



London Borough of Hammersmith and Fulham | The Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea | Westminster City Council

Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation

Tri-borough Local Safeguarding Children Board

March 2014



Tri-borough Local Safeguarding Children Board Strategy to Prevent Child Sexual Exploitation

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a criminal act that has a devastating impact upon children and young people and has an increasing profile following significant investigations which have led to prosecutions. At the national level there has been a tendency to assume CSE has an impact upon very small numbers of children in particular locations. However, recent reviews of its prevalence have concluded that there will be children and young people at risk and being abused in most local authority areas.
- 1.2. Perpetrators and victims of CSE come from all age ranges and ethnic groups. Most sexually-exploited children live at home when their abuse begins. It is clear that increased awareness amongst parents and young people, carers, professionals across the system and the wider public of the nature and indicators of CSE is essential to both preventing the risk of and ending ongoing exploitation.
- 1.3. Significant joined-up working and information sharing already takes place between local authority children's services, the police, health services and other agencies to identify and address CSE in the London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham, Royal Borough of Kensington and Chelsea and Westminster City Council areas. However, the bringing together of services across the three boroughs, the development of a range of multi-agency initiatives such as MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and MASE (Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Meeting) and a number of recent national guidance and protocols provide a significant opportunity to enhance our existing strategies and tackling CSE.
- 1.4. Agencies cannot address child sexual exploitation alone or in isolation from other related safeguarding issues. The Local Safeguarding Board (LSCB) has a significant role in ensuring that all the work of all agencies is coordinated, confirming unique and shared roles and functions to ensure that children and young people are protected and other important outcomes are achieved. The LSCB has identified addressing CSE as a priority and is committed to implementing a strategy to ensure a shared approach to tackle the problem. Guidance identifies the LSCB as having a fundamental strategic role in relation to addressing CSE. Governance is key and the LSCB will be informed about and given the opportunity to challenge progress through quarterly reporting coordinated through the LSCB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and CSE sub-group.
- 1.5. The LSCB's responsibilities include ensuring there is a multi-agency CSE Strategy and action plan with standard procedures and protocols¹. To ensure consistent best practice, we will adopt the Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol January 2014²
- 1.6. This strategy sets out the approach of the Tri-borough Local Safeguarding Children Board in the three boroughs. We aim to:
 - Take a shared but co-ordinated multi-agency approach to raise awareness of the problem
 - Intervene early
 - Provide targeted child-centred support and achieve good outcomes for those who are at risk of or already victims of exploitation

¹ ACPO Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan V0.8 25.10.12

² Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol January 2014



- Take a shared but co-ordinated multi-agency approach to deterring and disrupting CSE and prosecuting potential and active perpetrators wherever possible.

1.7. The objectives of the strategy are to ensure that:

- All relevant professionals have a good understanding of the prevalence, risk factors and indicators of CSE in their area and have a good understanding of the referral pathways to use when they are concerned about a child
- Children and young people, parents and carers and members of the wider community have increased awareness of CSE
- Children and young people at risk of CSE and other related risks are identified and effectively supported to prevent them from becoming victims of exploitation
- Victims of exploitation are supported towards positive outcomes
- The activities of perpetrators are either effectively disrupted or result in successful prosecutions.

1.8. There are three key areas that need to be strategically addressed. To build on current momentum, our initial priority will be to **PROTECT** children and young people who are at risk of, victims or survivors of CSE. However this strategy identifies our plans to increase our effectiveness in how we **PREVENT** CSE and **PROSECUTE** those responsible.

2. Definitions and Common Language

Over time, all three boroughs have developed separate local approaches to the issue of CSE. This strategy seeks to confirm a shared definition of CSE, as well as an understanding of need and risk based upon existing good practice and wider protocols. It will also clarify how we intend to coordinate our responses.

A nationally agreed definition of CSE is as follows:

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 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.³

Because of the vulnerabilities of care leavers and the need to address the issue of CSE holistically, this strategy also addresses our role, in liaison with other agencies, to tackle exploitation of vulnerable young adults up to the age of 25.

³ From the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) 2008, referred to in *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation* Department for Children, Families and Schools, 2009.



2.1. Types of child sexual exploitation

- 2.1.1. Inappropriate, sexually exploitative relationships where the young person believes the abuser to be their boyfriend or girlfriend, perceiving him/herself to be in a consensual romantic relationship with this individual.
- 2.1.2. Groups of adults abusing young people often through a particular adult, often seen as a “boyfriend” by the victim of the abuse (or the “party house model”)
- 2.1.3. Abuse of children via the internet. This can include online grooming of children, particularly through social networking applications and is usually “non-contact” abuse for example through encouraging the child to share indecent images or streaming of sexual abuse. It can occasionally develop into meetings offline which can lead to contact abuse.
- 2.1.4. Peer-on-peer exploitation, particularly by gangs and other peer groups including sexual abuse as part of the group’s rituals or “initiation”
- 2.1.5. Trafficking where young people are moved away from their locality, home town or from abroad to other locations, for the purpose of sexual exploitation
- 2.1.6. Abuse through prostitution (commercial CSE) where an exchange of sex for money, goods or the discharge of a debt takes place

3. The challenge of responding to CSE and other related concerns

- 3.1. CSE is a specific issue which needs to be tackled strategically and operationally including actions from specialist agencies. However, young people who are being sexually exploited or are at risk of this are often subject to a range of interrelated risks which affect vulnerable young people. This might include involvement with gangs and serious youth violence, going missing education, substance misuse and self-harm amongst others. Being frequently missing from home or care is a particular risk factor. With all of these issues, the focus of professional action mainly needs to be on vulnerable adolescents rather than younger children. While victims may have histories of abuse within their own families, the associated risks are usually located outside of the family and home. Perpetrators are more likely to be known peers or unrelated adults rather than family members. There is also often a need to address unsafe places as well as unsafe adults. Professionals in universal and statutory services tend to be less clear and confident about responding to such scenarios as opposed to “traditional” child protection scenarios which tend to involve suspected abuse of younger children by family members.
- 3.2. Therefore a key priority of this strategy is to ensure that professionals and other adults in contact with children and young people are alert to risk factors and indicators of a range of safeguarding concerns which do not reflect the more common focus of child protection activity. They also need to be aware of how to support such young people and the range of specialist agencies that can either advise them or provide targeted support to address risk factors which may indicate or lead to CSE as well as providing a clear response when CSE is confirmed to be taking place.
- 3.3. It is also important that while we intend to increase awareness of CSE at a local level, the assessments that are carried out must identify risks effectively so that responses can be targeted appropriately. While there may be concerns about sexual activity of particular young people which may involve significant risks, if this does not include elements of exploitation by others then a different response will usually be required.

We will confirm the referral process and service offer for children and young people at risk of CSE and related issues and communicate this to all relevant services



4. Categories of concern

4.1. Stages of sexual exploitation

Barnardo's have identified three stages of sexual exploitation⁴:

1. A young person is involved in inappropriate relationships
2. A young person is a victim of peer and "boyfriend" exploitation, which may be, but is not always, associated with groups and/or gangs
3. A young person is involved in organised sexual exploitation. This can involve moving young people around towns and cities for sex and sometimes the arranging of networks and exchange of money for sexual services.

4.2. Categories of risk

The Association of Chief Police Officers and London Safeguarding Children Board have agreed an operating protocol⁵ which includes three levels of risk based on a range of indicators. This framework will be used in all three boroughs when assessing the required response towards young people thought to be at risk of CSE:

Category 1

A vulnerable child or young person, where there are concerns they are being targeted and groomed and where any vulnerability factors have been identified. However, at this stage there is no evidence of any offences.

Category 2

Evidence a child or young person is being targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex for drugs, perceived affection, sense of belonging, accommodation (overnight stays), money and goods etc. The likelihood of coercion and control is significant.

Category 3

A child or young person whose sexual exploitation is habitual, often self denied and where coercion or control is implicit.

Young people assessed as being in Categories 1-3 will be provided with a range of services from relevant agencies informed by the specific needs of each cases. Specialist police interventions from the Child Sexual Exploitation teams will be provided for cases assessed as being in Categories 2-3.

4.2.1. Risk Assessment

A risk assessment framework has been developed by Barnardo's and London Borough of Hammersmith & Fulham which reflects the aforementioned ACPO recognised Categories of Risk. This identifies the typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse and lists specific risks to be aware of under each of the three categories. Multi-agency meetings then use a scale of 1-5 to assess the level of each specific risk identified. It is proposed that this framework will be evaluated with a view to adopting it across all three boroughs.

⁴ Puppet on a String, Barnardo's 2011

⁵ Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol January 2014



We will confirm a shared risk assessment framework in relation to CSE which will be disseminated and embedded through local guidance and training programmes

5. Information Sharing

Effective sharing of information across agencies will be essential if young people at risk of and experiencing CSE are to be identified and supported at an earlier stage and if perpetrators' activities are to be disrupted or lead to prosecutions. As CSE usually includes sexual abuse of children and criminal activity, then existing guidance on information sharing relating to seeking and potentially overriding of consent applies. As is the case with all children at risk of significant harm and their parents, victims of CSE must be supported through high quality casework which will include discussions about what information needs to be shared with whom and the reasons for this. However, specialist functions such as the local authority Sexual Exploitation Lead role, particular agencies and MASE may need to develop additional protocols, particularly in relation to how children and young people, parents and carers are consulted and involved in investigations, how information shared is recorded and where, particularly in relation to our understanding of networks and interrelationships of perpetrators and their victims.

We will review and confirm information sharing arrangements to ensure information in relation to CSE is shared safely, proportionately and effectively

6. Profiling Child Sexual Exploitation

6.1. Levels of risk

An exploratory model developed by Barnardo's⁶ in 2006 used measurable proxy indicators to calculate estimates for the numbers of young people at risk of sexual exploitation in each London borough. It was estimated that between 20 and 40 young people would be likely to be at risk at any one time in each of the boroughs. Barnardo's stressed that these figures were likely to be underestimates as CSE tends to remain hidden in most local authorities.

6.2. Local Profile

Agencies in all three boroughs including the Police, local authority and the voluntary sector collect information regarding children and young people who are at risk or victims of sexual exploitation. Currently there are very few who would be deemed to be in Category 2 or 3 according to ACPO definitions. At the time of writing, after the initial stages of gathering information across Tri-borough by MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) it had been found that:

- 17 young people had been identified as being at Category 1 or above in terms of risk of CSE across the three boroughs with significant variations between the boroughs.
- A greater number of young people have being identified as having risk factors but after further review, for the majority there no evidence that they were being targeted or groomed for CSE

Although all three boroughs have systems in place to enable a coordinated understanding of the profile of children at risk of exploitation, numbers known are low compared to likely prevalence. CEOP advise that when Police, children's services and the voluntary sector work together to identify and address CSE, a significant number of new cases come to light⁷. This would suggest that increased coordination across boroughs and agencies in relation to the identification of young people at risk or experiencing CSE will be required to better understand and respond to the profile of CSE in the three boroughs.

⁶ Meeting the needs of sexually exploited young people in London, Barnardo's 2006

⁷ Out of Mind, Out of Sight, CEOP 2011



6.3. The role of MASH

The establishment of a Tri-borough MASH is an opportunity to develop a single point of coordination of all referrals in relation to CSE and develop a better understanding of the level of need across the three boroughs. MASH enables key agencies to come together to share information and intelligence, and to respond consistently to individual cases. This will ensure that the aforementioned common thresholds and categorisation for interventions in response to CSE will be consistently adhered to.

- 6.4. MASH includes a centralised business analysis function for the three boroughs, a key role of which is to coordinate information relating to CSE. As well as gathering and reporting on data, this role is crucial in presenting aggregated information to MASE (Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting) to inform strategic developments in relation to CSE as well as providing reports for the LSCB.
- 6.5. As information has previously been gathered in a range of locations by different agencies, the role of MASH as the key hub where information is coordinated and processed needs to be emphasised. This will also ensure that children who are referred for reasons other than suspected involvement in CSE might also be highlighted if information from other agencies suggests that CSE may indeed be a risk. In addition, another key function of MASH will be to coordinate and present information in relation to networks of, and relationships between young people involved in CSE and their abusers.
- 6.6. An important aspect of data analysis will be to identify possible gaps in intelligence or awareness about CSE. This might include the degree to which particular cohorts of children e.g. boys, are not highlighted as being at risk of CSE prompting consideration as to whether this needs further exploration. There are also different approaches to addressing gang-related activity in the three boroughs which lead to variations in the way that intelligence is gathered and shared between relevant agencies and the degree to which CSE linked to gangs is recorded and addressed.

We will develop a “Problem Profile” to analyse the particular patterns and prevalence of CSE across the three boroughs

We will review and agree a common data-set which will be gathered for all children and young people referred to MASH where there are concerns in relation to CSE

We will coordinate CSE intelligence with related data sources, e.g. in relation to gang activity and missing children, to ensure a comprehensive overview of related concerns

We will ensure we have sufficient resources to gather, analyse and report on information regarding children at risk of or involved in CSE.

7. Local processes and pathways

7.1. The three boroughs have adopted the Pan-London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol as developed by the Metropolitan Police in conjunction with London Safeguarding Children’s Board⁸. Key stages of the process are being provided locally as follows:

⁸ Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol, January 2014



7.2. The role of the Multi-Agency Planning meetings

These meetings are identified in the London Safeguarding Children Board procedures⁹. They are convened by the Sexual Exploitation Lead who are experienced social workers based in the local authorities with roles in advising on general safeguarding concerns and chairing child protection case conferences. The meetings will include professionals who are working with individual victims or young people at risk to co-ordinate and deliver a child in need or child protection plan. Meetings focusing on individual young people are called as required, while panels (MAPs) are held on a regular basis to review a number of cases including representation from specialist services. Where a young person is discussed at a MAP, unless no further action is agreed, or child protection procedures are invoked, a date for a review meeting should be agreed, to take place no later than three months after the initial meeting.

We will compare and contrast existing arrangements in each borough to provide consultation and case planning on individual cases to ensure best practice across the three boroughs

8. The Role of MASE (Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Group)

The Tri-borough MASE is a monthly meeting co-chaired by the MASH Police lead and the local authority Sexual Exploitation Lead for CSE in Westminster. Its main purpose is to develop and maintain a detailed overview of the profile of CSE in the three boroughs. Cases will not usually be discussed at MASE meetings unless they have previously been referred into MASH and discussed at MAP meetings. This is to ensure that any risk to the child has been managed in a timely and appropriate manner as well as enabling the MASE meeting to maintain a strategic overview of CSE. Cases discussed at MASE should reflect concerns about CSE rather than other needs or behaviours. A common referral form has been agreed which includes mapping of interrelations with other children who appear to be at risk along with details of any relations with other young people and alleged perpetrators.

MASE meetings provide an opportunity to share information and intelligence in relation to CSE as well as to:

- provide a multi-agency response to operational issues.
- review progress on individual cases
- overseeing prevention activity
- reviewing the profile of CSE
- identify any trends or “hotspots” where CSE appears to be a particular issue
- Ensuring the disruption and prosecution strategy is implemented and effective
- ensure coordinated approaches with other boroughs where required, including where looked after children are placed out of authority and at risk of CSE.

It may also be the case that the MASE identifies a situation involving multiple victims and/or perpetrators in one or more of the boroughs. MASE will then provide a forum in which the case should be managed and members should be in a position to commit resources to a multi-agency team should this approach be needed.

8.1. Approaches to looked after children

Research and national investigations have indicated that children in care, especially those placed out of the local authority area in residential provision, are particularly vulnerable to CSE. The initial responsibility to respond to any concerns about CSE is held by the local authority in which the child resides. This would include MASH and MASE processes although it will not always be the case that such arrangements will reflect those of the Tri-borough

⁹ Safeguarding children abused through sexual exploitation, London Board 2006



authorities. The child's allocated social worker has a significant role in maintaining regular, effective contact with young people regardless of the where they are placed. Along with Independent Reviewing Officers they also have a major role in relation to engaging and monitoring the views and behaviour of the young people concerned as well as ensuring effective communication with their carers. Children's social workers would be expected to attend any relevant local planning meetings in other authorities that take place in relation to CSE. To reinforce robust oversight of these children and their placements, the following procedures are followed:

- All three local authorities ensure that formal notifications to the "host" authority take place when looked after children are placed out of authority.
- The Tri-borough placements team maintain a record of looked after children placed with Independent private and voluntary providers out of authority, including those in residential provision.
- The Tri-borough placements team carry out specific checks before placing young people in such placements including the number of missing episodes recorded and any safeguarding issues. The views of other placing authorities are always sought before using a new resource.
- A risk assessment is carried out in relation to each young person before they are placed in a particular resource and this will include consideration of risks posed by or to other young people already placed as well as known risks in the vicinity of the placement.

We will reassert the role of social workers and Independent Reviewing Officers in maintaining effective links with children placed out of authority and being vigilant in regard to the risks posed by CSE.

We will develop protocols between MASE and the Placements Team to ensure MASE maintains a strategic overview of children placed out of authority and that relevant intelligence regarding potential risks of CSE are shared, including challenging particular placement arrangements where required.

The Tri-borough Placements Team will work with other local authorities to develop relationships with independent placement providers to ensure better information sharing and coordinated planning between these providers Children and young people involved in gangs and serious youth violence.

8.2. Young people involved in gangs or serious youth violence

The main priorities of street gangs usually include protecting territory, selling drugs or involvement in a range of other crimes. However, local experience and recent research has identified the prevalence of sexual violence within or between such gangs¹⁰. Gang members, their associates and the professionals who work with them were found to often fail to regard such violence as sexual exploitation. Gang-associated sexual exploitation has many similarities to wider CSE but has specific characteristics including the use of rape as a weapon in gang conflict or as a punishment. Young girls may be expected to offer sex to achieve status, to gain protection or as part of the initiation into the gang. There is also a risk that boys could be exploited through being coerced into initiation rituals which include sexual activity. All three boroughs have experienced particular issues over time in relation to gangs or serious youth violence. To ensure that this aspect of CSE has a high profile, a representative from Westminster's Integrated Gangs Unit will attend the MASE meeting to raise the profile of young people affected. Intelligence about known gang activity and perpetrators will be provided from MASH, the IGU representative the Youth Offending Service manager and local authority Sexual Exploitation leads who will develop effective information sharing arrangements with strategic groups addressing gang-related issues in their respective boroughs.

¹⁰ *If only someone had listened*: Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report



We will regard gang-related sexual violence as CSE and address it through the framework described in this strategy
We will review membership of MASE to ensure effective information sharing takes place with local strategic groups and operational team which address gang-related issues.
We will ensure mapping of CSE victims and perpetrators is coordinated with mapping of gang-related activity

8.3. Links to services for young adults

Sexual exploitation does not end when young people reach the age of 18. There is also that suggests that as they get older, some victims of CSE can play a role in grooming younger peers for abuse. While this strategy's prime focus is children and young people below 18, if risks to older young people are not addressed then this could dilute or undermine the effectiveness of our strategies to prevent CSE and protect children. Also, some cohorts of young adults, for example those with learning disabilities may be more effectively protected if the multi-agency framework developed for young people is adapted to meet their particular needs. Young people leaving care at the age of 18 are usually housed within the boundaries of the boroughs which were responsible for their care. The local authority continues to have responsibility for care leavers' outcomes, potentially until the age of 25 and this group of young people are particularly vulnerable. Although the focus of MASE is young people up to the age of 18, the group will also consider older young people, particularly those who are leaving care or are involved in gangs.

We will develop a protocol with the Tri-borough Safeguarding Adults Board, including operational links with Adults Safeguarding leads, to ensure effective information sharing and coordination of responses to sexual exploitation of children, young people and young adults
We will confirm referral pathways to address transition to services for adults and to report sexual exploitation of young adults. This will be included in training materials and other guidance

9. Coordination and Governance

All three boroughs will continue to nominate a Lead for Sexual Exploitation. These leads will be based within the local authority Family Services directorates. To support objectives to raise awareness of CSE and to provide expert advice and information for staff in a range of agencies, the role and contact details of the Leads will be included in training and publicity materials relating to CSE. They will have a significant role in ensuring all professionals understand their duties to identify young people who are at risk and provide them with effective support. The main strategic group for CSE is the MASE. This includes the local authority Leads along with Single Points of Contact for each borough's Police command, nominated leads from health and education, the MASH manager and business analyst and the Integrated Gangs Unit. The LSCB MASH board which meets quarterly includes CSE within its remit and will include report to the LSCB on a regular basis as well as coordinating an annual report.

There are significant links with other governance frameworks such as MARAC, particularly as the minimum age for young people to receive interventions in relation to domestic abuse has reduced to 16 and young people experiencing such abuse from intimate partners may also be victims of sexual exploitation. Protocols with MARAC and bodies such as GMAP (relating to gang activity in Westminster) need to be established.

We will regularly review the membership and effectiveness of MASE as the strategic group responsible for addressing CSE and it's relationship with the LSCB
We will agree a reporting process that ensures oversight, challenge and accountability in relation to the effective tackling of CSE
We will map links with other strategic groups addressing other related issues such as domestic abuse and gang activity to ensure there are protocols in place to ensure needs are met in a coordinated way



10. Raising awareness and prevention

10.1. If CSE is to be effectively prevented, it is important to ensure that awareness of CSE extends to staff in universal services, senior decision makers, children and families and other members of the community. Awareness should include an appreciation of warning signs and impact of CSE as well as understanding of how to intervene when there are concerns about individual or groups of young people or suspected perpetrators.

10.2. The LSCB currently provide the following training:

- Specific Level 3 training for specialist staff including the identification of need and risks in relation to CSE and safeguarding.
- *Bwise 2 Sexual Exploitation*, a Barnardo's programme which equips teachers, social workers and other professionals to educate young people about sexual exploitation.
- A range of related Level 3 training which addresses a range of risk factors related to CSE. This includes general training on Safeguarding Adolescents, E-safety and Safeguarding Children who may be involved in gangs.

10.3. Schools, youth provision and voluntary sector agencies should play a significant role in preventing vulnerable young people from becoming involved in increasingly risky behaviour or situations which may lead to CSE. Including clear messages about the quality of relationships that young people should expect as well effective sex education within the curriculum will improve resilience of young people who may be vulnerable to CSE. Such agencies can also help young people understand risks associated with online communication or behaviours such as going missing. Relevant members of staff should be aware of strategies they can use in direct work with young people to reduce risk as well as knowing how to involve services which can help young people with specific situations relating to CSE.

10.4. Staff in agencies with day to day relationships with young people are likely to be a source of initial advice chosen by young people who are at risk of CSE, as opposed to statutory workers such as police officers and social workers. Such staff should therefore be provided with accessible information about CSE including behaviours which place young people at risk.

10.5. For staff in universal services to be confident in their potential role in identifying and addressing the sensitive issues arising from possible CSE, they also need to have clear access to expert advice and support from specialist workers. Such workers should be able to provide consultation and be able to guide frontline staff through the use of resources such as *Bwise2 Sexual Exploitation*¹¹

10.6. Although the majority of children who are victims of CSE are not in the care system, looked after children are disproportionately at risk. Foster carer and residential staff should be aware of the indicators and risks relating to CSE and be able to provide support and guidance for children they care for in relation to keeping safe.

10.7. Looked after children who are subject to frequent placement moves and instability are especially vulnerable to CSE. While out of authority placements may remove some young people from local risks resulting from CSE, such placements can also increase feelings of isolation and likelihood of going missing. Consistent attitudes of adults providing care to anti-social behaviour and going missing, having someone to talk to and

¹¹ *Bwise2 sexual exploitation: a preventative education pack for use with 12 to 17 year olds in pupil referral units, residential units and schools. England and Wales, Barnardo's 2010.*



frequent activities involving staff and residents are known to reduce risk for young people in such placements.

We will ensure all training courses which cover CSE reflect key elements of this strategy including definitions, categories of concern and shared risk assessment tools

We will ensure that CSE Reports to the LSCB will include details of numbers of staff who have attended relevant levels of training and agencies will be challenged to ensure greater levels of participation where required

We will work with local schools and related services to develop tools to communicate key messages about CSE to children and young people in schools

We will work with commissioners of youth services to ensure similar tools are available to communicate with young people about CSE

We will develop a suite of awareness raising materials for a range of audiences including universal services, children and young people, parents and carers and the wider community including the business community

We will review training for foster carers and residential social workers to ensure key messages about risks of CSE for looked after children are communicated

11. Protecting and supporting victims

11.1. Where it is believed that a child has suffered or is likely to have suffered significant harm, a referral will need to be made to the relevant local authority's "front door" service which will pass referrals through the MASH whilst taking any urgent child protection actions as required. However, staff in all agencies also need to be clear of the referral processes they should use if they believe a child is vulnerable or at risk of being groomed for sexual exploitation which may not meet the threshold for a child protection referral. Where staff are not sure whether a referral should be made, the local authority Sexual Exploitation Lead should be consulted for advice. The Sexual Exploitation Lead may suggest discussion at a multi-agency panel or meeting or provide other advice.

11.2. Procedures for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of children from CSE are set out in the Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol⁴. These procedures will inform practice across the three boroughs including pathways and roles of key agencies.

11.3. Where it has been established, following review by MASH, that the level of risk is at Category 1 or lower, a clear plan will be agreed by the local authority Sexual Exploitation lead through a MAP meeting to ensure that identified needs are met and that young people involved in behaviour which may make them vulnerable to CSE are effectively tracked.

11.4. All three boroughs currently have access to different specialist service offers. These appear to be sufficient to meet the needs that arise from the small number of CSE cases that the boroughs are currently aware of. A key role of the MASE will be to map the services available, develop an overview of their strengths and weaknesses and to monitor the degree to which the range of services continue to meet need as the number of young people requiring support varies over time.

11.5. Referrals to these agencies will be managed through MAP meetings, or MASH and MASE if information from a range of agencies indicates that the risk of CSE is higher than originally assessed.

11.6. While preventing CSE, protecting victims and prosecuting perpetrators are key priorities, national research and guidance has indicated that there is a tendency to fail to provide sufficient support for victims, particularly during and after prosecutions. If such support is not provided then there is a risk that victims will be vulnerable to further exploitation. When planning interventions, MASE will include consideration as to



how best to provide child centred support for victims. This should include consultation with young people and their parents or carers as to the kind of support needed and the outcomes that are expected. A plan should also be agreed to support young people who have exited from exploitative relationships, involving relevant voluntary and early help services with clear access to support from specialist agencies should additional concerns arise.

12. Focus on perpetrators

12.1. Our approach to tackling perpetrators will be proactive and joined-up. Our aim is to target known perpetrators, disrupting their activities, increasing the number of prosecutions as appropriate. However, we recognise that gathering evidence can be challenging because victims may:

- Not believe they are being sexually exploited
- Distrust statutory services or adults in general
- Fear their peer group should they seek help, particularly in gang-related exploitation
- Provide confused accounts of their experiences as CSE tends to take place in a range of settings, involving the use of alcohol and drugs and multiple perpetrators

12.2. Disruption

The strategic overview of CSE being developed by MASE is likely to identify particular “hotspots” in any of the three boroughs where there are strong indications of CSE taking place. This might include emerging concerns about particular localities, addresses, businesses or professions, particularly those related to the night time economy. Local strategies are likely to be led by the Police but will be more effective if planned with other agencies. Particular activities might include:

- Providing information for young people to improve their resilience and stay safe including ensuring that they have somewhere safe to live
- Equipping parents and carers of children at risk of CSE with simple strategies such as monitoring mobile phone and social media use, or recording details of cars belonging to suspected perpetrators
- Street operations and visible policing
- Use of specific Orders and Notices
- Use of licensing laws and powers
- Targeting particular professions or businesses
- Sharing information and intelligence in relation to highlighted locations, perpetrators or suspected perpetrators with school networks and relevant voluntary organisations
- Prosecution including role of an links to CPS

12.3. Prosecution

As CSE is a criminal act, it is important that suspected perpetrators are investigated and where appropriate, prosecuted. Publicity resulting from prosecutions sends out a powerful message to victims that their disclosures can be effectively responded to. Meanwhile abusers or potential abusers are likely to become more aware of the potentially serious implications of their behaviour. While safeguarding children is the guiding principle, many responses to CSE focus solely on children. Sometimes they will be removed from the location of the abuse without addressing the behaviour of abusers who may go on to exploit other children. It is acknowledged that prosecutions can be difficult, particularly because of the positions of power that perpetrators tend to have over their victims. However, there have been national developments such as Child Abduction Warning Notices which do not require victim cooperation, along with wider changes to how the criminal justice system tackles child sexual abuse announced in 2013.



Prosecutions are more likely to be successful if they result from multi-agency planning and involve lead agencies such as the Crown Prosecution Service as early as possible. Young people are more likely to trust and confide in adults working for agencies they feel comfortable with and this will often not include the Police. Staff doing direct work need to be able to balance the need to support and reassure children with an awareness of how to assist in gathering evidence in an effective way. Therefore training programmes need to include information on disruption and prosecution.

12.4. Perpetrators who are children

The Inquiry into CSE by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner¹² found that 28% of identified perpetrators were children and young people (the youngest being 12 years of age), and that many of these young people were also victims of exploitation and abuse. Traditional policing methods in handling sexual exploitation by adults are unlikely to work when a child is abusing another child. In such cases, children’s services and others should aim to safeguard both, while ensuring that the exploitation ends. It is also important that support is provided to enable recovery of child perpetrators as well as victims. At the same time, where it is clear that a crime has been committed, for example in peer-on-peer gang related abuse it is important that relevant agencies coordinate an response using criminal justice systems if appropriate. Research¹³ has shown that young people’s reluctance to report incidents of sexual exploitation relating to gang activity resulted from a lack of confidence in the criminal justice system to respond effectively.

We will develop a high level disruption and prosecution strategy through MASE
We will develop effective links with the Crown Prosecution Service
We will ensure that training and awareness raising programmes includes briefing about disruption and prosecution strategies

13. How will we know we are being effective?

13.1. Through our concerted and coordinated drive to effectively tackle CSE, we aim to demonstrate a significant contribution to the shared outcome that “children are safe from sexual exploitation” as identified in the Tri-borough Outcomes Framework.

13.2. We expect to be able to demonstrate ongoing progress towards the following outcomes if we are being effective:

- All relevant professionals have a better understanding of the risk factors and prevalence of CSE in their area
- Children and young people, parents, carers and the wider community have an increased awareness of risks relating to CSE
- There is improved identification of children and young people at risk of CSE and other related risks – measured by the number of contacts made with Sexual Exploitation leads and MASH from all relevant agencies
- More young people are disclosing sexual exploitation
- There is increasing evidence of effective prevention of sexual exploitation of those at risk - vulnerabilities in individual young people have been addressed leading to their category of risk reducing over time

¹² “If only someone had listened” Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, 2013

¹³ “It’s wrong but you get used to it” University of Bedfordshire and the Office of the Children’s Commissioner 2013



- Young people at risk and victims are involved in developing support plans and agreeing desired outcomes
- Victims are successfully supported to exit exploitative relationships
- Activities of perpetrators are either successfully disrupted or result in prosecutions

We will develop a performance framework through which the LSCB will evaluate the effectiveness of our strategy

Action Plan

	Action	By whom	Date
Data and Profiling	Review and refine data monitoring process with reference to the University of Bedfordshire CSE Data Monitoring Tool	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	January 2014
	Review data gathering process, identify and address gaps to enable strategic overview and ongoing reporting	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	February 2014
	Fully define the scope and role of business analysis function for CSE and ensure required resources are in place	Sarah Moran	February 2014
	Coordinate links between Tri-borough Placements Team and MASE to enable a strategic overview of out of authority placements of LAC and risk of CSE	Cathy Smith/John Mythen	March 2014
	Coordinate links between intelligence relating to gang activity, missing children and CSE to ensure a comprehensive overview of networks of children who are at risk	Sarah Moran	April 2014
	Develop "Problem Profile" for CSE for all three boroughs	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	April 2014
	Provide regular headline management information from MASH and MASE for LSCB MASH Sub-group	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	From April 2014
	Develop a performance framework through which the LSCB can evaluate the effectiveness of the CSE strategy	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	April 2014
	Publish first annual report including Problem Profile and data from first quarter of MASE activity	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	May 2014
	Local data regarding CSE to be included in the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment	Steve Bywater	April 2014
	Review information sharing in relation to CSE and develop new protocols if required	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	July 2014



Pathways to Services & Support for Practitioners	Develop, confirm and communicate flowchart to show pathways to support and services for CSE and related risks	Cathy Smith	April 2014
	Define and confirm how intelligence will be gathered and addressed for levels of need below the MASE threshold	Cathy Smith/Alex Handford/Chris Miller	April 2014
	Develop a coordinated approach to working with young people at risk of CSE who are below the MASE threshold	James Thomas and Heads of Safeguarding	July 2014
	Develop a clear referral pathway document for all categories of CSE	Sarah Moran and Cathy Smith	April 2014
	Review and confirm common risk assessment framework for Tri-borough	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	March 2014
	Review Sexual Exploitation lead roles for consultation, advice and planning in relation to individual children and identify best practice model	Cathy Smith/Alex Handford/Chris Miller	October 2014
	Review sufficiency of borough based specialist services for CSE	Cathy Smith/Alex Handford/Chris Miller/Ros Morris	July 2014
	Review sovereign links between Sexual Exploitation leads and services addressing gang activity to identify best practice and ensure relevant information is shared consistently	Cathy Smith/Matt Watson/Betty McDonald	March 2014
	Confirm and communicate services available and referral pathway for young adults at risk of CSE	Cathy Smith/Louise Butler	July 2014
Governance	Review effectiveness of MASE as the Tri-borough strategic group which coordinates responses to CSE and consider case for developing an additional specialist sub-group under the LSCB structure	James Thomas	Ongoing – to address in first annual report to LSCB
	Map other strategic groups addressing related issues (e.g. MARAC and GMAP) to identify protocols to share information and avoid duplication	Steve Bywater	July 2014
	Publicise roles and contact details of Sexual Exploitation leads and MASE network	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	April 2014



Awareness Raising & Training	Review available publicity materials to raise awareness of CSE to inform local materials and disseminate to all key audiences ¹⁴	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	July 2014
	Develop and distribute at a glance information leaflets defining CSE, identifying key risks and indicators and specifying local support pathways	Cathy Smith/Neil Matthews	October 2014
	Review existing LSCB training offer and training for foster carers and residential social workers to ensure it reflects agreed processes resulting from the LSCB CSE Strategy including disruption and prosecution strategies	Emma Biskupski	April 2014
	Report (through report to LSCB) on participation in specialist training by relevant sections of the workforce and set targets as appropriate	Emma Biskupski	October 2014 & March 2015
	Develop communication strategy, resource pack and PHSE curriculum links in relation to CSE and related risks to young people for schools and youth providers	Hilary Shaw	October 2014
	Consultation to take place with victims of CSE and wider youth groups regarding the effectiveness of the strategy from their perspective	Mickella Jenkins	July 2014
Prosecution & Disruption	Confirm a high level disruption and prosecution strategy and scrutinise police role in both	Neil Matthews/James Thomas	July 2014
	Identify a named contact within the Crown Prosecution Service to support and advise on actions to address CSE	James Thomas	July 2014

Strategy Authors:

James Thomas, Director of Family Services, Westminster City Council
 Steve Bywater, Interim Policy Manager, Tri-borough Children's Services

Sign off and Review:

Signed-off March 2014
 To be reviewed March 2015

¹⁴ See http://www.local.gov.uk/web/guest/safeguarding-children/-/journal_content/56/10180/3790391/ARTICLE for posters and infographics

