

CHILD SEXUAL ABUSE AND EXPLOITATION

With child sexual abuse and exploitation constantly in the headlines, *CYP Now's* 12-page special report outlines latest developments in policy, practice and evidence in tackling CSA and CSE



Recent historical sexual abuse cases involving influential individuals and institutions have brought child sexual abuse (CSA) to the fore of public consciousness.

Meanwhile, publication years ago of the report by Professor Alexis Cullen on child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Northampton between 1997 and 2013 shone the light on how abusers systematically groom vulnerable young people to exploit them sexually.

A series of independent and government-commissioned reviews and reports have subsequently highlighted failings by all agencies involved in the child protection system to fully recognise the extent of the CSE threat and adequately protect the young people most at risk of being abused. This has led to action by policymakers to strengthen local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements.

Additional government funding has allowed councils, other public agencies and voluntary

organisations to work together to devise new ways of protecting children from exploitation, intervene earlier to prevent or stop abuse and boost support for victims of CSE and CSA.

CYP Now's Special Report on child sexual abuse and exploitation outlines the key policies that are driving change in how services are delivered, what latest evidence shows is effective in supporting children and young people affected by CSA and CSE, and profiles the work of five projects delivering innovative practice in tackling the problem. »

Policy context

The Department for Education leads on child protection in government, but it shares responsibility for child sexual exploitation (CSE) with the Home Office. Following a number of high-profile child sexual abuse (CSA) and exploitation revelations, recent policy announcements to tackle the issue have also involved the Department of Health, Ministry of Justice and Department for Communities and Local Government. This cross-government approach both reflects the wide-ranging nature of the risks posed by child sexual abuse and exploitation and the increased recognition the issues have had within government.

On the ground, it is the responsibility of local safeguarding children boards (LSCB) to bring health, social work, education and police professionals together to identify the risks in an area and how to tackle them; while many councils have established multi-agency safeguarding hubs (Mash) to co-ordinate the

system-wide response to sexual abuse and exploitation, with a number setting up dedicated CSE teams (see research evidence).

Scale of abuse and exploitation

Revelations in recent years about the existence of paedophile rings involving celebrities and influential institutions have increased media and political attention on child sexual abuse. In addition, the uncovering of grooming and exploitation of children by organised gangs over many years in a number of English cities, most notably Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxford and Birmingham, has propelled CSE to the top of policymakers' agenda.

Despite this, there is little prevalence data on CSA and CSE. Part of the problem stems from the hidden nature of the abuse itself, which leads to cases going unreported, and the fact that some children do not realise they are being exploited (see research evidence).

In 2014/15, there were 30,698 recorded sexual offences against children under 16 in England – or three sexual offences per 1,000 children (a rate of 0.03 per cent). This is 38 per cent higher than the previous year and double the rate of a decade ago (see statistics box).

However, self-reporting studies suggest official figures do not show the full extent of the problem. A 2011 survey by the NSPCC found that 12.5 per cent of 1,761 young people aged 18 to 24 reported being the victim of sexual abuse by an adult or peer. Among the 2,275 11- to 17-year-olds surveyed for the study, 5.1 per cent said they'd been sexually abused. When non-contact sexual abuse was also considered, a quarter of young adults surveyed by the NSPCC reported being victims.

There are no official figures showing the scale of CSE. In the UK, it tends to be viewed as a type of child sexual abuse, including online grooming, trafficking and exploitation by gangs or people in power. The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People, defines CSE as "involving young people under 18 who receive 'something' (food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities".

Despite the lack of official data on CSE, findings from studies have given an indication of the extent of the problem. A Children's Commissioner for England study showed 2,400 children were victims of gang-linked CSE over a 14-month period; in 2011, 2,038 victims of CSE were reported to the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (Ceop); and Ceop received 1,145 reports of online CSE in 2012.

A public consultation run by the Home Office and DfE this year is set to deliver a new definition of CSE in the autumn. Once introduced, this new definition should help paint a clearer picture on the number of child victims of sexual exploitation.

Vulnerable groups

Research has shown that vulnerable children and those who display risky behaviour are most at risk of being victims of CSA and CSE. Those in council care, who misuse drugs and alcohol and play truant from school are often targeted by abusers and gangs (see research evidence).

An inquiry into the actions of a gang of nine men convicted in 2012 of abusing children in Rochdale found victims were mainly vulnerable teenagers targeted at locations such as shops and bribed with alcohol, drugs and money.

The Jay report, which found 1,400 CSE victims between 1997 and 2013, identified how

ADCS ONLY MULTI-AGENCY APPROACH CAN TACKLE CSE



By Dave Hill, president of ADCS

The publication of the Jay report in 2014 shone a bright light on child protection. Awareness of the insidious nature of the sexual exploitation of children and young people continues to grow but local authorities cannot tackle this issue alone.

Identifying those who are vulnerable to exploitation is no easy undertaking but there are some excellent examples of partnership working between local authorities, the police, schools and voluntary organisations to address risky behaviour before destructive relationships can form.

We have a culture of shared learning in local government – this summer, the directors of children's services in Rochdale, Rotherham, Bristol and Oxfordshire organised an event in Birmingham to relay the lessons they have learned with sector colleagues. Some of the tools and tactics successfully employed range from the creative use of existing criminal sanctions to the development of multi-agency safeguarding teams like the Sunrise Team in Rochdale. Taxi drivers, bus drivers and hotel

staff are also receiving training to help them to be alert to the signs of grooming and exploitation and know what to do when concerns arise.

The government recently launched a consultation on the introduction of a new mandatory reporting duty for professionals. While the intentions behind this proposal are hard to argue with we are worried that this may detract focus from the disruption of criminal activities and the prosecution of perpetrators, particularly as many professionals already face serious sanctions if they knowingly fail to pass on information about suspected abuse.

We believe any available resources would be put to better use by bringing forward the development of the government's new "what works centre" in children's social care to help us get to grips with the underlying reasons why abusers act in this way and to help all safeguarding partners learn from survivors how we can improve our interventions and support.

A public health approach aimed at preventing harm is also required. Children and young people should be helped to understand what healthy relationships look like and recognise the signs and symptoms of grooming.

Y STATISTICS: CSE AND CSA

0,000 sexual offences
against under-16s
orded by police in 2014/15

e: NSPCC

% of 11- to 17-year-olds reported
being sexually abused

e: NSPCC

,000 victims of CSE were
reported to Ceop in 2011

e: Ceop

e living in residential child care were
eted by abusers and groomers.
earch carried out by Barnardo's shows that
000 children whose records for CSE were
ysed 18 per cent were in council care. By
parison, just 0.6 per cent of the general child
ilation are looked after.

re study also found that four out of five boys,
four in 10 girls were referred to the
nisation for going missing from home (see
tol Council practice example).

ernment response

policies to influence practice in tackling
l abuse and exploitation over the past five
s include:

Action Plan, 2011

2011 cross-government national action plan
ackling CSE set out a series of measures to
ent sexual exploitation, disrupt offenders
support victims to aid their recovery.
itory requirements included monitoring
s of CSE; specific LSCB procedures on it;
ing on warning signs and prevention;
eness-raising activities; and involving
ig people in crafting CSE strategies. These
sures have led to the creation of regional
oaches to tackling CSE, such as in Greater
chester (see Project Phoenix practice
nple).

arning home interviews, 2014

itory guidance published by the DfE made
andatory for a child who runs away from
e or goes missing from their residential care
ement to be offered an independent return
view by their home local authority.

vation funding, 2014-16

ugh the Department for Education's £100m
ren's social care innovation fund, four

SPECIALIST CSE UNIT WILL SUPPORT PROFESSIONALS



**By Edward Timpson,
minister for vulnerable
children and families**

It's worth reminding
ourselves that we do have a
child protection system
that, in the vast majority of cases, responds
well, intervenes appropriately and gets
excellent outcomes for the children involved.

But what we also have to face up to is what
happens when there are failures in child
protection. We've seen how the sexual
exploitation of children in Rotherham,
Oxford and Birmingham has blighted lives
and torn families apart.

To respond to these challenges, we are
launching in September a Child Sexual
Exploitation Response Unit, backed by £1.24
million of government funding. This unit
will ensure specialist support is available to
people working in children's safeguarding
across the country, enabling them to provide
a strong and robust first response to children
and families who are victims of CSE.

The unit consists of a team of specialists
who offer tailored help to local areas,
supporting them to respond appropriately to
this form of abuse, while boosting capacity
for local areas combatting child sexual
exploitation. The team will be supported by a
register of leading professionals who can be
seconded from their current jobs to support
an area with a specific issue. A helpline,
online knowledge portal, and training
courses will also be provided to ensure staff

on the ground are equipped to deal with
emerging issues.

It's important that we also learn from what
has happened to children who have been
abused and exploited. That's why we are
legislating through the Children and Social
Work Bill to establish a new Child
Safeguarding Practice Review Panel. This
will identify and undertake reviews of the
most serious incidents that raise issues of
national importance, so that findings from
them can be properly understood and
shared.

Putting children first is everyone's
responsibility and there is of course a role for
the wider public and local communities. In
March, we launched the national 'Together,
we can tackle child abuse' campaign to
encourage members of the public to report
any concerns they may have about a child, in
particular about suspected child abuse and
neglect. Over 110 councils have engaged with
the campaign so far, and our findings
indicate that it is giving people a sense of
confidence to report their suspicions. We
know it takes time to change opinions and
behaviours, which is why we plan to run the
campaign again in 2017.

We will continue to work hard to
strengthen the child protection system. We
must do all we can to identify children who
are vulnerable to abuse quickly and get them
the help they and their families need. I
believe these measures will help build on the
many strengths within our child protection
system and make vulnerable children safer.

projects run by voluntary organisations and
councils, including Rotherham Council, were
allocated £4m to develop new ways of
protecting children at risk of, or who have
experienced, CSE and supporting victims.

Response to CSE in Rotherham, 2015

In light of the Jay report and subsequent
review by government adviser Louise Casey,
the Coalition published a response that
outlined its plans for tackling the issue. This
included creating a national system for
reporting child abuse concerns, giving CSA the
status of a "national threat" so police
prioritised tackling the issue, creation of a
centre of expertise to support services, and the
extension of the "wilful neglect" offence to
children's social care and education
professionals, so more would report abuse and
exploitation concerns.

Serious Crime Act 2015

The legislation, which received Royal Assent late
last year, removed references to "child
prostitution" and "child pornography" and
replaced them with CSE.

CSE Response Unit, 2016

Through £1.24m of government funding, the
DfE has commissioned a new independent body
to develop best practice in tackling CSE, which
includes receiving support from an expert group
of practitioners (see minister's column).

The creation of the CSE Response Unit,
updated definition of CSE and publication of
the results of the six multi-agency inspections
of local CSE arrangements should help
safeguarding services and practitioners protect
more children from abuse. ■

By Derren Hayes

Research evidence

Research in practice

The research section for this special report is based on a selection of academic studies which have been explored and summarised by Research in Practice (www.rip.org.uk), which is part of the Dartington Hall Trust.

STUDY 1

Working It Around: What Do Young Women Say Helps Them Move On From Child Sexual Exploitation?

Philip Gilligan, *Child Abuse Review*, 15(1)

Achieving a definition of child sexual exploitation (CSE) is an important part of tackling the issue. A new definition is due to be issued by the Home Office in the near future along with guidance from the Department for Education. A transaction or exchange is often a key element of CSE, with the young person receiving – or being led to believe they will receive – something in return for involvement in sexual acts. This might be food, drugs, affection, promised protection. Violence and intimidation are not uncommon, along with manipulation and coercion, and exploiters' power may be increased by differences in age; intellect; gender; physical strength; economic/other resources.

A 2012 study by Berelowitz et al found at least 16,500 children at risk annually in England. Other research, including Smeaton (2013), consistently finds that CSE can affect any young person, but is strongly correlated with deprivation, homelessness, substance misuse, being looked after and, most prominently, going missing from home or foster/ residential placements. To date, little research includes the voices of CSE victims.

This research was conducted directly with 24 females and one male who are or were service users of voluntary sector projects in Bedford for those involved in, or at risk of, CSE. Gilligan

conducted interviews, questionnaires, workshops and focus groups with participants aged 13 to 23. The small sample cannot be representative, but findings are "real and instructive". The data uncovered overlapping themes; four of which are discussed below.

The impact of sexual exploitation

Short and long-term consequences of CSE include threats to young people's lives and the need to move to another area even after the police were involved. One young woman wrote to a perpetrator: "You took away my childhood... I feel like I am the one in prison... I am doing time because of you."

Smeaton notes the importance of focusing on the future when working directly with young people, to reframe the concept of a

healthy relationship. One young woman wrote: "Relationships are not all about sex and grooming. It's about loving and caring. Workers have helped me a lot with this sort of stuff."

Ambivalence regarding professional interventions

The manipulation inherent in CSE may result in victims viewing the perpetrator as their "boyfriend" and believing they made a "choice" to be in the relationship, resulting in resistance to intervention. Gilligan highlights the importance of practitioners persevering until victims are ready to engage (one person took two years to trust and be honest with her worker). These young people pointed out that the language professionals used can alienate and embarrass victims, demonstrating the need for a shared vocabulary with which victims are enabled to name their abuse.

Worker style and approach

Relationship-based support from a worker who would listen

without judgment was paramount. A warm and friendly environment was important, and reliability and flexibility were valued. Victims need to know workers "will be staying around" and talked of wanting workers to "take off their badges" so they would look like "a normal person" in public. The importance of engaging young people in enjoyable activities was mentioned, with one participant stating: "Just do something with them... to make them feel a bit special... once a month." Straightforward information and advice was helpful and assisted some victims in discussing their CSE.

Specialist versus statutory services

Ninety-three per cent of participants said these voluntary sector services had been "extremely", "very", or "really helpful".

The need for improved CSE training for police and children's services was highlighted. One 16-year-old said the police "treat the innocent as if they are the perpetrators"; another said, "you can't ring your social worker... they start making judgments".

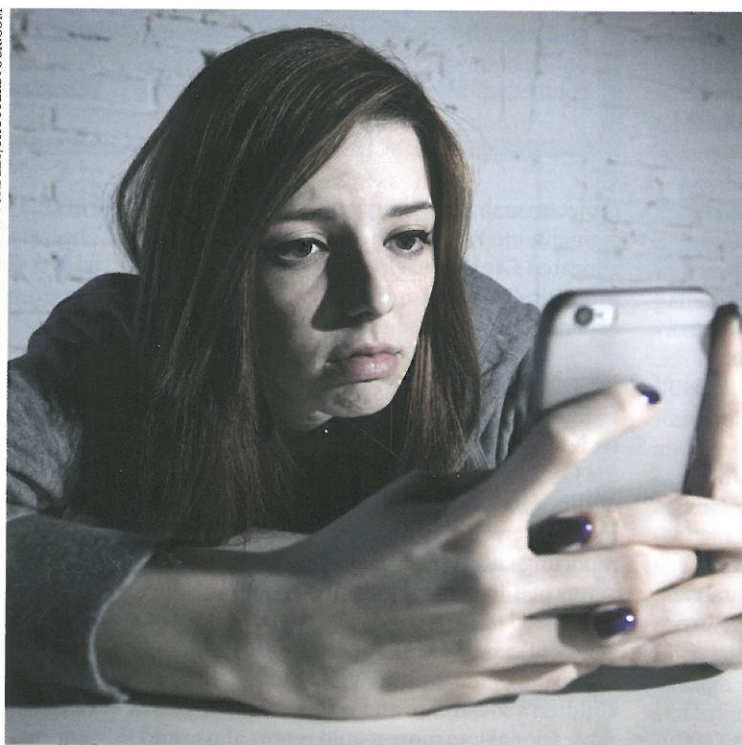
Some tensions concerning confidentiality and the impact of specialist workers sharing information with the police were discussed. One victim did identify having police "to hand" as an advantage of multi-agency hubs.

Implications for practice

While Gilligan's findings echo much of the previous work in this area, added value is brought by the direct involvement of those who have been subjected to CSE.

Young women participating in the study emphasised a need for greater awareness of grooming and CSE occurring during the school day; how mobile phone contact/texting with workers was highly important for them; and the need for specialist services to be available around the clock.

MARCOS MESA SAM WORDLEY/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM



Young women that had been victims of CSE valued regular contact with support workers

STUDY 2

What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People: Child Sexual Exploitation: Review of Local Safeguarding Children Boards' Work to Protect Children from Sexual Exploitation

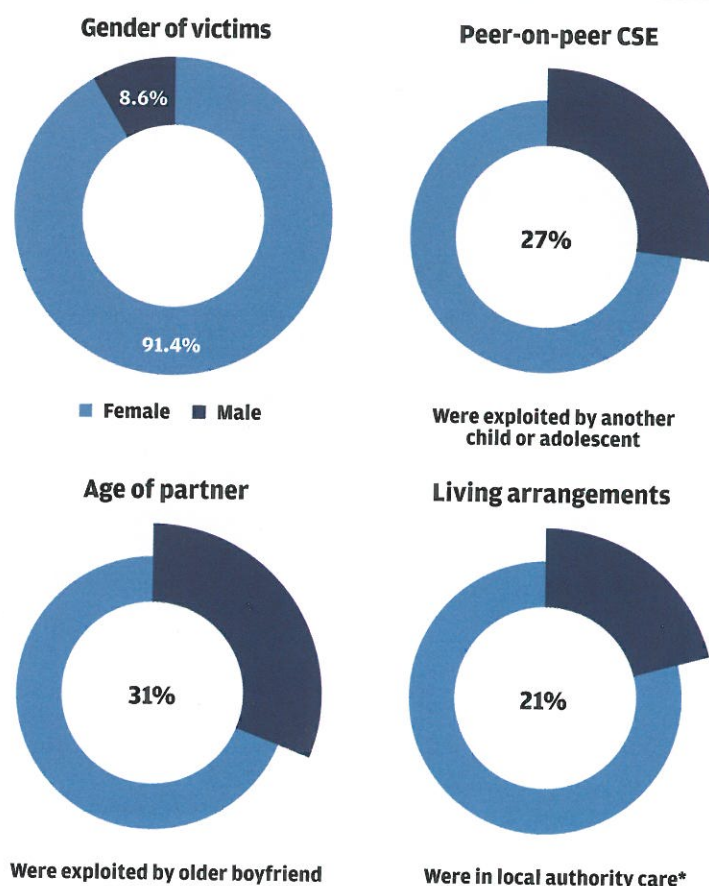
Dr. Pearce, Institute of Applied Research, University of Bedfordshire, UK Child Abuse Review,

The research provides an overview of the implementation of safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in England (Department for Children, Schools and Families, 2009). The researchers created a data gathering tool to gather information about CSE to inform development of future research. Questionnaires were sent to all local safeguarding children boards (LSCBs) in England and follow-up structured interviews were conducted with 104 practitioners from LSCB areas identified as the most at risk of CSE.

Implementation of the guidance

Published in 2011, the study found that CSE was not understood in three-quarters of the LSCBs. This was explained by a lack of resources and a lack of understanding (at that time) of the nature of CSE. The research found that LSCBs tended to focus on the protection of children deemed to be at risk of abuse and not 'looked' any 'additional' factors, such as the CSE of older children who were considered to be responsible for their own actions. In light of subsequent research, these attitudes could be described as "misunderstandings" that together contribute to an ultimate failure to address the problems associated with CSE.

CHARACTERISTICS OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



Source: Review of 1,065 cases (*684 cases) as part of What's going on to safeguard children and young people from CSE, University of Bedfordshire

Misunderstandings of children's agency and consent

Instead of being understood as victims of abuse, sexually exploited young people (particularly the 16 to 18 age group) were invariably perceived to be active agents making choices, albeit constrained, about their relationships. They were seen to carry responsibility and, consequently, blame for the abuse they experienced.

These attitudes also extended to younger children, with reports including reference to "consensual sexual activity" for children as young as 13-years-old (Jago et al, 2011).

Child-centred practice starts with the principle that no child, whatever age, can consent to their

own abuse, instead aiming to explore why they might "choose" abusive relationships. Time must be allowed to engage and to establish a supportive relationship despite episodes of "going missing", or of challenging or disruptive behaviours.

Displacement

Against competing demands and limited resources, it was suggested that many LSCBs placed disproportionate responsibility for intervention with the voluntary sector. In areas where a voluntary provider was working in the CSE field, they were over-relied on as 'champions' of the child's needs as well as advocates and trainers on local CSE issues. If voluntary

sector providers are not linked into an overall child protection strategy coordinated by the LSCB, they, and their clients, will remain isolated from mainstream child protection procedures. Police and child protection workers co-located and supported by youth work services appeared to provide a stronger approach to recognition.

Data monitoring

Inefficient data systems impeded recording and analysis of information and poor understanding of data protection meant that some agencies were reluctant to share data. The data monitoring tool was appreciated by those who used it, with 1,065 cases of CSE being identified through its use by 33 agencies.

- Males represented only 8.6 per cent of CSE victims identified, raising concerns that cases of male CSE went unrecognised.
- The average age of those being sexually exploited was 14-years-old, with exploitation by an older "boyfriend" being noted most frequently (31 per cent).
- Peer on peer exploitation was reported in 27 per cent of the cases, evidence from 73 per cent of practitioners noted concern about peer recruitment to CSE (where a young person brings or encourages another into an exploitative situation) and 42 per cent noted exploitation within youth gangs in their area.
- Of the 341 cases where information was provided about criminality in association with exploitation, 34 per cent (n = 115) were young people who had committed offences and a further 15 per cent were receiving support for criminal behaviour.

This data raises complex questions about safeguarding young people who may be both victims and perpetrators of CSE and the discrepancy between the age of criminal responsibility and

age for consent to sexual activity. The living circumstances of 684 cases were explored. Of these, 21 per cent were looked after by the local authority and of these a proportionally high 54 per cent were placed in residential care. However, 479 (71 per cent) of the children were living within families, many of whom already experienced multiple problems which involved additional support. In both circumstances there were missed opportunities for a holistic multi-agency approach linked to a LSCB strategy to address the child's experience of sexual exploitation.

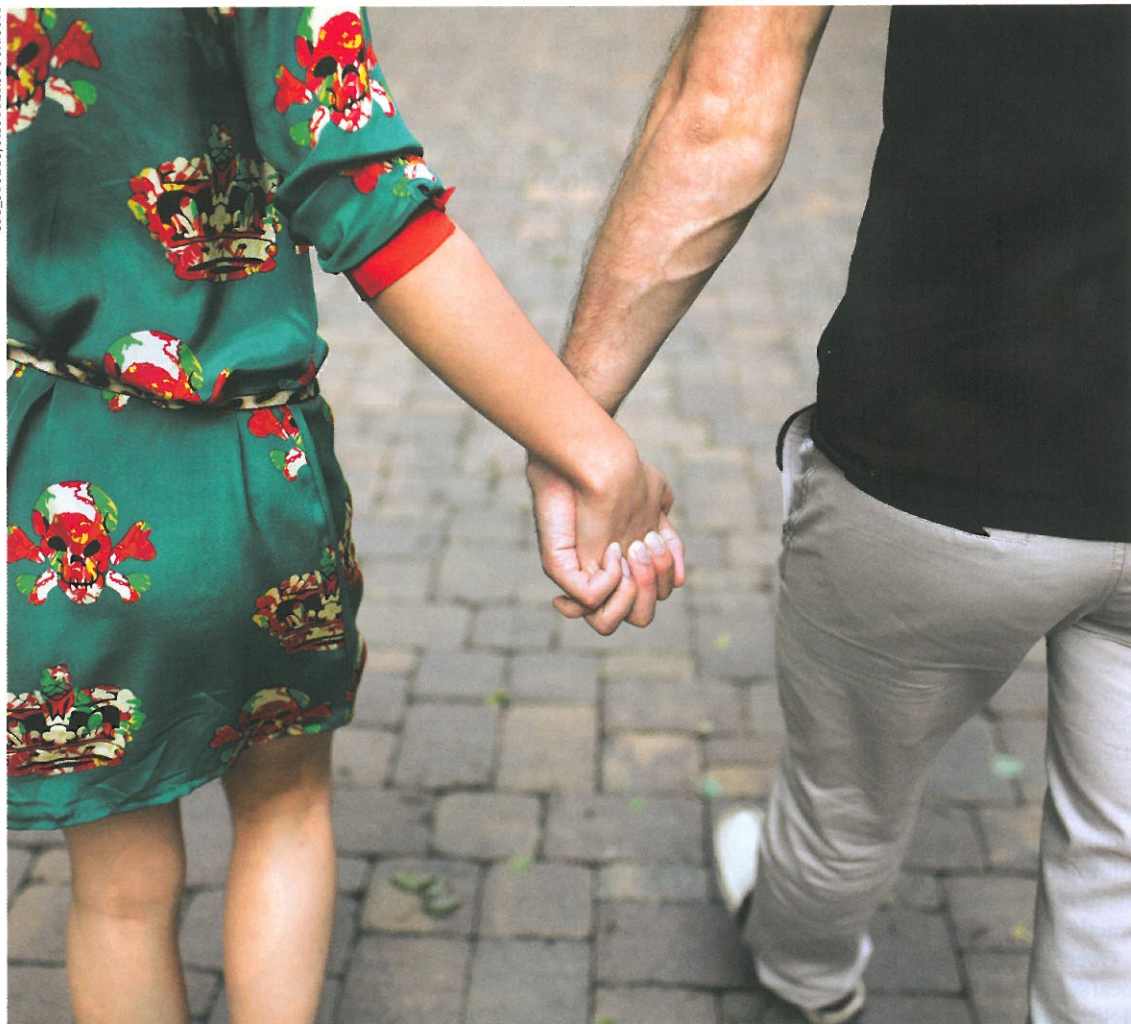
Local aim of protecting children and prosecution

Less than a quarter of LSCBs had strategies for achieving both disruption of CSE and prosecution of its perpetrators, with only 34 successful convictions from 158 cases.

Implications for practice

Co-located multi-agency teams supported by direct service provision to young people were identified in this study as the most successful approach for intervention to prevent CSE.

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Young people that have experienced abuse in childhood are more at risk of entering into abusive and exploitative relationships

STUDY 3

Sexual Exploitation, Selling and Swapping Sex: Victimhood and Agency

See Dodsworth, *Child Abuse Review*, 14)

Dodsworth's qualitative study with female sex workers in the UK focuses on the women's experiences of sexual exploitation under the age of 18. CSE was viewed by some respondents as selling sex for non-monetary gain, a survival strategy in the face of childhood adversity. Jane Dodsworth's research with 12 women from two UK regions explores how childhood experiences impact on their self-perception as victims or agents. Common factors were childhood abuse, neglect and rejection. Crucial differences were noted in how these women made

sense of these experiences and their subsequent choices. Lack of income and employment significantly affected their life pathways. Analysis of some key determinants of pathways is discussed below.

An unresolved search for approval and affection: a downward spiral

For five of the women, extremely negative childhood experiences contributed to a downward spiral into CSE. Izzie recalled her mother forcing her to have her baby adopted (conceived through rape aged 15), then running away and forming a violent relationship with an older man who "made me go on the game".

She and others had few positive relationships to draw on to develop their self-worth. They consequently believed they did not deserve approval or affection and their lack of agency contributed to

what these women experienced as an almost inevitable involvement in selling sex.

A resolved search for approval and affection: an upward spiral

Five women felt they had limited choices of life pathway. They recalled some positive childhood memories of approval and affection. Bella and Tina describe starting to sell sex to fund an otherwise unavailable lifestyle and continuing to sell sex on occasion to maintain a desired standard of living. For these women, their early experiences assisted in building resilience and self-esteem to make sense of, rather than internalise, adversity.

Different outcomes of feeling "different"

A sense of difference was common, but internalising this negatively in childhood appeared to predispose some of the women

to further risk. Ursula commenced selling sex at 17 and believed there was no sense in ceasing since people would always remember what she had done and judge her. These women felt they had least agency and experienced greatest isolation.

However, the experience of difference enabled other women to exercise agency and cease selling sex. Gina says: "There's got to be a time when you've got to stop if you want more positive things out of life." Here, the ability to reflect is an essential element in developing resilience.

Maladaptive and adaptive coping strategies

Some, particularly those with unresolved searches for affection, developed maladaptive strategies, such as increased substance misuse. The dependency then served to decrease their ability to exercise agency.

ability to reflect, make of experiences and develop adaptive coping strategies initiated by supportive networks and the ability to draw on positive childhood experiences, enabling agency to be realised. For example, Fiona I've been involved in bad situations but I think now before myself involved in problems. Before anything happens in I like to look at the picture and realise what the outcome is I do it."

Importance of a secure base relationship

as the overarching invariant of pathway outcome for these women, which confirms what is known about the links between attachment, relationships, and resilience. A secure base had been unavailable for many of the women, who then initiated their search for it in a downward spiral.

Implications for practice

Analysis demonstrates the importance of working with parents and adults to help develop resilience. Research provides a relational lifespan model to understanding of how systems are constructed for involvement in sexual exploitation, selling and using sex.

Advocates applying Gold and Beeks's 2006 resilient model in working practice, highlighting its use in systems that are already achieving some success. This includes: ability, sensitivity, distance, co-operation and a sense of family membership/ belonging; self-building, respectful, relationship-based, solution-oriented, strengths-based approach, as the findings of research indicate, can support involvement in CSE and adult work in changing perceptions of themselves and building resilience, using agency and making lives seem possible.

STUDY 4

Risk Assessment and Secure Accommodation Decision-Making in Scotland: Taking Account of Gender?

Autumn Roesch-Marsh, *Child Abuse Review*, (2014)

Roesch-Marsh explores a study analysing how systems, processes, and concepts including gender stereotypes affect decision-making in secure accommodation. Recent research (Rees et al, 2010; Stein et al, 2009) indicates 11- to 17-year-olds are not well served by existing child protection systems and that their growing autonomy needs to be acknowledged in decision-making. There is also a growing interest in how issues of class, gender, race and age are considered when discussing risk. Studies suggest that the approach to young women is "welfare-oriented" (Gelsthorpe, 2004) and often "paternalistic" (Gelsthorpe and Worral, 2009), which can result in repressive intervention, such as deprivation of liberty, in order to protect them.

The research took place in 2006-07 in a large urban local authority with high rates of secure accommodation. Methods included a survey of 110 referrals, interviews, focus groups, and observations of the secure referral group.

Gender, risk-taking behaviours and harm

Nearly half the survey respondents reported engaging in at least three of the risky behaviours listed which included absconding, substance misuse, unsafe sex, and self-harm. Behaviour, not environmental factors, was the focus in risk discussion meetings; the prime referral reason for females was "at risk sexually".

While professional discussions in the secure referral group sometimes considered whether particular groups were targeting these girls, risk management strategies centred on how the girls' own behaviour placed them at risk. For instance, linking

substance misuse to increased risk of rape or sexual exploitation; one social worker stated: "She has definitely upped the risk level by the drugs she is clearly taking." Placement in secure accommodation was viewed as a way of minimising the opportunity for young women to associate with those seeking to sexually exploit them.

Discussions relating to boys were in very different terms, describing them as "bad" or "acting out" their anger, rather than vulnerable children with limited ability to protect themselves.

While the secure group recognised some boys were being encouraged to engage in criminal activities by peers or relatives, they did not define this as exploitation.

Roesch-Marsh's findings underline how gender stereotypes

affect the negotiation and understanding of risk in a society that broadly views victimisation as feminine and offending as masculine.

Implications for practice

- Practitioners need to develop their ability to empathise and their willingness to share power with increasingly autonomous adolescents.
- Risk management strategies need to be collaborative – to help young people build confidence and equip them with the skills and understanding to make decisions by considering the potential consequences.
- Risk assessment practice must strive to balance understanding of how the wider environment impacts on the risks faced by particular groups, while also working to challenge stereotypes.

FURTHER READING

Families and Communities Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FCASE) Final Evaluation Report of the Barnado's FCASE Project, D'Arcy K, Dhaliwal S, Thomas R with Brodie I and Pearce J, 2015, The University of Bedfordshire

Making Justice Work - Full Report, Beckett H and Warrington C (2015), The University of Bedfordshire

'I Thought I was the Only One in the World' The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Interim report, Berelowitz S, Firmin C, Edwards G, Gulyurtlu S (2012) Office of the Children's Commissioner

'It's Wrong... but you get used to it' A Qualitative Study of Gang-Associated Sexual Violence Towards, and Exploitation of, Young People in England, Beckett H, with Brodie I, Factor F, Melrose M, Pearce J, Pitts J, Shuker L, Warrington C, 2013, Office of the Children's Commissioner: University of Bedfordshire

'If it's not better, it's not the end' – Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups: One year on, Berelowitz S, Ritchie Dr G, Edwards G,

Cabrita Gulyurtlu Dr S S and Clifton J, 2015, Office of the Children's Commissioner

Further reading from Research in Practice

Evidence Scope: That Difficult Age: Developing a more effective response to risks in adolescence

Children and young people missing from care and vulnerable to sexual exploitation

Practice Tool: Appreciative Inquiry in child protection – identifying and promoting good practice and creating a learning culture

Frontline Briefing: Understanding adolescence (Briefing)

Children and young people with harmful sexual behaviours

Workshops:

Young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation

Children and young people with harmful sexual behaviours

That Difficult Age: Developing a more effective response to risk in adolescence

Practice examples

Sex Matters Too

A volunteering project sees young people deliver workshops to their peers on sexual health, relationships and the warning signs of sexual exploitation

Young volunteers design and deliver their workshops in schools, colleges and community settings across South Wales

Established in April 2015 through Lottery Fund money, the project has reached more than 1,000 young people in its first year



Young volunteers are trained to educate peers to be aware of sexual exploitation

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Sex Matters Too (SM2) is a peer-led project run by Volunteering Matters in partnership with the Aneurin I Health Board in Gwent, Wales, that enables young people aged 16 to 25 to deliver workshops on sexual health, relationships and the warning signs of sexual exploitation to young people aged between 13 and 25. The project launched in April 2015 after receiving a £100,000, three-year grant from the Lottery Fund People and Communities programme, and was inspired by learning from the national Sex Matters (SM) project as run by Volunteering Matters under the name Community Volunteers between 2012 and 2013.

Adam Battrick, SM2 project coordinator, says the SM2 project was launched after findings from the national SM project highlighted a “sexting” problem among young people in Gwent and a lack of awareness about healthy relationships.

Now young volunteers can educate their peers they are equipped with training, which is provided by Battrick. She works with the health board and sexual health services to deliver education on

issues such as sexually transmitted infections and different forms of contraception.

The training then goes on to cover sexual exploitation, with information aligned to Thinkuknow, an education programme from the National Crime Agency’s Child Exploitation & Online Protection Command. Information on healthy relationships is provided in-house and in partnership with groups such as Women’s Aid.

“The training is tailor-made to the young people that we recruit,” explains Battrick. “It could be that the young people go through a day’s training, it could be that they want it split up over two full days or evening sessions, or if the volunteers say we want to do it for two hours over a couple of weeks then that is what we will do.”

Once the volunteers have been trained they can then design their workshop in groups of usually between three to four young volunteers, although it can be more.

“One group may want to do a PowerPoint presentation and another may want to do it through acting, drama and role play,” Battrick explains.

“Young people tend to make them as active as possible so we

play games, move around, and have hands-on demonstrations with things like condoms.”

Between April 2015 and March 2016, 71 workshops were delivered across Gwent with 27 taking place in Newport, 31 in Torfaen, seven in Caerphilly and six in Monmouthshire.

Battrick says that the workshops are used to signpost young people to resources in their area, such as sexual health clinics, Women’s Aid, and the NSPCC’s ChildLine.

A Sex Matters (SAM) card is also given to the young people being taught. Young people put their details on the card and when they go to a sexual health clinic they can say “SAM sent me” and hand over their card. This helps them be discrete and makes Volunteering Matters aware of how many workshop participants are attending clinics.

Battrick says that young volunteers have delivered the free workshops across a range of settings including schools, youth clubs, community centres, colleges, training providers and outreach youth work settings such as parks. Sessions on sexual health, exploitation and relationships can be delivered separately or together in one hour.

She says the workshops help

young people to open up and gain an understanding of what a healthy relationship looks like and to become aware of sexual exploitation. “They would rather talk to other young people about the issues they are facing because they could use their own language, have a laugh and a joke,” Battrick adds.

Although SM2 has been funded for three years, Battrick aims to continue the project beyond that and hopes to expand it to other areas of the UK.

IMPACT

Between April 2015 and March 2016, 120 volunteers ran 71 workshops that were attended by 1,005 young people, including marginalised groups such as disabled people, the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender community, young people not in education, training or employment, and young people at risk of exploitation.

Analysis of the programme between April and December 2015 found participants of SM2 workshops showed a 59 per cent increase in knowledge on contraception, an 88 per cent increase in knowledge on safer relationships, and a 99 per cent increase in knowledge around sexual exploitation.

Of those involved in the research, 84 per cent were aged 14 to 15 and the gender split was 49 per cent male and 51 per cent female.

An evaluation of participants six months after attending a workshop also revealed 83 per cent felt more confident about where to get support for sexual exploitation and 85 per cent felt more confident in how to have a safer relationship. In addition, 83 per cent said they now know what safe sex means and how to practice it.

By Adam Offord



Bristol City Council

Council uses analytical software designed by Avon & Somerset Police to predict if children and young people are at risk of sexual exploitation

Children and young people are given a score of up to 100 based on risk factors such as domestic abuse, school exclusion and going missing

Analysis shows that the profiling has a 94 per cent accuracy and has helped to identify young people who had not been allocated a lead professional

ACTION

Bristol City Council is using profiling of victims of child sexual exploitation (CSE) to help identify young people whose social and background characteristics put them at greater risk of being exploited than their peers.

In early 2015, the council embarked on a programme to build a "social profile" of the city's

population comprising data held by it on 33 different types of social issue, such as school attendance, drug and alcohol use and social services involvement, for about 170,000 residents, including 54,000 families.

The aim, says Gary Davies, head of early intervention and targeted support at Bristol City Council, was to better understand risk and vulnerability linked to CSE and to align resources to deliver support to the right children and families.

In light of the CSE revelations in Rotherham, Bristol decided it needed to identify young people at risk earlier, and that the best way to do this was to use "predictive analytics".

In partnership with Avon & Somerset Police, the council collected information relating to 150 young people that had been sexually exploited and were using services it commissions, then used police software to analyse this to gain a "comprehensive understanding" of the circumstances and risk

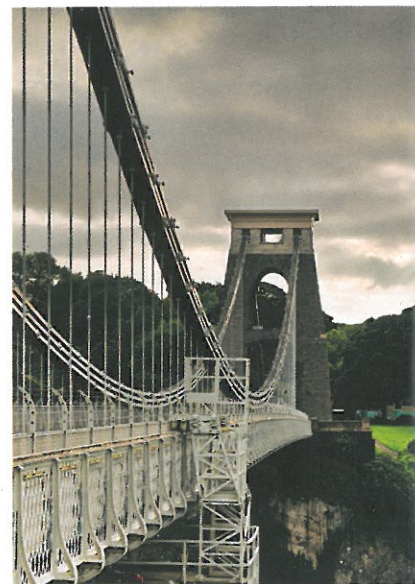
factors in the young people's lives.

Using these findings, they were able to programme the software to recognise those risk factors and search the database of residents - which included around 55,000 young people - to produce a risk analysis for every person.

"You look at the people who demonstrate a behaviour you are trying to understand and you analyse that group and understand all their social demographics and background issues to them," Davies says. "Then you point these at the wider population."

The software scans the database for around 80 different predictors of CSE, including going missing, domestic violence in the home, exclusion and absence from school, and assigns a score out of 100 for each child, young person and family.

Davies says that each predictor also has sub groups. For example, the going missing category includes "never gone missing", "gone missing in the last year", and "has gone missing multiple times".



A programme of social profiling is helping Bristol City Council

The authority will then look at those with a high score and see if they are already being helped by the council or are known to the council but not being actively worked with. If the young person already has a case worker, then the authority can speak to the case worker and say "this person has a type of risk, have you reviewed the case?" says Davies.

If they haven't got someone

The Blast Project

Male-only project supports boys and young men across Leeds, Bradford and Calderdale who have been, are being or are at risk of being sexually exploited

Blast also trains frontline professionals across England to recognise sexual exploitation of boys and young men, often overlooked by mainstream services

And through group work in schools, it helps boys spot the signs of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and stay safe

ACTION

Boys and young men are largely overlooked by CSE services and potential referrers, despite growing awareness of CSE and the fact that

they're likely to make up around one third of victims, according to 2014 NatCen and University College London research.

The Blast Project was started in 2003 by sexual health organisation Yorkshire MESMAC, to support young men in Bradford involved in sex work. Blast initially stood for "Bradford Lads and the Sex Trade", but this was swiftly dropped as it evolved into a CSE service. "We were getting lots of under-18s referred, who were involved with paedophiles and older men, and sometimes, older women," recalls project co-ordinator, Phil Mitchell. "Then people realised they were child sex abuse victims, not sex workers."

Mitchell and three part-time workers currently provide one-to-one support to 43 boys and young men in Leeds and Bradford,

mostly young teenagers, funded mainly by Comic Relief and the Esmée Fairbairn Foundation, and, from next month, by Children in Need. A council-funded full-time Blast worker also supports young men in Calderdale. Clients are CSE victims or deemed at risk, referred mainly by children's services, teachers or parents.

Team members discuss what work they could do with the boy to reduce his risk, such as finding ways of reducing the frequency of him going missing. If he's already a CSE victim, they discuss how they can help him deal with the consequences. The Blast worker requests a meeting with him, sometimes with the referrer, focussing initially on relationship building, through an ice-breaking subject of interest or activity. "In the first session, we'll rarely

mention sexual exploitation, as they're likely to say: 'I'm not at risk, everything's fine'" explains Mitchell.

"Our job is to establish the barriers to working with us and how we can get through them."

Mitchell describes Blast's one-to-one work as "facilitative and educational", using resources developed by the team to reduce boys' risk, by helping them think differently and make positive choices. These include games, DVDs, or possibly introducing him to a peer who has been through similar experiences. "It's all about evidence," Mitchell explains. "A 14-year-old with a 25-year-old girlfriend might ask: 'she's fit, we use condoms, what's the problem?' So we'll Google articles about women grooming young boys and what the outcome has been."



CHRIS GODDARD/SHUTTERSTOCK.COM

Identify children and young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation

g with them the council can
e a worker from the early
am to carry out an
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st local authorities and
s have got a referral system
t we have developed a
ve response where we will
ild up a relationship and
orking with the family,"
says.
is usually done by

brokering with someone who
already knows the family – maybe
the school – so they will approach
the family and say 'look we've got
some help'.

"We don't go to them and talk to
them and say 'look you've got high
risks of CSE'. Normally there are
some risk factors such as children
going missing and not going to
school so the person who gets
introduced will say 'we can provide

support and offer you a key
worker'."

The council will then work with
the family for between three and 12
months depending on their
situation to try and mitigate the
risks the young people in the family
face around sexual exploitation.

Davies says that you can also use
the analytical software to see which
schools are holding young people
with the most risk.

"We have looked at supporting
schools with training and looking
at whether they have their
safeguarding practices in place and
what scores those young people
have got so they are aware and
understand the risks so they can
deal with it," Davies adds.

He says Avon & Somerset Police
data scientist Tom Fowler runs the
CSE predictors through the
database weekly.

"If a child has gone missing
twice in the week then that will
get picked up as the model is run
and their score will go up so you
realise their risk has gone up,"
Davies says.

IMPACT

Across Bristol, the CSE model
scores around 55,000 children
from 0 to 100 based on 80
predictive risk factors that
process up to 17 million records
from various sources. The CSE
predictors are run through the
database weekly.

In the last week of August, 380
children were flagged as being at
higher than average risk of being
a victim of CSE. Of the group
identified, 79 per cent already
had a lead professional linked
with them, allowing the
remaining 21 per cent of cases to
be reviewed and allocated a lead
professional and support where
appropriate.

Analysis of the software by
Avon & Somerset Police, also
shows that the CSE model has an
accuracy level of 94 per cent. The
police and council review the
accuracy of the model by using it
on a confirmed list of CSE cases
to see how many it can find in
that flagged group.

By Adam Offord

s support usually lasts
a year, ending after a
d reduction in risk factors
missing episodes. Boys
entrenched in sexually-
ive situations may need
erm support, with Blast
staying with them at key
their journey out of
ion, sometimes as the
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fitchell cites the example
ie's been working with for
s. He was 13 when Blast
orking with him and the
ongoing grooming and
at least 15 men, some
d. "When he made his
e, we were there,"
recalls. "When he was in
ng evidence, we were
en he argued with his
ve were there. When
re having a go at him,

when his social worker wasn't
there, we were."

Mitchell says boys can be failed
by potential referrers, who tend to
recognise CSE much more quickly
and easily among girls, finding it
harder to see boys as victims. So
Blast trains professionals across
England to identify male CSE
victims, without being swayed by
gender. Mitchell typically delivers a
day's training to professionals
including social workers, police
and teachers, sometimes in multi-
agency groups. "When these
professionals talk about a boy
who's the same age as a girl and
displaying exactly the same
warning signs, they often have a
very different response to him," he
explains. "We ask why they're not
considering CSE when it comes to
the boy. Then there's an awkward
silence. We say the only thing

different is the gender and if you're
going to let that affect your
professional decision-making,
that's gender inequality: the girl
is getting a service but the boy
isn't, despite both being in the
same situation."

Blast has provided one-to-one
support to almost 500 boys since
2003, trained around 7,000
professionals and delivered group
work to around 16,000 young
people in schools and youth
centres, helping them spot CSE
signs and stay safe.

IMPACT

Excellence for Boys, a two-year
Department for Education-funded
project from April 2013, involving
Blast working with a CSE service
and partners in 20 English council
areas to develop more proactive,
male-friendly services, led to the

number of boys offered support
across these areas increasing from
91 to 249.

Of 135 improvements outlined
in 20 action plans, such as
increasing the male-friendliness of
publicity and premises, 71 per cent
had been implemented by the end
of the project, according to the
evaluation report due for
publication this autumn. Of 560
professionals attending training,
90 per cent said it left them better
equipped to work with boys and
young men, with 95 per cent
stating they would no longer be
influenced by gender when
assessing risk.

Of 504 boys and young men
attending awareness training, 95
per cent said they would now be
able to spot the signs of CSE and
make different choices to stay safe.
By Emily Rogers

Project Phoenix

Project Phoenix spreads public awareness of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and trains professionals across Greater Manchester in identifying children at risk

It is a partnership between 10 Greater Manchester local authorities and multi-agency partners to ensure a consistent, joined-up approach to protecting children from CSE and bringing offenders to justice

Support for victims of CSE and those at risk is provided through a specialist co-located multi-agency team in each authority, which assesses risk through a single form shared by all 10 councils

INTRODUCTION

Project Phoenix was established in 2013 in response to high-profile cases including the 2012 sentencing of nine men for grooming and abusing teenagers in Huddersfield. It was set up by Greater Manchester's 10 councils and

partners in a drive to get everyone working together more effectively in protecting children and bringing about successful prosecutions.

Phoenix's annual action plan is produced by a monthly steering group of managers from councils, safeguarding children boards, police and charities, chaired by its manager Damian Dallimore. He reports to an executive board of senior children's and health services directors chaired by Salford Council boss Jim Taylor, with representation from the Police and Crime Commissioner's (PCC) office. Dallimore started his role in January 2014, with funding from the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities.

Dallimore oversees Project Phoenix's communications strategy, which includes the website itsnotokay.co.uk, guiding young people, parents, public and professionals in spotting and reporting CSE. In explaining how agencies work together to support CSE victims under Phoenix, he cites the example of a teenager attending school looking tired and

heavily made-up, smelling of alcohol and perhaps adorned with expensive jewellery. Her teacher spots these signs and the school contacts children's services, which passes the details to the authority's multi-agency safeguarding hub. Any CSE signs result in the case being passed to the specialist CSE team.

This multi-agency, co-located team includes full-time specialist social workers and police, who meet daily to discuss overnight incidents and share updates on high-risk cases. Most teams also include family or parenting support workers and four include specialist nurses, linking police and social workers with health services. The others work in partnership with their authority's lead CSE health worker.

A social worker from the team visits the child to build a relationship, leading to a risk assessment shared by all 10 authorities, which Dallimore says is crucial to ensure a consistent and equitable approach. "Before Phoenix, children with similar

experiences and risks were described in different ways; a 'medium risk' child in one authority could be 'high risk' in another, so they'd get a different service and level of expertise," explains Dallimore.

The Phoenix assessment results in a score out of 60, and a banding of low, medium or high risk. Medium- or high-risk cases will be held by a member of the CSE team, while lower risk cases can be handled by "early help" services in schools and other universal settings, through advice on issues including internet safety and safe relationships.

CSE team caseholders co-ordinate a bespoke plan for the child, brokering whatever services are needed to reduce his or her risk. In cases of family conflict, parental support or family group conferencing can be offered, to rebuild family support networks and equip parents with conflict resolution skills, helping reduce children's missing episodes. Children with drug and alcohol issues can be linked with specialist

Protective carers training

Child protection charity Lucy Faithfull Foundation specialises in preventing child sexual exploitation (CSE) and abuse

It has been delivering a CSE training programme for professionals working with parents and carers of abused children since 2011

The one-day training is the organisation's most requested programme and has achieved a 98 per cent satisfaction rate

INTRODUCTION

Lucy Faithfull Foundation's training days to help professionals support parents and carers – known as protective carers – whose children have been

the victims of sexual exploitation and abuse.

The foundation specialises in working with adults and young people who have sexually abused others, which helps inform much of its training for professionals in relation to the behaviour of perpetrators, and how they groom children.

Lisa Thornhill, a senior practitioner at the foundation, has delivered the protective carers training since its inception. The course covers all aspects of CSE and abuse, and aims to equip social workers to support affected families who may be struggling to access support elsewhere.

The course, Thornhill says, encourages professionals to question and challenge their own beliefs and values, and those of

their colleagues, so they can effectively support and pioneer for young people.

"We know the most vulnerable children can be seen as 'putting themselves at risk'; they can feel blamed for adults taking advantage and exploiting them," she says.

In the training, professionals are helped to empower parents and carers to be effective "external inhibitors" between the child and the offender.

"In order for young people to be protected they need carers who understand the process of child sexual exploitation. Protective carers need to be able to understand how abusers operate in order to know how they can best protect their child."

The course is tailored to individual local authorities

depending on their needs, and to each professional group it trains, including social workers, residential workers, foster carers, police officers, head teachers, childcare staff and drugs workers.

Thornhill says the training aims to help social care professionals to spot the signs of CSE early, and to work with at-risk children, as well as those who have been abused, to prevent further abuse taking place.

"For example, often people aren't aware of 'return home' interviews, which take place when young people have returned after going missing, and are a key risk indicator," Thornhill says.

"As part of the training, we help people to understand whether a young person might benefit from a place outside the county and when that may increase the risk to them."



ALEX DEVERILL

Workers offer support when a child recognises that they are being exploited

and mental health support brokered through the team's social workers or the authority's health lead. "If the child sees the person as a boyfriend or girlfriend, and can't see they're being groomed or exploited, the primary purpose will be to help them that what's going on is abusive," Dallimore says. "If offences are taking

place, police will act on them. Our social workers are fantastic at building trusting relationships, so that when a child does finally recognise the abuse, they're there to support them."

CSE teams update their risk assessment every three months, or following significant events such as a bereavement or school exclusion, continuing support until the risk

has reduced. The 10 authorities act as critical friends to each other: each team is peer-reviewed annually by a multi-agency panel, with representation from the PCC, police and health services, the sexual assault referral centre and a social worker from another authority. They review six open cases, reporting on good practice and opportunities for development. Dallimore chairs a meeting of the project's 10 operational leads every two months, enabling them to share best practice. And CSE teams train frontline staff, including teachers and police response officers, in spotting and reporting CSE.

IMPACT

Case files show the number of medium to high-risk CSE cases across Greater Manchester increasing from 230 in September 2014 to 367 in June this year. But although the number of medium-risk cases more than doubled from 139 to 283, high-risk cases reduced, from 91 to 84.

Dallimore attributes the

increase in medium-risk cases to the training and awareness-raising under way after his appointment in January 2014, helping people spot and report possible CSE. "What I'm most happy about is the number of high-risk cases decreasing," he says. "That tells us our practitioners are better able to identify risk at an earlier stage and stop it escalating, by putting protection around the child."

Launched in September 2014, Phoenix's website itsnotokay.co.uk had received 174,288 hits by July this year, 22,995 of them during its week-long campaign in March to raise awareness of the risks of going missing. New users make up 82 per cent of website visitors.

Crown Prosecution Service data obtained by Dallimore shows the percentage of convictions resulting from North West child and adult sexual abuse cases, excluding rape, increasing from 76.9 per cent in April last year to 81.6 per cent in March this year, the highest rate in England.

By Emily Rogers

says one aspect of the highlights the typical patterns of perpetrators, and groom and manipulate people, and often without the person realising that they are being manipulated. This is supported by up-to-date research and own experience of working with offenders. Social workers also look at how to use interventions, such as sexual harm orders, to disrupt perpetrators," says Thornhill. "So mindful that they can get away with offenders trying to groom vulnerable children and young people."

Another key aspect of the training, Thornhill says, is challenging unhelpful beliefs. "We often hear professionals talking about young people putting

themselves at risk. That terminology gives a clear message to young people that it's them who is responsible for what's happening to them, as opposed to focusing on the adult that's exploiting them," she says.

"The course puts people in a place where they're having discussions about young people's behaviour. Young people at risk often have testing behaviours, so it's important to be able to put that in the context of being a sign of CSE."

"We challenge people's thinking in relation to how we see children. It doesn't matter what their behaviour is, they always have the right to be protected from sexual exploitation."

Trainers also recommend resources, such as apps, designed

to help and support staff and families, and videos that can help start conversations with children around abuse.

Thornhill says the training is much more comprehensive than what social workers receive in their initial training.

"It's really important that everyone is aware and takes responsibility for the child, and thinks of innovative ways we can communicate with children to make sure they are kept safe."

The training has been delivered to a number of local authorities in South East England. It has also recently worked with Bedfordshire County Council and Luton Borough Council to develop a bespoke course with the aim of delivering it on a multi-agency basis area-wide.

It helped develop and apply a working definition of CSE, help staff to recognise the signs of a child at risk of CSE and identify strategies to promote resilience.

IMPACT

Luton Borough Council said the training delivered to them was consistently of a "high standard", and staff reported that it equipped them to support children and young people at risk of CSE.

Figures supplied by Lucy Faithfull Foundation, show 98 per cent of 311 staff involved in training in Bedfordshire between 2014 and 2016 rated the training useful, and 95 per cent said they would be able to apply what they learnt into their current role.

By Jess Brown