

<b>Item No.</b> 9.	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 18 November 2014	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Cabinet
<b>Report title:</b>		Report on Child Sexual Exploitation and Safeguarding Board's Strategy	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Cabinet Member:</b>		Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	

## **FOREWORD – COUNCILLOR VICTORIA MILLS, CABINET MEMBER FOR CHILDREN AND SCHOOLS**

Safeguarding remains a top priority for the council and its partners represented on the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB).

This is a joint report from Social Care and the SSCB. I welcome the SSCB's decision to maintain its focus on tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) throughout this year. I look forward to the multi-agency strategy on CSE being finalised but am pleased that much has been put in place regarding CSE in the meantime.

The strategy seeks to prevent CSE; build intelligence about CSE in Southwark; support and protect victims; disrupt and prosecute offenders. Key to the success of the strategy will be a robust approach to training, awareness-raising in the community and strong casework by the Police, council and partners.

A multi-agency approach to tackling CSE is required. The council has a key role in leading the development of that strategy and in the safeguarding of vulnerable children and young people.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

### **Recommendation for the Cabinet**

1. That the cabinet receives this report, noting the recommendations from the education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee and provides its comment regarding the development of the Southwark Safeguarding Board's multi-agency CSE Strategy (attached in Appendix 1).

### **Recommendation for the Leader of the Council**

2. That the cabinet member for children and schools reports back to the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board in December 2014 regarding cabinet's discussion of the draft CSE Strategy.

## **BACKGROUND INFORMATION**

3. Cabinet requested a full report on child sexual exploitation (CSE) in order to review progress on the establishment of a local strategy to tackle the issue, and in order to discuss the multi-agency action plan. This report is co-authored by the director of children's social care and the Independent Chair of the Southwark

Safeguarding Children Board.

4. The education and children's services scrutiny sub-committee scrutinised Southwark Safeguarding Children's Board's draft CSE Strategy in October 2014. The committee has developed twelve specific recommendations which are being brought to the attention of the cabinet.

## **KEY ISSUES FOR CONSIDERATION**

### **Policy Context**

5. 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
6. 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.

### **Definition**

7. 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)
  - 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".

### **The occurrence of CSE**

8. 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.

9. Research carried out by Barnardo's in 2011 identified three broad categories of CSE. These were:

1	<b>Inappropriate relationships</b>	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	<b>'Boyfriend' model and peer exploitation</b>	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	<b>Organised / networked CSE and trafficking</b>	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.

10. 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.
11. There is, however, a link between CSE and the trafficking of children. In some cases, children will be trafficked into the UK and/or around the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation or prostitution – as well as cheap labour, servitude and criminal activity. Professionals must be aware that children may be forcefully removed from one borough to be sexually exploited elsewhere. Trafficked children often go missing - even after they have come into care, with national data showing that most go missing within one week of becoming looked after. In cases involving trafficked children, social workers are required to work with the UK Human Trafficking Centre and specialist immigration staff.
12. 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, genuine or harmless.
13. 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. 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.

14. The Metropolitan Police use a range of legislation to prosecute individual perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation.

**Groups of children and young people vulnerable to CSE:**

15. 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 are often vulnerable in other ways and 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.

16. 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. A service to conduct 'return interviews' has been commissioned specifically for this purpose.

**Southwark's action on CSE**

17. In anticipation of the adoption of the multi-agency strategy, much is already being done across the Council and partner organisations to tackle CSE locally. This has included:

- Southwark Council has operated Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Panel since 2007. 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.

- 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, the Metropolitan 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
- The Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub, in operation since 2013, maintains a single record of all cases *suspected* CSE. All referrals into Social Care are routed via the MASH so that local agencies can share information they hold and enable social workers to make more informed decisions about risk. A detective constable has joined the Southwark MASH from the Metropolitan Police with specific responsibility for CSE and recording of cases, as is consistent with the Metropolitan Police's Pan London Protocol for CSE
- Two specialist CSE caseworkers have been commissioned in order to provide 1:1 support to victims of CSE. These caseworkers receive referrals from the MASE panel
- A specialist children's charity has been commissioned 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 will be key to identifying victims of and those at risk of CSE. This is consistent with the revised multi-agency Protocol for children who go missing from home, school or care, which aims to ensure a robust response to missing episodes.
- Southwark Safeguarding Children Board's training programme includes specific training on CSE, with three further courses scheduled during this financial year. Other training provided by the Board also covers CSE. All training is subject to the Board's quality assurance process.

### **Strategy development**

18. 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.
19. The subgroup is currently writing a multi-agency strategy to tackle CSE, which is appended in draft form to this report. Its 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
20. 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
21. The partnership is involved in a peer review exercise along with other London Boroughs in November/December 2014 to identify good relevant practice and priorities for further development regarding CSE.
22. 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.

### **Consultation**

23. The Safeguarding 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.
24. Partner agencies have provided further feedback through discussion of the draft Strategy in the September meeting of the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board. The Board noted the need for robust measures to raise awareness and the importance of incorporating lessons from the Rotherham Inquiry into CSE.

### **Community impact statement**

25. The relationship between vulnerability and the risk of sexual exploitation has been widely evidenced. The approach taken by the council and its partners to tackle child sexual exploitation will therefore affect some of the borough's most vulnerable residents, including those who are children looked after. The council has a duty to protect and promote the welfare of all children and young people, and this SSBC draft strategy sets out how the council will work with partner agencies to prevent CSE and protect those who are victims of it. Any child under 18, regardless of gender, ethnicity, sexuality or disability, can be a victim of CSE and the draft strategy's principles apply across all communities. Ensuring that the strategy is effective for all groups will form an important element of its ongoing evaluation.

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Background Papers	Held At	Contact
Metropolitan Police Pan London Protocol for CSE	<a href="#">MPS website</a>	
Education and Children's Scrutiny Sub-Committee agenda papers and minutes of the meeting held 15 October 2014		Julie Timbrell, Scrutiny Team
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=380&amp;MId=4952&amp;Ver=4">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=380&amp;MId=4952&amp;Ver=4</a>		
If Only Someone Had Listened: Children's Commissioner's Report into CSE in Gangs and Groups (Office of the Children's Commissioner)		
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743">http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743</a>		
Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013 (Jay, A.)		
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham">http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham</a>		
Working with children and young people who experience running away and child sexual exploitation: An evidence-based guide for practitioners (Barnardo's)		
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://www.barnardos.org.uk/CSE_practitioners_guide_v2_hr.pdf">http://www.barnardos.org.uk/CSE_practitioners_guide_v2_hr.pdf</a>		
Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care		
<b>Link:</b> <a href="https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf">https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf</a>		
Southwark Safeguarding Children Board: Annual Report 2013-14		
<b>Link:</b> <a href="http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s49348/Appendix%201%20Annual%20report.pdf">http://moderngov.southwark.gov.uk/documents/s49348/Appendix%201%20Annual%20report.pdf</a>		

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
Appendix 1	Draft CSE Strategy

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Director of Children's Social Care Michael O'Connor, Independent Chair, Southwark Safeguarding Children Board	
<b>Report Authors</b>	Oliver Hopwood, Principal Strategy Officer	
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<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>	<b>Comments Included</b>
Director of Legal Services	No	No
Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No	No
<b>Cabinet Member</b>	No	No
<b>Date final report sent to Constitutional Team</b>	6 November 2014	