis and as required where there are cross border concerns.

In July 2012 the Children's Commissioner published a briefing for the Secretary of State for Education on child exploitation in gangs and groups, with a focus on children in care. In November 2012, the Children's Commissioner published 'Seeing the signs of sexual exploitation' in which it identifies running away as an indicator that a child is at risk and extremely vulnerable. The report cites that, one in four of such children will end up in a harmful or dangerous situation and more needs to be done to keep children safe.

Professor Alexis Jays report into the sexual exploitation of children in Rotherham was a wake up call for every professional working in the field of protecting children from sexual exploitation. The catalogue of failings across agencies has prompted the majority of authorities to review how it prevents and protects children from sexual exploitation.

The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it? Ofsted, November 2014 goes further to recommend every area has a CSE action plan that robustly monitors the capabilities and progress of agencies to keep children safe from CSE. The Single Inspection Framework has been reviewed to ensure there is increased scrutiny of the local authority's performance.

'Real Voices' by Ann Coffey, MP demonstrates the need to ensure the voice of children is visible in everything we do across the levels of need. Whilst children are clearly vulnerable to CSE they also have a contribution to make in the design and delivery of local services recognising the issues of growing up in a modern world where the use of technology plays an increasing role

National guidance, key national reviews and briefings will continue to shape our local response to tackling CSE in Reading and will support our planning of operational work and training.

## 4. Our achievements so far

In Reading we are working towards developing a clearer picture of the extent to which CSE affects children locally. Implementation of this strategy will facilitate improved recording, monitoring and reviewing to provide a sense of prevalence in the Reading area. Nationally we know that the issue has not always been recognised and that the extent of the problem has been underestimated. Research undertaken by

Barnardos 'Puppet on A String', shows that nationally the reporting of abuse through child sexual exploitation is growing year on year with a 16% growth in reporting between 2008/09 and 2009/10

Whilst we recognise there is still more to do to ensure we are effective in tackling all aspects of CSE across the Reading LSCB partnership, progress has been made in a number of areas that gives a strong foundation for moving forward:

- The LSCB now has a CSE and Missing steering group reporting to the LSCB, chaired by the Director of Children and Education Services.
- The CSE and Missing Children Operational Mapping Group is fully established.
- CSE champions have been identified across Reading Borough Council.
- There has been significant investment in training of professionals through single and multi-agency training at universal, targeted and specialist levels.
- Bespoke training has been delivered on sharing intelligence with the police and guidance issued to frontline practitioners.
- An educational/preventative programme has been delivered in nine schools which included the use of 'Chelsea's choice' reaching approximately 2000 young people.
- Completed and ongoing investigations pursuing those who have harmed or present a CSE risk to children.
- We have a number of established services to support victims of CSE including: counselling services, CSE champions, Source Team, Health drop ins, Youth Outreach nurse and Targeted Youth Support.

## 5. Strategic priorities - Prevent, Protect, Pursue

All agencies providing services to children have a statutory duty under Section 11 of the Children's Act 2004 to understand the risks and ways in which children can be exploited sexually and the ways in which their agencies can safeguard them against this.

Our strategic priorities facilitate a multi-agency approach that emphasises the need to:

- Recognise the possible indicators of sexual exploitation;
- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
- Work together to provide children with strategies to exit sexual exploitation;
- Investigate and prosecute those who coerce, exploit and abuse children and young people in this way;
- Ensure that voice of children informs service delivery and plans to keep them safe from CSE.

As a partnership we are committed to:

**Prevent:**

Child Sexual Exploitation takes place within our community. We must raise awareness and understanding of Child Sexual Exploitation in order to prevent children from becoming victims.

**Protect:**

We will work together to identify children at risk of, or subject to sexual exploitation, so that we can safeguard and support them and prevent further harm. It is important that professionals, public, families and children understand the many forms of CSE so that they are better able to protect children and not miss signs.

**Pursue and Disrupt:**

We will work together to assist in bringing offenders to justice and disrupt behaviour, whilst ensuring that children and young people are not subject to further risk and harm

**Recovery:**

We will ensure that victims of CSE are provided with the necessary support to aid their recovery. This support needs to be delivered in such a way that we do the right thing, in the right way and at the right time to aid their recovery. Recovery should also include the provision of services to enable them to reach their potential and reduce the likelihood of needing support services in the future.

<b>Vision</b>	For children and young people to be free from the risks and harm of sexual exploitation in Reading		
	<b>Priorities</b>		
<b>Prevent</b>	Ensure the governance framework for CSE delivers an effective partnership response to CSE	Provide awareness and targeted training to professionals across the partnership. Engage Parents, Schools, colleges, local communities and the voluntary sector in prevention and awareness training	Establish a targeted prevention and self-protection programme for use by schools, voluntary/community organisations and with targeted vulnerable groups including children going missing and looked after children.
<b>Protect</b>	Ensure that multi agency processes and procedures are in place and are effective in using collective intelligence to identify children at risk of CSE	Ensure there is a clear pathway in place that manages the risk of CSE at the appropriate level of need	Ensure that victims of CSE receive the appropriate support and are protected from further harm
<b>Pursue and Disrupt</b>	Use the collective intelligence gathered whilst preventing and protecting to produce Problem Profiles	Proactively identify and disrupt locations where there maybe CSE activity	Proactively use criminal and civil enforcement legislation to challenge and confront inappropriate and harmful behaviours
<b>Recovery</b>	Ensure there are clear recovery pathways for the victims of CSE	Ensure there are smooth transitions between Children and Adult services	Ensure that the needs of parents and families of victims of CSE are considered and appropriate support provided

## Action Plan 2014 - 2017

PRIORITY AREA	HOW
<b>PREVENT</b>	
<p>Ensure the governance framework for CSE delivers an effective partnership response to CSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ CSE Missing Children Strategic group meeting scheduled to take place every 6 weeks.</li> <li>▪ CSE Missing Children Operational group scheduled for monthly meetings (minimum).</li> <li>▪ CSE Champions Group scheduled monthly and expanded to multiagency.</li> <li>▪ Terms of Reference for the above groups reviewed on an annual basis</li> <li>▪ Governance framework agreed by LSCB and Community Safety Partnership</li> <li>▪ CSE Missing Children Strategy group will monitor progress of the action plan and report progress to the LSCB</li> <li>▪ Reading LSCB will report to and inform the work of the Community Safety Partnership</li> <li>▪ The CSE and Missing Children Strategy group will facilitate links to relevant strategies across the partnership to include; Domestic abuse strategy, Children Missing Out on Education, Children and Young People's Plan, Early Help Strategy.</li> <li>▪ Ensure that the local plans and strategies are informed by the voices and experiences of children.</li> </ul>
<p>Provide awareness and targeted training to professionals across the partnership. Engage Parents, Schools, colleges, local communities and the voluntary sector in prevention and awareness training</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Universal CSE E-learning training for professionals across the partnership including schools and colleges.</li> <li>▪ Tiered CSE training packages - Introductory level, targeted and specialist for services most likely to identify CSE victims through their work with high risk groups</li> <li>▪ All front line staff working with children aged 10+ to receive CSE awareness training.</li> <li>▪ All agencies report on the numbers of staff trained at the level appropriate to their role.</li> <li>▪ Develop and deliver appropriate training for the licensing/hospitality sector including taxis, hotels</li> <li>▪ CSE champions identified and trained in all LSCB partnership agencies.</li> <li>▪ Respond to the training needs of those additional services in communities which, whilst not directly working with children, may have a contribution to make in tackling CSE, such as housing providers and community safety services.</li> <li>▪ The LSCB has ensures there is effective quality assurance of all training on offer.</li> <li>▪ Provide 'spotting the signs' information and guidance to parents on parenting programmes</li> <li>▪ Introduce a Peer mentoring scheme to schools to involve learners in raising awareness and supporting pupils in efforts to keep themselves safe</li> </ul>

<p>Establish a targeted prevention and self-protection programme for use by schools, voluntary/community organisations and with targeted vulnerable groups including children going missing and looked after children.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Establish a targeted preventative and self-protection programme on child sexual exploitation for looked after children and children who go missing.</li> <li>▪ Engage with learning providers; provide CSE prevention resources and curriculum support to School PSHCE leads for children Year 5 and above.</li> <li>▪ Provide CSE prevention resources to Juice Health drop in providers delivering in Schools and the community</li> <li>▪ Provide curriculum support to schools through the PSHCE partnership on topics such drugs and alcohol, domestic abuse, CSE, Internet safety and Sex and relationship education</li> <li>▪ Annual campaign in schools through Chelsea's Choice/Theatre production or through RBC PSHCE menu offer with the inclusion of sign posting options for parents</li> <li>▪ All missing children will receive a return interview and the thematic findings will be reported to the CSE Missing Steering group as a standard agenda item</li> </ul>
<b>PROTECT</b>	
<p>Ensure that multi agency processes and procedures are in place and are effective in identifying children at risk of CSE</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review the LSCB multiagency threshold criteria and ensure that CSE and missing is reflected across the levels of need</li> <li>▪ Produce a CSE and Missing Toolkit for use by all agencies that includes an agreed screening tool and referral processes.</li> <li>▪ Establish a risk management model</li> <li>▪ Publish a Framework for Intelligence, Confidentiality and Information Sharing</li> <li>▪ Gather intelligence through Mapping and CSE Champion subgroups will be used to inform local delivery of services with regular thematic reports provided to the CSE missing steering group</li> </ul>
<p>Ensure there is a clear pathway in place that manages the risk of CSE at the appropriate level of need</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Review existing policies and procedures to ensure that strategy meetings, child protection and conferences include children, parents and consider disruption as part of the action.</li> <li>▪ Introduce a single data set giving information about children and young people screened and assessed as at risk of CSE</li> </ul>

<p>Ensure that victims of CSE receive the support and are protected from further harm</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All children being exploited and children believed to be being exploited have a risk assessment on file</li> <li>▪ Auditing of CSE cases is included in the cycle of LSCB multi agency audits and reports received from single agency audits that relate to CSE</li> <li>▪ Explore the potential for the collocation of professionals working with victims of CSE</li> </ul>
<b>PURSUE and DISRUPT</b>	
<p>Use the collective intelligence gathered whilst preventing and protecting to produce Problem Profiles</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ The CSE and Missing Children Operational Mapping Group will produce Problem Profiles to be used for operational partnership disruption activity</li> <li>▪ The CSE Strategy group will receive reports on Problem Profiles to inform strategic planning and allocation of resources.</li> </ul>
<p>Proactively identify and disrupt locations where they maybe CSE activity</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that any targeting of location engages other appropriate services in communities which can support enforcement agencies</li> <li>▪ Where there is intelligence on locations, a disruption plan will be developed and deployed</li> <li>▪ Gather intelligence to inform local problem profiles, identifying persons of interest, potential victims and hotspots.</li> <li>▪ Use visible policing and street youth work in areas where child sexual exploitation is known or suspected to be taking place</li> </ul>
<p>Proactively use legislation to challenge and confront inappropriate behaviour</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Monitor the prosecution rate and disruption activity of CSE perpetrators and report to the LSCB</li> <li>▪ Disruption guidance will be included in the CSE toolkit.</li> <li>▪ Use legislation to enforce/prevent children accessing certain premises, businesses or individuals: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➢ Anti-Social Behaviour Orders</li> <li>➢ Risk of Sexual Harm Orders</li> <li>➢ Sexual Offences Prevention Order</li> <li>➢ Issue Child Abduction Warning Notices</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

RECOVERY	
Ensure there are clear recovery pathways for the victims of CSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ All young people who have been in local authority care and sexually exploited will receive leaving care or other appropriate services regardless of their care leaving status.</li> <li>▪ All support services across statutory and voluntary sector organisations are mapped and included within the toolkit including how therapeutic needs will be prioritised and met.</li> <li>▪ Review clinical pathways and ensure there is a fast track to therapeutic intervention for CSE victims if required.</li> </ul>
Ensure there are smooth transitions between Children and Adult services	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure there are clear transition pathways for victims of CSE and that every victim receives a seamless service.</li> <li>▪ Include the pathways in the CSE toolkit.</li> </ul>
Ensure that the needs of parents and families of victims of CSE are considered and appropriate support provided.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▪ Ensure that whole family assessments are considered for children who are victims of CSE</li> <li>▪ Develop support programmes for parents and families of CSE victims</li> <li>▪ Harness the potential of the voluntary and community sector to support families of CSE victims in the community</li> <li>▪ Provide parenting groups and peer support for parents of CSE victims.</li> </ul>

## References

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