

Item No.	Classification: Open	Date: 15 October 2014	Meeting Name: Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub- Committee
Report title:		Child Sexual Exploitation Overview Report	
Ward(s) or groups affected:		All	
Report from:		Director of Children's Social Care	

1.0 Background

1.1 The Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee requested a report covering:

- A definition of CSE and an introduction to this area of work.
- CSE and links with abuse generally and Domestic Abuse, in particular
- CSE & Looked after children
- A description of Southwark's work to date on CSE
- Southwark's draft child sexual exploitation strategy - alongside any timeline for consultation & adoption

1.2 The Council's Cabinet has requested a full report on Child Sexual Exploitation for consideration in November 2014. Through this review, Scrutiny Committee will have an opportunity to make recommendations to the Cabinet on the draft Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and future service delivery.

2.0 Introduction

2.1 Child sexual exploitation (CSE) has rightly become a major focus of media and policy attention. Widely publicised, systemic failures to protect children, prosecute perpetrators and support victims – such as in Oxford, Rochdale, Doncaster, Derby and most recently in Rotherham – have exposed the potential scale of CSE in our communities and the difficulty experienced by public agencies in addressing it. High profile reports from influential organisations including the NSPCC, Barnardo's and the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England have called upon local authorities to take concrete steps to improve their practice in protecting children from sexual exploitation.

2.2 Though the recent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation has brought the issue into focus once again at a national level, this is not a new area of work for the council and its partners. Tackling CSE was identified as a priority for the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board in 2013/14 and again for this current financial year. It remains high on our agenda across the partnership.

3.0 Definition

3.1 The Department for Education (DfE) defines CSE as involving "exploitative

contexts and relationships where young people under 18 receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities”.

CSE can occur without the child’s recognition or example the persuasion 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 or economic or other resources. Perpetrators use this power they have over the victim to sexually abuse them.

Note that victims of CSE can be *over* the age of consent (16).

- 3.2 CSE is a form of child abuse. It is a specific manifestation of sexual abuse, which involves “persuading or forcing a child to take part in sexual activities or encouraging a child to behave in sexually inappropriate ways”

4.0 Forms of child sexual exploitation

- 4.1 Sexual exploitation of children occurs in a variety of manifestations. The victim may or may not know the perpetrator well, and there may be one or several perpetrators abusing the child or young person. It is important to note that CSE does not only affect girls, nor is it confined to specific ethnic or religious communities, nor indeed does it occur exclusively in deprived areas. CSE is widely agreed to be more common than is represented in official datasets.

- 4.2 Research carried out by Barnardo’s in 2011 identified three broad categories of CSE. These were:

1	Inappropriate relationships	Usually involves one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control (physical, emotional, financial, etc) over a young person – perhaps indicated by a significant age gap. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.
2	‘Boyfriend’ model and peer exploitation	Perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a ‘relationship’ and coerces them to have sex with friends or associates This can be associated with gang activity.
3	Organised / networked CSE and trafficking	Young people are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances between places where they will be coerced into sexual activity with multiple perpetrators. Young people may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this type of CSE can be serious organised crime and involve the buying and selling of young people.

- 4.3 Common conceptions that child sexual exploitation is always part of serious

organised crime are, therefore inaccurate. CSE can also take within or in connection with a relationship.

- 4.4 CSE is a challenging area of work for practitioners and frontline professionals, for a number of reasons. Many young people do not want to disclose that they have been a victim, owing to shame or embarrassment. Others will not recognise themselves as victims, and believe that there is nothing 'wrong', particularly where CSE occurs within relationships that young people understand to be loving or genuine.

5.0 Grooming

- 5.1 The grooming of the victim is typically a precursor to child sexual exploitation taking place. Grooming is the building of an emotional connection with a child to gain their trust for the purposes of sexual abuse or exploitation.
- 5.2 Often (though not always), grooming occurs online. It may involve somebody the victim knows, or somebody the victim has never met. It can therefore also involve a perpetrator in the victim's peer group.

6.0 Links to other forms of abuse

- 6.1 Child Sexual Exploitation is itself a form of child abuse. However, it is linked to other forms of abuse, and young people who fall victim to CSE frequently have other needs and problems in their lives. Problems and needs often associated with CSE include:
- Problems with substance misuse or alcohol misuse
 - Physical or learning difficulties or special educational needs
 - Sexual health concerns
 - Mental ill health
 - A record of youth offending
 - Not attending mainstream education, being on role at a Pupil Referral Unit or being not in education, employment or training (NEET)
 - Being victim of or witness to domestic violence
 - Being a looked after child (LAC) in the care of the local authority.

6.2 Domestic violence

A child or young person affected by domestic violence may be more vulnerable to CSE for a number of reasons. The child or young person may suffer from lower self esteem, in turn increasing their vulnerability to CSE, or he/she may seek means of escape from the home and end up in situations or relationships where sexual exploitation can occur. Research for the Office of the Children's Commissioner also found that in some instances of CSE where there was also domestic abuse, the family member was directly involved in the sexual exploitation of the victim – for example, where perpetrators of domestic violence were also sexually exploiting children in the household.

6.3 Children looked after

- Research has shown that a disproportionate number of looked after children are more vulnerable to sexual exploitation. This was also a significant issue in the recent Inquiry into Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham,

which found that some children become exposed to exploitation when they first became looked after, while for others who were already at risk, the risk was increased.

- In some instances, this is associated with the targeting of residential children's homes by perpetrators, and by the peer influencing that can take place within residential care homes for looked after children. Research has suggested that children placed in residential care are 4.5 times more likely to be sexually exploited
- In other instances, the risk of sexual exploitation is associated with being away from home and the other vulnerabilities associated with being in care, such as a chaotic family background, low self-confidence and friendships with other vulnerable young people.
- Of particular concern is young people who go missing from care. Evidence from serious case reviews, inquiries, prosecutions and research illustrates an increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation among children who go missing from care. Episodes of going missing may be the occasions where victims meet or become close to perpetrators. Engaging with young people after they have gone missing to find out why they went missing is therefore an essential component of assessing and managing risk.

7.0 Southwark's action on CSE

7.1 There has been increasing activity to tackle CSE in Southwark for a number of years. It is currently a priority for the Safeguarding Board to develop and strengthen current arrangements.

7.2 Governance and strategy:

7.2.1 Southwark's Safeguarding Children Board established a Task-and-Finish group in January 2013 to look at the issue of CSE in the borough. This group was formally incorporated as a subgroup to the Board in 2014.

7.2.2 The subgroup is currently writing a multi-agency strategy to tackle CSE, which is appended in draft form to this report. It's core intentions are to:

1. Prevent CSE
2. Build intelligence of CSE and understand how it manifests itself locally
3. Provide timely support to victims
4. Disrupt perpetrators
5. Prosecute perpetrators

7.2.3 The Board has sought feedback from young people on the draft strategy, who emphasised the need to focus on raising awareness in communities. It was clear from the feedback obtained from young people that victims often do not recognise themselves as victims of CSE, nor the risks to which they might be exposing themselves. They emphasised that raising awareness among young people about what CSE is will be very important, and called for greater emphasis of the issue within school PHSE curricula.

7.2.4 The CSE subgroup has also studied in detail the lessons of the Rotherham Inquiry to ensure its strategy benefits from this opportunity to learn from mistakes elsewhere. Key elements of this learning include:

1. The importance of good fundamentals in social work practice: low vacancy rates and timely, robust assessments of risk and impactful supervision.
 2. The need for a clear, focussed strategy – and the importance of checking that the strategy is proving to be effective
 3. Child-centred practice which understands the child as the victim of CSE, not as responsible for it, and which provides a clear route to help for all children and young people regardless of gender or ethnicity
 4. The importance of an open organisational culture which hears the voices of children and young people and which values the contributions of different types of services
 5. The need for bold engagement and communication with communities which does not evade sensitive issues of faith and ethnicity, where relevant
- 7.2.5 Southwark Safeguarding Children Board's training programme included two multi-agency dedicated courses on CSE in 2013-14, with three scheduled for 2014-15, of which one has already taken place. All training is subject to the Board's quality assurance process.
- 7.2.6 The Board intends to initiate specific work with faith communities on the issue, and this will form part of the forthcoming strategy, particularly following feedback from children and young people. The Teenage Pregnancy commission was particularly successful in engaging mosques and churches its prevention agenda, and future work on CSE will aim to build on this success. The CSE subgroup is aware of innovative practice elsewhere in England involving the development of CSE protocols in places of worship. There is voluntary sector representation on the CSE subgroup.
- 7.3 Operational work
- 7.3.1 In 2007, in advance of major political and media focus on the issue of CSE, Southwark established a Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel. This panel meets on a monthly basis, and enables professionals from a variety of agencies to share information on individual cases and make recommendations for action. The social worker responsible for the case also attends the panel.
- 7.3.2 The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), which went live in September 2013, is a team of professionals from over 14 agencies who are co-located (in some cases virtually) in order to share information about cases where there is concern about the welfare of a child. All referrals to children's social care are now diverted to the MASH, so that relevant professionals can feed-in the information they hold about a child or family. This enables a better understanding of risk and enables more informed decision-making in terms of next steps. A detective constable has joined the Southwark MASH from the Metropolitan Police with specific responsibility for CSE and recording of cases. Alongside safeguarding and child protection procedures overseen by social workers, all incoming referrals relating to CSE or possible CSE are now recorded and monitored by MASH, so that a clearer, evidence-based picture can be built of CSE locally. This is consistent with the Metropolitan Police's Pan-London Protocol for CSE, which is being embedded in Southwark.
- 7.3.3 Officers from a variety of agencies including health, social care and troubled families contributed to the identification of a cohort of young people known to be victims to CSE or thought to be at risk of CSE. This exercise, involving a risk assessment of each case, has informed local strategy and planning. The

indications are that CSE in Southwark tends to be, but not exclusively, associated with young adult males who are connected to other criminality and who exploit younger girls for criminal and sexual gain

- 7.3.4 Building on the successful local model of working to tackle gang culture, a regular Tasking and Intelligence meeting takes place, attended by key representatives from the MASE (see 6.3.1), the Police's Child Abuse Investigation Team, Health and Community Safety, in order to share intelligence and undertake strategic analysis of the profile and characteristics of CSE in the borough. T
- 7.3.5 A contract is being let to appoint 2 CSE caseworkers for a period of nine months in order to provide 1:1 support to victims of CSE.
- 7.3.6 A contract has been let to St Christopher's, a children's charity, to conduct return-to-home interviews with children who go missing. This is a cohort widely accepted to be at higher risk of CSE and understanding the causes and nature of missing episodes

7.4 Next steps

- 7.4.1 Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) aims to finalise its strategy in December 2014, building on input from children and young people and embedding learning from cases in Rotherham and elsewhere
- 7.4.2 The SSCB will develop a plan for evaluating the impact of the strategy, such as through a programme of audits
- 7.4.3 The council plans to appoint a CSE Coordinator to oversee implementation of the strategy and liaise with key partner agencies
- 7.4.4 Work will continue to embed key processes associated with the Pan-London Protocol for CSE, on the back of which more sophisticated analysis of the profile of CSE locally will take place.

APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Southwark Safeguarding Children Board Draft Sexual Exploitation Strategy

AUDIT TRAIL

Cabinet Member	Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools
Lead Officer	Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care
Report Author	Oliver Hopwood, Principal Strategy Officer, Children's & Adults' Services
Version	Final

Dated	6 October 2014	
Key Decision?	No	
CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER		
Officer Title	Comments Sought	Comments Included
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
Cabinet Member	Yes	Yes
Date final report sent to Constitutional Team	6/10/2014	