

<b>Item No.</b> 7	<b>Classification:</b> Open	<b>Date:</b> 24 November 2014	<b>Meeting Name:</b> Education & Children's Services Scrutiny Sub- Committee
<b>Report title:</b>		Children and Young People: views on draft SSCB CSE strategy	
<b>Ward(s) or groups affected:</b>		All	
<b>Report from:</b>		Southwark Safeguarding Children Board	

## **1.0 Background**

- 1.1 Following its meeting on 15 October, the Education and Children's Services Scrutiny Sub-Committee requested a short description of any work done to date with young people on the Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy.
- 1.2 The CSE strategy is being developed by Southwark Safeguarding Children Board and its dedicated CSE subgroup.

## **2.0 Work to date**

- 2.1 In summer 2014 a Child Engagement Subgroup was set up at the request of the Independent Chair of Southwark Safeguarding Children Board.
- 2.2 Members of this subgroup are drawn from the local community and from a variety of services for children and young people. The subgroup is supported by officers from services provided by Southwark Council.
- 2.3 The purpose of the subgroup is to serve as a means for the Southwark Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) to engage with young people, identify insights relevant to the Board's priority areas of work, and understand issues from the perspective of children and young people. In these ways, the SSCB intends that its priorities will be influenced by what local children and young people say about their lives.
- 2.4 An early focus for this subgroup was the sexual exploitation of children and young people. A series of workshops and sessions were held over Summer 2014 to explore CSE as an issue, including awareness and existing understandings. This included spoken word exercises, an ethnographic focus group and the discussion of CSE-related scenarios. This workstream provided an indication for the Board regarding awareness and understandings of CSE among young people in Southwark today.
- 2.5 This work built on a previous project in 2013, whereby young people from the 'Speakerbox' Children in Care Council made a short video for the SSCB, in which young people directly asked the Safeguarding Board to be protected, and for work on 'healthy relationships' to be a priority.

- 2.6 Young people from the subgroup attended the meeting of Southwark Safeguarding Children Board in September 2014 in order to feed back directly to senior representatives from the council and partner agencies. Their feedback challenged the Board to:
- Strengthen the awareness-raising element of the strategy, to ensure that CSE is fully integrated within PSHE curricula in schools, as many young people do not understand CSE and what constitutes CSE
  - Consider social media platforms as a means of communicating with young people
  - Include local businesses in efforts to keep young people safe
  - Ensure that arrangements to keep young people safe who go missing are strong and effective
  - Provide help and support to victims and ensure that young people are shielded from subsequent exploitation
  - Consider the role of the wider community in stamping out sexual exploitation

### 3.0 Young people and their understandings of CSE across England




- 3.1 Various work has taken place both within specific localities and nationally by reputable charities and the Office of the Children's Commissioner, to understand prevailing attitudes among young people regarding CSE: what do they understand CSE to be? In what ways is it wrong? What makes young people vulnerable or safe?
- 3.2 These pieces of work have consistently highlighted similar insights around the following issues:
- i. **Understanding:** young people are not familiar with the term 'child sexual exploitation' and do not always understand the ways in which (a) perpetrator(s) is abusing the victim.
  - ii. **Victims** of CSE often do not recognise themselves as victims – and may therefore resist offers of support and opportunities to share details of abusers
  - iii. **Gender** plays a role in understandings of and manifestation of sexual abuse and sexual exploitation among young people. Specifically, sexual activity can be a source of status within groups and gangs for young males, whereas young women are harmed or judged for sexual activity.
  - iv. **Blame:** young women are frequently blamed for the harm they experience, with some young males in research thinking that victims 'ask for it' or 'deserve it'.
  - v. **Normalisation of sexual violence:** in some communities, young people assume that sexual violence is inevitable and something that young people have gotten used to
- 3.3 These insights help to crystallise the challenges in raising awareness among young people and emphasise the need for direct work with young people in early adolescence.
- 3.4 A specific strand in the draft CSE Action Plan, appended to the draft Strategy, is dedicated to raising awareness with young people in schools, faith and community settings.
- 3.5 Ongoing engagement with young people who are victims or at risk of sexual

exploitation will be important in developing our multi-agency response. This will include analysis of return interviews with those who go missing and engagement via dedicated CSE caseworkers, who are skilled and experienced in working with young people on this issue.

## APPENDICES

No.	Title
None	

## BACKGROUND DOCUMENTS

Document
 <a href="#">"Sex without consent, I suppose that is rape": How young people in England understand sexual consent</a> , Office of the Children's Commissioner
 <a href="#">It's wrong but you get used to it</a> , Office of the Children's Commissioner
 <a href="#">Child Sexual Expolitation Inquiry interim report - I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world</a> , Office of the Children's Commissioner
'Real voices: Child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester. An independent report by Ann Coffey MP <a href="http://anncoffeymp.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Real-Voices-Final.pdf">http://anncoffeymp.com/wp-content/uploads/2014/10/Real-Voices-Final.pdf</a>

## AUDIT TRAIL

<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Councillor Victoria Mills, Children and Schools	
<b>Lead Officer</b>	Rory Patterson, Chair, CSE Subgroup and Director, Children's Social Care	
<b>Report Author</b>	Oliver Hopwood, Principal Strategy Officer, Children's & Adults' Services	
<b>Version</b>	Final	
<b>Dated</b>	13 November 2014	
<b>Key Decision?</b>	N/A	
<b>CONSULTATION WITH OTHER OFFICERS / DIRECTORATES / CABINET MEMBER</b>		
	<b>Officer Title</b>	<b>Comments Sought</b>
	Director of Legal Services	No
	Strategic Director of Finance and Corporate Services	No
	<b>Cabinet Member</b>	Yes
	<b>Date final report sent to the Scrutiny Team</b>	13 November 2014