

**Wakefield and District
Safeguarding Children Board**

Multi-Agency

**Child Sexual Exploitation &
Missing from care/home
Strategy 2015 – 2018**

Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is an abhorrent crime and can have a devastating impact on children and their families. It is not a new phenomenon. In Wakefield there has been a CSE Strategy and Action Plan in place since 2012, and a clear process for identifying risk and vulnerability in place through the Multi Agency Action on Child Sexual Exploitation (MAACSE) meeting. The MAACSE itself built on an existing and well established model for identification and support for those at risk and a key priority for the Board.

What has changed is the level of professional and public awareness generated by a series of high profile investigations and criminal trials in places such as Rotherham, Rochdale, Derby and Oxford. Professor Alexis Jay's report entitled 'Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013', (2014) uncovered a catalogue of abuse and failings across all agencies over a prolonged period of time. Senior leaders were urged to show political and moral courage to challenge this type of offending and treat it as a priority. Local Safeguarding Children Boards' (LSCBs), charged with the responsibility to ensure that agencies carried out their duties with regard to safeguarding children in their areas, had according to Ofsted, shown 'poor leadership' and in their thematic report 'The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it? (2014) demonstrated slow progress in developing strategies and actions plans.

The Government then commissioned Louise Casey, appointed as a statutory inspector by the Secretary of State, to enquire into the Local Authority in Rotherham and reported in January 2014. The government responded to this report with a raft of recommendations including the following: 'Introduce an expectation that all Local Safeguarding Children Boards will conduct regular local assessments on the effectiveness of local responses to child sexual exploitation and publish the outcome of those assessments through their annual reports'. This Strategy describes what will be done to reduce and eradicate CSE and going missing to make Wakefield a safer place for children and young people to live and thrive.

I am therefore pleased to publish Wakefield's Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Strategy 2015-2018. It represents a comprehensive and ambitious strategy to address a complex and challenging problem. It builds on work that has been happening across the authority and the good partnership working which is in place as well as using examples of local practice so that what has been learnt elsewhere can help develop local practice. This is a milestone in our programme of work about this terrible crime against children. We will genuinely challenge ourselves and ensure that we are listening to children and young people throughout this conversation so that we can eradicate this horrible crime against the children we endeavour to protect.

Edwina K. Harrison



Edwina Harrison, Independent Chair of Wakefield Children Board

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

There are a number of definitions of CSE, including those developed by Association of Chief Police Officers, Barnardo's and the National Working Group on CSE. Wakefield, along with the four other Local Authorities which make up West Yorkshire Consortium, has adopted the definition outlined in the current national statutory guidance issued in 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, attention, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, or others performing on them, sexual acts or activities. Child sexual exploitation grooming can occur through 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'.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner: *'I thought I was the only one'* (CSEGG) 2012 found that at least 16,500 children and young people had been identified as being at risk of CSE between 2010-2011. In addition, between a 14 month period from 2010, 2,409 children and young people had been confirmed as being victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups.

Sexual Exploitation can be linked to other types of crime including:

- Child trafficking, (into, out of and within the UK)
- Domestic abuse
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships
- Grooming, on and off line
- Abusive images of children and their distribution
- Organised sexual abuse of children
- Drugs related offences (dealing, consuming and cultivating)
- Gang related activity

It is critical that all professional groups/organisations and individuals recognise the link between going missing from home/care and education and CSE. Whilst not all children who go missing are involved in CSE, being missing makes them more vulnerable to situations where they can become at risk. Whilst the police and Children's service are the lead for investigating whether children are subject to CSE it is for all agencies/organisations to be responsible and accountable for their identifying and protecting children who are vulnerable to risks associated with missing and CSE.

CSE and Missing from home/care

Children who are missing from home, school or care are at greater risk of sexual exploitation. The Department of Education (DfE) issued statutory guidance in January 2014 to Local Authorities: addressed LSCB's, Chief Executives of LA's as well as senior managers of agencies working with children on the management of children missing from care/home. It requires that LA's have guidance on running away and missing from home and care with a senior officer who monitors the policies and performance relating to children in who are at risk of missing/running away. The link between children and young people who go missing and the risk of sexual exploitation is increasingly recognised, whether young people are missing and sexually exploited, or at risk of sexual exploitation and going missing. The nature of this link is yet unclear, however, sexual exploitation is considered to be both a cause and a consequence of going missing (CEOP, 2011). There are also many different types of missing incident including running away from or being forced to leave home or care, being trafficked into, out of, and within the UK, and being abducted or kidnapped.

Definition of Missing

Governmental guidance describes a young runaway as 'a child who has run away from their home or care placement, or feels they have been forced or lured to leave.' And a missing child as 'a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers. Since April 2013 police forces have been rolling out new definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' in relation to children and young people reported as missing to the police.

These definitions are incorporated into the West Yorkshire Procedures Online http://westyorkscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_sg_ch_and_yp.html

There are 2 category definitions used by the Police:

MISSING:

Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be the subject of crime, or they may be a risk to themselves or others.

ABSENT:

A person is not at a place where they are required or expected to be. The level of risk is assessed as no apparent risk.

When a child or young person runs away or goes missing they are considered to be at risk. Whilst the majority of children who go missing will return or be located quickly, there are many others who will either be at risk of, or will suffer from harm. Their physical and emotional health may suffer as well as their general health, education and social relationships.

Children who go missing from home or care place themselves and, at times, others at risk; they are also at increased risk of being harmed. The reasons why children go missing from home or care are complex and frequently involve a number of 'push' and 'pull' factors, which should not be viewed in isolation from a child's experiences in daily life. All those in contact

with children should be aware that when a child runs away or goes missing this may be an indicator that they are at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation; also that a child is more vulnerable to being sexually exploited when missing.

Children missing education

Statutory guidance was issued to local authorities January 2015 by the DfE on the role they play in children missing education. Children missing education (CME) are at significant risk of underachieving, being victims of abuse, and becoming NEET (not in education, employment or training) later on in life. The guidance states that 'Local authorities should have **robust procedures** and **policies** in place to enable them to meet their duty in relation to these children, including appointing a named person that schools and other agencies can make referrals. Local authorities should undertake regular reviews and evaluate their processes to ensure that these continue to be fit for purpose in identifying and dealing with CMEs in their area'.

Children at particular risk of missing education include:

- Pupils at risk of harm/neglect
- Children of Gypsy, Roma and Traveller (GRT) Families
- Families of Armed Forces
- Missing children/runaways
- Children and young people supervised by the Youth Justice System
- Children who cease to attend a school

In Wakefield the Local Authority manage a team for children missing education and work closely with local schools on identification and notification of those at risk.

WHY WE NEED A STRATEGY FOR CSE/MISSING

Sexual exploitation of children is child abuse and is completely unacceptable. The only effective way to tackle sexual exploitation of children is via effective multi agency and partnership working. This strategy proposes the following objectives to which all of us, whether operating at a local or national level, in the statutory or voluntary sector, should work collectively to deliver:

- **Identify and recognise-** we need to tackle and change the culture of denial about CSE where victims are believed, no matter how they behave. Professionals and the public must become more aware of the signs of abuse and feel empowered to come forward and report it.
- **Prevention** – reducing the number of children who go missing/at risk of CSE – through prevention strategies, public awareness, education work and early intervention. This includes good information sharing protocols where this is done effectively.

- **Protection** – reducing the risk of harm to those who go missing/at risk of CSE – by ensuring local agencies provide a tailored, risk based response to cases and that they work together as quickly as possible and effectively at a local level.
- **Prosecution**- ensuring that all offenders are brought to justice and use maximum disruption with vigour where CSE is always pursued by law enforcement agencies
- **Provision and support**– providing support and guidance to children and families by referring promptly and ensuring that they have tailored packages of support informed by a good commissioning strategy.

It is our collective multi-agency responsibility to identify those children and young people at risk of exploitation and our joint responsibility to protect them and safeguard them from further risk of harm. It is also our responsibility to prevent children becoming victims of this form of abuse and reassure our communities we can perform our duties effectively. It is the police responsibility to focus on the detection, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators of CSE.

The Government produced a report entitled 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (2015)' outlining the actions Local Authorities, police, children's and health services must consider when addressing this issue within their locality. The report placed the following expectations on LSCBs:

- All LSCBs will conduct regular local assessments on the effectiveness of local responses to child sexual exploitation.
- Improve the quality of central Government collection to include data on the prevalence of child sexual abuse and publish this data to inform LSCB assessments so that that performance of local agencies is more transparent to the communities they serve.
- Commission an external analysis of LSCB Annual Reports in 2015/16 to bring greater scrutiny to the system and to examine how effectively the data being used to improve outcomes for children.

This multi-agency strategy draws on the following documents:

- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation- HM Government (2015)
- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care (DfE 2014)
- Ofsted thematic inspection 'The Sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it?' (2014)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE 2015)
- The Independent Enquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham (2014) Professor Alexis Jay OBE

- Real Voices: Child Sexual Exploitation in Greater Manchester. An Independent Report by Ann Coffey MP (October 2014)
- The National Statutory Guidance “Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation” (2009)
- The DFE’s “Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan” (2011)
- The Report from the Joint Enquiry into Children who go missing from care (2012)

The CSE context

Evidence of child sexual exploitation is unlikely to turn up fully formed at the door of the police station or the local authority and it needs to be searched out. As a spectrum of activity, there are a whole range of behaviours and scenarios which alone do not mean anything significant, but pieced together form a composite picture. The proactive gathering of information helps to form that picture, to identify perpetrators, hotspots, and those who need protecting. There are a myriad of ways in which different parts of the local authority—whether through their regulatory, licensing and community safety functions or their leisure and community services, can seek out this information, share it with partners and act to tackle child sexual exploitation.

In Wakefield we will actively work together across agencies to identify those vulnerable to sexual exploitation and who go missing, build resilience, and prevent exploitation taking place. Across the partnership, we are committed to making a difference for children and young people through:

- Enabling children and young people to make safe choices through a concerted campaign of awareness raising and education,
- Providing accessible, early support, to target vulnerable groups, build resilience and prevent exploitation occurring, with development around longer term support
- Proactively work across the partnership to identify, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of this crime, to reduce the duration of abuse and minimise the impact on the victim
- Challenge each other and all key agencies to ensure that this very important issue is being given continual priority

Prevalence of CSE

The prevalence of CSE is difficult to ascertain with any accuracy due to:

- Low levels of reporting by young people
- Variable levels of awareness & confusion around definition

- Inadequate intelligence gathering & information sharing
- Inconsistent recording

Child sexual exploitation is hidden, rarely recognised or identified. Victims of child sexual exploitation say that shame and believing the threats made by the perpetrator/s of harm to them or their family silence them. Victims are also afraid that they will not be believed, and there is justification for this. Many who have spoken out about being sexually exploited or abused have not been believed because professionals, the public, and perhaps even those close to them often do not see them as being exploited. Experts agree that child sexual exploitation is more prevalent than the number of reported cases suggest. The CSEGG Inquiry estimated that at least 16,500 children were at risk of child sexual exploitation during the period from April 2010 to March 2011.¹² Whilst 2,409 children were confirmed as victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups during the period from August 2010 to October 2011, there is no confirmation of the numbers of children sexually exploited by individuals.

The majority of victims were identified as female though it is important to recognise that there is likely to be an even greater under representation of males due to difficulties in recognising sexual exploitation amongst boys and young men. The average age when concerns are first identified is between 13-15 years.

Some children or young people do not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and do not see themselves as victims of exploitation, as they consider they have acted voluntarily. The reality is their behaviour is not voluntary or consenting. It is important to remember that a child cannot consent to his or her own abuse.

The internet, social media and mobile technology are also utilised by perpetrators to identify potential victims;

- Online grooming of children, by perpetrators is easy to do via social networking sites, where children are very vulnerable and easy to locate as they often post detailed personal information including home address, school etc.
- Meeting children offline following online grooming, whilst less common, is a criminal offence. In the United Kingdom it is illegal, online and offline, to entice or coerce a child under 16 to engage in sexually explicit conduct.

Missing From home/care as a National Issue:

When a child goes missing or runs away they are at risk. This includes those who are identified as missing from education. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. Local authorities are responsible for protecting children whether they go missing from their family home or from local authority care. Other agencies have key responsibilities outlined in the national guidance 'Working Together to safeguard children (DfE) 2015, regarding how to identify and refer children who are at risk.

There are no exact figures for the number of children who go missing or run away, but estimates suggest that the figure is in the region of 100,000 per year (Still Running 3, 2011). Children may run away *from* a problem, such as abuse or neglect at home, or *to* somewhere they want to be. They may have been coerced to run away by someone else. Whatever the reason, it is thought that approximately 25 per cent of children and young people that go missing are at risk of serious harm. Missing children may also be vulnerable to other forms of exploitation, to violent crime, gang exploitation, or to drug and alcohol misuse.

A study conducted by the Centre for the Study of Missing Persons, Repeat reports to the police of people: locations and characteristics (July 2014), found that of the 313,000 reports made to the British Police in 2011-12, 64% involved children. The study focused on the data from one police force during 2011. The study identified that young people make up the great majority of those reported missing three times or more in a year. The results show that people went missing from a variety of locations, but that private child care homes were the most common place (57.1%) Almost all (99.5%) of those who went missing from private care homes were under 18 years old. Going missing from a home address (16%) was the next most common location; followed by mental health units (9.9%) and hospitals (7.7%).

Looked after children missing from their placements are particularly vulnerable. In 2012, two reports highlighted that many of these children were not being effectively safeguarded: the Joint All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry on Children Who Go Missing from Care and the accelerated report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's on-going inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. Key issues identified suggested that:

- Children in residential care are at particular risk of going missing and vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation;
- Local Safeguarding Children Boards have an important role to play in monitoring, interrogating and analysing data on children who go missing.

The Ofsted report 'Missing Children' published in February 2013 on local authorities' work in relation to children missing from home and care highlighted a number of concerns. These were that:

- risk management plans for individual looked after children were often not developed or acted on;
- placement instability was a key feature of looked after children who ran away;
- reports about looked after children missing from their care placement were not routinely provided to senior managers in local authorities;

- ensuring that Local Authorities' and schools had good information sharing on pupils missing or absent from education
- there was little evidence that safe and well checks or return interviews were taking place. This is a key focus of the improvement plan for the LSCB in Wakefield.

CSE in Wakefield

The Wakefield and District Safeguarding Children Board launched a Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy in 2012. The strategy was developed by a multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Task Group that was established by the Local Safeguarding Children Board in early 2011 and which consisted of representatives from across the partnership.

The CSE Strategy 2012 was influential in bringing about a number of changes in the way that agencies work together in Wakefield to tackle child sexual exploitation including:

- The development of the MAACSE Panel (Multi-agency Action on Child Sexual Exploitation) which became operational in January 2013 and which meets regularly to monitor and review all cases of suspected child sexual exploitation. This is a multi-agency mechanism that is chaired and coordinated by the Police and which has received full support and cooperation from all partner agencies.
- The police established a Child Sexual Exploitation Team that is able to respond swiftly to concerns and also work proactively to prevent child sexual exploitation in the district. This team is closely linked and co-located with the MAACSE Panel, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub and the council's Joint Investigation Team.
- Since 2013 specialist support has been available to professionals and families in the district via Barnardos.
- Training and awareness raising has been carried out by the Wakefield and District Safeguarding Children Board itself and within our partner agencies to ensure that people who work with children and young people are able to identify the signs of child sexual exploitation
- We have strengthened our local links with the companies that operate private residential homes for young people and have provided them with training, advice and support in relation to child sexual exploitation and other issues.
- We have undertaken a multi-agency case audit to comprehensively review a number of child sexual exploitation cases with a multi-agency review through the LSCB
- Set up a Strategic Group that has replaced the previous Task Group and which exists to bring governance to our coordinated response to child sexual exploitation. The strategic group is chaired by the Service Director for Safeguarding and Family Support Service and reports directly to the Wakefield and District Safeguarding Children Board.

- Active partners in the West Yorkshire CSE Strategic meeting including the West Yorkshire Police media campaigns.

DELIVERING ON OUR PRIORITIES FOR 2015-2018- 5 STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

Priority 1 - Identify and recognise - We will do this by:

- Actively tackling the culture of denial will mean challenge and greater awareness and education amongst professionals and the community in order to tackle a widespread view that young people have made 'lifestyle-choices' are firstly children and victims of abuse.
- Continually assess, review and build upon the problem profile in Wakefield to identify hotspots, offenders and co-ordinate data through triangulation of intelligence through the newly developed MASH, Joint Investigation Team (JIT), CSE dedicated police unit and the MAACSE.
- Track and identify children who are vulnerable and or go missing and improve information sharing across agencies through revising the current protocols
- Learning from legacy cases- current work is underway with historical cases with Police and CSC. Once this work is complete the learning from missed opportunities will be brought together in a thematic report to the WDSCB for appropriate learning and action.

The Government has announced: the launch of new online training for health sector staff to identify children at risk, revision of 'What to do if you are worried a child is being abused' guidance, set new standards for the Police with College of Policing for all call handlers, police officers, detectives and specialist investigators to respond to child abuse, and ensured that all specialist investigators complete the child abuse programme before they are included on the National Register of Child Abuse Investigators. Whilst this is at a national level locally we must ensure that training for professionals, elected members and others is up to date and targeted at different levels and there is a good awareness raising campaign targeted at the local community as well as professionals.

Priority 2- Prevention- We will do this by:

- Provide appropriate child friendly information to raise awareness and offer local signposting for help and support
- Training and awareness with local community businesses such as Hoteliers, Taxi Driver, Door-staff etc.
- Ensure that children and young people's view are being heard and informing 'what works'.
- Developing a robust data set for the LSCB to understand what is happening locally to disrupt and successfully prosecute individual/groups
- Develop easy referral pathways for children and professionals for early identification and intervention
- Ensure that all partners are using the CSE risk assessment and monitor this through audit

Priority 3 -Protection-we will do this by:

- Early recognition by all professional groups and the community through improved joint working
- Ensure that information sharing is not prohibited nor false barriers to protect children following the national guidance published by the DfE (March 2015) on information sharing
- Increase professional confidence to actively protect children when required through improved training
- Continue to challenge agencies through the WDSCB through the section 11 process and through 'challenge events' to ensure improvements in practice and standards are met.
 - Monitor children's home staff use of notification of missing from care procedures through regular audit.
 - Ensure Children's Social Care continue to make improvements in response by using evidence based tools that promote clear assessments
 - Through placement choices for looked after children who go missing, and or at risk of CSE, are not placed outside the authority unnecessarily
 - Ensure that Wakefield conduct regular audits of compliance with Children's Homes Regulations for staff so they take steps to prevent children from contacting or meeting someone who they believe is a risk

- Continue to hold regular meetings with Wakefield Children's home managers and the Local Authority Missing and CSE lead to ensure they are adhering to the actions set out in this action plan

Priority 4-Prosecution and disruption-we will do this by:

- Stopping offenders requires resources and WDSCB will review the current level of commitment to resources to ensure maximum possible disruption takes places within the authority.
- Ensure that the Police and other agencies have CSE/Missing as a key priority in their resource planning
- Better use of Sexual Harm Prevention Order within the Police and new powers established in March 2015
- Review the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) to ensure that it informs commissioning
- Engage business's within the local area to support identification and referral of cases
- Actively locate, protect and return children missing from home or care and provide on-going support
- Provide multi-agency response plans through MAACSE
- Map out hot-spots and use intelligence to disrupt criminal activity of child abuse
- Establish closer working arrangements with CPS and CSE specialist to maximize prosecution options
- Ensure that agencies work closely together to share intelligence on suspects/offender by sharing information and improving data mapping.
- Ensure senior managers through WDSCB are having regular discussions about data provided to the Board on CSE/Missing children to continually focus on common definition to create more readily joint assessments of children and their families

Priority 5-Provision and support-we will do this by:

- Provision of help and support is made by the statutory and voluntary which ranges from basic support to interventions that tackle more serious psychological problems caused by abuse. WDSCB will review the local offer for children so that we can

ensure that children who cannot access services, or should be dropped from these services, when they are unable to attend, as highlighted in the Jay report.

Governance

Wakefield and District Safeguarding Children Board has established a Subcommittee that is responsible for CSE and Missing Children. Reports are fed into the WDSCB at each Board meeting.

The Sub-committee will meet bimonthly to undertake the following:

- review the local implementation of protocols
- Analyse data of missing from home/ care/ education incidents; patterns and outcomes
- Identify any patterns and trends in running / missing episodes and links to CSE and trafficking to inform changes to joint working.
- develop local strategies / plans to address concerns / patterns / trends.
- Identify and respond to practice and procedural issues
- Core membership:
 - Senior manager from the local police
 - Senior managers from the relevant Local Authority Children's Service Department
 - Senior manager from the relevant Local Authority Residential / Fostering Services
 - Youth Offending Team Manager
 - Health Safeguarding leads
 - Legal services senior officer
 - Licensing officer of the LA
 - Barnardos & Independent Advocacy service
 - Sexual health service
 - Education Lead
 - Other professionals may be co-opted on to the group depending upon local needs.

The Lead Member for Children Services (statutory role) meets regularly with the Director of Children's Services, and the Service Director - Safeguarding and Family Support to ensure that information is shared about the level of CSE/Missing activity within the local area.

Quarterly West Yorkshire meetings also take place with strategic representatives from the Local Safeguarding Children's Boards, the Local Authorities and the Police. This meeting is chaired by the Independent Chair of WDSCB. The purpose of this meeting is to:

- To review the implementation of protocols on a West Yorkshire across West Yorkshire Consortium basis
- To consider the provision of services for CSE and children missing from local authority care
- To identify any patterns and trends in CSE/missing episodes and any cross border issues

- To review the effectiveness of training for those responsible for management of, and services to, children at risk of victim of CSE/missing from both local authority care and home
- To monitor on a West Yorkshire basis the provision of single and multi-agency data collation and information sharing processes
- Identify, apply and disseminate good practice and promote consistent implementation
- Offer peer challenge and review of effective practice – including audit

The representatives from the relevant Local Safeguarding Children Boards are responsible for ensuring updating their respective Board with any West Yorkshire issues or areas for concern.