Safeguarding Children and Young People From Child Sexual Exploitation

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Child Sexual Abuse – The Children's Commissioner

Preparing Children for court

AMENDMENT

In March 2018 this chapter was extensively updated and should be re-read in its entirety.

Note: the appendices below are Warwickshire specific guidance, tools and referral pathways.
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1. Introduction

The purpose of this guidance is to assist professionals to understand child sexual exploitation (CSE) and how they can support and safeguard children and young people who are identified as victims of or at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a national threat that transcends geographical boundaries and challenges our safeguarding response. These procedures will assist professionals to identify and respond where there is a concern that children and young people are victims of or at risk of CSE. It is important that professionals understand the impact of child sexual exploitation and are able to:

- Recognise the indicators of child sexual exploitation;
- Prevent children and young people from becoming victims of exploitation;
- Assess the risk a child or young person may face;
- Work with children and young people who are victims of or at risk of sexual exploitation;
- Support Police to take action against perpetrators; and disrupt locations where children are targeted.
- Know who to contact for advice;
- Know how to make a referral to the appropriate services.

It is vital that professionals recognise the importance of recording their concerns and pass these to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub and/or named contact within their organisation. Information about the circumstances and people involved will contribute to Police intelligence, and at a later stage may also contribute to the successful prosecution of people who sexually exploit children and young people.

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) promotes a multi-agency approach which emphasises the need to:

- Safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people;
• Work together in an integrated way to provide children and young people with support to safeguard them from sexual exploitation;

• Investigate and prosecute those who coerce, exploit and abuse children and young people in this way.

This procedure should be read in conjunction with Child Sexual Exploitation; Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from Child Sexual Exploitation (Department for Education, 2017) and Working Together to Safeguard Children.

2. Definition

Government Guidance Child Sexual Exploitation: A guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (Department for Education 2017); defines child sexual exploitation as:

“Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

• Can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex.
• Can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual.
• Can include both contact (penetrative and non–penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity.
• Can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both.
• Can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence.

• May occur without the child or young person’s immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media for example).

• Can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents overtime, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse.

• CSE is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status and access to economic or other resources.

It is vital to recognise that children and young people do not have a “free choice”. Their age social, economic and emotional vulnerability is being exploited. All children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

**Legislation and the Law**

CSE is not a specific criminal offence. It encompasses a range of different forms of serious criminal conduct and a number of individual offences. CSE investigations require a proactive approach to explore the nature and patterns of sexual exploitation locally, and to share information with partner agencies about those at risk and potential offenders.

Professionals should also have due regard to relevant legislation that is pertinent to children and young people and sexual activity.

The **Sexual Offences Act 2003** introduced a range of offences that recognised the grooming, coercion and control of children.

• **Section 14** arranging or facilitating the commission of a child sex offence (child under 16)
- **Section 15** meeting a child following sexual grooming (child under 16) – amended by The Criminal Justice and Courts Act 2015
- **Section 47** sexual exploitation of children
- **section 48** causing or inciting sexual exploitation of a child
- **Section 49** controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation
- **Section 50** arranging or facilitating sexual exploitation of a child

**Section 2 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015** creates new offences relating to trafficking into, within or out of the UK for sexual exploitation. For more details regarding trafficking, refer to the trafficking procedures.

**Consent for sexual activity.**

A child under the age of 13 years cannot consent to sexual activity. A defendant’s belief that the child was over the age of 13 years or 16 is not legal defence. Equally if a young person is 16 or 17, the fact that they have reached the legal age to consent to sex should not be taken as a sign that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. These young people are defined as children under the **Children Act 1989** and **2004**, and they can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation. Their right to support and protection from harm should not, therefore, be ignored or downgraded by services because they are over the age of 16, or are no longer in mainstream education.

In addition to above, consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13-15 years as to whether there should be a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to Children’s Social Work Services. Professionals should consider whether a young person is at risk or may be suffering sexual exploitation.

Careful consideration should be given to whether relationships which are presented as consensual by children or young people actually are, or whether exploitation is taking place. Professionals should be alert to the ways in which perpetrators can operate, especially where there is a large age-gap between the individuals involved. Many sexually exploited young people have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices about sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities they are coerced into. This potential confusion should be handled with care and sensitivity by professionals.
3. Principles

Warwickshire Safeguarding Children’s Board approach is to ensure an effective and child centred approach is taken to child sexual exploitation. This means ensuring that practitioners build enduring relationships and listening to young people to enable them to trust professionals are key to our approach. Young people need stability, continuity, and persistence. Therefore, support needs to be flexible and highly intensive.

There is often a complex interplay of systems in addressing vulnerability; a core challenge is the need to hold the tension between children’s right to safety and protection and their right to participate in making decisions that affect them. It is important that the young person feels they have been heard and are part of the safety planning.

Intervention with young people needs to be trauma informed and abuse informed interventions are usually longer and trauma may be the root cause of young people’s health, mental health or behaviour problems. Practitioners need to take a strength based approach to focus on building resilience alongside reducing risk.

In addition the Warwickshire Safeguarding Children’s Board also strongly advocate the following principles which are reflected within the Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Strategy 2017-2020. These include:

- An integrated multi agency approach where information is shared across agencies to protect and support children and young people.
- To prevent children and young people being exploited through the provision of services and understanding the local profile which enables early identification and early intervention.
- Young people over the age of 16 are still defined as children under the Children Act, 1989 and 2004. They can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation and their right to support and protection should not be ignored nor will their need for services.
- Sexually exploited children and young people should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders. The primary law enforcement effort must be made against the coercers and adults who sexually exploit young people.

Integrating Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) Risk Discussion

Following feedback from young people and professionals, Warwickshire’s approach is to one meeting and one plan for the child/young person. This means that whatever the level of intervention, one plan should be developed which integrates the concerns around child sexual exploitation. Therefore the one meeting and one plan will encompass all of the relevant requirements/actions/interventions and desired outcomes and which is then regularly reviewed by the relevant multi-agency professionals with the family working closely together.
4. Indicators of Risk and Preventing Sexual Exploitation

4.1 Risk Indicators

Child sexual exploitation can occur to any child, in any community. It occurs across the country but is often hidden so prevalence data is hard to ascertain. However, areas proactively looking for child sexual exploitation are uncovering a problem. All practitioners should be open to the possibility that the children they work with might be affected.

Children’s age, gender and ethnicity are not indicators to increased likelihood of sexual exploitation. Children aged 12-15 are most at risk but children as young as 8 years old have been identified as being exploited online. Practitioners should be alert that boys may be less likely than females to disclose experiences of child sexual exploitation and less likely to have those identified by others. Child sexual exploitation affects all ethnic groups.

Children do not see themselves as victims and adolescents are sometimes mistakenly seen as more resilient. Research is clear that they may be more likely to be blamed for contributing to and exacerbating risk. This fails to account for the interconnected nature of adolescent vulnerability and that young people are groomed and do not have choice due to the power imbalance.

The earlier that sexual exploitation, or a risk of sexual exploitation, can be identified, the more likely it is that harm to a child or young person can be minimised or prevented. The Warwickshire Safeguarding Board have made the decision to not endorse the use of a CSE Screening Tool, as there is no definitive list or checklist for any abuse suffered by a child or young people. Some children who are sexually exploited/ abuse will display no obvious indicators of risk. There are heightened vulnerability factors which practitioners should be aware about. Primarily practitioners should remember that no child is immune from the threat of child sexual exploitation. All children require a practitioner to make a holistic assessment of vulnerability, examining risk and protective factors. Whether singly or in combination, indicators should be viewed as conclusive proof of involvement in sexual exploitation, but a combination of them may be taken as suggestive of the
possibility. The facts or each child or young person should be considered separately. These factors are intended as a guide have been provided by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner (OCC) which highlights the following warning signs and risk indicators.

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality).
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of ‘honour’-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect).
- Recent bereavement or loss.
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang associated CSE only).
- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Learning disabilities.
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families.
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Homeless.
- Lacking friends from the same age group.
- Living in a gang neighbourhood.
- Living in residential care.
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer.
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Young carer.

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited.

- Missing from home or care.
- Physical injuries.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Involvement in offending.
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- Absent from school.
- Change in physical appearance.
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites.
- Estranged from their family.
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources.
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations.
- Poor mental health.
- Self-harm.
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

When making an assessment of the circumstances and the possible risks regarding a child/young person the professional should also consider:

- The age of the child. Sexual activity at a young age is a very strong indicator that there are risks to the welfare of the child (whether boy/girl) and possibly others.
- The level of maturity and understanding of the child.
- What is known about the child’s living circumstances or background.
- Age imbalance, in particular where there is a significant age difference.
- Overt aggression or power imbalance.
- Coercion or bribery.
- Familial child sex offences.
- Behaviour of the child i.e. withdrawn, anxious.
- The misuse of substances as a mechanism to cause disinhibition.
- Whether the child’s misuse of substances places him/her at risk of suffering harm so that he/she is unable to make an informed choice about any activity.
- Whether any attempts to secure secrecy have been made by the sexual partner what would be considered unusual in a teenage relationship.
- Whether the child denies, minimises or accepts concerns.
- Whether the methods used are consistent with grooming.
- Whether the sexual partner/s is known by one of the agencies.
- The child/young person’s understanding of consent.

The forming of a close relationship with an older boyfriend, or female ‘friend’ who may in fact be or become a coercer; Adults who exploit young people in this way are adept at the ‘grooming’ process and target those who are vulnerable. They may offer them the affection they crave and / or material gifts; they may introduce them to drugs / alcohol and inspire intense loyalty. Parents and social workers may find that convincing the young person to return home or to end the relationship is extremely difficult to achieve. The young person often does not view themselves as a victim and may not be prepared to make any complaint to the police, for example if it is thought that unlawful sexual intercourse is taking place between the young person and the older male.

The fact that a young person is 16 or 17 should not be taken as a sign that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. Young people of this age are still covered by statutory duties under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and they can still be subject to significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation. Their needs must not be ignored or de-prioritised by services.

4.2 Boys and young men.

The risk of boys and young men becoming victims of sexual exploitation by both male and female offenders is underestimated and less well understood than those relating to girls and young women. Boys and young men also face additional barriers to disclosing their experience because they may be coerced into engaging in heterosexual and homosexual sexual activity (even if they identify their sexuality as heterosexual) as part of their abuse. Barriers include:

- fearing that their sexuality/masculinity will be questioned
- being perceived as being gay when they are not
- worrying that they will not be believed
- not perceiving themselves as a victim because their abuser is female.
The building or a trusting and safe relationship with all young people will support and enable them to overcome these and other barriers but this can take time and patience.

4.3 Specific Risks Associated with Computers and Mobile Phones

There is an increased use of technology to groom and exploit children and young people. Below are some indicators which practitioners and parents/carers may observe which may indicate children and young people are at risk of being exploited online or are being sexually exploited:

- Spending increasing amount of time on social networking sites;
- Accessing dating agencies via mobile phones;
- Unexplained increased mobile phone / gaming credits;
- New contacts with people outside of town;
- Spending increasing amount of time with online friends and less time with friends from school or neighbourhood;
- Increased time on web cam,
- Going online during the night;
- Being secretive using mobile phone for accessing mobiles, tablets or computers;
- Unwilling to share / show online contacts;
- Concerns that a young person’s online friendship has developed into an offline relationship;
- Concern that inappropriate images of a young person are being circulated via the internet / phones;
- Arranging to meet people they have met on line;
- Receiving gifts through the post from someone the young person does not know;
• Concern that a young person is being coerced to provide images;

• Concerned that a young person is being bribed by someone for their inappropriate online activity;

• Concern that a young person is being drawn into providing increasingly provocative / sexualised images in exchange for payment;

• Concern that a young person is selling sexual services via the Internet;

• Being bullied / threatened, pressured.

Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported by practitioners to ensure appropriate parental controls are implemented for children to protect them when they are online and using technology.
5. Taking Action if you are concerned about a Child or Young Person

If you are concerned that a child or young person is at risk, or is being sexually exploited you should always contact the Police or the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to make a referral.

5.1 Seeking Advice

Professionals, or parents / carers, can seek advice from the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on telephone number 01926 414144. Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/MASH

5.2 Making a Referral to Children’s Social Care

Any practitioner who is concerned or receives information, that a child or young person is involved in sexual exploitation, should make a referral to the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) on telephone number 01926 414144. Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/MASH

5.3 Victims of child sexual exploitation

If you have been a victim of child sexual exploitation or are concerned about someone who is please contact:

Warwickshire Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Trafficking Team

Telephone: 01926 742226

Website: www.warwickshirecse.co.uk

Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

Telephone: 01926 414144

Website: www.warwickshire.gov.uk/MASH

Call the police on 101 (always call 999 in an emergency).
5.4 Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Multi-Agency Assessment Framework

The Warwickshire Safeguarding Children Board Assessment Framework should be used by multi-agency practitioners, to identify the needs of a child/young person who may be vulnerable to being sexually exploited, is being groomed or targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation or is being sexually exploited. The document will also support multi-agency practitioners to identify concerns and appropriate intervention(s) for the child and their family.

When completing the assessment the practitioner should use their professional opinion and judgement to determine whether on the balance of probability if they assess the risk of harm to the child as being:

- CSE is currently not a factor at this time and concerns relate to age appropriate behaviours;
- There is evidence of the child being vulnerable to sexual exploitation;
- There is evidence of the child being groomed or targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation;
- There is evidence the child is being sexually exploited.

If multi agency practitioners have concerns after completing the assessment framework for children who do not have social care involvement, a referral to the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) should be made. A copy of the assessment framework should be included with the Multi-Agency Referral Form (MARF).
5.5 National Working Group (NWG) - Child (Sexual) Exploitation Assessment Tool

The National Working Group (NWG) Child Sexual Exploitation Assessment Tool is being endorsed by the Warwickshire Safeguarding Board, see appendix 4. Designed to identify the needs of a child/young person who may be vulnerable to being sexually exploited, may be being groomed for the purposes of sexual exploitation or who may have been sexually exploited.

The Warwickshire and NWG Child Sexual Exploitation Assessment Tool should be completed whenever Social Care is concerned a child may be at risk of sexual exploitation.

When completing the assessment the practitioner should use their professional opinion and judgement to determine whether on the balance of probability if they assess the risk of harm to the child as being:

- CSE is currently not a factor at this time and concerns relate to age appropriate behaviours;
- There is evidence of the child being vulnerable to sexual exploitation;
- There is evidence of the child being groomed or targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation;
- There is evidence the child is being sexually exploited.

A copy of the assessment should be recorded upon the child’s records; both the child/young person and the parent’s views should be recorded and a copy of the assessment should be shared with the child/young person and parent, as appropriate.

A copy of the completed assessment should be shared with the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team by emailing the below email address to consider further actions.

childsexualexploitationteam@warwickshire.gov.uk
5.6 Police Intelligence Form

The CSE Information Sharing Form (see appendix 2) enables anyone to provide information about perpetrators and concerns of Child Sexual Exploitation occurring. This information is gathered and used to enable police and partners to build a picture of such exploitation taking place and take action to address it. It is particularly useful in situations where there may be no evidence available, the information is unknown or the victim is either unwilling or unable to provide a police statement. Therefore, the opportunity to provide intelligence could potentially intercept and disrupt criminal activity where young people are being exploited.

Completed forms should be sent to cse.east@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk

5.7 The Role of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

When a professional, parent, or another person contacts Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) with concerns that a child or young person is being sexually exploited, the concerns will be triaged and shared with police and the Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing and Trafficking Team. The referrer should be informed of the decision taken and any proposed action by the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). If no feedback is received, the referrer should contact them to follow up on the outcome.

6. Action Following a Referral

As in all cases of suspected abuse and neglect, the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) should respond by making a decision within 24 hours. This should take into account all the available information. Actions may include:

- Early help
- Child Assessment.

Where a presenting contact or referral has concerns about child sexual exploitation this will normally lead to an assessment by a social worker.
6.1 CSE Assessment

Where a social work assessment identifies concerns, there needs to be a multi-agency discussion about how best to protect the child or young person. The social worker, in partnership with other involved professionals, will complete a Child’s Single Assessment. The information collated in the single assessment should facilitate an analysis of the child / young person’s needs and highlight the risks in respect sexual exploitation and should focus on the effects upon the child or young person’s wellbeing.

In order to contribute to the assessment, where there are concerns about child sexual exploitation the Social Worker should complete the NWG CSE Assessment which should take a holistic view of the child’s circumstances examining risk and protective factors and addressing the child’s needs within their family/living environment, their peer group, education and wider community and consider the impact on the child’s lived experiences. Assessment should be underpinned by professional curiosity and not simply rely on checklists, disclosures or what is or is not known.

The assessment should actively and meaningfully engage the child/young person and the parents within the assessment and be focussed on outcomes rather than a process. In order to ensure that an effective assessment of the child’s circumstances takes place, it should therefore be an ongoing process.

The assessment should seek to understand the unique needs of the child and the young person, consider parental capacity to protect and consider how external factors such as push/pull or grooming can undermine or cause a breakdown in the protective capacity of parents. The purpose of the assessment is to:

- Establish the seriousness of the exploitation;
- Gather information to assist the police in the identification and prosecution of offenders; and
- Implement the strategy agreed to assist the person to exit sexual exploitation safely and successfully.
It may be that after the Child’s Assessment the Social Worker needs to progress to Section 47 Enquiries under Children Act 1989. This could be established after the Child’s Assessment and or as a result of the Strategy Meeting.

As part of the Child’s assessment process Social Work practitioners should take into account the following when they believe a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation:

- The age of the child. Sexual activity at a young age is a very strong indicator that there are risks to the welfare of the child and possibly others;
- The level of maturity and understanding of the child;
- What is known about the child’s living circumstances or background;
- Age imbalance in relationships with others;
- Change in friendship groups;
- Overt aggression or power imbalance in relationships;
- Grooming, Coercion or bribery indicators;
- Familial child sex offences;
- Behavioural changes in the child;
- The misuse of substances.

Discussion should also take place in relation to informing the parents/carers as to the level of their child’s involvement and the source of the referral and parental and child’s views must be gained as part of the completion of the tool

The assessment should also gather information linked to perpetrators/suspects and also where possible identify risky locations. A 2013 study conducted by the NWG Network, If you Shine a Light you will probably find it, identified locations where young people congregate or can be easily accessed by offenders.
These include:

- shopping centres
- arcades
- cafés
- areas with no parental supervision
- take-away food outlets
- sheesha (hookah) bars
- alcohol outlets (including corner shops with liquor licences)
- pubs/clubs/hotels
- public parks
- car parks
- public transport hubs
- hotels
- taxi ranks.

This is not an exhaustive list. Depending on the type of exploitation, different locations may apply.

6.2 Integrated Meetings to assess and manage risk.

Key to Warwickshire's approach is the integration of meetings and interventions. Rather than having separate multi agency meetings, we aim to integrate assessment and risk discussions regarding sexual exploitation into existing meetings. In practice this means where there are concerns about sexual exploitation the MASE meeting will be integrated and combined with other meetings and called a CSE Child In Need Meeting, CSE Strategy Meeting, CSE Core Group and CSE Looked After Planning/Review meeting. This means there is no need to have two meetings, one around the general plan of intervention and another multi agency sexual exploitation MASE Meeting however the focus must be on the risk of CSE which often include risks around missing and trafficking.

The MASE section of the meetings outlined in appendix 5 will be a vehicle to complete and review risk assessments of young people, and will be a forum where professionals relevant to the young person come together with the young person and
family to share information establish concern, risk, consider the disruption and prosecution of perpetrators and develop safeguarding and support plans and work towards a recovery strategy. The meeting will complement and enhance the current process for supporting young people focusing on the child sexual exploitation and building resilience.

Young person and the parent will be invited to contribute to all the meetings outlined above to share their views with the exception of the strategy meeting however workers should consider the appropriateness of the young person’s participation in each meeting relevant to their individual circumstances and consider could be given person being invited to the relevant part of the meeting. The child’s interest are kept as top priority and their involvement ensures that they have a say in how they are being protected and cared for, acknowledging they need to be informed of any issues that affect them throughout. It also ensures that families and carers who can safeguard and support a child or young person who is at risk of or is being sexually exploited are involved in the planning and can see the support that is being offered; support is delivered through a partnership approach. Were the child/young person is looked after or subject to a child protection plan CSE should be part of the child/young person’s care planning and conference process/reviews.

Meetings may include some restricted updates from the police which the young person or the parent may not be privy too therefore consideration will need to be given around how this is managed by the individual worker and team manager.

However, where there are complex issues managers within Children’s Social Care may decide a specific meeting to consider child sexual exploitation may be helpful.

A representative from the Warwickshire multi-agency CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team should always be invited to attend any meeting where there are concerns about child sexual exploitation.
6.3 CSE Strategy Meetings

Where there are concerns regarding suspected or actual sexual exploitation, the Strategy Discussion would take place at the Strategy Meeting to determine whether the young person has suffered or likely to suffer significant harm. The focus of the meeting will be to discuss the concerns/disclosures by the young person, share and clarify information, share/gather, information about perpetrators and locations, establish risk, consider disruption and develop a multi-agency safeguarding and an integrated support plan to meet a young person’s needs who are at risk of sexual exploitation. The meeting will consider the risk and protective factors in the child’s life and agree actions to safeguard the child. The focus of the risk discussion at the end of the meeting will be around management of the risk of CSE, and the appropriate way forward in order to safeguard the child and/or young person and also around parental capacity to respond to the needs and risks.

However, there may be occasions where the Strategy Discussion is a telephone contact between the Police and Social Care prior to the Strategy Meeting, because of the need for immediate action to safeguard a child or young person. Such a discussion would always be followed by a Strategy Meeting involving professionals who are involved with the young person.

It is the role of the Initial CSE Strategy Meeting to determine the level of the risk the young person is deemed to be at as a result of sexual exploitation. There are actions set at the meeting; actions which can be taken against adults, medical examinations and achieving best evidence (ABE) interviewing, completion of the CSE assessment tool, safe care/working agreements. The meeting will also agree who the best person is to support the young person on an ongoing basis. The district team will retrain the case responsibility for managing the child protection enquiry. CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team will be part of this meeting and the discussions around risks and where appropriate, would allocate a practitioner to complete CSE related work with the young person/parent to work towards reducing the risks present.

CSE investigations are often more complex and it may take a child/young person much longer to build a relationship which then enables them to make a disclosure.
The role of the CSE team is to offer a long term intervention to the child/young person, as appropriate.

CSE Strategy Meetings are usually chaired by Children’s Social Care. The following agencies should attend the meeting:

- Social Worker;
- Police;
- Youth Worker
- School;
- Health e.g. school nurse, youth clinic;
- CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team
- Other agencies already involved with the child or relevant adult(s) (e.g. Youth Offending Services or Probation for the adult).

The Initial CSE Strategy Meeting, on a multi-agency basis, should:

- Assess the level or information received about the child or young person to decide whether or not threshold has been met for a Section 47 investigation;
- Decide if plans are required to be put in place to safeguard the child or young person; and consider any further assessments that should be completed
- Decide the feasibility of identifying and taking action against any suspected abusers.
- Decide whether support services are required for the child / young person.
- Decide whether there should be no further action.

As part of the meeting, consideration will be given to if the child or young person is not willing to make a complaint or there are concerns about their safeguarding on an ongoing basis. Therefore consideration can be given to using the Child Abduction Act 1984, Section 2. The Child Abduction Act 1984 S2 states that an offence is committed by taking or detaining a child under 16, so as to keep the child from the
lawful control of someone who has or is entitled to have, the lawful control of the child. An offence may be committed if a child goes willingly with an abductor as a result of an inducement. A child’s parent or carer can make a statement to the police stating that they do not give permission for the child to be with a particular adult. The Police have powers under this section to issue a Child Abduction Warning Notice and if breached to make an application for a Child Abduction Warning Order.

A Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN) may be issued (by a Superintendent of the police force) to a person aged 18 years or over where (a) that person has without lawful authority or reasonable excuse been found in the company of a child; and (b) the child is reported missing and is found on two or more occasions to be in the company of that person; or (c) there is reason to suspect that the child’s behaviour is, by reason of association with that person, giving significant cause for concern. The CAWN must prohibit the person from being in the company of the child; the CAWN must state that the person will be arrested should the CAWN be breached and an application for a Child Abduction Warning Order will be made within 48 hours. If a child or young person is on a Care Order (that is they are a Looked after Child), Abduction Orders apply up to the age of 18.

The strategy meeting should consider other legal action or tactics to disrupt child sexual exploitation. Some disruption methods are detailed in appendix 3.

6.4 Complex CSE Strategy Meetings

Where there is knowledge or strong suspicion that multiple children or young people are involved in sexual exploitation together, or are being controlled by the same person or a group of people, consideration should be given to implementing complex safeguarding procedures.

Where there is evidence of multiple victims or perpetrators, such concerns should be raised with a manager within the multi-agency CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team who will consider the need for a Complex CSE strategy Meeting. If there is evidence of multiple victims or perpetrators or if a situation has been given police Operational status, a Complex CSE strategy Meeting will be undertaken. A manager from Social Care within the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team will chair this meeting with attendance from Police and the district teams.
The agenda for a Complex CSE strategy meeting is outlined in appendix 6. Areas to be considered include:

- Complete detailed mapping of associations, locations/hotspots and draw together other potential victims/perpetrators.
- Co-ordinate interventions to young people, ensuring there is a consistent approach.
- Ensure there is a co-ordinated approach and allocated lead within the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team.
- Consider any additional resources which are required to help manage the investigation/operation.
- Establish and co-ordinate a community cohesion plan.
- Establish and co-ordinate a press/media strategy. Risk discussion / Analysis of information shared

- Ensure appropriate briefings to senior officers in relevant organisations are completed.

CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team will also take responsibility to chair relevant reviews and to keep the relevant practitioners up to date of progress. The strategy meeting should consider other legal action or tactics to disrupt child sexual exploitation. Some disruption methods are detailed in appendix 3.

6.5 Looked After Children

Children and young people who are Looked After by the local authority and are living in foster care or in residential care may be particularly vulnerable to being sexually exploited. Whenever concerns arise regarding a Looked after Child being at risk of being sexually exploited, the Social Worker and or Independent Reviewing Officer should discuss this with the Sexual Exploitation Team Manager if they are in any doubt after completing a CSE assessment.
In addition the following factors should be taken into account:

- Risks to other children / young people in the placement;
- Whether the child / young person should remain in their present placement;
- To establish the level of risk in order to protect the child / young person.

If the child or young person is a Looked after Child, carers should be asked to take positive action to clarify and record their suspicions.

Staff should ensure that all relevant information is recorded in their Care Plan. The Care Plan should clearly indicate the level of risk the child or young person faces as a result of sexual exploitation and how these risks can be reduced and monitored.

Some other examples of information which should be included in the child or young person’s Care Plan are listed below:

- Adults or other children and / or young people who are involved in the exploitation – names, street names, descriptions, addresses and other information;
- Cars – colour, models, registration numbers;
- Telephone calls – to and from whom, with numbers if possible;
- Missing from care episodes and locations where the child or young person has been found;
- Gifts or money that the child or young person has received;
- Injuries – including small scratches or bruises etc – location on body, colour, shape etc.

Residential care home staff can confiscate mobile phones from Looked after Children to give to the Police, if there is concern that there is an issue of child sexual exploitation. This can legally be examined by the Police as part of an investigation into crimes that may have been committed. However, the child or young person should be given another mobile phone to use until it is returned to them.
6.6 Trafficking

There are two different types of trafficking of children and young people for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Firstly, there is trafficking from abroad into the United Kingdom. The second category is internal trafficking, where children and young people are moved from one place to another in the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation. This may be from one room to another within the same property, one street to a neighbouring street, from one area of a town or city to another area, or across county borders. It is not the distance that is relevant in the definition of internal trafficking, but the movement of a child or young person for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Full consideration to trafficking must be made when completing assessments and planning intervention.

Where there are concerns about trafficking, a referral under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) framework is required for identifying victims of human trafficking and modern slavery to ensure they receive appropriate care. A range of agencies may be involved in a trafficking case including the police, the UK Border Agency (UKBA), local authorities and non-governmental organisations such as charities.

See Warwickshire Safeguarding Board Trafficking Procedures for more details.

6.7 Criminal Investigation

If a child or young person is prepared to give an Achieving Best Evidence (ABE) interview and a criminal case is brought forward the Police in conjunction with the Crown Prosecution Service should take into consideration the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999 to ensure that Special Measures are taken into account in the giving of evidence in criminal proceedings by witnesses under 17 years old or those whose evidence is likely to be affected by fear or distress.

Practitioners should also be aware of the guidance on ‘Provision of Therapy for Child Witnesses Prior to a Criminal Trial’ Crown Prosecution Services, 2001 and Preparing Child for Court, before offering independent counselling to the children and young people involved in an on-going Police Investigation. Social Care Practitioners should work closely with the Police and Crown Prosecution Service to ensure that any help
and support leading up to a criminal trial supports the child or young person but does not hinder the criminal process. Practitioners should also use the Victim Support Plan in appendix 7 for all victims and witnesses for every CSE Court case. A planning meeting with all relevant agencies to ensure young people are supported through the court process should also be undertaken.

The CPS has issued Guidelines on Prosecuting Cases of Child Sexual Abuse, which are designed to set out the approach that prosecutors should take when dealing with child sexual abuse cases.

6.8 Adult Safeguarding

Where Adult Social Care have concerns regarding sexual exploitation they will contact the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team to provide information and advice. Where there are concerns regarding an adult who may be sexually exploited the Adult Safeguarding procedures should be followed and this should include an integrated MASE discussion. A member of the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team will be invited to the safeguarding meeting.

Where of the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team feel a young person requires ongoing support and has care and support needs they will make a referral to adult safeguarding through the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

6.9 The Role of the Police

The Police have a number of different roles when dealing with sexual exploitation. This includes having a duty of care to the child or young person, preventing and investigating any crimes, and arresting and prosecuting offenders. Warwickshire Police CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team together with colleagues within Local Investigation Team investigate child abuse allegations and are actively involved in all child sexual exploitation operations.

CSE is not a specific criminal offence. It encompasses a range of different forms of serious criminal conduct and a number of individual offences. CSE investigations require a proactive approach to explore the nature and patterns of sexual
exploitation locally, and to share information with partner agencies about those at risk and potential offenders.

In assessing whether a child or young person is a victim, or at risk of becoming a victim, of sexual exploitation, careful consideration should be given to the following:

- a child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching
- sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence
- it is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17-year-old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them
- where sexual activity with a 16 or 17-year-old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm or the likelihood of harm being suffered
- non-consensual sex is rape, whatever the age of the victim
- if the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim, or his or her family, has been subjected to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and, therefore, offences may have been committed
- CSE is an issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not limited to those in a specific age group.

Investigators should liaise with the CPS at the earliest opportunity to seek appropriate advice as this can help to outline an effective investigative strategy which will strengthen the prosecution case.

The Police Procedure in Respect of Children and Young People Involved in Sexual Exploitation in summary should include:

a. When Police Officers have found a child or young person in the above circumstances they should be taken to their home address for the purpose of checking the suitability of their home circumstances;

b. If the Officers feel that their home and family circumstances are adequate, and that the child or young person will not suffer any significant harm by remaining at that address, then they will be left there;
c. Either the same day or the following morning the officers should send the incident details to the Harm Assessment Unit (HAU) who are based in the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to inform them of the incident/circumstances.

d. Should officers feel that the child / young person’s home circumstances are inadequate, or they are of no fixed abode and may suffer imminent harm because of the circumstances in which they were found, then the police should make contact with social care / emergency duty team (out of hours) and consider if it is necessary to take the child / young person into Police Protection, under Section 46 of the Children Act 1989;

e. Police Officers should contact the relevant Children’s Social Care locality office or the Emergency Duty Team with a view to them being found suitable accommodation. A verbal telephone and follow up written report should be provided;

f. If a child or young person comes to the attention of the Police under these circumstances, a record on the Operational Intelligence System (OIS) will be made of the individual and the circumstances in which they were found and a referral will be made to the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team;

g. The individual circumstances of each case must be considered and if Officers are in any doubt whatsoever then they should seek advice from Children’s Social Care;

h. The Police Protocol requires that a child or young person should be given advice about such behaviour on two occasions. Police Officers will endeavour to engage multi-agency partnerships to prevent the young person becoming further involved in this behaviour.

6.10 Gathering Evidence and Recording and Sharing Information

An Officer who receives and investigates a complaint of sexual exploitation should ensure that vital evidence is not lost. As with every investigation time is often critical, and any delay could result in partial or total loss of evidence. This may result in being unable to prosecute the perpetrator for the abuse, but more importantly could leave
the child or young person, and any potential future victims, exposed to further danger.

The Investigating Officer should attempt to preserve witness evidence as soon as possible, which may include obtaining the child’s or young person’s clothing. This includes taking statements from the child or young person, and any other witnesses. However any witness needs must be taken into consideration. The Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act 1999 define vulnerable and intimidated witnesses, and how to obtain 'Best Evidence'. Police Officers should familiarise themselves with this document.

Photographs of injuries received as a result of abuse or other types of evidence should not be taken by professionals other than those involved in an investigation such as a Police officer or by a medical photographer when requested by a paediatrician. Professionals should always inform Children’s Social Care or the police of the presence of such injuries or other factors that may be useful for evidential purposes.

7. Providing Alternative Accommodation for Children and Young People

7.1 Immediate protection

Sometimes it is clear that emergency action should be taken to safeguard a child or young person. Such action should normally be immediately preceded by a Strategy Discussion between the Police, Children’s Social Care, and other agencies as appropriate. This may result in either ensuring that the child / young person remains in a safe place, or removing them from the home of the person who is exploiting them to a place of safety.

7.2 Accommodation for sexually exploited children and young people

If a child or young person needs to be accommodated away from their family home, the option of them staying with extended family or connected person who may provide safe accommodation or foster care may be necessary.
Another option may be a residential unit or even secure accommodation but placing children away from their community and home may not keep them safe. They may try to return to their home or the area which may increase the risk of harm. Placing a child or young person in a residential unit or secure accommodation should only be considered in extreme circumstances and in the case of Secure accommodation where legal advice has been sought to confirm whether threshold is met for a Secure Accommodation Order.

Children and young people who are being sexually exploited need good quality placements, with family, connected others, staff or foster carers who have experience of building trusting relationships and have skills at containing young people. These placements do not have to be secure or away from the area, they can be within their community with robust support and a safety plan.

7.3 Residential Units

Residential units are sometimes targeted by persons who exploit Children and Young People, therefore staff need to be aware of the indicators of risk with respect to sexual exploitation. As well as following internal Children’s Social Care procedures relating to Looked after Children, if a child/young person is at risk of sexual exploitation and living in a residential unit, the following steps should be taken:

- Trying to dissuade the child/young person from leaving the unit to engage in sexual exploitation;
- Monitoring telephone calls and letters; confiscate a mobile phone that is being used inappropriately;
- Monitoring callers to the home or adults who collect children / young people by car. This may involve refusing visitors entrance to the unit; monitoring any suspicious activity in the vicinity of the unit and passing information direct to the police about people and vehicles via the Information Intelligence Form and sending via cse.east@warwickshire.pnn.police.uk
- Where these efforts fail and the child / young person leaves, staff should follow them and encourage them to return;
If they will not return, staff should inform the police immediately and pass on all relevant information.

Staff can confiscate mobile phones from Looked after Children to give to the police, if there is concern that there is an issue of child abuse. This can legally be examined by the police as part of an investigation into crimes that may have been committed. However, the child / young person should be given another mobile phone to use until the original is returned to them.

7.4 Notifications Process

Where a child is looked after or subject to a child protection plan and has a history of going missing or being a victim of sexual exploitation, notification should be sent to the Local Authority Children’s Social care Team and Police Force where the child is placed.

Where children are placed by other local authority’s in Warwickshire the placing and responsible local authority should consult with the Warwickshire Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and complete the Out of Area Notification Form and send this to notifications@warwickshire.gcsx.gov.uk

Where there are concerns about child sexual exploitation or children with a history of going missing, the Notifications Officer will forward the information to the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team.
Appendices

- Appendices for Multi-agency partner agencies

Appendix 1: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Multi-Agency Assessment Framework

The Assessment Framework should be used by multi-agency practitioners, to identify the needs of a child/young person who may be vulnerable to being sexually exploited, is being groomed or targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation or is being sexually exploited. The document will also support multi-agency practitioners to identify concerns and appropriate intervention(s) for the child and their family.

Appendix 2: Warwickshire Police CSE Information Sharing Form

This form is completed when sharing information with Warwickshire Police about perpetrators and concerns of Child Sexual Exploitation occurring that is NOT an emergency and does not require immediate action.

Appendix 3: Tools to disrupt Child Sexual Exploitation

This document identifies the legal orders available that can be issued by police, applied to from criminal or family Court or made via civil law route.

- Appendices for Children’s Social Care

Appendix 4: National Working Group (NWG) - Child (Sexual) Exploitation Assessment Tool

This assessment tool is completed by Social Care to identify the needs of a child/young person who may be vulnerable to being sexually exploited, is being groomed or targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation or is being sexually exploited. The tool will also support practitioners to identify the most appropriate intervention(s) for the child and their family.

Appendix 5: Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Meeting (MASE)

A Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting (MASE) meeting is a forum to share and clarify information, establish risk, consider disruption and develop a multi-agency safeguarding and support plan to meet the needs of children and young people who are at risk of, or are being sexually exploited (including support for parents/carers).

Appendix 6: Agenda for CSE Complex CSE Strategy Meeting

This meeting is chaired by the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team where there is knowledge or suspicion that children are involved together or being controlled/exploited by the same person or there are multiple perpetrators.

Appendix 7: Victim Support Trial Risk Assessment and Support Plan

This document should be completed when supporting victims or witnesses who are likely/are giving evidence in a criminal trial in respect of CSE, Missing or Trafficked young people. This is completed by the allocated Social Worker with support from the CSE, Missing and Trafficking Team.