

Child Sexual Exploitation
Policy
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Version 1

Growing the right way for
a bigger, better Peterborough

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Document Control Sheet

Purpose of document:	This policy is intended to establish what is expected of PCC staff in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation.
Document ratified by: (group)	
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If applicable, has an initial Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) been completed?	
Document lead and author, and their role:	Lead: Jenny Goodes (Head of Service, MASH and First Response) Author: Kirsten Cooper (Policy Manager)
What other documents should this be read in conjunction with:	PSCB CSE Strategy PCC CSE procedure Child sexual exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation

Revisions

Version No.	Page/ Paragraph No.	Description of amendment	Date of Change

1. Child Sexual Exploitation

1.1 Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse.

It can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and internal child trafficking.

Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances.

1.2 Child sexual exploitation is a hidden crime. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. Young people often trust their abuser and don't understand that they're being abused. Practitioners should be aware that particularly young people aged 16 and 17 may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

They may depend on their abuser or be too scared to tell anyone what's happening.

The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

1.3 It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults, including oral and anal rape. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status.

1.4 Child sexual exploitation doesn't always involve physical contact and can happen online. Technology can, for example, be used to record abuse and share it with other like-minded individuals or as a medium to access children and young people online in order to groom them.

1.5 Sexual exploitation has strong links with other forms of crime, for example, online and offline grooming, the distribution of abusive images of children and child trafficking. The perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and use sophisticated tactics. They are known to target areas where children and young people gather without much adult supervision, e.g. parks or shopping centres, takeaway restaurants or sites on the Internet.

1.6 Sexual exploitation results in children and young people suffering harm, and causes significant damage to their physical and mental health. It can also have profound and damaging consequences for the child's family. Parents and carers are often traumatised and under severe stress. Siblings can feel alienated and their self-esteem affected. Family members can themselves suffer serious threats of abuse, intimidation and assault at the hands of perpetrators.

1.7 There are strong links between children involved in sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home or care, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, absence from school and substance misuse. In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those in residential or

foster care, those leaving care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children and those involved in gangs.

2. National context

2.1 It's difficult to understand the true levels of Child Sexual Exploitation as by nature, it is a very hidden crime.

2.2 There have been high-profile independent reviews into child sexual exploitation in areas including Rochdale, and Rotherham (which identified that at least 1,400 children were sexually exploited in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013). Peterborough has also had its own high profile cases under Operation Erle, which has seen a total of 10 male defendants convicted of 59 offences against 15 young females, receiving a total of 114 years and 9 months in custodial sentences.

2.3 The following statistics go some way to showing the severity of the problem:

- Over 360 children were trafficked for sexual exploitation last year
- There were over 2,100 counselling sessions with young people who talked in Childline about online child sexual exploitation (CSE) in 2016/17
- Published offence data shows an increase in all sexual offence categories in 2015/16 compared to 2014/15. The most notable year on year changes are:

> a 30 per cent increase in rape of a male under 13 (from 1,268 to 1,648);

> sexual activity involving a child under 16 has increased by 32 per cent (from 8,051 to 10,661);

> there is a 49 per cent increase in sexual grooming (from 652 to 971);

> abuse of children under 18 years old through sexual exploitation has increased by 56 per cent (from 347 to 541).

> In 2015/16 the number of police-recorded offences for "Obscene Publications" in England increased by 64 per cent to 11,992. (This is likely to be attributable to targeted and coordinated activity by the National Crime Agency and the police against online sexual exploitation and abuse)¹.

3. Legal framework

3.1 Local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding all children in their area. Their statutory functions under the 1989 and 2004 Children Act(s) include specific duties in relation to children in need and children suffering, or likely to suffer, significant harm (under sections 17 and 47 of the Children Act 1989). Local agencies, including the police and health services, also have a duty under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 to ensure they consider the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people when carrying out their functions. Under section 10 of the Children Act 2004, these agencies are required to cooperate with local authorities to promote the wellbeing of children and young people in each local authority area. Practitioners are responsible for ensuring they fulfil their role and responsibilities in a manner consistent with the statutory duties of their employer.

¹ Bentley, H. et al (2017) How safe are our children? The most comprehensive overview of child protection in the UK 2017. London: NSPCC.

3.2 In law, there is no specific crime of child sexual exploitation. Offenders are often convicted for associated offences such as sexual activity with a child. Therefore it's not possible to obtain figures from police statistics of sexual exploitation offences².

Sexual Offences Act 2003

Prosecutions for child sexual exploitation can be brought under provisions of the Sexual Offences Act 2003. These include:

- [S.1 Rape](#)
- [S.2 and 3 Sexual assault](#)
- [S.5-8 Rape and other sexual offences against children under 13](#)
- [S.14 Arranging or facilitating commission of a child sex offence](#)
- [S.15 Meeting a child following sexual grooming](#)
- [S.47 Paying for sexual services of a child](#)
- [S.48 Causing or inciting sexual exploitation of a child](#)
- [S.49 Controlling a child in relation to sexual exploitation](#)
- [S.57-59 Trafficking within and outside the UK for sexual exploitation](#)

Serious Crime Act 2015

The Serious Crime Act (2015) amends section 15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, so that it is now a criminal offence for an adult to send a sexual message to a child. Hopefully, predators will be discouraged from grooming children online for sexual exploitation and the police will be able to take action against offenders earlier on in the grooming process³.

Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Section 116 of this act 'Protection from sexual harm and violence' allows police to require hotels and similar establishments, in which they reasonably believe child sexual exploitation is taking place, to provide information about guests. This is intended to equip the police to better investigate sexual offences committed on these types of premises.

Section 113 amends the Sexual Offences Act 2003 to create Sexual Harm Prevention Orders (SHPOs) and Sexual Risk Orders (SROs). An SHPO or SRO is intended to protect the public or an individual against sexual harm.

4. Definitions

4.1 The cross county CSE partnership have agreed to work on the following definition, as provided by the Department for Education and updated in February 2017:

² [Berelowitz et al. 2012](#)

³ [section 67 of the Serious Crime Act 2015](#)

“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”⁴

5. Peterborough’s policy to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation

5.1 Peterborough is committed to tackling CSE in partnership alongside our colleagues in the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children’s Board. We will support the delivery of the Joint CSE Strategy⁵.

5.2 Our responsibilities

Peterborough City Council Children’s Services are responsible for co-ordinating statutory assessments of children’s needs which include the parent’s capacity to meet those needs. The assessment may result in the provision of services designed to address the identified needs of the child through a child in need plan. Where a child is assessed as having suffered, or being at risk of, significant harm PCC Children’s services will convene an initial child protection conference to consider the risks on a multi-agency basis. This may result in the child becoming subject of a child protection plan under the category of neglect. Children’s Social Care has the statutory responsibility for child protection cases but it will work with other agencies to develop, implement and monitor a plan (Child in Need or Child Protection) to help the child and their family and stop the neglect

The Exploitation (CSE / Criminal Exploitation) Risk Assessment and Management Tool⁶ will be used in any case where a child or young person is considered to be at risk of CSE or Criminal Exploitation.

PCC staff will follow the CSE procedure to ensure that responses are thorough, effective and consistent.

5.3 Whenever PCC staff act on concerns about CSE, their response will be underpinned by the principles that partnership agencies designed and agreed to as part of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children’s Board. These are:

⁴ *Child sexual exploitation Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation* February 2017 Department for Education

⁵

<http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/11/Child-Sexual-Exploitation-Strategy-UPDATE-Feb-16.pdf>

⁶ <http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/child-sexual-exploitation/>

1) The child's best interests must be the top priority

The responses by the LSCB to CSE seek to take a child centred approach, whilst at the same time recognising that to protect other children and future abuse there is a need to identify, disrupt and prosecute offenders.

Children do not make informed choices to enter into or remain in sexually exploitative situations. They do so through coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation. Children under 16 years old cannot consent to sexual activity and sexual activity with a child under 13 years is statutory rape.

Sexually exploited children or those at risk should be treated as victims of abuse, not offenders. Prosecution should be focused on those who abuse children and young people in this way. It is important to remember that these perpetrators may be adults, or they may be the child's peer or close to their age. The needs of the children within a perpetrator's family must also be considered.

2) Participation of children and young people

'Children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and to have consistent support provided for their individual needs. This should guide the behaviour of professionals. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs.'⁷ Agencies should always consider the wishes and feelings of the children and young people receiving their services. This is no more or less true for victims or those at risk of CSE.

3) Enduring relationships and support

Support should be tailored to meet the needs of the individual, taking into account their age, ethnicity, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, language and maturity. As mentioned above, lasting, trusting relationships with professionals who offer consistent support are crucial to support and protect children and young people and aid their recovery.

As with other areas of child protection, the effective safeguarding of children and young people is best achieved through early help and intervention. Professionals working with young people are well placed to identify risks at an early stage and should ensure they have the knowledge and skills to identify and respond to the vulnerabilities and risk indicators of CSE. Information concerning training and guidance and information can be found on the LSCB website.

Professionals should be supported in building relationships with the children and young people they are working with. They should also have access to support for themselves through their line manager and/or the lead for child sexual exploitation within their agency.

4) Comprehensive problem-profiling

⁷ *Working Together to Safeguard Children* Department for Education 2015

It is important for all LSCBs to establish the prevalence and character of abuse in their areas. The most effective and accurate profile includes data from a range of agencies, compiled with the oversight of the LSCBs and shared across key partners to inform activity concerning CSE.

Profiles should contain the following:

a) The incidence of CSE:

This should include data held by Children's Social Care, Police, health agencies and the voluntary sector, and should be considered for consistency and accuracy. Collection of data may be best facilitated via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

b) Information on local trends:

The LSCB have sought this data from Cambridgeshire Constabulary in order to strengthen their approach to CSE. Information collated by the Police has identified 'hotspots' and those young people considered to be most at risk.

c) Prevalence of core risks:

This information indicates the probable extent and character of abuse in the area. This can then be used to determine what type of preventative services are likely to be most effective in reducing the risk of CSE. Good practice would be to share and compare this data with boarding local authorities and other relevant areas.⁸

5) Effective information-sharing within and between agencies

There is in place an effective information-sharing protocol predicated on the best interests and safeguarding of children and young people. All relevant agencies and services should be signatories and it should clearly state what information should be shared, by whom and the process for doing this. It can be found here:

<http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/cambs-information-sharing-framework.pdf> .

For more information, professionals should refer to the Department for Education Guidance: 'Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' 2015

6) Supervision, support and training for staff

Agencies within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough should invest in the development and support of staff including the provision of regular supervision and the opportunities for staff to reflect on practice. Those professionals who offer direct support to sexually exploited children and young people might require further intensive training and must have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice with a skilled consultant or supervisor.

7) Evaluation and review

⁸ Taken from *Tackling child sexual exploitation: Helping local authorities to develop strategic responses*. Barnardo's 2012

Regular evaluations and reviews of this strategy and the CSE Action Plan must be undertaken to ensure services are progressing activity to reduce the risks posed to young people by child sexual exploitation, and interventions are achieving their intended outcomes. Children and young people from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough areas should be involved in this process to ensure improvement. Questions against which the strategic response should be evaluated are detailed in the See Me, Hear Me Framework⁹ under the following headings:

- Voice of the child
- Voice of the professional
- Protecting the child

6. Equality Impact Assessment

7. Scope

This policy applies to any member of staff employed by Peterborough City Council who work with children and young people. It also applies to managers, commissioners, and organisations who have been commissioned by PCC to deliver services.

⁹ 'See Me, Hear Me Framework, from *If Only Someone Had Listened: Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups* OCC 2013

