

Child Sexual Exploitation

Children and Young People's Scrutiny Committee November 2017

Background

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded 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 and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. Children or young people may be tricked into believing they are in a loving, consensual relationship.

Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. This includes boys and young men as well as girls and young women.

National research identifies certain groups as being particularly vulnerable to exploitation. This includes

- Children who regularly go missing from home or care
- Children who are disengaged from education
- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues and criminality)
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- Living in residential care
- Children who sexually harm

Our experience locally suggests that young people who have siblings who are sexually exploited are also at increased vulnerability of sexual exploitation.

Working with children who have been, or are at risk of being sexually exploited.

Where there are concerns that a child or young person is being, or is at risk of being sexually exploited there will be an assessment undertaken by Children's Social Care. If the assessment identifies that the concerns are serious and a coordinated, multi-agency response is required then A CSE Strategy meeting will be convened.

CSE strategy meeting involve social care, the police The CSE Coordinator, health, education and any other involved professional. Parents and young people are encouraged to attend these meetings, or at least part of them.

Protect and Respect is a service that is delivered in Nottingham City by the NSPCC, who also fund the service. The service works with individual young people and their families where there are concerns about sexual exploitation.

The Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE) is a multi-agency forum chaired by the Director of Children's Integrated Services. The MASE provides a quality assurance function for work undertaken in relation individual young people and correlates information to identify risks associated with possible perpetrators and locations of concern. The MASE has representation from key groups/sectors including Police, education, health (both public health nurses and sexual health services), Children's Social Care, Targeted Support services, the Youth Offending Team, Early Help and Community Safety colleagues, in order to ensure that the full range of community safety measures are considered.

Concerns Network Meeting The concerns network meeting is chaired by police and the NSPCC, it is a bi monthly multi agency meeting where pieces of 'soft' intelligence are shared to gain a bigger picture of CSE across Nottingham City ultimately to disrupt CSE activity.

We have also have a CSE Coordinator Post. The CSE Coordinator also manages the small team based in the City Council that lead on return interviews for young people reported as missing. Her analysis of Return Interview's has allowed us to identify vulnerable young people who otherwise would not have been visible within the system and make connections between young people, locations and possible perpetrators. The Coordinator also leads multi-agency work in relation to children who sexually harm.

Child Sexual Exploitation Cross Authority Group (CSECAG) Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Board has a specific sub-group that focuses on sexual exploitation. This a joint group with Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board. The group leads on the development of multi-agency policy and practice.

We recognise that victims of CSE can sometimes find it hard to recognise that they are being abused, or are at risk of becoming so. For this reason a key focus of our strategic response to CSE is awareness raising. We recognise that there are different target audiences that require different approaches and have tailored our approach accordingly

- Awareness raising in the community
- Awareness raising for those who work with children, young people and their families
- Awareness raising for other sectors

Voice of the child

In February 2016 we conducted a workshop in partnership with the NSPCC called 'Have Your Say' with young people who had been involved in CSE. They came together to give their views about services. The findings from the workshop have been shared at the MASE panel and assist with future planning of work and how interventions are delivered with individual children and groups.

At an operational level young people are supported to attend strategy meetings and be involved in the planning for their own safety.

What's happening regionally?

The City Council has played a leading role in the development of regional standards for the response to sexual exploitation across the East Midlands. The standards cover

- Accountability for all safeguarding and strategic co-ordination
- Multi-agency strategic planning
- Partnership and information sharing for identification and assessment
- Coordination of multi-agency strategic groups
- Intervention and service delivery