What’s going on to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

How local partnerships respond to child sexual exploitation

Sue Jago, with Lorena Arocha, Isabelle Brodie, Margaret Melrose, Jenny Pearce and Camille Warrington
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Acknowledgements

On behalf of the project team
Sue Jago

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This research has been funded by Comic Relief. For over ten years Comic Relief
has been providing support to tackle the problem of sexual exploitation, funding
support services for young people and also work to train the police, teachers
and others likely to be in a position to spot the signs of sexual exploitation. Most
recently Comic Relief worked with its funded projects to advise the BBC on a
child sexual exploitation storyline for EastEnders which began to air to coincide
with Red Nose Day 2011. Comic Relief has been a major source of support for
both local and national initiatives in this area.

The research was carried out by the International Centre for the Study of Sexually
Exploited and Trafficked Young People, based in the Institute of Applied Social
Research at the University of Bedfordshire. Details of the project team are set
out in annex B. A particular strength of the International Centre is its partnership
approach. It has strong links and shared projects with major children’s charities,
including Barnardo’s and NSPCC; with the Office of the Children’s Commissioner
for England; with organisations leading practice in this field, including the Child
Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP); and with key policy makers in
government.

A central objective of the International Centre is to encourage strong links
between research and practice. A key partner in this research has been the
National Working Group for sexually exploited children and young people (the
NWG). The research team worked closely with the NWG to ensure an exchange
of information with its UK-wide network of practitioners, policy makers and
researchers. The NWG will also play a key role in disseminating the results of
this research project.

The research has benefited from the advice and guidance of a Project Advisory
Group (PAG), comprising key policy and practice leads in this area. Grateful thanks
go to all members for their support and, in particular, to Professor Susanne
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John Coleman for acting as ‘critical friends’ to the project.

The research team is also indebted to the generosity of many practitioners who
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Summary

This research project has explored the extent and nature of the response of LSCBs to the 2009 government guidance on safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation. Where the guidance is followed, there are examples of developing and innovative practice to protect and support young people and their families and to investigate and prosecute their abusers. However, the research has found that the delivery of that dual approach to child sexual exploitation is far from the norm. There are three areas that cause particular concern:

- only a quarter of LSCBs in England are implementing the guidance
- young people, their families and carers receive awareness raising in less than half of the country
- the prosecution of abusers is rare and, where criminal proceedings take place, young people’s experience of court is intolerable

These and related findings are set out below together with recommendations on how to ensure that action is taken, locally and nationally, to address this form of child abuse.

Key findings: Coordinating a local response to child sexual exploitation

The findings of the research on how LSCBs implement the guidance in terms of coordinating joint working to develop a child exploitation strategy to meet the needs of the local area are set out in Chapter 4.

1 Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse

A conceptual shift is needed to safeguard older children from abuse outside the home. Sexually exploited young people experience sexual abuse, rape, violence, abduction, intimidation, emotionally subtle and violently explicit coercion. It is child abuse. Specialist staff trained in child sexual exploitation are needed in multi-agency teams.

2 LSCBs are failing to safeguard young people from sexual exploitation

Around three quarters of LSCBs are not proactive in implementing the 2009 guidance. Co-located units, where key practitioners from children’s services and police work together in a team, were identified as an ‘ideal type’ for developing the dual strategy. However, only around 10% of 100 LSCB areas that took part in the research have co-located units in place.

3 Isolated pockets of good practice have been developed, usually as a response to a child death or through the commitment of a local ‘champion’

Despite there being some examples of excellent practice, this occurs in ‘pockets’ across the country often where a child’s death resulted from sexual exploitation or where an individual ‘champions’ the cause. Although not fully implementing the guidance, these areas of active practice demonstrate that young people can be protected from child sexual exploitation and abusers can be prosecuted.

4 Awareness raising and training is piecemeal and inadequate

Both the survey and interview data reported poor levels of awareness raising and training on child sexual exploitation, particularly with young people, families and carers. There is an urgent need for LSCBs, through schools and health practitioners, to extend awareness raising to young people, to their families and to communities overall.

Key findings: identifying child sexual exploitation

The research findings on how to identify young people at risk of or experiencing child sexual exploitation are set out in Chapter 5.

5 Child sexual exploitation takes place in many ways

There is no one model of how young people are sexually exploited and no one method of coercion. While exploitation by an older boy/girlfriend was noted most frequently there were significant levels of peer on peer exploitation reported. Also, while grooming was the main method of coercion identified, there were significant numbers of reports of pressure from a peer who is also sexually exploited, or pressure from other young people in gang-affected neighbourhoods. Technology was widely recorded as a method of coercion, often involving social networking.

6 A high proportion of sexually exploited young people ‘go missing’ while some are purposefully moved within the UK for sexual exploitation usually without intelligence sharing between professionals in different areas

‘Going missing’ was frequently reported and a significant number of young people reported to be moved between areas in the UK for sexual exploitation. Questions were raised about effective information sharing between LSCBs and police to identify and track young people who had gone missing, including those abducted and forcibly moved within the UK.

7 Research is needed to identify the needs of sexually exploited boys and young men, and of young people from BME communities

The ‘snapshot’ data identified the average age of young people identified as at risk or experiencing sexual exploitation to be 15, with the majority of the cases relating to White British girls. The qualitative data raised questions about the local accessibility of services to victims from different Black and Minority Ethnic communities; the nature and understanding of exploitation within different communities; and the need for better awareness of how to assess risk and intervene to support boys and young men.

Key findings: Protecting and supporting young people and families

The findings of the research on how to support and protect young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation, and how to support and involve their parents and carers, are set out in Chapter 6.

8 Current thresholds for intervention through child protection procedures are too high

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DCSF (2009)
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Practitioners’ acceptance of young people’s apparent consent to abuse must be challenged. While useful, the Common Assessment Framework used to assess for child protection interventions does not address thresholds needed to protect young people from exploitation. This is particularly relevant in cases of child sexual exploitation when the young person is over 16 years of age and in cases of boys and young men when false assumptions of experimental sexual activity may conceal abuse, exploitation and violence.

A disproportionate number of sexually exploited young people are looked after by the local authority, and a disproportionate number are placed in residential care: unsafe accommodation increases vulnerability to sexual exploitation.

The research findings raise concerns about the high number of young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation who are accommodated in residential care. Qualitative evidence and previous research shows that, unless specifically trained and managed to prevent child sexual exploitation, residential units can increase a young person’s vulnerability to abuse. It is also concerning that a number – albeit a small number – of young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation are accommodated in bed and breakfast accommodation, despite guidance specifying that this type of accommodation is unsuitable for those at risk.

Sexually exploited young people, including those living with their families, had a number of associated problems.

The ‘snapshot’ data showed that many young people identified as at risk of or experiencing child sexual exploitation also experienced a range of other problems. These problems may have increased the vulnerability of the young people to this form of abuse, or may have occurred as part of that abuse. Difficulties reported included mental health problems, disabilities, disengagement from school, substance misuse and experiences of domestic violence. A significant number of young people were ‘looked after’ and those living with their families were often subject to child protection procedures or known to other practitioners. If professionals addressing these other issues were trained to recognise sexual exploitation, cost-effective interventions with the most vulnerable young people could be developed.

Criminality may be an indicator of child sexual abuse; sexual exploitation of young people in gang-affected neighborhoods may not be recognised and child protection and community safety strategies are rarely ‘joined up’.

Offending behaviour was found to be a factor for a significant number of young people at risk or experiencing sexual exploitation. There was also evidence of gang-associated child sexual exploitation. There is a need for further exploration into the relationship between criminality, peer on peer exploitation and sexual exploitation. This should address the divide between policy targeted to work with alleged offenders, with child sexual exploitation and with community safety in gang-affected neighbourhoods.

Key findings: Disrupting and prosecuting abusers

The findings relating to the identification, disruption, investigation and prosecution of abusers are set out in Chapter 7.

12 Despite the police taking a lead in a small number of areas, LSCBs are not proactive in disrupting and prosecuting offenders.

Less than a quarter of LSCBs demonstrated strategies for both protecting young people from sexual exploitation and prosecuting abusers. In areas that were proactively focusing on offenders, serious questions were raised about covert surveillance and the need for joint work between agencies to ensure that appropriate child protection procedures were maintained. Reviews of prosecutions note that when abuse is identified, the need for intelligence does not override the need to intervene to prevent exploitation and abuse.

13 Few cases come to court and victims’ experiences of the court processes are negative.

The most striking statistic was the low number of cases with convictions, reflecting the rarity of sexual exploitation cases reaching court. Support for the young person during the court process was also noted as lacking. Young people who came forward with previous experience of attending court noted that the process can feel like repeat abuse. The pre-, during and post-court experience was intrusive and they had little confidence that the alleged abuser would be convicted, or prevented from re-abusing them post-sentencing.

Key findings: collecting and managing data

14 Data is not being collected on the nature and prevalence of child sexual exploitation, despite data collection being intricately linked to awareness raising.

Only one LSCB collected and shared data at both agency and LSCB level. Over half of the LSCBs surveyed reported that they were not recording any data on child sexual exploitation. The low level of responses from LSCBs to the ‘snapshot’ data collection reflected the experience of CEOP’s (2011) thematic assessment: Out of Mind; Out of Sight. Collecting data and scoping the extent and nature of the problem in the local area is one way for an LSCB to begin to identify where and how child sexual exploitation takes place and provides intelligence to inform strategic (rather than individually led random) preventative interventions. Chapter 5 outlines methods that can be used to scope the nature and scale of the problem and the report also provides briefing on training (annex G).
Recommendations

These recommendations are made in the context of the overriding need for a conceptual shift in child protection that recognizes child sexual exploitation as a form of child abuse. This means extending the remit of child protection beyond the safeguarding of younger children in the home so that the safeguarding needs of older children with multiple vulnerabilities are also addressed.

1. **There is an urgent need to review how the court process impacts on young people who are victims of child sexual exploitation, learning from the experiences of recent prosecutions**

   The review needs to assess how reforms designed to achieve child-friendly justice have been implemented, particularly in respect to supporting victims of abuse through the court process. The review should consider young people’s experiences as victims and witnesses in recent cases where alleged offenders of child sexual exploitation have been taken to court, and assess the extent of training received by the Crown Prosecution Service, the judiciary, barristers and senior court officials in understanding the dynamics and nature of child sexual exploitation.

   (lead implementation: Ministry of Justice)

2. **All pre- and post-qualifying training for professionals working with young people should include child sexual exploitation**

   It should be a statutory requirement for child sexual exploitation to be on the curriculum for trainee social workers, youth workers, youth offending team practitioners, health workers (primary and secondary care workers); CPS staff and education practitioners including head teachers, teachers, teaching support staff and education social workers. The quantity and quality of input on curriculum for these staff should be inspected, monitored and reviewed.

   (lead implementation: providers of professional pre- and post-qualifying training; progress to be reviewed and assessed through the Department for Education)

3. **All LSCB Chairs and Directors of Children’s Services should receive training on child sexual exploitation**

   This should include awareness raising of the prevalence and nature of child sexual exploitation, of thresholds of abuse and child protection strategies and of their duty to deliver a dual approach to safeguarding children from sexual exploitation: protecting children and prosecuting abusers.

   (lead implementation: Association of Directors of Children’s Services (ADCS), Department for Education)

4. **Inspections of LSCBs should include progress on the dual aim of a child sexual exploitation strategy**

   When inspections of Children’s Trusts and LSCBs are carried out, activities to safeguard young people from child sexual exploitation should be included, addressing multi-agency work between representatives in children’s services, police, education and health.

   (lead implementation: OFSTED with Her Majesty’s Inspectorate of Constabulary)

5. **The Department for Education should lead an assessment of the availability and appropriateness of specific forms of accommodation provided by local authorities in response to the needs of looked after children who have experienced sexual exploitation**

   (lead implementation: Department for Education)

6. **A national database providing information on the nature and prevalence of sexual exploitation should be maintained and monitored by CEOP to be supported to manage the collection and analysis of annual data on the nature and prevalence of child sexual exploitation.**

   (lead implementation: CEOP, with support from the Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO), the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England (OCC), regarding data on young people in gang-affected neighbourhoods, and the Department for Education)

7. **Each LSCB should use the 2009 guidance to develop a multi-agency strategy with a coordinator, a sub group with lead professionals and a service for children and young people**

8. **Each LSCB should use the self assessment tool developed through this research and report on progress for annual audits and inspections**

9. **Each LSCB should work with local partners to develop and implement an awareness raising and training strategy programme that reaches practitioners and, importantly, young people, their families and communities**

10. **Each LSCB should scope child sexual exploitation in their area to identify its nature and prevalence and use the monitoring tool developed through this research to provide an annual return of data to CEOP**

11. **Each LSCB should work towards having a co-located team**

Further detail on these recommendations, including supporting data, is included in a separate Research Briefing, available as a pdf or in hard copy from cara.senouni@beds.ac.uk
1.1 In June 2009 the government published guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation. 1 This was an opportunity for Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to review their approach, consider their policies and develop their procedures. It was also a signal to the many areas yet to address child sexual exploitation that they should begin to do so. However, there was no action plan attached, no plans to monitor or evaluate the implementation of the guidance, and no mechanism to share developing practice.

1.2 The report is the result of a major review of the work of LSCBs since 2009 to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation, exploring the ways in which LSCBs and partner agencies are implementing the 2009 guidance. It does not replicate or replace the guidance. It is a commentary on the level of response and it also aims to be a practical document which will raise awareness of the issue of child sexual exploitation in all its complexities. It highlights the key principles involved in safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation and provides practical information on ways that may help to develop an effective strategy, drawn from interviews with practitioners.

1.3 The over-arching aim of the project has been to ensure the maximum impact of the government guidance by raising awareness of the need for LSCBs to take action, and by facilitating the sharing of information about the way in which LSCBs and partner agencies respond to the 2009 guidance. The research acknowledges the challenges faced in many areas but also focuses on the many examples of practice deemed to be effective, showing how LSCBs and their statutory and voluntary partners can respond to child sexual exploitation.

The case for this research

1.4 Child sexual exploitation seems to exist in all communities – but it is yet to be recognised or addressed in many parts of the UK. Previous research 2 has shown that:

• developed practice is patchy
  Some excellent practice has been developed but it is far from widespread. Many areas are blind to the existence of child sexual exploitation or else reluctant to ‘lift the stone’, lacking confidence in the capacity, locally, to respond to the issues that may emerge. There are only a limited number of effective multi-agency responses to safeguarding children and young people and to disrupting and prosecuting their abusers. There has been no other assessment of the impact of the guidance on local partnerships, or the nature or extent of activity to address child sexual exploitation

• there is no established system for identifying, collecting and recording reliable data on the prevalence of sexual exploitation
  Very few areas are collecting data on a multi-agency basis. Yet information on how many young people are affected, their characteristics and the characteristics of their abusers, and the way in which exploitation takes place, is crucial to the development of effective local and national strategies. Very little data is collated by LSCBs and – until CEOP’s recent thematic assessment 3 – no attempt had been made to produce a national picture of the nature and prevalence of the sexual exploitation of young people. The development of a data monitoring tool, and an assessment of the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation nationally, have been key objectives for this research

• there is a piecemeal approach to training staff to raise awareness and improve practice
  Much is dependent on the willingness and commitment of specialist workers, often in voluntary sector projects – and these have yet to be established in many areas. Training and awareness raising is crucial to ensure that it is recognised by those caring for and working with young people. It is also important because child sexual exploitation presents significant difficulties for practitioners and for all those affected by it:

• the coercive nature of exploitative relationships may hide or confuse the picture for practitioners and young people alike
• the exploitative process may lead young people to display aggressive behaviour that masks their vulnerability

These factors mean that they are not always recognised as young people in need of protection and support. 4 Even when exploitation is recognised there are difficult ‘contradictions’ to be negotiated between the perception of young people as victims and their desire, particularly in the case of older adolescents, to take some control over their lives.

The 2009 guidance is advocated as sound advice for LSCBs and their partner agencies. However, it was recognised, and endorsed by Comic Relief, that research into what can work to tackle child sexual exploitation was needed to support its implementation. Practitioners are keen to share ideas and good practice in a way that avoids the need to reinvent the wheel up and down the country. This research has practical outcomes and is intended to do just that.

Aims and outputs

1.5 The research explored how policy and practice is developing in response to the specific requirements set out in the guidance. It was conducted through contact primarily with LSCBs given their coordinating role on this issue. The key aims of the research were to work with LSCBs and relevant specialist projects to:

• chart services and interventions, by LSCB area, to provide an up-to-date record of ‘who is doing what, where.’ Data has been collected in each phase of the project to build a picture of service delivery and developing practice
  Output: the University of Bedfordshire is working with the NWG to develop this into an online resource for practitioners

• explore existing and developing responses to child sexual exploitation.
  Developing practice has been identified through the survey of...
arrangements in place in each LSCB area and discussions with practitioners and LSCB staff.

**Output:** a self assessment tool has been developed on each aspect of a child sexual exploitation strategy so that LSCBs and partner agencies can assess their progress and focus their future activity effectively

- **suggest how training on child sexual exploitation should be delivered.** This builds on a recent audit of training provision.**6** The overarching aim is to ensure that available training is fully utilised by all services (including those not directly concerned with child protection as their core work) and to identify gaps and further training needs, with recommendations of how they might be met

**Output:** information on training is included at annex G

- **assess the prevalence of child sexual exploitation** by creating a method of collating and recording data on sexually exploited young people. There were two key aims here:

  - the first aim was to ensure that data can be used in each local area to identify the numbers of those known or suspected to have been sexually exploited, to break down the numbers by age, gender and ethnicity and other characteristics, and to explore how the exploitation is taking place. This will help to develop effective strategies to address the issue locally and will provide evidence to determine local priorities and secure the required resources
  
  - the second aim was to develop a national picture of the young people involved to inform national policy and practice

**Output:** the legacy of this research is a tried and tested monitoring mechanism capable of delivering consistent and robust local and national data into the future

- **influence the development of policy and practice.** A range of media is being used to make research findings available to practitioners, senior managers and policy makers

**Output:** throughout the project progress has been reported through a regular newsletter, *What’s Going On?* This included a Special Edition which reported on the interim findings.**7** The findings in this report will be presented at a conference for policy leads and practitioners and other events, including through the University of Bedfordshire Making Research Count programme.**7** The research findings have also been taken into account in the development of the forthcoming national action plan.**8**

### The scope of the research

1.6 The initial intention was that the research should be UK-wide but there were a number of issues that placed practical limitations on the scope of the project. Primarily, the guidance on which this research is based applies to England only. Additionally:

- **parallel research in Northern Ireland**

  Running in parallel with this research was the first local study into the sexual exploitation of children and young people in Northern Ireland.**9** This was undertaken by Barnardo’s Safe Choices with funding from local government. The research gathered information on the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation across Northern Ireland, with a particular focus on the risks facing children in and missing from care (the clientele of the service and a recognised high risk group). The research also gathered information on current responses to the issue, identifying examples of good practice and areas where improvement is required.

  There were clear parallels between the two projects. It was agreed at an early stage that it would be confusing and inappropriate to duplicate the work. The two project teams worked closely together to ensure that maximum benefit was derived from the findings of the complementary studies. This included running a joint roundtable discussion with a range of practitioners.

  It should perhaps be noted that there is no guidance in Northern Ireland specifically addressing the safeguarding of young people from sexual exploitation.

- **Wales**


  During the course of this project the WAG consulted on parallel guidance for Wales. This was published on 12th January 2011.**10** The definition in this guidance is taken from the [All Wales Protocol](http://www.gov.wales.nhs.uk/health/care-assessment-and-welfare/child-protection-wales/protection-of-children-from-abuse/media/17249080/child-protection-protocols-2011.pdf) and specifically addresses the protection of 16 and 17 year olds and also those over 18 who may be vulnerable to sexual exploitation. In terms of safeguarding young people, the guidance is specifically directed at LSCBs and Social services Departments in Wales and includes advice on the use of SERAF. In terms of disrupting and prosecuting offenders, the guidance replicates the DCSF guidance**13** as criminal justice matters are not devolved to the WAG.

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**CROP (2009)**

**Welsh Assembly Government (2008)**

**Welsh Assembly Government (2011)**

**DCSF (2009)**

**Beckett (forthcoming)**

**Welsh Assembly Government (2008)**
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1.0 The format of the report

1.1 The report sets out the methods of data collection and the ethical considerations addressed in Chapter 2 and the analysis of the data and its limitations in Chapter 3. The research findings are set out thematically, to cover the role of the LSCB in the development of a multi-agency response (chapter 4); the scoping and identification of child sexual exploitation (chapter 5); the engagement and support of young people and their families (chapter 6); and the identification, disruption, investigation and prosecution of abusers (chapter 7). Chapter 8 reports on the research findings with regard to collecting and managing data. The final chapter (9) considers how the implementation of the guidance could be strengthened in the context of the current political and economic climate.

1.2 In each chapter relating to the research findings (chapters 4–8) readers will find:

- key statistical findings, also presented in one document at annex A
- a summary of the findings for that element of the strategy
- an exploration of that element of the strategy, with reference to discussions with practitioners and all other relevant data
- a list of resources which may be helpful in the development of this element of the strategy and
- a self-assessment tool to enable LSCBs to assess their progress and identify areas for development. The full self-assessment tool is also presented as one document, with guidance notes, at annex F and available separately from the NWG.16

A note on terminology

1.12 Throughout the report some shorthand has been used to improve the flow of the text. To avoid confusion:

- child sexual exploitation – is always defined as set out in the 2009 guidance: 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 socioeconomic and/or emotional vulnerability17

- the guidance – refers to the guidance published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in 2009 on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, unless otherwise specified

- interview data – refers to the information from interviews with practitioners and LSCB staff in 24 areas

- snapshot data – refers to the information from the records submitted on young people at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation who were being worked with on 6 June 2011

- survey data – refers to the information from the initial surveys completed by 100 (70%) LSCBs in England

- young people – is used to mean ‘children and young people’ and always refers to children under 18 as defined in the Children Acts 198918 and

14 Barnardo’s Cymru was commissioned to deliver training on the new guidance and a commitment was given to a review of its implementation within six months of its publication.

15 As with Northern Ireland the views of practitioners were sought through individual interviews with practitioners and one focus group.

16 All LSCBs and their partners in local agencies should take account of this guidance (p11)

17 Sexual exploitation is not limited to particular geographical areas and all LSCBs should assume that it is an issue in their area (p11)

18 www.nationalstrategygroup.org.uk

19 DCSF (2009) p11

20 Children Act 1989 s 105

21 Children Act 1989 s 16

22 see s 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 and s 16 of the Children Act 1989

23 DCSF (2009) p11

24 Children Act 1989 s 105

25 Children Act 1989 s 16

26 Children Act 1989 s 105

27 Children Act 1989 s 16

28 Children Act 1989 s 105
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2 How the research was carried out

2.1 The project followed a work plan comprising four interrelated strands:
- working with practitioners
- establishing a Project Advisory Group
- gathering and analysing qualitative and quantitative data
- developing a model data collection system.

Working with practitioners

2.2 It was extremely important to the success of this research to ensure that practitioners were aware that it was taking place and the potential benefits to them of the outputs. This was achieved in a number of ways:

- partnership with the NWG
  The partnership between the International Centre and the NWG was a crucial element of the project. It enabled the project team to benefit from the expertise of practitioners and to learn about the particular challenges of delivering an effective child sexual exploitation strategy. The link with the NWG also helped to promote the value of the project with LSCBs and to secure cooperation in many local areas.

- practitioner expert group
  The research process began with a practitioner expert group, held in February 2010. It was attended by 21 professionals representing projects and agencies involved in the most leading edge work in relation to the sexual exploitation of children and young people. The aim of the day was to inform practitioners about the research and to enable the research team to develop a good understanding of the challenges and successes encountered in developing this work.

- seminar on police operations
  During the course of the project a number of major police operations took place. In July 2010 a seminar was held with the police and other agencies directly involved in those operations to discuss the building blocks that need to be in place and to distil developing investigative practice.

- What’s Going On? newsletter
  To extend the reach of the seminars and other events and to keep practitioners in touch with developments, What’s Going On? was published quarterly. The aim was to publish a newsletter rather than just a project update. It has become a platform for practitioners to share news and views, reports on other research in the field, and provides information on new policy and practice initiatives. It also incorporates a useful diary of events. An extensive email circulation list has been developed, including all LSCBs, NWG members and many other interested professionals. Following the end of the project the newsletter will be continued through joint work between the University of Bedfordshire and the NWG.

- ‘proofing’ the recommendations
  Towards the end of the research project (July 2011) small practitioner groups were set up to ‘proof’ the findings and the practice examples from the perspectives of both social care and the police.

What’s going on?

Welcome!

This page and the entire research project is the result of the huge amount of work by the project team, and practitioners and agencies from a range of backgrounds involved in sexual exploitation of children and young people.

The project aimed to improve practice and policy with respect to child sexual exploitation and to provide a basis for future work.

What’s going on?

How the research was carried out

Accessing the report

The full report is available to download only. The Executive Summary is included in the downloadable report and also available in hard copy. Both can be obtained from Cara Senouni at the University of Bedfordshire (cara.senouni@beds.ac.uk).

The project team

Sue Jago

Professor Jenny Pearce

Joint work between the International Centre and the NWG was a crucial element of the project. It enabled the project team to benefit from the expertise of practitioners and to learn about the particular challenges of delivering an effective child sexual exploitation strategy. The link with the NWG also helped to promote the value of the project with LSCBs and to secure cooperation in many local areas.

1 Children Act 2004 e 65.
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Establishing a Project Advisory Group

2.3 One of the first tasks for the project was the establishment of a multi-agency group comprising key partners from government, statutory and voluntary agencies. The aim of the Project Advisory Group (PAG) was to provide a forum for the governance, monitoring and accountability of the research. It also aimed to ensure that the project team was kept up to date with policy and practice developments and any parallel research relevant to the project. It was independently chaired by Professor Susanne MacGregor, a senior research manager with wide experience of project management at University Executive level. The members of the PAG are listed at annex C.

Gathering qualitative and quantitative data

The initial survey

2.4 The first stage of the project was to conduct a brief survey to gain basic knowledge of activity in each LSCB area. A questionnaire was developed and circulated to the Chairs of each of the (then) 144 LSCBs in England. This requested information about how LSCBs discharge their roles and responsibilities with regard to child sexual exploitation, and covered all aspects of the guidance. The survey form is attached at annex D.

2.5 A key consideration was to ensure that the survey would be quick to complete in order to minimise the burden on LSCB staff and to ensure a greater return. However this needed to be balanced with the requirement for a sufficiently comprehensive set of data to provide a useful assessment of the level of activity across the country. To ensure that balance a tick box response was requested on a checklist of issues reflecting the key elements of the guidance with respect to LSCB and partner agency roles. The form also included space to enable LSCBs to provide further qualitative information if they wished to do so.

2.6 The survey forms were first circulated in January 2010 by post with an accompanying letter and stamped addressed envelope to all the LSCB Chairs (there were 144 at the time). An initial deadline of 6 February was set for return of the questionnaire. It was also e-mailed to Chairs (where an e-mail address was available) and copied to LSCB Business Managers (where there was such a post holder and where contact details were known.) E-mail reminders were sent to LSCBs who had not responded to the initial deadline in February and again in March. DCFSF officials wrote to LSCB Chairs to encourage their cooperation and NWG members, other local contacts and Government Office Safeguarding leads were all asked to encourage LSCBs in their areas to return the completed survey forms. A reminder was also included in the project newsletter, What’s Going On? In April all LSCBs who were still to return completed forms were contacted by telephone by a member of the project team. A final request was e-mailed in April, setting a final cut-off date of 14th May 2010. The result of this intensive approach was that a response from 70% of LSCBs (100/144) was achieved.

The practitioner interviews

2.7 The second stage of the project was to identify LSCB areas in which to conduct an extensive interview with key practitioners to develop a more detailed understanding of where and how the guidance is implemented. The data from the LSCB survey was used to identify suitable sample areas. The sample was selected to give a mix of areas, including those that appeared to have a well-established strategy, those that appeared to be well developed in a particular element of a child sexual exploitation strategy; and those that appeared to be actively developing a new child sexual exploitation strategy. Of the 30 LSCBs requested to take part in this part of the project, 24 agreed to do so.

2.8 A schedule of questions was developed to elicit quantitative data and also to provide a structure for qualitative interviews. This included tick box answers to questions about the different areas of responsibility for LSCBs and local partners to deliver a child sexual exploitation strategy, and about the different elements of the strategy itself. Interviews were recorded where prior consent was given (consent was withheld in only one case). In a minority of cases (four interviews) it was not possible to schedule the interview during the visit to the area, and so it was conducted by telephone. For each interview a completed questionnaire was produced together with a record of the discussion. The questionnaire is attached at annex E.

Developing a model data collection system

2.9 An important objective for the project was to develop a simple data collection tool which would enable LSCBs to understand the nature and prevalence of child sexual exploitation in their area. It was also important that this tool should be capable of providing comparable data from across the country so that it could be fed into a national picture of the nature and prevalence of child sexual exploitation. Just as local data is crucial to the development of local strategies, national data is needed to influence the development of policy.

The trial

2.10 In order to ensure that the data collection tool was fit for purpose and easy to assimilate into local practices, the 100 LSCBs who had responded to the initial survey were invited to take part in a trial. Over a quarter responded positively (see 3.9). The tool was developed in collaboration with a Task Group of representatives from areas that had already developed a successful system and representatives of areas keen to be involved in the trial. The Task Group helped to work through the tensions between achieving a comprehensive picture which would require the collection of a wide range of data, and the need to keep the system manageable. The resulting tool addressed eight themes:

• personal information on each young person
• the type of social care intervention
• the nature of exploitation

What’s Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?
• the living situation of the young person
• the education, employment and/or training needs of the young person
• any issues related to the young person’s health, including sexual and mental health
• any issues related to substance misuse and any other risk factors
• criminal justice issues

2.11 It was also important that the tool should be capable of adaptation to work in all areas, regardless of local structures, provided that they were implementing the guidance. The form was provided in two formats (Word and Excel) as the trial areas were at different stages of development and used different methods to record data locally. The tool was accompanied by written guidance and telephone support was also offered in case difficulties were encountered. The tool was made available in March 2011 and trial areas were asked to record any concerns, any local adaptations made to the tool, and any suggestions for future improvements. In the light of these comments the tool was reviewed at a further Task Group meeting.

The national snapshot

2.12 At the same time the trial areas were asked to provide a data return with anonymised details of all young people being worked with on 6th June 2011 to address their risk or experience of sexual exploitation. Through the NWG, agencies in areas not covered by a LSCB trial were also asked to contribute data to the snapshot to get as close as possible to a true picture of the number of young people involved.

Ethical considerations

2.13 Ethical approval was granted by the Institute of Applied Social Research Ethics Committee at the University of Bedfordshire. A confidentiality agreement was drawn up to address the ethical considerations required in respect of the provision of any data and access to any personal/sensitive information. This was consistent with the conditions set out in the Data Protection Act 1998 and with current child protection legislation. Acknowledging the emotional labour involved in researching practice issues related to child abuse, the team ensured that researchers were fully debriefed after interviews.

2.14 The Chairs of all LSCBs in England received information explaining what the research was aiming to achieve, detailing the information the research team would be requesting and confirming that involvement with the project would be on the basis of voluntary consent. LSCB Chairs were also assured that all data would be anonymised. Those who completed the survey and interview participants were informed of the confidentiality policy in advance. This explained a procedure that the researcher would follow in the unlikely possibility of confidentiality having to be broken in order to safeguard young people. No such circumstances arose. Interviews were tape recorded with the participants’ prior agreement.

2.15 The focus of the research was on the activity of LSCBs and partner agencies to implement the guidance. It was decided that it would not be appropriate to include service users in the area interviews but it was considered important to take the views of young people (aged 18 and over) on the findings of the research and the recommendations with regard to services for young people. This was done through the participation project, What Works For Us, based at the University of Bedfordshire. A small focus group met to consider how services can best support and protect young people at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation. Information on confidentiality was provided and consent obtained for participation in the group and for the proceedings to be tape recorded. The views of young people on disruption and prosecution, obtained through a similar focus group set up for CEOP’s thematic assessment, were also shared with the project team.
3 Analysing the data

The initial survey

3.1 Completed survey forms were received from 100 LSCBs in England (100/148) – this 70% return provided a robust picture of the response to child sexual exploitation across the country.

3.2 In the main, the project team had no further contact with the areas that did not return a completed survey form. It was rare for areas to offer a reason for non-completion but two areas – although returning a completed form – replied to say that they considered that the request should have been directed at Children’s Trusts in view of their role in the commissioning and delivery of services for children and young people. One of the areas commented that:

‘the Board does not hold and is not party to information necessary to answer the questions and would probably not be unless this [child sexual exploitation] was being looked at as a specific issue.’

This worrying lack of recognition of the role and responsibilities of the LSCB, as set out in the guidance, was discussed with the then DCSF and the official advice forwarded to the areas in question.

3.3 The data from the completed survey forms was analysed using SPSS. This proved less straightforward than might have been expected but the difficulties are revealing. Responses indicated differences in understanding terminology, and in the way categories of response were interpreted. There was an apparent tendency to ‘talk up’ or, interestingly, to ‘talk down’ the local response to child sexual exploitation. This resulted in some internal contradictions within individual survey forms – for example, an area where most aspects of the guidance had been implemented might rate itself as having made ‘little’ progress. This could sometimes be explained by the amount of knowledge and nature of the role undertaken by the person completing the survey form. However, the issues highlighted in the analysis of the surveys emphasised the need for further, qualitative exploration of the issues.

The practitioner interviews

3.4 The interviews involved 104 practitioners in 24 areas of England. In the main the interviewees were selected by the project’s key contact in the LSCB. The majority of the interviews were with practitioners from statutory children’s services and the police. A significant number also took place with LSCB staff, principally Business Managers. There were a few interviews with other agencies, including health and education. It is important to emphasise, however, that there was a wide divergence in the types of roles undertaken within each agency. Table 1 below illustrates the balance of interviews from each agency.

Table 1 – Number of interviewees by agency

3.5 The interviews generated two sets of data:

• quantitative information from a questionnaire completed by the researcher which summarised individual responses during the interview. This ensured fidelity across the research team to the different areas of the interview. This data was analysed using SPSS and provides a broad picture of individual responses across the different areas. The total number of questionnaires analysed was 104

• qualitative data which provided a detailed insight into the views of individuals regarding their experience of working in the field of child sexual exploitation in their area. Transcripts were analysed thematically by the research team in order to ensure analysis was informed by the researcher’s knowledge of individual areas and experience of the research process there. Transcripts were then subject to open coding using NVIVO software. The total number of interviews subject to qualitative analysis was 89.

3.6 Both sets of data presented certain challenges. The pattern of work undertaken in different areas, and the considerable variation in individual experience, meant that interviewees had more to say on some topics than others. This had implications for the analysis of both quantitative and qualitative data. In relation to the quantitative data, the result was a large amount of missing data. This can be attributed to understandable differences in levels of knowledge and experience. For example, a practitioner involved in direct work with sexually exploited young people was not necessarily aware of the relationship between different agencies and the LSCB. However, to a certain extent, the level of missing data is a matter of concern in that it may indicate a lack of knowledge where knowledge should exist, a lack of understanding of the local strategy, and a lack of progress in relation to the issues explored in the interview.
The national snapshot

3.9 Data was received from data collection trial areas and from other LSCBs who used the trial documents specifically for this purpose, and also from voluntary sector specialist projects using the trial documents (for a full breakdown see table 3 in Chapter 6). Data was also provided from the Barnardo’s central database which collates data from 22 sexual exploitation and missing projects across the UK. In total the snapshot data included records of 1150 young people. Our intention had been to limit the data to England only and only LSCBs in England were approached to provide data. However the return from Barnardo’s included their services across the UK. Only data relating to the 1066 cases in England were included in the final count.

3.10 The returns were anonymised, using a personal identifier applied locally, to ensure that the data was protected. This caused some difficulty when returns were completed by individual agencies in the same area. There were few areas where local data had been collated by the LSCB so that, elsewhere, there was a possibility of duplicate records. Significant efforts were made to cross-reference the records submitted by different agencies in the same area. All potential duplicates were excluded from the final count.

3.11 Some of the returns were completed only in respect of basic personal data. This was generally because, without a data monitoring tool in place, it would have been too labour intensive to trawl files for the other information requested. The areas involved had also recently set a good deal of time aside to provide data for the CEOP thematic assessment. In those areas that had attempted to fully complete the return, including the trial areas, not all the data requested was known or available. There were also occasional misunderstandings in interpreting the requests for data.

3.12 The low number of returns and the extent of missing data means that the findings, set out in Chapter 8, need to be treated with some caution. However, the data provides broad indications of the characteristics of young people experiencing sexual exploitation, and the way in which that exploitation takes place. The findings have been strengthened by triangulating the data with the interview data, and with the findings from both the NWG survey and the CEOP thematic assessment.

3.7 The qualitative data is also challenging in its richness and quantity. It provides an impressive testimony to the intricacy and complexity of the day-to-day experience of practitioners working in this field. The challenge has been to capture and communicate the different perspectives presented within and between areas.

3.8 Each member of the research team carried out interviews and each researcher thematically analysed the data to identify the main emerging themes. These findings were then cross-referenced between the research team and with data from the NVIVO analysis.

Spending cuts

3.13 This project was undertaken at a particularly difficult time in terms of the economic climate. The project team was mindful that the initial survey forms were completed by LSCBs, and interviews undertaken with practitioners, before decisions on spending cuts had been taken. In order to understand how those cuts may impact on the delivery of a child sexual exploitation strategy, the team contacted the 24 areas in which interviews had taken place to ask:

- have there been local authority spending cuts to services directly involved in the delivery of the child sexual exploitation strategy?
- have there been local authority cuts to other services that may have an impact on the delivery of the CSE strategy (for example, cuts to asylum teams or other areas of work that may relate, or cuts to training budgets)?
- what has been/is expected to be the effect on the delivery of the strategy?

The information received has been reflected in Chapter 9.

A coda to this section

3.14 The project team were mindful of the additional burden they were placing on those practitioners willing to give their time and share their expertise through interviews and seminars. However, many of our interviewees and seminar participants commented on how valuable they found the process to be. Many found that it helped to discuss the issue to clarify in their minds where progress had been made and where further action was required.

3.15 Interviewees found the question schedule to be a useful ‘checklist’ and the interview process to be therapeutic. Those who attended seminars welcomed the opportunity to share their thoughts with colleagues from around the country, and to hear of developments elsewhere. It was clear that this work carries a considerable emotional cost for those working directly with abused young people and that practitioners welcome the opportunity to share their feelings in a safe environment. This report considers the issue of emotional support in Chapter 7.

3.16 The focus of the project means that young people were not themselves a primary source of data for this research. However representatives from the What Works for Us group were invited to respond to some of the findings around practice and to share reflections on effective services. In addition the on-going consultation work of the group and comments from the group’s newsletters are highlighted throughout this report. It is worth noting that in all such work there is a tension between the sensitivity of the subject matter, young people’s needs for protection and the commitment and desire expressed by all participants to be involved in influencing change. Throughout
the work of What Works for Us, including contributions to this project, members have fed back on both the difficulties and value associated with discussing these issues. As the words alongside highlight, consultation work with young people on this subject must be purposeful and forward facing. Feedback from young people and practitioners highlights that such initiatives can be experienced positively, providing peer support, opportunities to be actively listened to and developing confidence. However safeguarding and young people’s individual needs must always take priority over any group, project or research goals.

4 Coordinating a multi-agency response

A shared responsibility, an integrated approach

Key statistics on LSCB coordination of partnerships
- 67% of (89) interviews considered child sexual exploitation to be a priority for their LSCB
- 55% of (100) LSCBs surveyed reported a specific protocol in place
- 38% of (100) LSCBs surveyed reported a sub group in place
- 43% of (100) LSCBs surveyed had identified lead professionals
- 25% of (100) LSCBs surveyed reported that a coordinator was in place
- less than 10% of areas have co-located units in place, or planned
- 24% of (89) interviews reported that young people had been involved in the development of the strategy

There were no plans:
- in 13% of (100) LSCBs surveyed for a specific protocol to be developed
- in 43% of (100) LSCBs surveyed to review their protocol in the light of the 2009 guidance
- in 33% of (100) LSCBs surveyed for a specific sub group to be set up
- in 21% of (100) LSCBs surveyed for lead professionals to be identified
- in 64% of (100) LSCBs surveyed to appoint a coordinator

Summary of findings

4.1 Key principles in the guidance include ‘an integrated approach’ and ‘a shared responsibility’. Joint working is needed to deliver a strategy that tackles prevention, protection and prosecution. The guidance suggests that joint working needs to be underpinned by:
- a strong commitment from leaders and senior managers
- a shared understanding of the problem of sexual exploitation
- effective coordination by the LSCB

4.2 The survey findings, reinforced by the interview data, show that LSCB coordination is lacking in many areas. It also shows that this can have a significant impact on securing the commitment of leaders and senior managers and on the development of a shared understanding of the problem of child sexual exploitation. The leadership role of the LSCB is seen as crucial to create a strong and sustainable infrastructure to support the work of partner agencies. This chapter explores local responses to each of

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people... depends on effective joint working between different agencies and professionals that work with children and young people (p16)

‘it is not enough for one or two agencies to work hard “within their own sphere.”’

Taylor Brouse (2002) p18

4 from What’s Going On? An Interim Report available from cara.senouni@beds.ac.uk
5 from What’s Going On? An Interim Report available from cara.senouni@beds.ac.uk
6 DCFS (2009) p6
7 Derby SCB (2010) p6
8 Taylor Brouse (2002) p18
9 DCSF (2009) p6
the LSCB responsibilities set out in the guidance, and considers the involvement of different agencies and groups in local partnerships.

### 4.3 The coordinating role of the LSCB

The survey data showed that LSCBs have not always scoped the presence of voluntary organisations, or have chosen not to work with them. The ‘trick’ to delivering a cohesive response to young people is for a wider safeguarding role to complement more formal child protection procedures so that voluntary and statutory agencies work in partnership, playing to each other’s strengths, to deliver a cohesive response to young people. For all agencies involved in the local partnership, success depends on acknowledging the need for a broader safeguarding approach. This is discussed more fully in Chapter 6. What is explored in this chapter is the leadership role played by the LSCB to harness the strategic commitment of all agencies to make that happen.

**The coordinating role of the LSCB**

4.4 The guidance is clear that a key role for the LSCB is to develop an effective partnership to deliver a child sexual exploitation strategy for the local area. The interview participants gave a number of reasons as to why this leadership role was so important:

- **neutrality**
  It was suggested that the ‘neutral’ lead of the LSCB could ensure a genuine partnership approach. Without it:
  ‘one group leads and if you’re not careful it skewes the work. It needs to be everyone coming to the table with an equal contribution’
  
  The leadership of the LSCB can also be important to ‘manage’ the relationship between the voluntary and statutory sectors because, as one interviewee put it: ‘no-one means to make life difficult, it’s just the nature of it – it’s the difference between voluntary and statutory’

- **commitment**
  The leadership of the LSCB was also considered important to ensure commitment from senior staff to the delivery of the strategy. Without that strategic lead:
  ‘it ends up as buy-in and commitment just at a practitioner level’
  
  but
  ‘if it was under the Safeguarding Board you’d have access to senior managers in the services and there will be more awareness about it’

- **developing a strong and sustainable infrastructure**
  Ensuring strategic commitment enables an appropriate infrastructure to be developed to support an effective and sustainable response to child sexual exploitation. In some areas a situation was described in which a strategy was being developed by one or more agencies independently of the LSCB.

It was reported that it was not uncommon for such action, however limited, to provide an ‘excuse’ for LSCBs to avoid their responsibilities because:

‘the LSCB feels it’s taken care of quite well so they don’t need to worry about it’

Interview participants – including those practitioners driving forward this work as local ‘champions’ – felt the involvement and leadership of the LSCB to be crucial otherwise the work is led by:

‘a number of committed individuals who are allowed to follow their initiative rather than owned both within and across agencies.’

This issue had already been recognised. A common pattern had been identified in which local ‘champions’, by dint of their passion and enthusiasm, managed to establish a response to child sexual exploitation but without benefit of an LSCB-led infrastructure to ensure that the work was sustainable. Two outcomes have been observed. Either (a) the strategy founders when the ‘champions’ move on or (b) ‘champions’ become overwhelmed as caseloads grow and they are underresourced to meet the need.

- **raising awareness and positioning the issue as a local priority**
  The research showed that these were key factors depending strongly on LSCB leadership because:
  ‘what’s important is how the guidance is embedded and how the Safeguarding Board takes responsibility. It’s about keeping it on the agenda against competing demand’
  
  A high number of interview participants (67%) considered that this was a priority for their LSCB. This should be expected from areas selected because they had a good or developing track record in this area. However, there was only one area where all interviewees agreed that it was a priority. This means either that the LSCB priority is not as strong as at first appeared, or poorly communicated to local practitioners.

4.5 The research found that the leadership of the LSCB was considered to be extremely important. It was not seen as just a bureaucratic arrangement but essential to bring together key agencies in a way that supports effective joint working.

**Developing a specific protocol**

4.6 The guidance sets out the need for LSCBs to coordinate the development of specific protocols to address the challenges of responding to child sexual exploitation. Although over half of the LSCBs surveyed had a specific protocol in place, half of them are likely to be out of date as they had not been reviewed since the guidance was published in 2009. On that basis we can only be confident that just over a quarter of LSCBs in England are working with up-to-date protocols.
4.7 The survey data suggests that the existence of a protocol is an important indicator of activity to address child sexual exploitation. It shows an association between having a protocol and also having:

- identified lead professionals
- appointed a coordinator
- a specialist team in place

There were worrying discrepancies between interviewees in the same areas with respect to the existence of a protocol. For example in one area an interview participant told us that:

‘there is a strategy around children and young people who go missing but there isn’t a protocol, as far as I’m aware, around CSE’

while a colleague in the same area advised that:

‘it’s being revised currently but I’ll get a copy for you.’

As was observed in a recent Serious Case Review, there is not only a need for policies and procedures to be in place but:

‘they also need to be known and implemented… staff were not always aware of them, and/or did not use them in a timely way.’

4.8 The development of an up-to-date protocol specifically addressing child sexual exploitation was seen as only the start to addressing the problem. The challenge of getting the strategy ‘off the page’ was acknowledged by many interviewees. Without ‘flesh on the bones’ the procedures simply:

‘re-state what the guidance states but won’t say how it’s going to happen or who’s going to do that’

because the danger is that:

‘[it] doesn’t necessarily help to keep young people safe…. as long as it’s following a procedure then we’re fine, we’ve ticked the box, we’ve had a strategy meeting, but if you walk away from that strategy meeting and nothing’s been put in place then it’s a tick box exercise… there’s a long way to go.’

The role of the sub group

4.9 It is a dedicated sub group that can get the strategy ‘off the page.’ The role of an LSCB sub group is as a ‘driver,’ bringing together all the key agencies to develop the protocol into an active strategy that meets the demands of sexually exploited young people. The data showed that areas with sub groups were more likely to have identified lead professionals and also to have a specialist team in place. Certainly where sub groups had been set up interview participants reported that they were much valued:

‘I felt very supported by those people because […] I didn’t feel I was carrying the flag of the campaign on my own.’

Nevertheless interviewees also cautioned that the mere existence of a sub group is not enough. Analysis of the data suggests some ‘essential criteria’ for success:

- representation from all relevant agencies
- full commitment from each of the agencies represented
- a focused remit

4.10 The research found that the right agencies were not always represented, or not on a consistent basis:

‘so there’s a group there but is it the right group, is it doing the right thing, is it going to have any impact?’

Key partners are considered in 4.16 – 4.24.

Without that commitment, it was said to become ‘like a watchdog without teeth.’

- an open-ended

The remit of the sub groups varied greatly. While there were a number of sub groups dedicated solely to sexual exploitation a common model linked it with work on missing children:

‘there is a strand around young people who go missing, young people who are sexually exploited and young people who are at risk of gang activity, and some of those overlap, there’s a common core…there is a sense that perhaps [there should be] a more generic work stream around vulnerable people because there’s some duplication in processes.’

In other areas, sexual exploitation was considered at sub groups with a far broader remit. The research found that child sexual exploitation could be lost from the focus if the remit is too broad, particularly if this meant that experts on sexual exploitation were not attending, or were in the minority. As a result at least one area is moving back to a specific missing and child sexual exploitation brief.

- open-ended

The sub groups included fixed term task groups and open-ended groups. The findings suggest that a short-term commitment by LSCBs may not be adequate:

‘it was almost like, you’ve got your procedures now, you don’t need to do any more work now – but it’s just one tiny part of it. It’s getting all the rest of the systems in place to make the procedures work.’

- LSCB coordination

In other areas the issue of child sexual exploitation was considered to be adequately covered by a multi-agency group sitting outside the LSCB. In some cases this was a sub group originally set up by the LSCB but later ‘faded off.’ For example:
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

4.11 The LSCB survey found that lead professionals for specific agencies tended to be those who attended the sub group. This works well with a strong, appropriately focused and well-attended sub group. However where sub groups were non-existent lead professionals had yet to be identified:

‘there is a practitioners’ forum but it’s attended in a very ad hoc way with no lead representatives from the different agencies.’ 44

The identification of lead professionals did not always mean full commitment.

The findings suggest that it is frequently an additional role placed on top of an existing workload and rarely adequately resourced:

‘there are leads in all agencies but sometimes it’s just another job on top of other jobs.’ 46

4.12 In most areas lead professionals had been identified from the police and children’s social care but less commonly from education, health and other agencies. This chapter will go on to consider the range of agencies that need to be involved, and the challenges involved in bringing them to the table (paragraph 4.16). What is particularly concerning is that, more than ten years on from the publication of the original guidance, even children’s social care can be ‘missing’ from the table:

‘the area where a lead professional has not been identified is in social care…this has been because every social worker works on individual case loads and works in area groups…it’s a great massive loophole.’ 50

The role of the coordinator

4.13 The guidance does not currently require a coordinator to be appointed but does make clear that local arrangements require coordination. Previous research found that where a coordinator had been identified it proved to be a turning point, in particular for the gathering of information.12 This research found that, disappointingly given the potential value of the role, coordinators were in place in only a quarter of the LSCBs surveyed. A number of reasons were given for not appointing or identifying a coordinator. Two areas cited a lack of resources, including the following interview participant:

‘there is no way we are going to do that – we can’t even recruit social workers. It’s not very high up in priority.’ 52

One LSCB survey response simply commented that:

‘it is not a requirement.’

A further two areas had previously appointed a coordinator on a fixed-term basis and had no plans to extend that role. The interview discussions suggested that this had had disastrous consequences:

‘[two areas] had their dedicated coordinator and they no longer exist and I think that what I am picking up is because they no longer exist, it’s all just gone completely.’ 64

4.14 It emerged from the interviews that, where a coordinator post existed, it was rare for it to be a dedicated post. The role had often been assumed by LSCB officers, or sub group or panel chairs, on top of existing responsibilities. As with many lead professionals (para 4.10), it was an add-on to their existing role. Again, this can be problematic because resources are rarely provided to support the role. In areas with no coordinator and no specialist project, there is no apparent focus for this area of work.

Managing and sustaining effective partnerships

4.15 The research findings show that forming a functioning multi-agency partnership that genuinely supports joint working is a challenge – but a challenge that must be met if local areas are to be capable of effectively safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation and bringing their abusers to justice. This chapter has considered the importance of strategic commitment to the strength of a partnership, and the need to manage the relationship between voluntary and statutory sectors, and between statutory agencies that have a different ethos and culture. There were also other factors impacting on the coordination and development of a successful partnership that emerged from the interview data:

• the size of the area

This can make it difficult to ‘manage’ the issue:

‘it’s a big county with a big Safeguarding Board. There is a general issue about understanding performance issues and what’s going on in services. Probably common to all but the smaller unitaries’ 44

• rural areas

The difficulties of size were exacerbated in rural areas where distance affects both resources and professional relationships. The sparse population also impinges on the availability of services:

‘multi agency working is not working – there’s a long way to go here.’ 44

4.16 Another issue that affected multi agency working was the availability of time:

‘it is not a requirement. ’

One LSCB survey response simply commented that:

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What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

3.45 It’s pretty hard to service an area this size… if you’re taking a day to go and visit a young person and come back, that’s significant, whereas in an inner city things are either at hand or better resourced and very often agencies are near each other in a way that doesn’t happen here. \[146\]

- resource availability

Resources were also often cited as an issue, with frustration that all too often services were tailored to resources rather than to need:

‘are we just managing a problem or are we looking upon those young people as valued members of the community? It’s a sad situation when you have to look at resources. It’s equally important to safeguard a child as it is to prosecute a perpetrator. You take a risk by not properly resourcing your multi-agency team.’ \[123\]

By contrast, in one area where a strong partnership was in place the message was very different:

‘we will match priorities with resources. There is a partnership commitment to it.’ \[134\]

Key partners

4.16 The research shows that police and children’s social care are the two agencies most likely to be involved in joint working. However, this was not inevitably the case and there were some significant factors relating to the recognition and awareness of child sexual exploitation, reinforced by organisational factors, which both agencies struggle with in some areas.

The police

4.17 In the case of the police it was recognised that a conceptual shift needs to be made as child sexual exploitation requires a very different way of working to traditional policing:

‘it takes a certain type of person from a police point of view. You’ve got to have a certain mind, got to be victim led. That takes some getting your head round it.’ \[120\]

Safeguarding those at risk of sexual exploitation is rarely a matter of responding to a formal complaint. For this reason a number of police interviewees suggested that it does not fit comfortably within a child abuse investigation unit (CAIU) which is traditionally reactive in style. Indeed child sexual exploitation has rarely been included within the remit of CAIUs which focus on familial abuse. ‘Child prostitution’ may have been addressed in old-style vice units but the current broader understanding of sexual exploitation means that it has no natural ‘home’ in police organisational terms. This has caused considerable frustration for other agencies who have struggled to identify police officers willing to take on this work. The relatively recent introduction of public protection units (PPUs) has provided a way forward which has a clear advantage in terms of linking the issue with work on missing people, domestic abuse and other issues affecting vulnerable people. The interviews suggested that this is already working well in some areas. This is explored more fully in Chapter 7.

4.18 As with all agencies there were issues for the police about commitment at a strategic level. The interview data suggests that proactive interventions often rely on the commitment of individual staff:

‘we have some very dedicated police officers but because they are not given this as a priority target it relies on their good will and their personal qualities.’ \[146\]

Real frustration was expressed by some of those dedicated police officers:

‘I’ve tried to push it and explain how serious it is but its “mrmrmr, yeah, thanks… but we’ll leave it at that.”’ \[141\]

The role that the police can play has been supported nationally by a strong ACPO lead. From 2004 when ACPO guidance first promoted ‘a proactive approach’ \[146\] there has been strategic leadership shown. The autonomous nature of police forces means that it is far from straightforward to deliver a consistent response across England but messages are clear and unambiguous from the current ACPO leadership. This strategic leadership has not been in evidence in other agencies.

Statutory children’s social care

4.19 For statutory children’s social care, the barriers and challenges are similar to those experienced by the police. There was a lack of awareness and recognition of child sexual exploitation, coupled with procedures that are traditionally based on familial abuse:

‘they’ve been sexually exploited, it’s not by somebody in the family so it’s nothing to do with social care.’ \[143\]

A child protection approach has been described as:

‘mechanistic… it can’t deliver that intensive and long-term support.’ \[144\]

Interventions designed to protect young children from neglect and abuse in the home are based on time limits, thresholds for intervention and an inherent assumption that one or more of the parents and carers are failing or complicit. Interview data suggested that current child protection procedures do not support the proactive and long-term approach needed to work with young people at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation. The situation is made worse by the fact that social workers already hold excessive caseloads and inevitably feel cautious about taking on more work where there are no quick outcomes and not always a clear progression. This is a real issue because:

‘you often need to be involved with people longer than that, you need to have seen them more than that before you get any form of disclosure.’ \[146\]
'I didn’t want to tell the truth when Streetreach staff first helped me because even though I knew I was in a harmful situation I still thought the men cared about me and wasn’t ready to leave them. But the staff didn’t give up on me and Streetreach was a place I could go to any time of day. I did lots of activities...’

Voluntary sector specialist workers

4.20 While statutory children’s social care has been constrained by procedures, priorities and a resource crisis, the role of the voluntary sector has been of great significance in many of the areas delivering an effective child sexual exploitation strategy. The interview data suggests several reasons why the voluntary sector has been well suited to taking on this task:

- **Flexibility**
  Voluntary sector specialist projects are more able to adopt the flexible therapeutic model to which this group of young people is most likely to respond well (explored in Chapter 6). This is contrary to the short-term nature of many social care interventions:
  ‘you always feel people think “is that all?” – they’re waiting for something more and actually its quite a lot to even start to develop a relationship with young people who are so damaged and so disaffected.’

They are also more likely to be able to provide support at an early stage, from the point of initial identification of risk, to disclosure (if this takes place), and throughout any judicial process and beyond to safeguard young people from re-victimisation. Given the length of time it may require to support young people with a multiplicity of needs, and the slow progress of criminal investigations, this often means continuing to work with young people after they have turned 18. This is a further challenge for generic services. Offering support to young adults can be easier for the voluntary sector:

‘the cut off point for them [statutory services] could cause us some difficulties and that’s why we go up to 25 so that we can pick up those older young people who are equally as vulnerable but by virtue of their age can’t necessarily access a service and one of the things we do is to link into key adult services to alert them to our existence.’

However it is worth noting that funding restrictions and constitutional constraints can mean that not all voluntary agencies can support young people beyond the age of 18, leaving many cases of victims of child sexual exploitation unsupported in the transition to adulthood.

- **time and other resources**
  Voluntary sector specialist projects do not have the same caseloads as statutory social workers and often have the time and the staff (and ideally the consistency of staff) to engage intensively with young people in a key worker role. This time commitment is crucial – one dedicated service reported 600–800 direct contacts with one young person over a period of 14 months.

LSCBs can... be a key link between voluntary and statutory agencies (p26)

- **expertise**
  It requires expertise to address the complex needs of sexually exploited young people. The voluntary sector has led the way in developing practice to address child sexual exploitation and many workers are trained to use a range of creative approaches to identify and engage with young people. Those interviewed talked about the ‘pull’ of the abuser and the need to explore different ‘hooks’ that might go some way to replacing that ‘pull’, encouraging young people to engage with their service:

‘...sometimes to have the space to go and do a bit of artwork or some baking or something without anybody talking about any of the stuff is really good. And they might want to do that for six months before talking, and that’s fine... It has to be led by the young person... it’s what works for them really and who they want to talk to.’

Current resource restrictions on statutory services, and the procedural issues already considered in this chapter, mean that it is not usually possible for social workers to engage with young people through these ‘youth work’ approaches. However, it should be noted that the voluntary sector is also facing cuts in the current climate and has always struggled for consistent funding.

- **accessibility**
  Voluntary sector specialist projects are often located in premises that are more attractive and accessible to young people. Arrangements will often include a drop-in centre. Young people can make contact without the need for a formal appointment and will generally be welcomed into a friendly environment.

- **trust**
  The most important advantage is that young people are more likely to trust someone from a voluntary sector project than a police officer or a social worker who they may fear or resent. This does not necessarily mean that all contact needs to be through the voluntary sector – they can be a useful conduit:

‘the voluntary sector are pivotal really... if they have a negative experience, and quite often they have, the statutory agencies are not always welcome. The voluntary sector come along, introduce themselves, and explain they do work along with the police and social workers. And obviously our names are dropped in. It can come to a point where there is a level of rapport, confidence and they’ll say “look I really feel you need to speak to our colleague” and that barrier has been broken down. Jeans and T-shirts too. The voluntary sector don’t wear suits and ties.’

4.21 The overwhelming message from those interviewed was that it did not matter who delivered direct work with young people so long as they are properly trained and skilled; they have the time and space to deliver the work; and their role is recognised by the LSCB and supported by the local authority. However, the reality of the current challenges faced by statutory social workers led many interviewees to believe that the direct face-to-face work
with the young person needs to be taken on outside their caseload:

‘the mainstream is inundated with cases of young children – that’s the reality – our approach is that we can do this on your behalf, and we understand the risks.’

Health and education

4.22 The interview data suggests that an effective response to child sexual exploitation relies on a wide multi-agency partnership. Both health (primary health care, sexual health and CAMHS) and education (schools in particular, but also those working on truancy and exclusions, and on anti-bullying) have crucial roles to play. However the research has found that it is sometimes difficult to get them to the table. This is often an awareness raising issue. In areas where the dynamics of sexual exploitation are well understood within those agencies, and a broad safeguarding approach is coordinated by the LSCB, health and education practitioners are more likely to recognise the relevance and importance of their contribution to the partnership.

Other key partners

4.23 Other agencies that can – and do in some areas – make an important contribution include:

• CPS
  The guidance states that ‘whilst the CPS is not a statutory member of LSCBs, they should be invited to contribute to the development of procedures.’ There was no evidence that this had actually taken place although many areas would welcome greater involvement from the CPS

• housing
  This is an area that is often forgotten as it is assumed that children in care are accommodated, and assumed that children in parental homes are safe. However, for older teenagers housing can be a key concern both as a risk factor and in terms of ensuring safety and enabling them to move on from dependency on an abuser. It is crucial that housing agencies should be involved in the development of the strategy so that the partnership understands the contribution that they can make.

• youth justice
  A number of young people may be involved in criminality, and this may be linked to their vulnerability to sexual exploitation, or may be involved in criminality as a result of the process of exploitation. A recent UCL study found that almost 40% of victims of child sexual exploitation identified criminality as a result of the process of exploitation. A recent UCL study found that almost 40% of victims of child sexual exploitation identified criminality as a result of the process of exploitation. At the same time they proactively investigate those suspected to be abusers. This way of working directly responds to the ‘dual approach’ set out in the guidance. The model is not specifically required in the guidance and so there were no questions about it in the survey or in the interviews. It also means that it has not been seriously considered as an option in many areas. However, in discussion, interview participants frequently put forward this model as a major contributory factor to the success of their partnership. The data revealed a significant difference between the achievements of agencies working together in co-located multi-disciplinary teams and those where partnership working is yet to develop ‘off the page’ of the local strategy.

• youth services
  Having a potentially crucial role to play in the direct support of vulnerable young people, it is vital that youth services contribute to the development of the strategy to ensure that they are involved appropriately, particularly as they are also most likely to be suffering from spending cuts.

4.24 Other important contributions to help develop procedures and practice within local partnerships can be made by young people themselves, and by their families. Working with young people, and working with parents and carers, is explored in detail in Chapter 6.

The value of co-location

4.25 The interview data has shown that the most successful organisational model is where specialist staff from a range of agencies work together in a dedicated multi-agency unit. This not only provides a referral point for all those professionals with concerns about young people but ensures that those concerns are dealt with by staff with an understanding of child sexual exploitation. In some areas this is achieved through a ‘virtual team’; elsewhere the teams share premises.

4.26 Co-location is a model in which specialist staff from key agencies, both voluntary and statutory, share premises and also share the aim of providing a service that responds to the safeguarding and practical needs of young people at risk of, or experiencing, child sexual exploitation. At the same time they are most likely to be suffering from spending cuts.

4.27 Interviewees in co-located units recalled how difficult life used to be:

‘whilst you have got professionals working in silos, in different buildings with different IT structures and systems, you’re always going to have a bit of a hill to climb in terms of getting proper timely exchange of relevant information.’

Those still struggling expressed their aspirations:

‘we all work very well together…but to be able to be in one location where we are able to be effective and immediate – a one stop shop would be on my wish list…’

because

‘…a lot of what the young people bring, its immediate.’
And in another area:

‘I want to keep reminding people that that’s the vision.’

4.28 Co-located units are known to be in place, or planned, in less than 10% of areas. This echoed the findings of previous research. A key factor for success is that the close working relationships engendered between co-located agencies enable practitioners to develop a valuable understanding of the capabilities, capacity and working practices of their partners. For example, it increases the ability of police officers to adopt a ‘softer’ approach to their interactions with young people and helps those in welfare agencies to develop a more robust approach to gathering evidence:

‘on any multi-agency team the individual organisations have got their own priorities – but we are all enthusiastic and committed and we have the same goals. The police aren’t like police but more like social workers. There might not be an investigation but we are all still thinking “what can we do?” We do work well together.’

The value of co-location was certainly recognised in practical terms:

‘we’re all in one location so information and intelligence is shared on an hourly, daily basis,’

and:

‘the only way you get that leap is through these specialist teams, when you’re sitting in one another’s seats all day.’

Crucially, its value was also expressed in terms of what co-located units have been able to achieve:

‘to only lose two cases that have gone to court I think really is testament to the work, the value of the work, the value of co-location, the value of the work that goes on with social care and health and education and the police working together to try to protect victims, because you only have to look at the overall conviction rate for rape in this country, it’s ludicrous.’

Self assessment checklist to coordinate joint working and develop a child sexual exploitation strategy

- The LSCB has fully signed up to the 5 principles underpinning a CSE strategy
  - a shared responsibility
  - an integrated approach
  - a proactive approach
  - a child-centred approach and support for parents and carers
  - recognising criminality
- The LSCB supports a sub group to drive forward work to tackle child sexual exploitation
- All key agencies are represented at the sub group, lead professionals are identified and the expectations of each agency clearly understood
- Child sexual exploitation is championed at the highest level in partner agencies
- An up-to-date and specific child sexual exploitation protocol has been agreed and disseminated, focussing on identification, engagement, disruption and prosecution
- The child sexual exploitation protocol is aligned with other relevant strategies
- There is a coordinator in post whose function is recognised in the local area so that referral routes for concerns are widely understood
- Local partners have agreed to share all relevant information and there is a process for safeguarding children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation

Resources

Sample child sexual exploitation protocols, information sharing protocols and other key partnership documents are available from the NWG website: www.nationalworkinggroup.org.uk

Interview A4/C1
Interview A7/C1
Interview A1/C1
Interview B2/V3
Interview A2/C1
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

5 Recognising child sexual exploitation

A proactive approach

Key statistics on identifying child sexual exploitation

- 72% of (89) interviews reported that training was available on the identification of child sexual exploitation but
- 16% of (100) LSCB areas surveyed had no plans to provide specific advice on child sexual exploitation to professionals, young people or parents and carers
- 60% of (89) interviews reported that awareness raising was under taken with practitioners
- 44% of (89) interviews reported that awareness raising was under taken with young people
- 38% of (89) interviews reported that awareness raising was under taken with parents/carers
- 73% of (89) interviews identified local issues that placed young people at risk of sexual exploitation
- young people going missing and looked after children were most likely to be targeted by strategies to address child sexual exploitation:
  - 76% of (89) interviews recognised grooming by adults in their area
  - 73% of (89) interviews recognised peer recruitment in their area
  - 69% of (89) interviews recognised the use of the internet in sexual exploitation in their area
  - 52% of (89) interviews recognised the movement of sexually exploited young people from place to place in the UK
  - 42% of (89) interview participants recognised sexual exploitation associated with gangs in their area
  - 37% of (89) interviews recognised cases of trafficking from abroad for child sexual exploitation in their area
  - 66% of (89) interviews considered that referral routes were clear
  - 44% of (89) interviews reported that the ‘identification’ element of the local strategy was under review

Risk group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk group</th>
<th>% interviews reporting some targeted work (n=89)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘children regularly absent from education’</td>
<td>43% (a further 23% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children who regularly go missing’</td>
<td>53% (a further 14% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children affected by gang activity’</td>
<td>14% (a further 51% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children with mental health issues’</td>
<td>24% (a further 43% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children abusing drugs or alcohol’</td>
<td>39% (a further 28% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children with disabilities or special needs’</td>
<td>24% (a further 41% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘looked after children’</td>
<td>51% (a further 17% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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Summary of findings

5.1 A key principle of the guidance is ‘a proactive approach.’ This includes taking action to identify those who may be at risk; identifying ‘hotspots’ to minimise the opportunity for exploitation; and disrupting the activities of potential abusers. This chapter looks specifically at the importance of identification:
- raising awareness with a whole range of agencies and groups, including young people and their families and carers, so that sexual exploitation is understood and signs will be recognised and
- scoping the issue to understand how and where exploitation is likely to take place locally.

5.2 This chapter also addresses the issue of consent. Sexually exploited young people are often described as ‘hidden.’ Their predicament can be misunderstood, particularly in the case of older teenagers. The need to consider consent to sexual activity within the context of coercion and manipulation is crucial if exploited young people are to be identified. It must be an essential element of any awareness raising and training programmes. It underpins not only whether exploitation is properly identified but also whether (and how) support and protection is provided (addressed in Chapter 6) and whether criminality is recognised (addressed in Chapter 7).

5.3 There may be a natural tendency to view younger children as vulnerable, with a limited ability to protect themselves from harm, and so most deserving of our protection. However there is a need to ensure that agencies do not choose which age group to protect and which to abandon. This chapter considers how LSCBs can exercise their duty to ensure that all young people under 18 are safeguarded.

‘all professionals who work with children and young people should be alert to signs of possible abuse or neglect including sexual exploitation’ (p7)
Training

5.4 LSCBs have a responsibility to ensure that agencies are provided with training on how to safeguard young people. The guidance also requires that LSCBs should ensure that local safeguarding training includes information about how to identify the warning signs of and vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation as well as all aspects of a child sexual exploitation strategy, including supporting young people, delivering disruption plans and gathering evidence about perpetrators of sexual exploitation. Training for practitioners needs to include information on how to identify those at risk, or experiencing child sexual exploitation. Even in the 24 areas selected for interview training on the identification of those at risk, or experiencing child sexual exploitation was not a ‘given’. A number of interviewees, when asked what further tools they would like to have to support this area of work, talked about a need for training on identification as well as information on trigger factors and on the capacity of a young person to consent. The experience of sexually exploited young people was that many agencies working with them were unaware of the way in which exploitation takes place. This not only means that signs are overlooked and the opportunities for early intervention are missed but it also affects the way that generic services are delivered.

5.5 Teachers were frequently identified as among the most likely to spot early signs – but it was also recognised that they need help to understand the issues:

‘the identification of early concerns does come from schools, or should come from schools, but it is about making sure schools are on board and have had training and support [in] recognising those early signs.’

One interview area had begun to address this to great effect:

‘we now hold briefing sessions three times a year for every designated teacher and every head in [the city]…we’ve actually got head teachers ringing up saying “when are they, we want to get them in the diary.”’

Neighbourhood police officers are also in a good position to observe what is happening on the street and to identify ‘hotspots’ and those frequenting them. However it was reported that:

‘routine police officers often miss information because they don’t have access to training.’

5.6 Awareness raising may not necessarily require a formal training setting. One innovative practice that emerged from the interviews involved schools intervention officers who:

‘come to the child protection team in the summer holidays so we can help them to identify those at risk.’

Every LSCB should assume that sexual exploitation occurs within its area unless there is clear evidence to the contrary (p23)

Other areas have made available Emma Jackson’s personal account of the way in which she was sexually exploited as an easily accessible and impactful insight into sexual exploitation. However it is delivered, raising awareness with those working with young people is the bedrock of a child sexual exploitation strategy. No awareness, no identification. One interviewee explained the priority to be attached to this element of their work:

‘we felt that identification through training and work with the police and professionals and young people would be more effective because we are embedding the identification of sexual exploitation. We could case work with people for three years and still no one would really have changed their practice. There is no guarantee that we will get further funding but that would be a lasting change. It will have put CSE on other people’s agendas and they will be better equipped to deal with it.’

5.7 The guidance includes a list of indicators of possible sexual exploitation. Also included in the guidance is a diagram of three stages of risk (characterised as sexualised risk taking behaviour; ‘swapping sex’ and involvement in an exploitative relationship) and the indicators associated with each level of risk. Raising awareness of these levels of risk, and the indicators at each stage, enables practitioners to intervene from the earliest stage. Early intervention can be a sound investment if it can prevent a young person from moving from the stage of sexualised risk taking to involvement in an exploitative relationship. Where early intervention techniques are in place it is widely believed to have resulted in a drop in the numbers of young people becoming heavily involved in sexual exploitation.

Conducting a scoping study

5.8 The guidance includes the premise that child sexual exploitation can take place anywhere. This was confirmed by the interview data where participants noted that scoping the issue had led to its identification locally. However, although recognising that it could take place in any area, interview participants also identified specific local conditions that influenced the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation. These included:

- geographic factors
  Links to transport routes/hubs and the geographic position – central or coastal – were mentioned

- demographic factors
  The nature of the youth population, the numbers of young people in care or looked after and histories of migration and immigration were put forward as factors

- socio-economic factors
  This included levels of deprivation and the nature of housing provision, including the numbers of B&Bs used to accommodate young people, and resource allocation to education and youth service providers.
Practitioners should ensure that they have an up-to-date understanding of the pattern of sexual exploitation in their area (p17)

5.9 A first task for LSCBs is to scope the issue. The research found that a scoping study is important for establishing where sexual exploitation is taking place, and the extent of the problem. Although almost half of interview participants had reported that some kind of exercise had taken place, in some cases that work was as yet incomplete and, in others, practitioners felt that the work was already outdated. And, as the data indicates, scoping has yet to be undertaken in many areas.

5.10 A number of ways of scoping the issue were reported:

- **Barnardo’s methodology**
  Drawing on previous research and the identification of risk factors for sexual exploitation, Barnardo’s has developed a set of proxy indicators. These are used to develop a profile of the area, examining key factors relating to sexual exploitation. Together with the socio-economic situation in the area, the proxy indicators are used to develop a profile of the area. Typically such reports will provide an overview of:
  - the groups of young people likely to be vulnerable to sexual exploitation
  - the range of sexual exploitation ‘models’ in that area
  - the risk indicators that relate to that particular locality
  - the level of awareness among those working with young people and service responses.

- **pooling information**
  In some areas, where there was a willingness to work in partnership on this issue, information was simply brought to the table so that all parts of the jigsaw were in place to enable relevant agencies to understand how and when child sexual exploitation was likely to be taking place in the local area. One interviewee reported that:
  “we had a multi-agency meeting – everybody brought what they knew and we just drew it … we literally cleared a wall and put names, known associates, known places where they go and we mapped it all out looking specifically at where the links are.”

- **case analysis**
  In another area historic cases files were examined:
  “we looked at the social care records over 9 months and found around 250 names [of coercive adults]. The police are now cleansing that data and the police analyst has been asked to look at the links. The greatest number of adults associated with one child is 12, and the greatest number of children associated with one adult is 11.”

Prevention strategies should...be regarded as a key part of agencies’ approaches to sexual exploitation (p13)

- **use of police analyst**
  Whatever methodology is used to scope child sexual exploitation, it can result in a wealth of data which can be difficult to interpret. A number of interviewees reported that they found the use of a police analyst to be invaluable:
  “We have identified hotspots using the police analyst.”

ACPO guidance promotes the use of police analysis to determine gaps in knowledge and the use of a target profile to identify particular individuals and groups who are suspected or identified as a threat to young people. Intelligence, when used properly, should enable resources to be targeted at identified offenders (both individuals and linked groups) and locations eg a school or children’s home, to prevent child abuse or drive effective investigations of child abuse.

5.11 A scoping study can identify groups of young people particularly at risk of sexual exploitation. This does not mean that it is only those deemed to be ‘at risk’ should be targeted as it is important to avoid ‘labelling’ and to prevent practitioners and policy makers from being alive to new and emerging risks. The research has found that the ways in which exploitation takes place are changing (see paragraph 5.21 and Chapter 8) and this may affect different groups of young people. It is also easy to overlook the fact that all young people can feel vulnerable at times and, however resilient, may find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. Nevertheless, it makes sense to focus some preventative work on those groups that face known risk factors and who have the least resilience if and when they find themselves to be ‘at risk’.

**Targeting risky groups**

5.12 All those interviewed were asked whether the local strategy focussed specifically on targeting certain ‘at risk’ groups for early preventative work.

Overall the research found only limited evidence of targeted early intervention. Around a third of interview participants offered no information indicating that there was little focus locally on these groups. The ‘at risk’ groups recognised in the guidance (and the questionnaire) were:

- **children regularly absent from education**
  As with many of the factors listed here, this can be a cause or an effect of child sexual exploitation. A young person absent from school may be vulnerable because they are spending time away from anyone who is looking out for their wellbeing. In other cases, the impact of the exploitation may cause a young person who may not previously have been absent from education to begin to truant, or to lose interest in school work. Previous research found that many ‘at risk’ young people are absent from school.

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98 Harper and Scott (2009)
100 A9/C1
101 Interview B9/C2
102 Interview BBC
103 Interview C8/C1
104 Interview C8/C1
105 Interview C8/C1
106 Interview C8/C1
107 Jago and Pearce (2008)
108 A scoping study can identify groups of young people particularly at risk of sexual exploitation. This does not mean that it is only those deemed to be ‘at risk’ should be targeted as it is important to avoid ‘labelling’ and to prevent practitioners and policy makers from being alive to new and emerging risks. The research has found that the ways in which exploitation takes place are changing (see paragraph 5.21 and Chapter 8) and this may affect different groups of young people. It is also easy to overlook the fact that all young people can feel vulnerable at times and, however resilient, may find themselves in the wrong place at the wrong time. Nevertheless, it makes sense to focus some preventative work on those groups that face known risk factors and who have the least resilience if and when they find themselves to be ‘at risk’.

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The snapshot data showed that, although half the records related to young people still attending school or college full time, a significant number currently being worked with were described as truanting, temporarily excluded or attending a Pupil Referral Unit (108 from a total of 461). Yet a quarter of interviewees (23%) stated categorically that no targeted work was taking place, and a further third (32%) had no knowledge of any such activity.

- **children who regularly go missing**

One hundred thousand young people run away from home every year. The Children’s Society has reported that its services are increasingly helping pre-teens who have run away.144 Again, this can be a ‘symptom’ of sexual exploitation as well as a situation that puts young people at risk. The snapshot data showed that well over half the young people currently being worked with were known to have gone missing (278 from a total of 427) and, of those, over half had gone missing more than ten times.

The introduction of a national indicator for missing young people led to it becoming an LSCB priority in a number of areas and the links to child sexual exploitation are beginning to be recognised more widely. This was the group that strategies were most likely to target as at risk.

During the course of the research project the government announced the transfer of responsibility for national missing children policing services from the NPIA to CEOP. The Home Office Minister announcing the change said that ‘these incidents are opportunities to intervene and protect these vulnerable children and we need to ensure these cases are considered as part of the wider child safeguarding context’.

- **children affected by gang activity**

This group was least frequently included in child sexual exploitation strategies. This is perhaps unsurprising as exploitation associated with gangs was not recognised at all in eleven of the 24 interview areas, and identified by only a small number of interviewees in a further six of the 24 areas. Despite this, 42% of interviewees noted concern about the sexual exploitation of young people in gang-affected neighbourhoods. Exploitation may not be recognised as gang violence is perceived to be between rather than within gangs and to be gender specific with boy on boy violence dominating the public view. Research carried out by Race on the Agenda (ROTA)144 clearly demonstrates a high level of sexualised violence and peer on peer abuse within gang-affected neighbourhoods. A literature search145 shows a disjuncture between interventions targeted at preventing child sexual exploitation (invariably led through child protection strategies) and those preventing violence in gang-affected neighbourhoods (invariably led through community safety strategies). In organisational terms this means that there is a barrier to effective action in that the local authority teams working on gangs are not part of safeguarding. However action is being taken in some areas to bring the two strands of work together:

> ‘we do have a team that looks specifically at gang activity and we do have strong links with them. They will attend our sexual exploitation meetings if we think there is a gang element and we’ve also got a fast-track referral into them.’

To explore the prevalence and nature of gang and group related sexual exploitation the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England is launching a two-year inquiry in October 2011.

- **children with mental health issues**

Although the research data found that there was some targeted work going on with this group of young people, it is a largely unresearched area. The snapshot data found that mental health issues were represented (among other health difficulties) in 32 cases (from a group of 675 where data was provided)

- **children abusing drugs or alcohol**

Developing addictions may be the first indication that a young person is in difficulty. Although young people may not previously have had a problem with abusing drink and/or drug use, this can be part of the process of coercion. Interview data suggested that alcohol was the main issue, together with ‘soft’ drugs among the younger victims. Heroin and ‘crack’ were said to be associated only with older victims.

- **children with disabilities or special needs**

As set out above the prevalence of the impact of disability on vulnerability to sexual exploitation was explored through the snapshot data. While learning difficulties were most commonly encountered other behavioural/emotional difficulties and some physical difficulties were reported. However there is little evidence of work with this particular group. It is a seriously under-developed area in terms of both research and practice.

- **looked after children**

The snapshot data explored the living situation of young people currently worked with and found 146 cases of children looked after or in the care of the local authority (from a total of 684). The majority were living in residential care homes. This is an area in which some targeted work is taking place as it has long been recognised that looked after children may be a focus for abusers:

> ‘I think there are definitely concerns about children’s homes, young people in care, that’s across the board a growing concern in local authorities and safeguarding… I think there are more incidents of vulnerable young women in care, guys turning up in cars, taxis, it’s obvious that they are a group of very vulnerable young people and they are going to be targeted.’

While this is undoubtedly the case it should also be recognised that the majority of young people included in the snapshot are living in the family home.

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144 The Children’s Society (2011)
145 The Children’s Society (2011)
146 Race on the Agenda’s speech to mark International Missing Children’s Day, (25 May 2011)
147 ROTA (2010); ROTA (2011)
148 Pearce and Pires (2011)
149 ‘Looked after’ AS3:1
150 Interview B8/V2
151 Interview B9/V2
5.13 The interview data suggested that, in addition to the ‘at risk’ groups indentified in the questionnaire, practitioners were also particularly concerned about:

- Homeless young people, and those living in unsafe situations

Recent research found that young people with experience of family violence were more likely to have had a relationship, and at an earlier age. Girls with a history of family violence were found to have an increased likelihood of an older partner. An older partner, especially a much older partner (at least two years older) was found to be a significant risk factor for sexual exploitation. Young people found it difficult to distinguish between caring concern and coercive control.\(^{[111]}\) The snapshot data found that 206 young people currently being worked with (from a total of 1065) were known to have witnessed or experienced (or both) domestic violence.

5.14 It should perhaps be noted that interview participants did not often allude to the need for early intervention to address exploitative behaviour from the perspective of the potential abuser. A recent ROTA report noted that ‘men and boys require support to understand the consequences of their actions and “choices”.’\(^{[112]}\) Exploitation is often sophisticated in targeting young people – have access to training or awareness tools for practitioners – including those not directly involved in safeguarding but working closely with young people – have access to training or awareness raising programmes to help them to understand the ways in which young people can be coerced and manipulated, and the impact this can have on their actions and “choices”. As one interviewee put it: ‘We need to work with young people to understand that they are not alone and that there is help available’\(^{[113]}\).

5.15 It is the exploiter’s influence that can result in young people going missing from home or care, truanting from school, and becoming involved in anti-social behaviour and sometimes serious criminality. The irony is that the same risky behaviours that leave young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation also lead them to be described as “sassy”, streetwise and fiercely independent.\(^{[114]}\) Exploitation cannot be solved by a ‘one size fits all’ approach. Young people can be coerced and manipulated, and the impact this can have on their actions and “choices” is significant.

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The capacity to consent

5.16 The interview data suggested a widespread misunderstanding of the capacity to consent. For those under 16 the inability to consent is absolute – yet even in these circumstances there is evidence that practitioners are failing to identify exploitation:

- ‘I see “consensual sexual activity” written in reports about 13-year-olds.’\(^{[115]}\)
- ‘Misunderstandings were found to be even more widespread in respect of those over 16 who can consent in law – “all of a sudden you can consent to everything”\(^{[116]}\).’

5.17 The guidance states that professionals should be aware that children and young people do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative and abusive situation but that this should not be taken as a reason to deny what is happening, to turn away or to close the case. An interviewee explained that:

‘If you could create a toolkit around how you explore the capacity of a child and what you can use alongside their capacity to make judgements about risk, a toolkit for practitioners to sit down and challenge their own thinking about “what do I need to see and understand about this child’s life?” That would be really useful.’\(^{[117]}\)

I didn’t want to believe it was all about sex for him. I wanted to believe he cared and I needed acceptance. I think that’s why a lot of young people end up where I was.”\(^{[118]}\)

Exploitation also frequently involves violence or threats of violence against young people and their families. The impact on the young person can result in ‘challenging behaviour’ which all too often is addressed as anti-social behaviour. The victim, rather than the perpetrator, is penalised. This can further obscure the reality of the exploitative relationship from both the young person and from practitioners.

Still hidden?

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What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Boys and young men

5.18 The difficulties of identification appear to be magnified in the case of boys and young men. The snapshot data showed that the vast majority of young people currently worked with are girls. Only 92 (from a total of 1064) cases of boys were reported. This can be an extension of the consent issue, and how society views the power and agency of men and women:

'some people have a view that a 14-year-old boy and a 48-year-old woman, they don't necessarily see that as exploitative. If that was a girl it would be very different. Professionals see it very differently with young boys and that's why we aren't getting the referrals.'

Other suggested that the 'signs' may be misinterpreted in boys:

'if you look at a boy and he's got more bling, he's using drugs or selling drugs – the fact that there's some sort of exploitation going on can often be missed.'

Research has also found that there are different routes into exploitation for boys. They can include homophobic bullying and rejection by peers and families which leaves them vulnerable to exploiters.

BME communities

5.19 The snapshot data showed that, where ethnicity was recorded, the vast majority of young victims were white (819/1040). The majority of the cases (98%) were also identified as British. This is largely consistent with the national population – although may show that some communities are under- or over-represented in some areas.

The urban myth?

5.20 There were also perceptions that exploitation only takes place in city centres. The snapshot data showed that the majority of the cases were reported as taking place in towns (254) and cities (223). Only seven cases were reported in rural areas (from a total of 484). One interviewee explained that:

'it's a lot easier to meet people in a larger, more complex urban environment than it might be in a local community. The child in a relatively small town would be well known to the community at large. It would be easier to meet up with a stranger in Piccadilly than it would be in a park in a small town.'

But other interviewees suggested that it may be that recognition is related to knowledge and the knowledge of urban communities outstrips that of rural situations because that is where projects tend to be based:

'we've got a dedicated service in the city that uncovers understanding around what happens.'

The changing nature of sexual exploitation

5.21 The interview data showed that there was widespread recognition of the grooming model. The snapshot data also showed that grooming was the most commonly reported method of coercion (211 from a total of 478). There were indications that, once one model of exploitation had been identified in the area, practitioners do not always recognise others:

'the first sort of model that was identified, you still see that older boyfriend/younger girl which is often the only model that is seen a lot of the time by professionals, which sort of then the other issues are missed.'

The guidance recognises that the ways in which young people are exploited is constantly evolving. Policy makers and practitioners need to be alert to the emergence of new models. An important finding from this research has been the changing patterns of child sexual exploitation. The model of a young person, typically a young girl, groomed by a male adult, or group of male adults, has long been understood. This model can easily be understood within traditional notions of power and gender imbalance. The concept is easy to accept although difficult to recognise without disclosure from the young person involved. The way in which this model plays out is evolving but it is still the most recognised (by over three quarters of the interview participants):

'Barnardo’s have had this sort of older boyfriend model for a while and I think over the years it seems to have changed into a kind of an older male would become friendly with a younger female and then kind of pass her around his friends [...] and it’s seen as we’re all friends or that kind of thing rather than it being the locked in a flat kind of scenario that might have been something that was in the past.'

5.22 The increased use of the internet is also recognised and accepted as part of this ‘grooming’ process. The involvement of the internet emerged strongly from the interview data. The snapshot data found 82 cases related to the involvement of the internet.

Interview A7/C1

Interview B2/V1; see resources box for useful references

Interview C6/V1 & O1

Chase and Statham (2005)

Interview A4/V1

Interview A8/V1

Interview B5/V1 & O1

Interview A9/V2

Interview B7/V1; see resources box for useful references

7 Interview A7/V1

9 Chase and Statham (2005)

10 Interview A3/V1

11 Interview C6/V1 & O1

12 Interview B2/V1; see resources box for useful references

13 Interview A8/V1

14 Interview A9/V2
The biggest problem is the internet. It’s not just about grooming, it’s a major communication tool. It’s used to get to know girls, to make links with more girls, to start contact with them, and also to pass on information and to interfere with witnesses.”

Another explained how those ‘links’ are made so easily:

“They may add that person to their friends’ list on Facebook and then their relationship develops from there. Their friends will add them as friends and before they know it they’ve got umpteen friends on Facebook they don’t really know.”

5.23 However there are other areas of sexual exploitation that are more difficult to reconcile with the traditional view of grooming, and of our understanding of the power dynamics that allow it to take place:

- **exploitation linked to poverty and social exclusion**
  There may be no grooming involved but the opportunistic abuse of a young person in need of help. An example of this would be offering accommodation to a runaway or homeless young person in return for sex.

- **exploitation involving peers**
  The responses from interviewees suggest that coercion by peers may be just as common as the ‘older boyfriend’ pattern. This ‘model’ was identified in 21 areas (21/24) and was also the second most common model of coercion identified in the snapshot data. In some cases the ‘peer’ will also be a victim:
  “you have a victim and then they will introduce a lot of other victims so there always seems to be a constant chain.”

- **partying lifestyle**
  A partying lifestyle featured in only four cases in the snapshot data (from a total of 478),
  “a lot of the young people are now talking about it much more in [terms of] going to a house with a group of lads where there’s an exchange of sex that is kind of presumed, so not the traditional picture although that’s still there.”

Some practitioners believe there to be a danger that, in certain circumstances, underage sex is becoming normalised. For example, ‘social workers […] were worried that the crimes of Ormerod and his friends had normalised the idea of underage sex among youngsters in Torbay, even for those who did not know the men.’

As a result of Operation Mansfield, which led to the prosecution of Ormerod, Torbay has launched a ‘Challenging Social Norms’ project aimed at giving young people the tools to tackle their peers on subjects such as sex.

Raising awareness with young people and with families

5.25 Information available to professionals to help them to identify child sexual exploitation has been considered in 5.4. The interview data also addresses awareness raising with parents and carers and with young people:

- **parents/carers**
  Parents and carers are most likely to be the first to be aware of a change in a young person which may give cause for concern. However, the availability of guidance specifically directed at parents was far from widespread, and was even less evident for foster carers:
  “I would guess the 120 odd foster carers that we’ve got don’t know that it exists.”

Guidance available nationally, from CROP and other organisations, is listed in the Resources section at the end of this chapter.

- **young people**
  The research found some very good initiatives taking place to raise awareness with young people in schools and other settings:
  “we’ve tried to extend the work so that there is a preventative element to it – within schools, children’s homes, that kind of thing. It’s important in equipping young people with some kind of tools to think about when they’re out there and they’re facing the situation – so that basically their awareness is higher.”

This activity was seen as crucial to raise awareness and to increase resilience and also to ensure that young people already at risk or experiencing sexual exploitation would know where to turn for help:

“we’ve had young people come forward because of the education..."
However work in schools is still an area that many partnerships struggle with: ‘one of the things that is sadly lacking is education at school’
sometimes because:
’a lot of our schools weren’t comfortable with the kids being taught about the risk of CSE.’
In some areas this related back to a lack of awareness raising and support for teachers and other staff:
‘I think schools are quite reluctant because if a child discloses a lot of the teachers aren’t competent on what to do.’

Raising awareness in the community
5.26 The research questionnaire asked about awareness in the community. It is crucial for everyone, including the wider community, to understand the way that exploitation works. Unless LSCBs invest in some awareness raising in local communities the view of young people apparently ‘choosing’ to spend time with their abusers will continue to evoke the description of those ‘persistently and voluntarily’ returning to selling sex and still liable to be arrested for loitering and soliciting. There is already anecdotal evidence that prosecutors, the judiciary and juries are responding to young people who display this counter-intuitive behaviour as ‘unreliable witnesses.’ If blame is placed on the young person, it not only further damages that young person but effectively shifts the blame away from the abuser. Justice cannot be served unless the dynamics of the entrapment of the young person is widely understood.

5.27 The only responses to awareness raising beyond professionals, schools, young people and their families and carers, related to use of the media. There were examples of the use of local radio as well as local print media to provide an insight into child sexual exploitation and the initiatives locally to address the problem.

Referral routes
5.28 The research questionnaire asked whether referral routes were clearly signposted. There was a high level of confidence from the interview participants even when other aspects of the strategy were not in place.

5.29 During the course of the research project the websites of all LSCBs were checked. There were few direct references to child sexual exploitation and, although specific procedures were generally available to professionals through the website, very few offered information to young people, parents and carers and the general public on the risks of child sexual exploitation and how to seek help or report concerns.

Resources

On awareness raising:
• The NWG has examples of leaflets that have been used to raise awareness with a wide variety of audiences, available from [www.nationalworkinggroup.org.uk](http://www.nationalworkinggroup.org.uk)
• Barnardo’s have produced guides for parents, young people and professionals who work with children to help them to be more aware of the signs of child sexual exploitation. The guides are available to download at [www.barnados.org.uk/spotthesigns](http://www.barnados.org.uk/spotthesigns)
• NSPCC produced Protecting self and keeping safe in 2006, an education pack for use in schools and youth settings for 11–16 year olds covering sexual exploitation. This includes a DVD and stand-alone resources to highlight sexual exploitation issues
• Friend or Foe (2009) was developed by Taking Stock in Sheffield. It is an education pack for use in schools, exploring positive and negative relationships, peer pressure and sexual exploitation. It includes exercises on risks associated with new technologies and materials aimed at increasing the knowledge and confidence of staff involved in its delivery
• My Dangerous Loverboy is a film produced to raise awareness of internal trafficking of UK national children for sexual exploitation, with an accompanying education pack. Available from [www.mydangerousloverboy.com](http://www.mydangerousloverboy.com)

There are also books which provide a very accessible and direct account of child sexual exploitation:
• The End of My World: The Shocking Story of a Young Girl Forced to Become a Sex Slave by Emma Jackson (Ebury Press, 2010) and
• Fiona’s Story by Irene Ivison (Virago, 1997)

On scoping:
• An example of a scoping exercise is Tipping the Iceberg: A Pan Sussex Study of Young People at Risk of Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking, by Harris and Robinson, published by Barnardo’s in 2007
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

In relation to BME communities
Useful background information is contained in:

In relation to boys and young men:
Useful background information is contained in:
- Dennis, J. (2008) Women are Victims, Men make Choices: The Invisibility of Men and Boys in the Global Sex Trade, Gender Issues, No 25, pp 11-25

In relation to violence in teenage relationships:
Useful background information is contained in:

In relation to missing young people:
Useful background information is contained in:
- ACPO has published guidance for the police in 2010 on the management, investigation and recording of missing persons. There is also a supplementary briefing note, published by the NPIA in 2010, on the investigation of missing persons. Both are available to download from www.npia.police.uk
- The Children’s Society has published a research summary report to accompany their campaign to Make Runaways Safe, available from www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-you-can-do/campaign-join/make-runaways-safe/our-research-reports
- Government guidance was published by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in 2005: Statutory guidance on children who run away and go missing from home and care, London: HM Government

In relation to gangs:
Useful background information is contained in:
- ROTA (2010) The Female Voice in Violence Project: London: ROTA. This report is based on face-to-face research with 352 women and girls associated with gangs
- ROTA (2011) The Female Voice in Violence Project. Final report: This is it. This is my life… London: ROTA. The final report into the impact of serious youth violence and criminal gangs on women and girls provides useful guidance to local agencies and partnerships in respect of the needs of girls and women who are gang-affected. Both ROTA reports are available to download from www.rota.org.uk/pages/ResearchPublications.aspx

In relation to violence in teenage relationships:
Useful background information is contained in:
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Self assessment checklist for identifying child sexual exploitation

- A scoping exercise has been conducted focusing on victims, perpetrators and locations
- Key agencies work with a range of other organisations to reduce the risks of child sexual exploitation, according to local need
- All practitioners working with children and young people have the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation
- Through training and awareness raising, all local practitioners working with children and young people are aware of the risk factors, including local factors, for child sexual exploitation
- There is a programme in place to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation with children and young people
- There is a programme in place to raise awareness with parents and carers
- The community is aware of the risks of child sexual exploitation and where to report concerns locally
- In all cases of children and young people going missing, the risk of sexual exploitation is specifically considered
- Children and young people who have been victims of child abuse or witnesses of domestic violence are monitored to minimise the risk of sexual exploitation
- Preventative work is delivered as early as possible with children and young people identified as at particular risk, and with their parents/carers
- Preventative strategies are delivered in a way that is accessible to young people and their families, regardless of gender and community

6 Supporting young people and their families

What's going on?

A child-centred approach

Action should be focused on the child’s needs, including consideration of children with particular needs or sensitivities’ (p5)

Key statistics on engaging with young people

- 52% of (89) interviews reported training on ways to engage with young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation
- 44% of (89) interviews reported that a specific information protocol was in place
- 76% of (89) interviews reported that intervention was discussed at a strategy meeting
- 53% of (89) interviews reported that education interventions were available
- 56% of (89) interviews reported that drug and alcohol interventions were available
- 42% of (89) interviews reported that health interventions were available
- 46% of (89) interviews reported that family support was available
- 39% of (89) interviews found that therapeutic interventions with young people were available
- 24% of (89) interviews reported that young people had been involved in the development of local strategies
- 43% of (89) interviews reported that the ‘engagement’ element of the local strategy was under review

Summary of findings

6.1 A child-centred approach is a key principle of the guidance. It is crucial to all aspects of a sexual exploitation strategy but particularly pertinent to the element of the strategy that relates to engagement with young people. Ensuring that the strategy responds to the particular needs of young people means they are more likely to be able to engage effectively with the help and support available to them.

6.2 Another important principle in the guidance is the provision of support for parents and carers. It is vital that local strategies recognise the key role that parents and carers can play. It is equally important to recognise that sexual exploitation can be very difficult for parents and carers to deal with, and place enormous strains on the family or group home. Parents and carers need help to support their children and to keep them safe.

6.3 This section will explore current practice on how local partnerships intervene to support and protect young people. It includes a perspective from young people on how those services should be delivered.
What is a child-centred approach?

6.4 Research\(^{143}\) into what is known and what works to support young people who have experienced sexual exploitation found unanimous agreement that ‘the approaches should be needs led and victim/survivor centred.’ Based on that research and developed in the light of views expressed by the What Works For Us project, the features of a child-centred approach have been identified as follows:

- **respect for a young person, and the belief that they can and should have a better life**
  
  Research found that the core of good practice is recognising that a young person needs and deserves help and support to safeguard them from abuse, and to move on from that abuse. Both interview participants and young people spoke of the need to recognise each person as an individual and not as a sexual exploitation ‘case’:
  
  ‘even though they may be affected by sexual exploitation, every child is an individual and they all deal with it differently […] that tick box might not work, it might work for one kid out of 30, and we need to step away from that and just look at kids as individuals, as individuals and what they like’\(^{147}\)

- **providing emotional support, and the time and space for young people to express their feelings**
  
  ‘The Barnardo’s people just talked to me – they were the first ones to ever take any real notice, the first ones to care’\(^{148}\)

For young people this means professionals investing in the time required to allow them to work at their own pace. It also means providing a space to work in which they feel both comfortable and safe. Ensuring that services are accessible is particularly important for those groups that, at present, are not widely accessing specialist services including boys and young men, young people from BME communities and young people with disabilities.

- **understanding how coercion is experienced by young people**
  
  Young people told us that it was crucial that those working with them understand sexual exploitation. Opportunities to recognise and respond appropriately to sexual exploitation are often missed by professionals misunderstanding the dynamics of abuse:
  
  ‘that’s actually important that people who work in it are trained and they understand it and they get it because if they don’t then it don’t matter whatever you put in place, however good it is, it’s never going to work’\(^{142}\)

- **providing practical support in response to the wider issues faced by young people**
  
  For young people there may be any number of practical issues that need to be addressed if the sexual exploitation is to be tackled. But there is a balance to be struck between addressing their needs and overburdening young people with services. It is important to assess what is of most concern, what is at the crux of their problems, and to focus on those

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\(^{143}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{144}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{145}\) Barnardo’s 2005
\(^{146}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{147}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{148}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting

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issues. This points to the value of one individual to hold the ring and coordinate the response and relates back to the invaluable role of the child sexual exploitation coordinator (Chapter 4):

‘you’ve got so many different people looking at different aspects of it and actually there’s normally just one or two major things that are causing everything else, and they need to be more focused on the root of the problem […] you might just want one person to help you – you might not want 20 odd people trying to come and help you.’\(^{141}\)

- providing easy access to services with flexible appointment times and, where possible, access without appointment

Young people explained the importance of helping them to get back into a normal routine:

‘when you’re involved in sexual exploitation your life is really chaotic, so even simple things like a doctor’s appointment, it becomes virtually impossible.’\(^{142}\)

Young people were remarkably realistic about this issue. They saw the issue as the need:

‘for help and support around getting you back into a normal life […] unless you’ve got a normal routine these things like mental health appointments and education and careers ain’t going to happen.’\(^{143}\)

The issue of providing easy access is explored in 6.17.

- encouraging young people to take actions on their own behalf

Young people were very clear that they did not want to be ‘mollycoddled’:

‘mollycoddling you, as if you can’t do it yourself and like treating you like you can’t, and treating you like maybe you don’t have a future.’\(^{144}\)

At the same time they did not want to be swamped by activities set for them by practitioners.

The best approach was seen as supporting young people to take decisions for themselves on how to move forward:

‘a lot of people who have pushed us into things, have forced us to do things, and made a lot of decisions for us and we don’t need the people who are there to help us to do it as well’\(^{145}\)

- providing information and support so that young people understand what has happened to them and also so that their parents and carers are able to support them more effectively

Young people told us that knowledge was power in that it enabled them to move on:

‘when something like this has happened and you’re working your way back up…there’s people out there unfortunately will take the piss out of that…because they see it as a mile off, and they can see that person’s vulnerable and then that’s how you get like in a bit of a cycle with it. But it

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\(^{141}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{142}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{143}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{144}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting
\(^{145}\) From transcript of What Works For Us meeting

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‘I think that’s what needs to be understood – that pretty much your life has fell apart.’\(^{149}\)
you give that person knowledge on the subject that's where they can sort it out.”

It was also important to support parents who are often completely bewildered by the circumstances in which they find themselves and struggling to cope.

6.5 The original set of characteristics was influenced by reports from young people of what they particularly valued: accessibility, flexibility, honesty, confidentiality, safety, gendered provision, and meeting others with shared experiences. These were all characteristics that the What Works For Us group identified as crucial:

‘the most important things are that you’ve got a worker that they understand, they don’t judge you, they support you, they believe you…”

Some practitioners described young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation as ‘hard to reach’. Yet others vehemently dispute that label and are clear that a child-centred approach can work:

‘I feel that sometimes there’s an approach and if that doesn’t work it’s the young person’s fault. If you can’t get through one way, you need to be always looking for things that young people are going to latch onto.”

This can only happen where the LSCB gives a clear lead that a broader approach should be looked at nationally to help other LSCBs.

‘early intervention is likely to be far more effective than intervention at a later stage when the impact on the child or young person’s health or development is likely to have escalated.”

This suggests that, in many cases, a broader safeguarding approach rather than a child protection response will be most appropriate. Child sexual exploitation can occur anywhere on a continuum from ‘low risk’ through to ‘high risk’ where there are very clear child protection concerns. Many young people, for whom a concern is expressed around the risks of exploitation, will not reach the threshold for a child protection response. However, the risks of sexual exploitation may be very real. Indeed the young person may already be at high risk but as yet unable or unwilling to disclose all that has happened. This should not preclude intervention from taking place. The strategy needs to be sufficiently flexible to enable practitioners to address the needs of young people wherever, initially, they appear to be on that continuum. This sometimes means operating outside traditional child protection procedures:

‘the system has changed from a s 47 approach. It means we are making a lot more progress. It was a very bold step but it has worked. This approach should be looked at nationally to help other LSCBs.”

This can only happen where the LSCB gives a clear lead that a broader safeguarding approach can and should be taken.

Everyone must take responsibility

6.7 Interview practitioners widely recognised the role for specialist workers:

‘if you haven’t got the specialism […] then the issue doesn’t get highlighted”

However it was also acknowledged that:

‘people can be deskillled and disempowered by experts coming in because they look to you to bring some amazing new tool or a magic wand and they don’t feel they’re doing it right.”

It is an issue that must be addressed through training and awareness raising so that it is de-mystified and all practitioners working directly with young people understand the part they can – and must – play to support young people. The research revealed some particular frustrations from specialist workers who, once they had begun working with a young person, found that other agencies considered that this discharged the responsibility of all agencies:

‘effectively the local authority is saying, you’ve got [a specialist project], we’re closing the case, just going to leave it with you. I think it’s their responsibility as well.”

This is clearly an important issue with regard to roles and responsibilities. It is also a real issue in terms of capacity:

‘[the project] can be overwhelmed in the absence of other services – cases just pile up”

because:

‘we get all the referrals, even if we can’t work with them, we still get all the referrals so we keep them on a waiting list and pick them up as we can.”

Interview participants from specialist projects emphasised that they were keen to be involved but as part of a multi-agency partnership:

‘as a voluntary organisation we would be happy to manage the risk in a proper partnership, where the safeguarding issue is identified, and we all work together to do something about it.”

The safeguarding approach needs to be linked into child protection procedures when appropriate (Chapter 4) and specialist work needs to be linked into the generic delivery of services to ensure that the response to the needs of young people is holistic, rather than fragmented.
Sharing information

6.8 A key principle in the guidance is ‘sharing information at the earliest possible stage where necessary to enable professionals to consider jointly how to proceed in the best interests of the child and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children more generally’. The research found that information sharing protocols were reported as in place in less than half (44%) of the interviews:

‘we haven’t signed up to an information sharing protocol but all of us round the table know it’s all because of child protection.’

Indeed there was evidence of some reluctance to consider a specific protocol because it was felt that formality might hamper current openness. However, in other areas, it was clear that information sharing needed to be improved, particularly with agencies used to offering a confidential service, including GU services:

‘one of the lessons has been about building bridges with what were historically seen as discrete adult services within the health world.’

Most of the discussion taking place with interview participants considered how to increase the level of information shared – there were few concerns about exceeding the boundaries of what needs to be shared. Discussions with young people revealed a different perspective. There was a realism about the need to share information in many circumstances, and indeed a plea to share information among practitioners who were working directly with them so that they need not repeat their stories over and over again:

‘young people have said to me: “I’m sick of telling my story to the YOT worker, the drugs worker, the sexual health worker, the social worker, you, the Connexions.”’

As one young person put it succinctly:

‘keep your files properly!’

However, there was also a plea for honesty and clarity about when, with whom and why information would be passed on:

‘people who just say like “Ah we’ll just talk – this won’t be said, that won’t be said” and then they go and say it – that knocks me down a bit.’

6.9 Given the nature of sexual exploitation, it is important that information can be shared between LSCB areas as well as within them. This is yet to happen in many parts of the country:

‘[developing links with other areas] is something that has been shelved really because there’s never enough time.’

Assessing needs and risks

6.10 The interview data shows that, in the majority of cases, assessments are carried out by statutory services, often in specialist teams where they are in place. This can include voluntary sector specialist projects. The variation in approach tends to reflect the differences between those areas where it was felt that child sexual exploitation could only be addressed through a formal child protection framework and those areas where a more tailored approach was taken to ensure a broader safeguarding response. Once again, the most effective practice seems to take place within dedicated and co-located teams. The key agencies can collate all information about a young person to assess the risks and dangers in their lives. Without this immediate response, specific procedures need to be in place to bring key professionals together to pool information and to carry out an assessment of need. The initial report may relate to a single concern – perhaps truancy – but, through this assessment process, what at first may appear to be low risk can become significantly more serious as the wider circumstances in which that young person is truanting is understood:

‘it’s that collective understanding of the incidents in relation to individual children… the police have got 12 incidents, social care have got three incidents and I’ve got one incident, collectively that pattern is a lot more serious than one agency currently understands.’

6.11 The research found that there are widely varying practices in the way in which this assessment takes place. In some areas the Common Assessment Framework (CAF) is seen as important as a way of formalising concerns. However, where practice has developed into a specialism, interview participants were concerned that it has too high a threshold to prompt early intervention and can hinder the gathering of useful information at an early stage – information which may help to form a picture which is later used in evidence against abusers. However the assessment is undertaken, the important features are that:

- it should be undertaken by someone who understands sexual exploitation
- it should include information in relation to specific risk factors for sexual exploitation
- it should include information from a wide range of agencies to provide a full picture of the circumstances of the young person
- it should determine whether the young person should receive a child protection response or, where that threshold has not been reached, a broader safeguarding response.

Managing duality

6.12 The issue of whether a child protection response or a broader safeguarding response is appropriate usually depends on the role of parents and carers. Where there are concerns about the care provided by one or more parents or carers, child protection procedures would be followed. Where parents and carers were supportive and clearly not complicit in any abuse, then a child sexual exploitation route would be taken. There were a number of practical differences that emerged from the research. At a child protection...
meeting those present may not have particular expertise in child sexual exploitation and the issue may ‘get lost’ alongside other harms and dangers being addressed. Some areas, to avoid this, hold both a sexual exploitation and a child protection meeting. This needs careful handling, as interview participants observed. Of paramount importance is the impact on the young person:

‘it’s difficult for young people having two separate systems. It’s too much for them. We try to merge the two together if we can. The social worker does the CP stuff and we [voluntary sector specialist workers] do the CSE. But that can cause problems because the CSE might be pushed to the side. And then people get confused if they come off a CSE plan but are still on a CP plan. But if you didn’t have a dual process the CSE stuff would get lost in the CP stuff.’

6.16 One of the key principles of the guidance is that ‘the wishes and feelings of children and young people as well as the concerns of parents or carers should be sought and taken into account in reaching any decisions about the provision of services which affect them.’

6.17 Developing a programme of support

Therapeutic outreach was reported as available by just over a third of interview areas.

‘we did invite the young person to some of the meetings but she declined because, on the one hand, she was concerned there were meetings being held to discuss her but, on the other hand, she didn’t want to put herself into the forum where there were people she didn’t know.’

Other interview areas appreciated the importance of making it work:

‘the role of parents and children in [strategy meetings] is important in terms of being part of establishing a joint journey to try to resolve the situation.’

Other areas were achieving significant success:

‘the feedback was very positive. They really liked the fact that we were all sitting round the table and that it involved people who all had a role, they were there for a purpose. They feel very supported.’

Ensuring that young people understand why practitioners are attending a meeting about their welfare was a key point. When discussing intensely personal and difficult issues it is crucial that practitioners only attend if they have something to contribute:

‘we invite people from agencies that are able to give us some resources – we keep them quite tight. We invite the people who need to be there.’

Developing a programme of support

6.18 The research questionnaire asked what elements of intervention would be included in a programme of support. Around a third of interview participants were unable to say whether different elements would be made available, indicating that this was not well understood across the agencies. This makes it difficult to ensure a cohesive response to meet the complex needs of young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation.

First steps

6.19 The interview data showed that, for those at risk but not yet ready to disclose or to move on:

‘a safety plan is always included because they won’t stop straight away. How would they get help if they needed it?’

Previous research stressed the importance of ensuring safety and building trust as the first stage in any intervention in order for there to be sufficient disclosure from the young person to understand the problems that need to be addressed. The quality of the human contact involved in any intervention was found to be crucially important, as was the need to focus on skills and personal development, and improvement in self-esteem.

Therapeutic outreach

6.20 Therapeutic outreach was reported as available by just over a third of
interviewees (39%). Pearce (2009) promotes the value of intervention through the provision of therapeutic outreach to support young people to recognise and build up resilience to the risk of sexual exploitation. This is characterised as ‘holding the young person in mind’ – the very essence of a child-centred approach. It means working with a young person in a flexible way, noting when and where they are comfortable. Studies of resilience have found that ‘being there’ for young people can enable a caring and supportive adult to counter previous exposure to risk and help young people to develop protective behaviours. A widely used model was developed by Barnardo’s and is known as the 4 ‘A’s. This was developed as a practitioner-friendly description of a range of Barnardo’s services but is well suited to the style of holistic intervention that only specialist services can deliver and which appears to work particularly well with sexually exploited young people:

- **Access**
  Offering support in a way that most enables young people to accept it. This means services that are practically accessible:
  - ‘you can’t expect young people in such a rural area to come to you, you’ve got to take that provision and that information out to them’
  - and also delivered by practitioners who are personable and reach out to young people to build effective relationships with them.

- **Attention**
  This can mean offering a safe and stable adult presence to replace their experience of exploitative adults. This can be achieved through a balance of listening and providing practical support. Crucially it means focusing on what is important to young people:
  - ‘we’re a dedicated service for that young person… we will start from the young person’s point of view, even though it might not be the bit that’s worrying everybody, we will start from the bit that the young person feels, so they feel very much that we’re set up for them’
  - ‘that’s not the only thing that’s going on in her life… for her it [stopping the abuse] was important but there were other things for her much more important – issues around her mum and her mum’s attitude to her and her mum’s support for her, living at home and the difficulties that was causing for her. I think it was very often more important to her than issues about exploitation.’

- **Assertive outreach**
  This is close to the therapeutic outreach model advocated by Pearce. It involves persistently maintaining contact, often using innovative ‘youth worker’ approaches to gain trust and maintain engagement with a young person. One interviewee described this approach – and, in his view, the secret of success in addressing child sexual exploitation – as ‘stickability.’

This recognises that it may be some time before they are willing to engage; they may drift in and out of a specialist service; they may engage but refuse to acknowledge any form of exploitation for some time; and it may be a very long time before any formal disclosure is made. But it is ‘stickability’ that will help a young person to recognise that you are on their side, undeterred by their challenging behaviour, not looking for any payback (unlike their abusers) and, ultimately, someone they can trust.

Practitioners also warned that care is needed in the way in which ‘risky situations’ are broached as it can sound as though it is the young person who is in the wrong.

- **Advocacy**
  This is not necessarily work that is visible to a young person. It is work with other agencies to encourage them to engage with young people to address their housing, health, education and other needs. This means representing the young people with services, fighting their corner for them on their behalf or attending meetings with them to give them confidence and to speak for them when necessary. It also means helping other agencies to understand how to make their services accessible to those they may consider to be ‘hard to reach.’ For example:
  - ‘to say to a young person who’s frequently missing from home and disengaged from society “you must attend this appointment at this time”, it’s not accessible.’

6.18 Young people with experience of sexual exploitation talked about what prevents them from speaking out:

- **fear of the reaction of the person they are telling** – of not being listened to, not being believed, being judged, being blamed, and seen as a ‘grass’

- **fear of the abuser** – because they are being threatened, bullied, intimidated or controlled; or because they don’t want to lose them:
  - ‘losing the person you think understands and cares and loves you’

- **fear of the consequences** – getting into trouble, what friends and family will think

- **it’s hard** – hard to explain
  - ‘it’s hard to explain it unless it’s happened to you’

- **they’re the only people in your life and the hardest thing that you can’
ever, ever do [...] is accepting that there’s people in this world who are that evil [...] nobody could possibly do that to anybody and why would anybody pick me to do that.”

- shame – embarrassment, feeling dirty

“It’s hard to be really honest with project workers and others because they would think you were “stupid” for putting up with them.”

- lack of trust

“can’t trust them – what will they do if I tell”

6.19 What helps them to tell their story is feeling confident in who they tell because they have had time to get to know them, because they are ‘professionals’ and because they don’t feel that they will be judged. For those young people finding it difficult to talk about what has happened to them activity can be a helpful way forward:

“I hadn’t talked about what was happening to me before that because I didn’t want people to think I was bad or stupid. It felt safer writing things down, knowing that no-one would change my words.”

A number of interviewees mentioned the importance of involving young people in creative projects as part of a programme of support:

“What we really need is to be able to do some art and drama with young people – it’s incredibly empowering. It helps them to recognise that there is a way forward.”

This can have added benefits:

“the project helped my parents understand about what was going on.”

A number of local projects have also worked with young people to use their stories to contribute to the development of preventative resources. Examples include the books Out of the Box and Pieces of Me developed with young people from Doncaster Streetreach and Sheffield Services; in a new light developed by the NWG; and several Barnardo’s projects which have involved service users in the development of animation and video resources. Members of the What Works for Us group have also recently contributed to the development of an EastEnders storyline.

Moving on

6.20 Discussion with young people revealed that they were keen for project workers to support them to move on. While recognising the need to talk about what had happened to them, they were keen to focus on the future and to be involved in deciding what that future might be:

• health and education don’t always attend [case conferences] so we don’t get an input.”
people and what kind of services they offer and how they seem to struggle to hold on to the difficult kids.\textsuperscript{12,14} The issue of access to suitable mental health care appears to become even more difficult for older teenagers. CAMHS services stop when children reach 16. They may then be referred to an adult service which may not be suitable to the needs of 16–18 year olds:

\textit{‘17-year-olds drop between two services.’\textsuperscript{218}}

\begin{itemize}
  \item drug and alcohol services
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Over half the practitioners interviewed recorded that drug intervention was available as part of the programme of support (56%). Addressing substance misuse will often be part of a programme of support at some stage
  \end{itemize}
  \item housing
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Just under half of the practitioners interviewed reported that other agencies made an input to the programme of support. Housing was included as an important element of the programme but there were many concerns expressed about the lack of availability of suitable accommodation for those young people who are unable to remain at home. Brodie has recently explored the provision of safe accommodation for those in the care system who are at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation.\textsuperscript{220}

    This research showed that this group of young people is likely to have experienced a range of difficulties which means that they need support in other aspects of their life as well as a safe place to live that protects them from their abusers. Care can provide young people with safe relationships and a safe place to live. However there is a recognised association between care and the risk of sexual exploitation and sexually exploited young people report variable experiences, and suggest that professionals inside the care system have not always provided the stability and security that they have been seeking. There is also an increasing awareness that young people may be particularly at risk from their peers. The chaotic behaviour of many young people at risk or experiencing sexual exploitation means that they are more likely to be placed in residential care (see Chapter 8) but it has been suggested that foster care may be more suitable.\textsuperscript{221} The difficulty here is that at least one interview participant found that:

    \textit{‘there are no foster carers to respond to young people who have been sexually exploited or therapeutic environment for them.’}\textsuperscript{14}

    For those leaving care, the picture is again patchy. In general leaving care services have had a positive effect in terms of planning accommodation and liaising with housing providers.\textsuperscript{223} However Ofsted\textsuperscript{224} has found that young people whose behaviour is described as chaotic are often placed in bed and breakfast accommodation. As has already been mentioned (see 5.13) interview participants are very concerned that, rather than a safe environment, bed and breakfast accommodation places young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation at increased risk. Young people in such situations generally have infrequent contact with professionals yet still need the stable presence of trusted and supportive adults.

    \begin{itemize}
      \item Working with older teenagers
      \begin{itemize}
        \item the current priority given to younger children aged 16–17 years are likely to be overlooked for this reason (p21)
      \end{itemize}
    \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\begin{itemize}
  \item less likely to be known to services
  \begin{itemize}
    \item ‘the difficulty with the 16+ (age group) is, they’re not often involved with many agencies because they can be beyond school leaving age so they can be missed in a way that younger children hopefully aren’t missed...so I think that is a bit of a problem because they don’t have those networks around them that younger children have, that are statutory like “you must go to school” and those things. It’s easier for them to be invisible...the older they get the more difficult it is to spot.’\textsuperscript{226}
  \end{itemize}
  \item rejecting services
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Some practitioners simply pointed to the innate difficulties of working with older teenagers who are striving to be independent:

      \begin{itemize}
        \item ‘the difficulty is not about our willingness to engage with or to provide services, it’s more 16–18-year-olds’ burgeoning independence and how do you deal with that, how do you keep them engaged when they desperately don’t want to engage with statutory services? I think maybe that’s why it’s difficult for social services to work with the 16–18-year-old group. Frankly I don’t think that’s down to our unwillingness to do so.’\textsuperscript{227}
        \item The danger here is:

          ‘they say “they’re not meeting my needs, they don’t do anything for me” and they step away and they become even more vulnerable and isolated.’\textsuperscript{228}
      \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
  \item trying to be independent
  \begin{itemize}
    \item For young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation, skilful navigation is required between offering them protection and supporting them to test boundaries and take risks – an essential part of adolescence. The key is guiding young people to avoid harmful risk factors and to build protective factors.
  \end{itemize}
  \item lack of expertise
  \begin{itemize}
    \item Many commented that, within specialist teams, there was no difference to those pertaining to children.\textsuperscript{12,14} Many of the interview participants reported that it was particularly difficult to get a programme of support in place for an older teenager. The research found a number of reasons:

      \begin{itemize}
        \item the difficulty is not about our willingness to engage with or to provide services, it’s more 16–18-year-olds’ burgeoning independence and how do you deal with that, how do you keep them engaged when they desperately don’t want to engage with statutory services? I think maybe that’s why it’s difficult for social services to work with the 16–18-year-old group. Frankly I don’t think that’s down to our unwillingness to do so.’\textsuperscript{227}
        \item ‘the difficulty is not about our willingness to engage with or to provide services, it’s more 16–18-year-olds’ burgeoning independence and how do you deal with that, how do you keep them engaged when they desperately don’t want to engage with statutory services? I think maybe that’s why it’s difficult for social services to work with the 16–18-year-old group. Frankly I don’t think that’s down to our unwillingness to do so.’\textsuperscript{227}
      \end{itemize}
  \end{itemize}
\end{itemize}

\textsuperscript{12} Ofsted (2009)
\textsuperscript{13} Interview A5/C1
\textsuperscript{14} Interview B6/C4
\textsuperscript{15} Jelly et al (2006)
\textsuperscript{16} O’Byrne (2006)
\textsuperscript{17} DfES (2006)
\textsuperscript{18} Lillywhite and Skidmore (2006)
\textsuperscript{19} Interview C8/C2
\textsuperscript{20} Interview C6/V1&O1
\textsuperscript{21} Interview C6/V1&O1
\textsuperscript{22} Interview A5/C1
\textsuperscript{23} Interview CBC1
\textsuperscript{24} Interview CBV/IO1
\textsuperscript{25} Interview CBV/IO1

\textsuperscript{21} Lillywhite and Skidmore (2006)
\textsuperscript{22} Lillywhite and Skidmore (2006)
\textsuperscript{23} Interview C6/V1&O1
\textsuperscript{24} Interview C6/V1&O1
\textsuperscript{25} Interview C6/V1&O1
\textsuperscript{26} Ofsted (2009) p14
\textsuperscript{27} Ofsted (2009)
\textsuperscript{28} Ofsted (2009)
\textsuperscript{29} Ofsted (2009)
\textsuperscript{30} Ofsted (2009)
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

As a result one interview participant said:

‘I really do fear for the post 16s who just walk away from the agencies. I don’t think there’s enough out there for them…specialism might lead to improved outcomes for this group.’\(^231\)

6.22 A child-focused approach to safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation is crucial but this needs to take account of generic patterns of behaviour endemic to adolescence. There may be significantly different perceptions of ‘risk’ between a young person and those offering protection. A young asylum seeker or runaway is likely to be more focused on finding a ‘safe’ place to live and may be prepared to negotiate with exploiters to do so, and may consider sex as a price that they have to pay. This is their brave and courageous way of managing their appalling situation. That they have notions of their own agency does not mean that they are not deserving of support and protection – far from it – but that help needs to be offered in a way that recognises their underlying concerns:

‘give autonomy to that young person and do lots of advocacy and give that young person a voice.’\(^233\)

Links with adult services

6.23 This is an issue with which many areas continue to struggle and which is said to have become even more difficult with limited access to adult safeguarding services:

‘that’s been a real issue. Unless young adults have a diagnosis of some kind, mental health or learning disability or a physical disability, they do not get a service. And there’s very little understanding in Adult Services about how to deal with [sexual exploitation].’\(^235\)

Supporting families and carers

6.24 The guidance recognises that ‘sexual exploitation can have profound and damaging consequences for families, including parents and carers, siblings and extended members, and impact on their health, work life, family cohesion, economic stability and social life’ and goes on to recognise that ‘life becomes difficult to manage and the stress of a situation which they do not understand can lead to despair, limiting their capacity to respond to the needs of their children.’\(^239\) The research questionnaire asked whether intervention includes support for families and carers. The response showed that just under half of the interviews suggested that this was available. There was considerable recognition of the need for support for parents:

‘If it’s someone outside the family grooming a young person the parents need support. It’s a horrible thing for them to go through.’\(^236\)

Another interview participant added:

‘often you’re working with people who can’t protect their children…the power of the abuse is so significant that even “good parents” can’t protect their children…you can have a lot of capacity to parent in every sense, those children still get sexually exploited.’\(^234\)

Supporting parents and carers is also key to the progress of the young person:

‘If you leave the family out then you haven’t looked at all the needs of the young person.’\(^217\)

because, for example:

‘if they don’t address the family conflict issues the young person is still going to go missing from home. They think the direct work is a magic wand.’\(^234\)

6.25 However there was a lack of access to parenting support workers:

‘I’m not meant to [support parents] but because there are so few resources for parents…you’ve got that difficult dilemma about not getting drawn too much into the parents’ needs because I’m there to support the young people, but I have been drawn into giving support and trying to signpost parents.’\(^239\)

It was one of the issues raised in discussion when practitioners were asked what new tools and resources they felt they needed:

‘more support groups for parents.’\(^240\)

‘we have some leaflets for parents but no one will fund them – let alone support any specific training for them.’\(^241\)

6.26 The guidance and responses from interview participants were based on the need for support to enable parents to cope. There was little recognition of the positive role that parents can play as partners in the work with young people. Parents generally know the young person better than anyone else and can be a crucial source of understanding of the exploitative situation and the young person’s needs. For example, some areas were still wrestling with the concept of inviting parents and carers to the meetings:

‘the parents aren’t always invited…they’re going to be adopting a more professional way that recognises their underlying concerns:

‘give autonomy to that young person and do lots of advocacy and give that young person a voice.’\(^233\)

 jeszcze inne

Involving their families early in interventions can be a key step in helping [children and young people] achieve good outcomes, and should underpin action to implement this guidance (p22)

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\(^{229}\) Interview A5/L1
\(^{230}\) DCSF (2009) p22
\(^{231}\) Interview A1/C1
\(^{232}\) Interview C6/V1&O1
\(^{233}\) Interview A5/E1
\(^{234}\) Interview C8/A1
\(^{235}\) Interview A9/C1
\(^{236}\) Interview A7/V1
\(^{237}\) Interview A5/L1
\(^{238}\) Interview A7/V1
\(^{239}\) Interview A5/E1
\(^{240}\) Interview A1/C1
\(^{241}\) Interview A8/V1
\(^{242}\) Interview A7/V1
\(^{243}\) Interview A5/L1
\(^{244}\) Interview A8/V1

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What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Involving young people in developing policy and practice

6.27 Although nearly a quarter of interview participants reported that young people were involved in the development of child sexual exploitation strategies, there is very little evidence from interview data on this work, or on how young people contribute in practice. This suggests that professionals do not routinely integrate the views of young people into their responses to sexual exploitation. Concerns are often raised about the appropriateness and sensitivity of involving young people in discussions about policy or practice and the resource intensive nature of this work. However the data does reveal some ‘one offs’ where individual practitioners are committed to a participatory approach:

‘a voluntary agency did some work with particularly vulnerable people around two years ago.’

Some practitioners recognised and noted the added value of working alongside young people:

‘there is certainly a role for the involvement of young people. There is a lot to learn from what works for them, what would have made a difference for them at the time, the means of communication…’

Elsewhere young people have also been involved in developing and delivering training and in service level participation or advisory groups which contribute to on-going practice development and evaluation:

‘…we have tasked our young people in the participation group to do a very small piece of work to look at exploitation on the internet. And then we’ve got a drama group that are actually going to raise awareness of cyber bullying and exploitation.’

In at least one local area a young person and parents affected by sexual exploitation are represented on the LSCB sub group and have been involved in the development of the local protocol. At a national level the CEOP Young People’s Advisory Panel (YAP) has contributed to both the development of their resources and organisational knowledge. But despite these examples there is little evidence that it is happening routinely and the examples often represent time-limited pieces of work rather than the presence of an integrated culture of commitment to participation.

Resources

Working with young people

What Works For Us (WWFU) is a national young people’s advisory group set up in through a partnership of NWG, Barnardo’s and ECPAT UK in June 2010. Building upon participation work of local projects it seeks to develop means of ensuring young people’s perspectives can feed into policy and service development. The primary purpose of the group is to influence improvement in support for young people at risk or experiencing sexual exploitation. The group has directly involved 22 young people from over 13 projects across England. A further 35 young people have contributed to a questionnaire project. The group is open to young men and women aged 16–21 with direct experience of accessing specialist sexual exploitation support. The group meet quarterly, in various locations across the UK. Travel costs for all participants and those supporting them to attend meetings are funded through the WWFU group. To become involved with WWFU, contact Camille Warrington – camille.warrington@beds.ac.uk

Previous work of members includes:
- developing and implementing a young people’s questionnaire on service provision (August 2010)
- making a presentation at the Council of Europe launch of a campaign on sexual violence against children (December 2010)
- contributing to the Comic Relief campaign and development of the EastEnders storyline (December 2010)
- providing a young person’s perspective for the CEOP Thematic Assessment on policing and prosecution (April 2011)
- contributing to the consultation by the Association of Young People’s Health exploring the health needs of young people affected by sexual exploitation (June 2011)

A number of other resources have been developed through participation work with young people at local and national levels. Full details are available from the NWG – www.nationalworkinggroup.org.uk

They include:
- Face up to it (2008) an online resource for young people developed by Barnardo’s and available from www.faceup2it.org
- Hidden (2009) a DVD telling the stories of three young people affected by sexual exploitation, produced by Barnardo’s Cymru
- Innocence (2010) a DVD written and filmed in partnership with young people from the Barnardo’s SECOS and ACE projects
Self assessment checklist for supporting young people and their families and carers

• All professionals who work directly with those at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation have the skills and knowledge to do so
• Services are fully accessible to all young people who may need them, regardless of gender, ethnicity or any other characteristic
• Services are flexible to meet the needs of both young children and adolescents
• Services are available to children and young people believed to be at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation regardless of whether or not they have made a formal disclosure
• Children and young people attend strategy meetings and care pathways are discussed and explained
• Parents and carers attend strategy meetings and care pathways are discussed and explained
• Transition arrangements are in place for young people reaching the age of 18 and still in need of services
• Where parents/carers are not implicated in child sexual exploitation, access to support is available
• Feedback from service users is taken into account in the development/review of services
• A process has been developed for professionals to meet and agree a plan as soon as concerns have been recognised
• A wide range of services are available to respond to the needs of children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation

Working with parents and carers

CROP was founded in 1996 and driven by the experiences and needs of affected parents. It is the only UK organisation to specialise in working alongside the parents, carers and wider family of child sexual exploitation victims. www.cropuk.org.uk

Available publications include:

  A worker’s guide to supporting parents affected by the sexual exploitation of their children
• STOP! She’s My Daughter (2007)
  Mothers of abuse victims share their stories of sexual grooming and exploitation in the UK
  Parents’ personal accounts
• Advice to Parents (3rd edn) (2004)
  A booklet for parents and carers

In a new light (2010)

A booklet of photography and writing, and accompanying exhibition, produced by young people from 7 different projects, coordinated by the NWG

Out of the Box: young people’s stories (2009)

A booklet of creative writing by young women from Doncaster Streetreach and NSPCC London projects, supported by the University of Bedfordshire

Pieces of me (2009)

A booklet of creative writing and photography by young women from Taking Stock and the Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service
What’s Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

7 Identifying, investigating, disrupting and prosecuting abusers?

Recognising criminality

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key statistics on identifying, disrupting, investigating and prosecuting abusers</th>
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<tr>
<td>• 31% of (89) interviews reported that local training covered disruption</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 73% of (89) interviews reported that the police were involved in disruption</td>
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<td>• 33% of (89) interviews reported that children’s services were involved in disruption</td>
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<td>• 31% of (89) interviews reported that licensing authorities were involved in disruption</td>
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<td>• 27% of (89) interviews reported that carers were involved in disruption</td>
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<td>• 16% of (89) interviews reported that health practitioners were involved in disruption</td>
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<td>• 14% of (89) interviews reported that voluntary organisations were involved in disruption</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 39% of (89) interviews reported that the ‘disruption element of the local strategy was under review</td>
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<td>• 51% of (89) interviews reported that child abduction notices were used</td>
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<td>• 20% of (89) interviews reported the use of covert surveillance</td>
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<td>• 31% of (89) interviews reported the use of forensic evidence</td>
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<td>• 27% of (89) interviews reported other investigative techniques</td>
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<td>• 48% of (89) interviews reported that a police operation had taken place within the last year</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 24% of (89) interview participants reported that abusers had been prosecuted in the last year</td>
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<tr>
<td>• support for young people should be provided by a specialist CSE service, a witness service or others with a trusting relationship with the child – but a third of interview participants were unable to say who would provide such support</td>
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<tr>
<td>• 38% of (89) interviews reported that the ‘prosecution’ element of the strategy was under review</td>
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Sexual exploitation of children and young people should not be regarded as criminal behaviour on the part of the child or young person, but as child sexual abuse (p6) ‘take effective action against offenders so that they can be held accountable, through the criminal justice system, while safeguarding the welfare of the child’\(^{214}\). ‘We can’t talk about disruption and prosecution without talking about multi-agency work’\(^{246}\) ‘I’m not sure there are any consequences for the perpetrators at the moment.’\(^{250}\)

Summary of findings

7.1 A key principle of the guidance is ‘recognising criminality’. Much of the focus of a child sexual exploitation strategy is on the young person and their behaviour. Where a risky situation is recognised, action to remove that risk is often part of the direct work with the young person rather than focusing attention on disrupting or prosecuting the alleged abuser. This can mean removing the young person to a place of safety which, in extremis, may mean secure accommodation. This further victimises young people and reinforces their view that they are bad and somehow to blame for the situation. It is crucial that local strategies should be developed with an understanding that serious criminality is involved in exploitation. The guidance requires that strategies should be based on the dual aim of protecting young people and disrupting and prosecuting abusers. Action taken should demonstrate that it is the abuser who is to blame. This message should be clear to abusers themselves, to their young victims, their victim’s parents and carers, and to the wider community.

7.2 The research has found a particular tension between safeguarding and prosecution. Many interviewees acknowledged that safeguarding young people must be the guiding principle of all aspects of a child sexual exploitation strategy. However it is also recognised that prosecuting abusers is a key element of ensuring that young people are safe. The tension arises in terms of decisions about gathering evidence and, in particular, the use of covert surveillance. This is explored in this chapter along with approaches to disruption, investigating abusers and supporting young people through this very difficult time. As with all other aspects of a child sexual exploitation strategy explored in this report, the value of a multi-agency approach emerges.

Training

7.3 Less than a third (31\%) of the interview participants reported that the training available to them included information on disruption. Even fewer (30\%) reported the availability of training on how to investigate cases of child sexual exploitation.

Identifying abusers

7.4 Less than a quarter of LSCBs were able to demonstrate strategies for both protecting children from sexual exploitation and prosecuting abusers. While in some areas the police are key partners in multi-agency partnerships and, in others, major operations have been launched to target those who sexually exploit young people, other areas have yet to develop the proactive approach required in circumstances in which victims are reluctant to make disclosures. Without a proactive approach, identifying potential abusers depends on the testimony of the young victim. This means that action is unlikely to take place until the young person is seriously entrenched in the exploitative process. Relying on the young person to provide the information that will...
identify his or her abuser places an enormous additional burden on them. Early identification through proactive policing allows for early intervention to support the young person and can prevent serious abuse from taking place.

Disruption

7.5 A key principle of the guidance is ‘taking action against those who sexually exploit children and young people to minimise the risk of exploitation’.253 This includes disrupting risky and potentially abusive activity and situations. The research found that there were some concerns that disruption can simply lead to displacement:

‘it just removes them from one place to another. That’s the problem with it. It serves its purpose but it’s not actually a solution... its sometimes all you can do.’254

One LSCB commented that:

‘we don’t really buy into disruption’.255

By and large it seems that specialist child sexual exploitation workers, who are involved in disruption work, can work together to deliver disruption plans.

Methods of disruption

7.6 In a few of the areas interviewees considered that they were poorly equipped to disrupt alleged abusers:

‘I don’t think we are quite there yet’.256

Some agencies felt that it was not within their remit to disrupt alleged abusers:

‘disruption is police work, other agencies may not have the power to get involved in disruption work’.257

But there was a significant amount of interview data on disruption techniques. Around two thirds of our interviewees discussed disruption which suggests that this is an element of the strategy that many agencies were involved with and understood. The tactics for disruption included:

- early preventative measures, such as making those areas where young people are known to go without supervision as safe as possible, and addressing specific risks and known ‘hotspots’
- more intrusive interventions including informal warnings, licensing restrictions and court orders.

By and large it seems that specialist child sexual exploitation workers, where they exist, focus on the former strategy, creating safer environments (managing the risks that young people take by increasing their understanding and their resilience), while the police focus on monitoring specific locations and the activities of the alleged abuser. As with other aspects of a child sexual exploitation strategy, to be effective these delineated interventions rely on a multi-agency response. It was suggested that:

‘outreach work is part of the disruption strategy and all local community agents can be part of it’.258

7.7 The research showed that disruptive strategies were often planned at a strategy meeting. Some practitioners suggested that the impact of a multi-agency discussion is sometimes enough to put an end to the abuse:

‘the intervention at that level, just because we’re involving other partners, can be enough to prevent a young person being sexually assaulted or go on to being groomed into prostitution’.259

Disruptive strategies: working with young people to manage risks

7.8 As discussed in chapter 5, part of the initial work with young people is about raising awareness of sexual exploitation and the support that is available to those at risk. This usually includes developing an awareness of protective factors and enhancing their own resilience to keep themselves safe. Helping young people to recognise exploitation, and providing them with the tools to protect themselves, is a key element of disruption. These ‘tools’ will range from practical measures – a phone number they can call if they feel in danger – to addressing self esteem and helping young people to understand that they have a right to a relationship that is free from violence and sexual coercion. This work will normally be delivered by a specialist child sexual exploitation team.

7.9 A key element of keeping young people safe is to ensure that they have somewhere safe to live. Participants in one interview area reported that they were taking action to remove young people at risk from bed and breakfast accommodation and other unsuitable environments:

‘we will go into those bed and breakfasts of a night, we will remove children if we think they’re in the wrong place, we will talk to housing and to the landlords about that – we will offer young people some form of emergency accommodation’.260

Jago and Pearce (2008) p22

DCSF (2009) p15

Interview A5/C2

Interview D5/P1

Interview A5/L1

Interview A5/C1

Interview C2/C1

Interview A6/P1

Interview A6/V2

Local procedures should specify how professions can work together to deliver disruption plans (p24)
For those young people who are in care some areas reported that they took action to split the young people up, sometimes accommodating them outside the local authority area. This is an expensive option and interviewees feared that it may not be available for much longer:

‘It’s very expensive actually – but she’s safe and she’s making progress… if we try to bring them back, they jump up and down, quite rightly so as well I think […] but I’m under pressure to bring kids back because obviously the costs, and that’s a worry for me because I do honestly think, going forward in the future, that decisions will be made on terms of finance rather than terms of child safety, or having consulted with the child and the child’s happy to stay where they are, but we just ignore that and bring them back anyway because we can’t afford it. That hasn’t happened yet […] I’m still overspending on external placements, […] but in these particular times of cuts, I will not be allowed to carry on with giving that kind of dent in the public purse.’

7.10 There is also a key role to play for parents and carers and it was reported that:

‘on the whole most parents and carers are more than helpful in the disruption of it… where it doesn’t work it’s because of either sheer exhaustion or there are other areas of wilful neglect already taking place.’

The research revealed a range of practical actions, including:

‘blocking the drives of children’s homes with their own cars to stop these men.’

However, it was also commented that residential home staff sometimes have restrictions in what kind of disruption work they can do when children are showing risky behaviours:

‘It’s very difficult for residential staff in particular to do certain things because of the restrictions placed upon us by the national minimum standards, in particular around […] looking doors […] one of the problems we were facing was that kids would be given mobile phones that we wouldn’t know about, they’d be getting a phone call at three o’clock in the morning, they’d be slipping downstairs undetected, and walking out of the building and getting into cars, and coming back two hours later […] we were powerless to stop it because we couldn’t even lock doors. We couldn’t seize mobile phones. We were restricted in what we could do. […]’

Other interviewees suggested that there was some confusion among residential care home workers about the action that they can take, and called for leadership within the profession on this issue because:

‘the majority feel that they don’t have the authority to remove that person’s mobile phone so that we could use it for evidence. […] They’re very uncomfortable about gathering evidence which would assist us that way because they feel that they’re not protected. There’s a lot of unknown issues for residential care staff which is a problem.’

They overcome these issues by involving children and young people in developing a policy on how to act on those circumstances:

‘eventually I sat down with a group of looked after children, a consultation group […] We ran it past children’s rights […] it was controversial in that there was restriction of liberty […] We also had policies again where we could seize mobile phones and SIM cards, and provide them with phones that they could only ring the homes and the police on to keep them safe.’

Disruptive strategies: targeting locations

7.11 The research found that disruptive activity also focuses on locations. It was suggested by a number of interview participants that removing the opportunity for offending by monitoring identified hotspots, or by increasing awareness of potential criminal activity taking place, can be effective:

‘one of the things that comes up regularly when I talk about hotspots is taxi firms, takeaways, parks, where young people… will gather together. I know this is where a lot of the networking takes place. When I speak to girls and say "How did you get to know such-and-such?", it’ll be through a friend or he works at such-and-such takeaway, or I met him at the taxi rank, or he hangs about at the park. There’s always a place where the meeting first took place.’

Focusing on areas where young people ‘hang out’ can help to raise awareness with young people:

‘we have like a, probably twice a year, like a night safe campaign where we go to these honey-pots and try and target the young people, actually see what they’re up to and if we do identify specific locations we do try, myself and the education worker, to go into the schools, let the teachers be aware of it, because it’s a safe haven for them.’

As with implementing other disruptive tactics multi-agency work with the police is essential:

‘the vol sector is part of things [here] For example, with the night time economy the Operations Inspector works with the [local drop-in]. We attend his briefing – the drop-in can have a radio and be part of the operation.’

Disruptive strategies: targeting businesses

7.12 Research showed that, in many cases, disrupting hotspots involves working with businesses to help to make them safer for young people. In some areas there was frustration that this was yet to be addressed as part of the local strategy:

‘the police could use their powers better. We know that men turn up at
certain establishments. Why don’t the police look at that? It’s getting better but there is a tendency to wait for something to happen.”

But the research found a more proactive approach in other areas. For example:

“If you are aware of a hotspot, say a particular hotel or café, you can educate the staff. “Are you aware that [this area] has a particular problem with adults taking advantage of young people? People are using your premises and so you can help us to stop that.”

In some areas hotels and taxi offices have been provided with information about exploitation:

“Not accusing them, but the approach was this is the sort of thing that happens, if you know about it, let us know.”

This can be welcomed by local businesses:

“The new nightclub owner […] is absolutely onboard with us, he thinks we’re wonderful, he’s happy for his daughter to go and he wouldn’t have been happy for his daughter to go before, he’s really tied in.”

7.13 Sometimes businesses are less willing to cooperate or are believed to be complicit. In such cases action taken is more intrusive:

“We have three or four times this year run an operation in the various hotspots. We go in during a night duty and deal with any crimes committed to do with sexual exploitation. But it’s also to protect. We distribute cards to young people.”

This often involves the use of licensing. The LSCB has an important role in licensing as child protection is now to be taken into consideration:

“The Safeguarding Board is a responsible authority under licensing provision and we do get sent copies of cases where there might be some concerns. So, for example, if there was somewhere that was repeatedly selling underage, or where there was activity that was dodgy, we would get copied into that, and we have on very rare occasion made representations against licenses being renewed.”

Research showed that this can be seen as a positive move by those businesses keen to demonstrate that their services are safe:

“It now works like if anybody applies for an under-18 licence to do a disco, they’re asked to come to us for a risk assessment and we work with them to risk assess all the sexual exploitation stuff. Having worked with three or four nightclubs now we use that to make sure that the way the venue’s run and the leaving home and the arriving is all safely taken care of.”

And, where cooperative, businesses often become an important source of information:

“[specialist police], they have links with all the taxi licensing, links with all the taxi firms, so we can get them involved in the disruption of picking certain individuals up, or dropping them off, or gathering intelligence, you know, you’re getting phone calls from this person, where are they being taken to, who’s paying for the fares, that kind of thing? So we do liaise with Licensing specifically around mainly taxi firms.”

Where firmer action is required, over a third of practitioners interviewed reported cooperation with licensing authorities:

“We have a strong licensing team. They do a lot of closures and reviews and come down very heavily.”

It should be noted that, as with other aspects of a child sexual exploitation strategy, this approach requires resources. These are not always available:

“I ordered a mini operation last year […] as part of it [the specialist police officer] went round to a few hotels and taxi offices just telling them information about exploitation… the approach was “this is the sort of thing that happens, if you know about it let us know”… but it’s the sort of thing we struggle to get time to do.”

Disruptive strategies: targeting offenders

7.14 The research found other examples of disruption which specifically targets offenders. This appeared to be conducted largely by the police and involves:

- basic policing

  For example:

  “Knocking on doors, checking car registrations etc”

  and

  “If there is nothing else we can do then the police will start driving around to let them know there is a police presence”

- ‘managing’ suspects

  Through offender-focused meetings:

  “If there’s an offender who’s not currently in prison or wanted but because either the intelligence on them or the previous convictions we think they pose a threat through serious violence or sexual violence, we put them into a Serious Offender Review Team (SORT) group, then they are assessed as high medium or low risk and managed by one of the Detective Inspectors…it’s not just MAPPA subjects”

- child abduction warning notices

  Previously known as abduction notices or harbourers’ warnings, this was the tactic most often mentioned by interview participants. There were a number of negative responses:

  not understood

  “We don’t know how to use abduction notices”
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Offence Prevention Orders (SOPOs) were mentioned less frequently.

Court orders, including Risk of Sexual Harm Orders (RSHOs) and Sexual Offence Prevention Orders (SOPOs) were mentioned less frequently.

But, in the main, interview participants were enthusiastic about their use as a deterrent provided that they were used well:

a powerful effect

‘at a takeaway a person has been served with an abduction notice. That gets passed around. The stigma is attached about an older man being in a relationship with a young person. Generally speaking they don’t like that if it’s a family group or business. They don’t like the publicity. Generally they’re taken notice of’

removes the opportunity for an offender to rely on ignorance of a young person’s age

‘the Section 2 abduction notices are excellent in the sense [that] of course a lot of our young people will tell people that they’re over 16 when they’re not 16. So we’ve got to try and redress that balance a little bit, take the onus away from the young person, put the onus on the offender’

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increased use of child abduction warning notices in some areas has helped to develop understanding to enable them to be used more effectively, for example including a photograph of the young person:

‘it was a learning curve as with all of these things. They used identification as a defence ultimately, saying the child we are talking about was not the child they were on about…this was Mary Smith, they were saying “I know you as Sarah, you tell everyone I know you as Sarah” for instance, so when you served the notice on them they’d sign it but then if they got caught, “no, she’s Sarah.”’

• court orders

Court orders, including Risk of Sexual Harm Orders (RSHOs) and Sexual Offence Prevention Orders (SOPOs) were mentioned less frequently.

Although their potential was recognised in a few areas it is clear that it would be helpful to provide tools to guide the police in their use as part of a child sexual exploitation strategy.

Investigating abusers

7.15 Two models were identified in the research. One model involved specialist police officers within a multi-agency team, often co-located with welfare colleagues, undertaking small-scale investigations as part of the regular business of the team. In other areas, police teams were put together to mount specific large-scale operations. While it is clear that established multi-agency specialist units would not have the capacity to handle a major operation, involving huge numbers of police officers and analysts, there are difficulties with short-term investigation teams. Often when the operation is over, the expertise disappears with the team. Few areas had addressed the relationship between on-going police investigation work and larger operations.

Gathering evidence

7.16 The police clearly have a key role in gathering intelligence that could be used as evidence although, as this report has shown (see Chapter 4), this requires a conceptual shift to enable them to engage appropriately with young people:

‘I think they need to sort their attitudes out and try to be more understanding, just to have a bit more respect and give people time so they can talk, if the police come in like they do, rushing in with their attitudes, the girls won’t sit down and talk to them. But if they gave the girls a bit more time to help them then maybe they’d do a bit better.’

It is also important to ensure that young people do not feel the weight of responsibility:

‘when you come forward and you make a disclosure, it’s as though it’s the child’s job to gather all evidence and then pass it to the police’

The research shows that, where a child-centred approach is adopted, the outcome has been positive:

‘we have our Child Exploitation [police] officer at the sexual exploitation meeting and, if the young person wants to, they can speak to them after the meeting or at another location a bit later on…that’s just really to make sure that they know what their options are and that if there is ever anything they want to talk to the police about they’ve got a named person they can contact…it’s creating the environment where you’re more likely to get a young person coming back because they know that the Child Exploitation Officer is really approachable and they’ll get a bit of confidence’

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Information sharing

7.17 Research showed that the other agency most likely to be involved in gathering evidence is children's social care (60%). A third of interview participants reported the involvement of health (33%) and a similar number of carers (30%). The research found frustration among investigation officers that information was not being shared, or not being recorded in an appropriate way. However it was understood that welfare agencies needed help to understand the difference between information, intelligence and evidence, and how it should be recorded. Recording small pieces of information, although apparently insignificant on their own, can be important to build up the jigsaw picture, and crucial to the development of a prosecution case. This can include details about the young person's behaviour, including running away, returning distressed, dishevelled or drunk, and other incidences that could indicate that a young person is at risk of exploitation. It can also include information on the alleged abuser. But it is important that the information is not only recognised as important but recorded properly. This does not need to be a complicated arrangement. Recording who saw a car and on what day transforms the usefulness of a car registration number jotted down on a scrap of paper to intelligence that can be used as evidence in a prosecution case. In one example:

‘children’s homes employ a pro forma – any tel calls that come in for a young person resident there, the office will ask “What’s your name? Why do you want to contact this person? What’s your relationship? Do you know that they are 14?” And they will do a 1471 to get the number and record that too.’

In another area care home staff were proactive about the kind of information they could collect and record and had:

‘CCTV outside the [residential home] so… if they pull into the car park at the front, we can get times and that type of thing.’

7.18 The format for recording information, given as an example above, is a tool that can be used with a wide variety of agencies and:

‘quite often the parents will complete those as well.’

Where agencies, parents and carers have been guided to record information accurately and consistently this has been a significant support to police investigations. The aim has not been to turn social workers and other welfare practitioners into police officers but to build some structure into the way that basic information is recorded so that it has validity:

‘at the time the police gave us some forms where we can actually share information. It was a little too elaborate, there were different forms for different people. Those have now been redeveloped and it’s a very much simpler process.’

The research suggests that information gathering and sharing is best where there are dedicated (and, ideally, co-located) multi-agency teams. Within these teams all practitioners develop an understanding of what kind of information may develop into intelligence, and may ultimately be used in evidence. Where all agencies share the same dual objectives of safeguarding young people and prosecuting their abusers, there is less evidence of a reluctance to blur the roles, with practitioners from both the welfare and criminal justice agencies contributing to the gathering of evidence. Similarly, where a child sexual exploitation coordinator, or a central point of contact, has been identified, this has proved to be a turning point for gathering information and building successful cases against the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation:

‘we have information where we have a dedicated coordinator, and none where there is no one and no resources to collect it.’

7.19 The routes for reporting the information are also an important factor:

‘we tried to create a system whereby there was a single point of contact in each agency… but, although it was useful training, the system was cumbersome and didn’t work. We [now have] an operational group with a referral system into that rather than SPOCs trying to gather evidence and passing it on to the police.’

That was echoed in another area:

‘there was a network of SPOCs in different agencies and the information was supposed to go to a certain place but we don’t hear any feedback […] so it feels like there’s a vacuum there. There’s a procedure but there aren’t the resources to actually handle the information once it’s received.’

It is important that the flow of information should be in both directions so that agencies are aware of action planned or taken by the police:

‘he [a police officer] kept people fully informed. So if there was going to be an arrest or surveillance or whatever, he would fully inform the other agencies about what the police were doing. What he found was that if he didn’t tell people they didn’t know what they were doing and maybe thought the police weren’t doing a great deal. But if he told them what they were doing they loved it because then they really understood what the police were doing and were grateful that they were doing as much as they possibly could.’

However the interview data revealed that many agencies are unaware of criminal investigations. Some agencies:

‘wouldn’t necessarily get told about it’

and would not hear about it until it was reported in the local newspaper. This raised questions about the level of support that was being provided for the young people involved:

‘you can read the newspaper and be aware that there’s been a prosecution …but they’re not cases that have been brought to [the sub group] which is rather interesting…there’s been no referral in and there’s been no...’
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Investigative techniques

7.20 The research questionnaire asked which investigative techniques have been used. The data was very limited with around 60% of interviewees providing no data at all on investigative techniques. The research showed that successful criminal investigations aimed to corroborate a young person’s evidence so that the burden of evidence does not lie solely with the young person:

‘s/he all criminal investigations, one relating to child abuse is a search for the truth and officers should focus efforts, from the outset of a child abuse investigation, on gathering evidence that does not rely entirely on the victim’s statement.’

This would involve:

‘standard policing tactics to support what the girls are saying.’

7.21 Covert surveillance was the technique most often discussed in interviews and was noted for discussion at the specific seminars with police officers. The research showed how important this was as an investigative tactic but that careful consideration was needed to balance the need for evidence with the overriding need to protect young people:

‘key to learning all round is understanding the impact of capacity of the child…you have to risk assess using covert surveillance and if that risk assessment is based on the idea that these young people are consenting then errors of judgement will be made. If you bring into that risk assessment an analysis of how much coercion is likely or known to be occurring towards the young person then better judgements will be made as to the appropriateness of covert surveillance.’

The research showed that it was crucial to make safeguarding a priority and to be clear about when and how agencies would intervene to protect a young person:

‘it is about the issue between the protection of children and the detection of crime and those areas can and do cross over when you’re doing covert surveillance. I think you’ve got to be very careful about the agreements you make about when any surveillance team will act to protect children.’

7.22 The research also showed that forensic evidence is often used for corroborative purposes, and for evidential purposes where no complaint has been made:

‘we have had prosecutions in the past where the young person has not made a complaint but we have had DNA evidence. We understand that it’s very intrusive. We would only do it in the best interests of the young person, if we could justify it.’

Prosecuting abusers

The role of the CPS

7.23 The research questionnaire asked about the role of the CPS. The research found an almost unanimous response that a greater and more positive involvement was needed from the CPS. There were exceptions in areas with a great deal of experience in bringing prosecutions related to child sexual exploitation:

‘we’ve got dedicated CPS lawyers who are deemed to be specialist on sexual exploitation and abduction notices, that kind of thing, so we refer to them first and it’s a continual process, we keep ringing to get advice, “are we going the right way with this, what do we need for this?”…so it’s a continual process between us and CPS.’

However, in other areas, interview participants spoke frequently of a lack of cooperation from the CPS, often based on a perception that young people are likely to be unreliable witnesses because:

‘it’s such a difficult scenario to get a coherent, thoughtful, logical account of what’s happened, going back months previously.’

It is clear from the divergence of experience and the depth of feeling from a range of practitioners across a number of different areas that there is a real need to spread good practice from those areas in which the CPS have succeeded in bringing successful prosecutions to other more wary areas.

Supporting young people and their families through the process

7.24 The research found that support for young victims and witnesses could be provided by a specialist CSE service but the largest response (43%) was in respect of ‘other services’. This could be anyone involved with the young person and typically included the police and the youth offending service. This is likely to reflect the recognition that whoever has built up a relationship with the young person would be best placed to support them at this particularly difficult time. The statistics also reflect the lack of a specialist CSE service in many areas. There was no explanation of the low response in respect of the specialist witness service (just 33%) other than that it would be yet another professional brought into that young person’s life.

7.25 It should also be noted that there was a high level of missing data in respect of this question – typically 30% of practitioners interviewed offered no information. This is likely to represent the fact that few interviewees had experience of a case going to court. Less than half of practitioners interviewed reported that a specific police operation in relation to child sexual exploitation and abduction notices, that kind of thing, so we refer to them first and it’s a continual process, we keep ringing to get advice, “are we going the right way with this, what do we need for this?”…so it’s a continual process between us and CPS.’

7.26 There was little discussion of the value of special measures. Since 1999 special measures have been automatically available to all victims of sexual offences involving violence, abduction or neglect who are under 17. They are also likely to be available to older witnesses but at the discretion of the court. Special measures will usually mean that the young person will give

'I didn't think anything could be worse than what had happened to me.'
their main evidence by means of a video-recorded interview and that any cross-examination will be by a live link so that the young person is not actually in the court room. Where a young person does attend the court room, application can be made to clear the court of the press and the public to make it a private hearing and a screen can be put in place to shield the young witness from the defendant. In addition to special measures, a further important provision, introduced in 1999, is the restriction on the circumstances in which the defence can bring evidence about the sexual behaviour of the victim of serious sexual offences.

7.27 Previous research found there to be a significant gap between the policy vision of a child-friendly court and the reality of many young peoples’ experiences, particularly in the cases of the most vulnerable of young people. This research revealed that, in most cases where there had been experience of court proceedings, interview participants were appalled by the impact of the court experience on young victims:

‘these girls have had the most horrendous time in court, it has been horrific, it’s abusive… nobody wants to tackle that.’

Following court

7.28 The process of going to court can have a positive impact. Research has shown that, for young victims, it is important to be believed by the court and to have the support of family and friends. The conviction of the defendant is also important, not least in helping the young person to feel safe and to be able to move on. However, this is not always the outcome:

‘one youngster did take a matter to court but the judge said she was 16, she knew what she was doing, he hadn’t committed a sexual offence for years although he was a Schedule 1 offender. She’s in adult prostitution now – she took that big risk and it never worked for her, and the judge was appalling.’

Whatever the outcome some interview participants were clear about the need to keep supporting young people after a trial because of the very real danger of re-victimisation.

Supporting practitioners

7.29 In discussion with interview participants it was often revealed that this work is ‘psychologically draining’. The issue of supervision was raised and it was noted that another advantage of close multi-agency working, was that good practice in terms of supervision spread across agencies. However, this is not an issue that has been fully addressed in many areas.

Resources

- CEOP is expanding its Think U Know programme to include the provision of educational resources and also training for the police. This will be available at www.thinkuknow.co.uk
- The UCL Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science has developed a graphic model of internal child sex trafficking called a crime script. ‘Crime scripting can deconstruct a complex crime into its component parts. This offender-focused crime script can be used to inform targeted multi-agency interventions aimed at disrupting, detecting and preventing specific steps in the crime commission process.’ This crime script was based on existing police data from two major internal trafficking operations, spanning hundreds of child abuse instances. It proved an effective way translating masses of data into a clear sequence of actions and decisions.
- The UCL Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science has examined networks of victims and offenders involved in internal trafficking. This study demonstrates how multi-agency crime reduction initiatives can be informed by a clearer understanding of the structure and function of victim and offender networks. Police data from two major internal trafficking investigations, spanning 36 victims and 25 offenders, were used to create and analyse networks. The study showed how network software available to the police, can be used not only to visualise networks but to identify key actors and structural weaknesses. These findings can inform targeted, proactive and collaborative interventions.
- For guidance on the use of Child Abduction Warning Notices see www.npia.police.uk/en/17488. The Missing Persons Bureau community of the secure police website POLKA contains templates for s2 and s49 notices as well as a protocol for their use
- For information on special measures, see www.cps.gov.uk/legal/s_to_u/special_measures and also Crown Prosecution Service (2006) Children and Young People: CPS Policy on Prosecuting Criminal cases Involving Children and Young people as Victims and Witnesses, London: CPS
What’s Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

8 Collecting and managing data

Collecting and managing data

Key statistics on data collection

- over 1,000 young people on one day were known to be receiving support in England because they have been identified as at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation
- 59% of (100) LSCBs surveyed reported that they were not recording data on child sexual exploitation
- 48% of (89) interviews reported that data was collected in their own agencies
- there was agreement in just one interview area that data was collected at both agency and LSCB level, and that there was a shared database

Summary of findings

8.1 Collecting and managing data is a key element of a child sexual exploitation strategy. It provides a clear picture of the scale and nature of the issue locally, helps to spread awareness and to spot trends. As a management tool it also provides vital data to assess resource requirements and can also be used as a way for LSCBs to monitor the effectiveness of multi-agency partnerships to tackle child sexual exploitation:

> ‘we feed in information to the LSCB so we would regularly give them updates in terms of what we were doing, what our business was, presentations to everybody on the LSCB.’

Yet it is an area of work that few LSCBs have taken forward. The survey data showed that well over half of LSCBs (59%) were not recording any data.

8.2 Through the process of developing the data collection trial and collating data for the national snapshot, and through the research interviews, it became clear that the situation was even worse than it appeared at first. This was one of the areas of the survey where local activity appears to have been ‘talked up’. In areas where data was said to be collated, it was often very limited and may only have been provided by one agency. As a management tool it also provides vital data to assess resource requirements and can also be used as a way for LSCBs to monitor the effectiveness of multi-agency partnerships to tackle child sexual exploitation:

> ‘there is masses of information but no one has the time to record it. It needs managing properly and it needs an analyst.’

If information is requested by LSCBs, by the media or, indeed, by researchers, staff are diverted from other tasks to trawl painstakingly through notes on files to extract the required information:

> ‘the difficulty is that files are full of minutes and reports and it is a case of’

LSCBs should put in place systems to monitor prevalence and responses to CSE within their area (p20)

LSCBs should put in place systems to track and monitor cases of sexual exploitation that come to the attention of local agencies including schools, colleges and other educational organisations, health, the police, social care, housing services and voluntary and community sector organisations (p25)
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During the course of this project this happened in a number of areas in response to CEOP’s call for data for their thematic assessment, and in response to our own data ‘snapshot’ on 6 June 2011.

8.3 This chapter reports on the data collection trial and also sets out the findings from a national snapshot of data, providing a step towards a clearer understanding of the nature and prevalence of child sexual exploitation in England.

Data collection trial

8.4 This was an area where LSCBs seemed to recognise a need to make progress and welcomed the offer of a data monitoring tool to trial. Over a quarter of the 100 LSCBs surveyed offered to take part in the trial, although this number decreased over time as spending cuts began to limit the capacity of LSCB staff, with reports that they were carrying vacant posts or in the midst of reorganisation.

8.5 When the data monitoring tool was made available further challenges were reported. The calls for data from CEOP for the thematic assessment and for this project revealed to many areas the inadequacies of their local information systems. In one case:

‘we have considered the documentation but a difficulty is we do not routinely record incidents.’

In many areas it also demonstrated a lack of awareness and low identification of young people at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation:

‘we have adopted the trial documentation as our local data collection tool but at present our numbers remain low. We expect we need to do more to raise awareness of signs and symptoms.’

Many areas had realised that it would not be possible to embed a data collection scheme until these issues of awareness have been addressed. It was a wake-up call for many about the lack of progress that had been made in the development of a child sexual exploitation strategy:

‘this piece of work has highlighted the information that we don’t currently collect and we will be moving forward by establishing a multi-agency exploitation steering group which it is intended will address these matters.’

A positive outcome is that the trial has galvanised a number of areas to address these inadequacies:

‘it will help us to move this work on’

8.6 The trial areas were enthusiastic about the trial and, within the initial three months, were already reporting that it had revealed characteristics of sexual exploitation locally which would influence how they shaped and targeted their policy and practice:

‘it has given us a lot of valuable information on child sexual exploitation’

The data collection tool was considered by the trial areas to work well. Comments made by trial areas on issues with its use, together with an insight into how categories of data were interpreted and information presented in the national snapshot, have since been used to amend and improve the basic tool. This is an important legacy of the research – a tried and tested data collection model already in use in a number of areas and contributing important data for the development of local strategies.

National snapshot

8.7 The lack of local data has meant that there has been little opportunity to assess the national picture of child sexual exploitation. The guidance sets out the figures extrapolated from small-scale studies and concludes that the figures used to date have been ‘a considerable underestimate of the extent of the problem.’

8.8 This research aimed for a ‘snapshot’ of data on all young people at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation who were being worked with on 6 June 2011 in England. LSCBs trialling the data collection tool were asked to contribute to the ‘snapshot.’ Data was also collected from other LSCBs, statutory and voluntary agencies, all using the same data collection tool to aid consistency. A breakdown of those agencies is included in table 2 below.

The size of the problem

8.9 Data was collected on 1065 cases of young people in England. It is sobering to consider that over a thousand young people were causing significant concern in respect to sexual exploitation on just one day. Inevitably this is not a true reflection of the number of young people experiencing sexual exploitation because, as this research has shown, a third of LSCBs are not delivering a child sexual exploitation strategy to identify and support young people at risk, or experiencing sexual exploitation. We also know that, for the reasons discussed in 8.4–8.5, not all LSCBs or partner agencies who have begun to address sexual exploitation were able to participate in this exercise. The figure is likely to be a significant underestimate of the size of the problem nationally but it is a significant starting point. The data also provides some interesting findings in relation to the characteristics of those young people who have been identified, and the nature of the abuse they have suffered.

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\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

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\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

\[\text{DCSF (2009) p20}\]

\[\text{CEOP (2011)}\]

\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

\[\text{from correspondence with trial areas}\]

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\[\text{This included young people over 18 but who were referred to services in respect of child sexual exploitation at up to age 18}\]
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

8.10 Table 2 provides a breakdown of case information received by region of England. The geographical breakdown of the data reflects the knowledge held within agencies rather than an accurate assessment of the prevalence of child sexual exploitation in each area. The breakdown by agency contributing the data is also significant (although, in some cases, the data may have been collated by that agency on behalf of a number of partners). Over half of the cases were provided by voluntary sector projects. This reflects the fact that specialist projects are most likely to collect data specifically in respect of child sexual exploitation. This geographical breakdown is an indication of where specialist projects exist rather than an indication of the location of sexually exploited young people.

Only a third of the records were collated by LSCBs. The remaining records were submitted directly by statutory agencies.

Table 2 – Cases by geographical area

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Region of England</th>
<th>Type of agency</th>
<th>Total</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>Statutory</td>
<td>Voluntary</td>
<td>Mixed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>London</td>
<td>70</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South West</td>
<td>0</td>
<td>40</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>South East</td>
<td>14</td>
<td>27</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>East</td>
<td>50</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>W Midlands</td>
<td>67</td>
<td>28</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E Midlands</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Yorkshire &amp; Humber</td>
<td>78</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North West</td>
<td>120</td>
<td>112</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>North East</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Total</td>
<td>438</td>
<td>619</td>
<td>8</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

8.11 The data has also been broken down to give an indication of the type of area where the exploitation is said to have taken place. This is based on the 484 cases where this information was known/made available to us and is shown in figure 1. Again, the data must be considered as showing the location of specialist projects rather than the type of location where child sexual exploitation takes place. The ‘urban myth’ is explored in Chapter 5.

Figure 1 – Nature of location

Characteristics of sexually exploited young people

8.12 Data was requested on a range of characteristics of young people:

• age

The exercise called for data on the current age of the young person and also on the age of the person at the time of the first assessment. This was because we wanted to include in the snapshot young people who were over the age of 18 but who were under 18 when they first received support. Current age was provided in 1064 cases (all but one of the cases). The average was shown to be 15 years of age. This was also the most frequent age reported. The youngest child reported was just four years old and the oldest was 25 years old. The number of cases in each age group is shown in figure 2.

Figure 2 – Number of cases per age group on 6 June 2011

• gender

Again, there was only one case for which no information was provided. The majority of the cases related to girls. As figure 3 shows, boys represented only 8.6% of the cases, with just one case identified as transgender. The difficulty of identifying boys and young men at risk of sexual exploitation is explored in Chapter 5.

Figure 3 – Number of cases by gender
Again, the issue of disability was discussed very briefly in Chapter 5. This is an underresearched area of vulnerability to sexual exploitation. That well over 100 cases of young people with some form of disability were recognised as at risk on one day suggests that there is an urgent need to consider prevention strategies for this group.

• living situation
This information was provided for a total of 684 cases. It was specified that the living situation was not known in a further 170 cases. A breakdown of those cases where information was known and provided is set out in figure 6.

The majority of young people were living with their families. Of these the data also showed that 339 were living in the family home and 16 in kinship care (no additional information was provided in the remainder of the cases). Of the 145 young people described as ‘looked after’, Table 4 provides a further breakdown of the situation for the 134 cases for which this information was available.

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**Table 3 – Cases by nationality**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Nationality</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
<th>% of available data</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>British</td>
<td>759</td>
<td>98.0</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>European</td>
<td>11</td>
<td>1.4</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Non-European</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>0.6</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Total</strong></td>
<td><strong>775</strong></td>
<td><strong>100.0</strong></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The high proportion of British young people reflects the low recognition of trafficking from abroad in the interview data (see table 6).

• disability
This information was provided in 821 cases. In 146 of the cases it was reported that there was no disability data available. The breakdown for the 675 cases in which a specific disability was listed is shown in figure 5.

The ‘other’ category included sight impairment but also included issues other than disabilities, including behavioural problems, mental health difficulties and autism.

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*This was checked against the estimate provided for 2008 by the Office for National Statistics*
What’s Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Table 4 – Location of looked after children

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Location if looked after</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
<th>%</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Residential children’s home</td>
<td>73</td>
<td>54.5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Private fostering</td>
<td>36</td>
<td>26.9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Supported accommodation</td>
<td>7</td>
<td>5.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bed &amp; breakfast</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>2.2</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (undefined)</td>
<td>15</td>
<td>11.2</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The research has shown that many LSCB areas recognise the vulnerability of young people in residential homes. The breakdown shows that significant numbers of ‘looked after’ young people were recognised as at risk. The majority of those were living in residential care although it is not possible to say from this data whether that was the case when they were first recognised as at risk. It is important to note that the majority of young people recognised as at risk in this snapshot were living with their family. This underlines the message that sexual exploitation occurs everywhere and can affect young people in very different situations. It should be noted that those living at home also shared some of the difficulties explored in terms of education, health and substance misuse. It underlines the importance of developing family support work, and involving parents and other family members in support plans.

• education

Data for this category was provided in 459 cases. It was specified that the education situation of the young person was not known in a further 234 cases. A breakdown of those cases where information was known is set out in figure 7.

Figure 7 – Education

This shows that the majority of young people were still in full-time education – unsurprising given that the majority of cases involved those aged 15 (again the data is influenced by the types of agencies that replied). However there were an alarming number of young people outside mainstream education – truanting, temporarily excluded or attending a Pupil Referral Unit (108). A number of young people (67) were also identified as having special educational needs. This shows that, while preventative work in schools is vital, it is also important to try to capture the attention of young people who may not be in mainstream education.

• incidence of going missing

Data on missing episodes was provided in 427 cases. This included cases where it was known that no missing episodes had been reported. A breakdown of the data is shown in figure 8.

Figure 8 – Missing incidences known to agencies

In over a third of the cases identified (155 from a total of 427), young people had been reported as missing over 10 times. The strong link between going missing and vulnerability to sexual exploitation has been addressed at some length in Chapter 5. This breakdown of the data provides further endorsement of the need to link missing and child sexual exploitation strategies.

• involvement in domestic violence

Data on domestic violence was requested. This showed that this was known to be a factor in 223 of the cases. Figure 9 gives a breakdown of that data.

Figure 9 – Domestic violence

Taking into account those who both witnessed and experienced domestic violence, witnessing domestic violence was the most frequent experience (114) but a significant number of young people had experienced domestic violence themselves (86). The ‘other’ category related mainly to sexual abuse, both historical and current (24 from a total of 37 cases). Other forms of violence involved peers, with either the young person or the peer as
the perpetrator (12 cases).
This is an important finding. Understanding the potential link between domestic abuse and sexual exploitation should help LSCBs to focus the prevention aspect of their child sexual exploitation strategies appropriately. This link is explored in more detail in Chapter 5.

• criminal justice involvement
Data was requested on criminal justice issues. Information was provided in 341 cases. A breakdown of issues is shown in figure 10.

Figure 10 – Criminal justice issues

There was an additional case in which the young person had both received an ASBO and was a victim of crime, and three cases in which the young person had received an ASBO, had committed a number of offences and was also a victim of crime. Again, the link between child sexual exploitation and criminality is explored in Chapter 5.

Nature of exploitation

8.13 Data was requested on who (by category) had initiated the exploitative process, the methods of coercion and the level of exploitation.

• who initiated the exploitative process?
This data was provided in 439 cases. In a further 46 cases it was reported that this information was not known. The breakdown for those cases where data was provided is shown in figure 11.

Figure 11 – Who initiated the sexual exploitation

The research findings suggest that the most commonly recognised form of child sexual exploitation is grooming by an older ‘boyfriend’. This is further explored in the breakdown of the data on methods of coercion.

• methods of coercion
The data, provided in 473 cases, is broken down in table 5. The ‘other’ category included risky peer behaviour, gifts (variously money, a place to stay, alcohol, cigarettes and drugs), and ‘party lifestyle’. In most cases (78.9%) only one form of coercion was indicated but in other cases up to five different methods of coercion were selected.

Table 5 – Methods of coercion

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Method of coercion</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Grooming</td>
<td>211</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Pressure from an exploited peer</td>
<td>77</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Gang-related activity</td>
<td>27</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Local businesses</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social networking</td>
<td>82</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other uses of the internet</td>
<td>36</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Mobile phone</td>
<td>62</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>58</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known to the agency</td>
<td>75</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Both figure 11 and table 5 underline the emergence of ‘new’ models of exploitation, often involving peers and frequently using new technologies to make contacts.

• level of exploitation
This data was provided in 481 cases and is summarised in table 6. Again, more than one answer could be provided but the vast majority provided only one (78.8%) with the rest indicating up to four different options.

Table 6 – Level of exploitation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of exploitation</th>
<th>No. of cases</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Risky behaviour</td>
<td>337</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Swapping sex</td>
<td>112</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Commercial sexual exploitation</td>
<td>38</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved from location to location in the UK</td>
<td>47</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Moved between countries</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Not known</td>
<td>20</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Only one case of cross-border trafficking was identified. This is perhaps unsurprising given that this seems to be a separate specialism for many professionals and the majority of the cases identified involved young people identified as British.
Agency response

8.14 Data was requested on the nature of the support provided for the young person, the social care outcome and also the criminal justice outcome in terms of an investigation into the abuse.

- **type of support provided**
  Data was requested on the main focus of support for the young person. Agencies could identify as many as eight different types of support for each case. The information, available in 882 cases, is provided in Table 7.

Table 7 – Main support provided

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Type of support</th>
<th>No. of cases for which it was provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Managing risk</td>
<td>785</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing substance misuse</td>
<td>67</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing sexual health</td>
<td>116</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing mental health</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Education</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Family support</td>
<td>122</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Addressing criminal behaviour</td>
<td>34</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
<td>568</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Most agencies offered more than one type of support (in 748 cases). Where only one option was selected (in 217 cases) that option was usually ‘managing risk’.

A high number reported ‘other’ support but this was mainly used as a device to provide a narrative about the young person’s situation. Typically data was recorded on the level of need, the nature of the young person’s vulnerabilities and the risks they were exposed to, how concerns had first been raised as well as the kind of activities that were being offered to the young person. This additional support included information on safe relationships and self-esteem.

- **social care response**
  Data was requested on the social care response for each young person. This information was made available in only 484 cases. The breakdown is shown in Table 8.

Table 8 – Social care response

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Social care response</th>
<th>Frequency</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Child in Need</td>
<td>97</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Child Protection Plan</td>
<td>171</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specific child sexual exploitation plan</td>
<td>167</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>No social care/strategy meeting</td>
<td>49</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

- **criminal justice response**
  Data was requested on the progress of any criminal investigation. This showed that the police were known to be actively involved in 238 cases. Data was provided on 158 of those cases in relation to court proceedings. A breakdown of this data is shown in Table 9.

Table 9 – Progress of court proceedings

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>In progress</th>
<th>Abuser convicted</th>
<th>Completed but no conviction</th>
<th>Other</th>
<th>Total</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>103</td>
<td>34</td>
<td>18</td>
<td>3</td>
<td>158</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

The most striking statistic is the relatively low number of cases in which any criminal proceedings are taking place. The very low number of cases completed reflects the rarity of sexual exploitation cases reaching court. It may also reflect the low number of young people still receiving support following the court proceedings.

8.15 The national data collection exercise experienced many of the same difficulties as the CEOP thematic assessment. The CEOP exercise was differently focused on a specific area of sexual exploitation – ‘localised grooming’ – and derived most of its data from the police and so had a far greater focus on the offender. In particular it did not include peer on peer abuse which this research has found to be a growing area. It also collated data over a period of time as opposed to a data in respect of a single day. What the exercises had in common was the difficulty of accessing data, particularly data from LSCBs. Both exercises found that ‘data relating to child sexual exploitation is often partial and incomplete, concealed in secondary indicator data, or simply unrecorded’.

8.16 The issue with data collection is an important one. It is crucial to have a clear picture in order to properly assess the need for resources:

> **What we need is hard data because then you can actually make an argument for why we need more resources in that area or how we can use the resources we already have more efficiently.**

Examining links and trends in the data can also help LSCBs to use their limited resources in the best possible way, for example targeting early intervention on those groups seen to be most at risk. Developing a tried and tested tool is an important step towards effective and consistent local and national data collection. However, what the trial and the thematic assessment have both shown is that a tool is not enough. A tool can only be effective where the LSCB is following the guidance so that agencies are working together, practitioners understand and identify child sexual exploitation, agencies share and record information, and that information is regularly collated by the LSCB. As this research has shown, this is not the case in many areas. Put simply, no amount of tools will produce data in areas where there is no mechanism to identify and address child sexual exploitation. Until child sexual exploitation becomes a priority for all LSCBs, and the guidance followed across the country to develop effective strategies, any data collection exercise will provide a significant under-recording of the number of young people abused in this way.

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330 CEOP (2011)
331 interview A8/V1
332 interview B5/V2
What’s going on to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation?

- The data collection monitoring tool is available at www.nationalworkinggroup.org.uk
- For an example of how to use data in an annual report see www.safeguardingsheffieldchildren.org.uk

Self assessment checklist for collecting and managing data
- the LSCB coordinates a data collection system to monitor the nature and prevalence of CSE locally, and to assess outcomes for children and young people
- the LSCB contributes data to a national snapshot coordinated by CEOP

What is the impact of the guidance?

9.1 The essential task for this research project has been to look at the way the guidance has been implemented by LSCBs across England. What the research has revealed has been both an inspiration and a cause for serious concern. It has been an inspiration to learn what can be achieved by those LSCBs who are following the guidance and, after scoping the issue, have set up a multi-agency group to develop a child sexual exploitation strategy that really delivers — supporting young people through an incredibly damaging time in their lives and putting an end to their abuse through the prosecution of offenders. But a real concern has been that, despite the passage of 10 years and successive sets of comprehensive government guidance, this inspirational work is limited to a few areas of the country. LSCBs elsewhere are not fulfilling their responsibilities; young people are suffering horrific abuse; abusers are evading justice.

9.2 The impact of guidance has been limited. Government guidance originally took the form of Safeguarding Children from Prostitution. While considerably narrower in focus than the current guidance, this document introduced the dual aim of protecting young people and taking a proactive approach to the investigation and prosecution of offenders. A review of its implementation found that it had been far from successful. While 11 areas in England recognised a problem with children abused through prostitution, only 6% considered that they were meeting the dual aim. The current guidance, expanded and updated in 2009, has had a similarly limited impact. This research has found that it has not been implemented in half the country.

9.3 Local histories and circumstances emerge as more influential than national policy or guidance. Where practice seems to be most developed, addressing child sexual exploitation can be traced back to the late 1990s. The 2009 guidance sets out the appropriate steps for LSCBs to take. It should be noted that, while the guidance was widely welcomed, it did not seem to have been embraced as a user-friendly document. A number of interviewees asked for a copy of the interview schedule as this seemed to them to offer a useful checklist. The ‘checklist’ had been directly derived from the guidance but clearly provided a more accessible guide to the action required of LSCBs and their partners. It was also interesting to note that, when asked what additional tools might be helpful, there were a number of requests for a risk assessment matrix and other model documents, including an assessment tool and a draft action plan as well as models of successful practice. While there were few quibbles with the aims and direction of the guidance, there may be more effective ways to bring key elements of its content to the attention of strategic leads and practitioners.

9.4 Many LSCBs have taken little or no action following the publication of guidance in 2009. Others are pushing to develop the work but finding it a long and hard struggle to gain the commitment of partner agencies. This report, and the practical tools also developed as part of the project, are

Looking to the future

‘[CSE] been around for a long time and there doesn’t seem to be a lot of progress on it really’

‘I think there are spots of good practice in every area – but it’s spots’
What’s Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

The campaign called on government this found that the costs associated with sexual exploitation has been a challenge to the wider implementation of the guidance has been the child 9.8 afford not to take action? • cuts to generic services on which such strategies rely to meet the needs of sexually exploited young people. This includes Connexions and other youth services • increased workloads. The research found that the lead professional role and frequently the coordinator role had been added to existing responsibilities. Cost cutting measures have increased workloads to an even greater degree so that services become even more stretched • training and travel budgets have suffered significantly which has an impact on the provision of training and on the ability of staff to attend training and also regional meetings and national conferences which, as the research has found, were often the ways in which practitioners developed their knowledge of child sexual exploitation.

9.6 This period of austerity means that LSCBs must be able to justify their allocation of resources. It has become all the more important for an investment to be made into scoping the issue locally and adopting robust data collection and monitoring systems so that the scale and nature of local need can be properly assessed. The model data collection tool has been developed as part of this research project for just this purpose.

9.7 It is also crucial that local areas consider the economic cost of failing to intervene to protect and support young people at risk. Barnardo’s has recently published the result of an assessment of the potential savings from their own interventions for young people who have been sexually exploited. This found that the costs associated with sexual exploitation increased significantly with no intervention – an increase six times greater than the estimated cost of the intervention itself. In addition, LSCBs and partner agencies need to calculate carefully the savings that can accrue from the efficiencies of co-location. The unified approach in Blackburn is said to have achieved a 35% drop in the number of children missing between 2005/2006, prior to setting up the team, and 2010/11. Which LSCB can afford not to take action?

The reform agenda

9.8 Resources have always been a struggle. The research found that another challenge to the wider implementation of the guidance has been the child protection procedures themselves. Munro’s review of child protection advocates a reduction in the central prescription and interference and a move to a system characterised by the development of professional expertise to work effectively with children, young people and their families. This should enable local partnerships to build on the ways of working that they know from professional experience to be the most effective and – as some have already fought hard to do – move away from the stranglehold of time limits and working practices that do not serve the needs of this particular group of young people. The government response has been encouraging. The research suggests that this fundamental change in the way of working would be a significant step in the right direction although there are still issues to be addressed in terms of training, resources and priority.

9.9 The approach of ‘localism’, together with a less rigid child protection system, could provide a context in which LSCBs and their partner agencies have the freedom to deliver a strategy for child sexual exploitation tailored to local need. However, there is a balance to be struck between local freedom – which may result in a continuing postcode lottery as far as a response to child sexual exploitation is concerned – and a national lead which sets out a clear priority for this area of work, and supports that priority with the necessary resources.

A national action plan

9.10 In 2011 Barnardo’s launched a campaign to highlight the ‘urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation.’ The campaign called on government to take a lead in ensuring a fundamental shift in policy, practice and service delivery in England. In response Tim Loughton MP, the Children’s Minister, announced that a cross-government action plan to prevent child sexual exploitation would be developed to embed the guidance and to ensure an improved response. The central themes from the findings of this report have been noted by the Department for Education in the preparation of a national action plan which is expected to be published shortly. This provides an opportunity for government to challenge all LSCBs to take action. It is to be hoped that government does not shrink from that challenge because it is abundantly clear that yet another ‘guidance’ document will not prompt the fundamental shift that the campaign seeks. The national action plan will be impotent without an obligation on LSCBs to act and the resources to enable them to do so.

9.11 The reality is that the sexual exploitation of young people is not a new issue. Government guidance has been available to local partnerships for over 10 years. The reaction has shown that words are not enough – there must be an obligation on LSCBs, and their partner agencies, to act. The situation is unlikely to improve without a clear lead from government and from the heads of profession in the relevant agencies. We support the Barnardo’s campaign to ‘cut young people free’ from sexual exploitation. We welcome

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9.8 Barnardo’s (2011)
9.9 Department for Education (2011)
9.10 Barnardo’s (2011)
9.11 Tim Loughton’s speech to Barnardo’s (17 May 2011) is available from www.education.gov.uk/lisnews/speeches/0077302-tim_loughton_to_barnardo_event_on_child_sexual_exploitation
What’s Going on to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Annex A  Key statistical findings

LSCB coordination of partnerships
- 67% of (89) interviews considered child sexual exploitation to be a priority for their LSCB
- 55% of (100) LSCBs surveyed reported a specific protocol in place
- 38% of (100) LSCBs surveyed reported a sub group in place
- 43% of (100) LSCBs surveyed had identified lead professionals
- 25% of (100) LSCBs surveyed reported that a coordinator was in place
- less than 10% of areas have co-located units in place, or planned
- 24% of (89) interviews reported that young people had been involved in the development of the strategy

There were no plans:
- in 13% of (100) LSCBs surveyed for a specific protocol to be developed
- in 43% of (100) LSCBs surveyed to review their protocol in the light of the 2009 guidance
- in 33% of (100) LSCBs surveyed for a specific sub group to be set up
- In 21% of (100) LSCBs surveyed for lead professionals to be identified
- in 64% of (100) LSCBs surveyed to appoint a coordinator

Identifying child sexual exploitation
- 72% of (89) interviews reported that training was available on the identification of child sexual exploitation but
- 16% of (100) LSCB areas surveyed had no plans to provide specific advice on child sexual exploitation to professionals, young people or parents and carers
- 60% of (89) interviews reported that awareness raising was undertaken with practitioners
- 44% of (89) interviews reported that awareness raising was undertaken with young people
- 38% of (89) interviews reported that awareness raising was undertaken with parents/carers

‘there are current protocols in operation in less than a quarter of LSCBs’

‘a third of the country has no plans to deliver a child sexual exploitation strategy’

the lead taken by CEOP to address this issue on behalf of the police. We support the work of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner to enquire into gang and group associated sexual exploitation of young people. We hope that the government’s national action plan will be a real catalyst for change so that all young people who experience sexual exploitation will have the support and protection that they need and that abusers will no longer be able to act without impunity.
What’s Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

73% of (89) interviews identified local issues that placed young people at risk of sexual exploitation.

Young people going missing and looked after children were most likely to be targeted by strategies to address child sexual exploitation:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Risk group</th>
<th>% interviews reporting some targeted work (n=89)</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>‘children regularly absent from education’</td>
<td>43% (a further 23% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children who regularly go missing’</td>
<td>53% (a further 14% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children affected by gang activity’</td>
<td>14% (a further 51% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children with mental health issues’</td>
<td>24% (a further 43% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children abusing drugs or alcohol’</td>
<td>39% (a further 28% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘children with disabilities or special needs’</td>
<td>24% (a further 41% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>‘looked after children’</td>
<td>51% (a further 17% reported that none was done)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

76% of (89) interviews recognised grooming by adults in their area.

73% of (89) interviews recognised peer recruitment in their area.

69% of (89) interviews recognised the use of the internet in sexual exploitation in their area.

52% of (89) interviews recognised the movement of sexually exploited young people from place to place in the UK.

42% of (89) interview participants recognised sexual exploitation associated with gangs in their area.

37% of (89) interviews recognised cases of trafficking from abroad for child sexual exploitation in their area.

66% of (89) interviews considered that referral routes were clear.

44% of (89) interviews reported that the ‘identification’ element of the local strategy was under review.

Identifying, disrupting, investigating and prosecuting abusers:

31% of (89) interviews reported that local training covered disruption.

73% of (89) interviews reported that the police were involved in disruption.

33% of (89) interviews reported that children’s services were involved in disruption.

31% of (89) interviews reported that licensing authorities were involved in disruption.

27% of (89) interviews reported that carers were involved in disruption.

16% of (89) interviews reported that health practitioners were involved in disruption.

14% of (89) interviews reported that voluntary organisations were involved in disruption.

39% of (89) interviews reported that the ‘disruption element of the local strategy was under review.

51% of (89) interviews reported that child abduction notices were used.

20% of (89) interviews reported the use of covert surveillance.

31% of (89) interviews reported the use of forensic evidence.

27% of (89) interviews reported other investigative techniques.

48% of (89) interviews reported that a police operation had taken place within the last year.

Engaging with young people:

52% of (89) interviews reported training on ways to engage with young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation.

44% of (89) interviews reported that a specific information protocol was in place.

76% of (89) interviews reported that intervention was discussed at a strategy meeting.

53% of (89) interviews reported that education interventions were available.

56% of (89) interviews reported that drug and alcohol interventions were available.

42% of (89) interviews reported that health interventions were available.

46% of (89) interviews reported that family support was available.

39% of (89) interviews found that therapeutic interventions with young people were available.

24% of (89) interviews reported that young people had been involved in the development of local strategies.

43% of (89) interviews reported that the ‘engagement’ element of the local strategy was under review.
What’s Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

**Annex B The project team**

**Sue Jago** led the project. Sue has a background in policy development relating to child sexual exploitation, trafficking and prostitution. Previous research includes an exploration of ways to gather evidence against the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation. During the course of the project Sue was part of the Reference Group for the CEOP thematic assessment of ‘street grooming.’

**Dr Lorena Arocha** led the quantitative data collection trial. Lorena has conducted research on trafficking and other forms of exploitation such as bonded labour and forced labour in different national/regional contexts, in South Asia as well as in the UK. Lorena was part of the Anti-Trafficking Monitoring Group during its first year, conducting an evaluation of the implementation of the Council of Europe Convention on Action against Human Trafficking in the UK. She is currently working on Comic Relief funded research examining cross-border child trafficking prevention initiatives across three different geographical regions.

**Dr Isabelle Brodie** led on the analysis of the project data. Isabelle has researched extensively in the area of child welfare, including children and young people in care. Isabelle has recently carried out a review of literature relating to safe accommodation for young people in the care system and who are also sexually exploited and trafficked.

**Professor Margaret Melrose** has been researching the topic of sexually exploited young people for a number of years and has published extensively in the field of child and adolescent drug use and prostitution. Margaret has evaluated provision for young people involved in commercial sexual exploitation and produced empirical evidence showing why and how young people become involved. She is currently evaluating a programme run by the Metropolitan police to support young people involved in, or at risk of, violent or sexual victimisation; undertaking a study of the needs of young female offenders as they make the transition from custody to community (funded by the Sir Halley Stewart Trust) and a study of sexual victimisation within gangs (funded by the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England).

**Professor Jenny Pearce** had overall responsibility for the management of the project. Jenny has conducted extensive research in this area including studies of safeguarding sexually exploited young people, trafficked young people and the development of young people-centred accounts of exploitation. Jenny is Director of the Institute of Applied Social Research and the International Centre for the Study of Sexually Exploited and Trafficked Young People. She is Chair of the UK Home Office Child Trafficking International Sharing Forum and co-founder and management group member of the NWG. She is a member of the Policy Steering Committee of Eurochild, Brussels, and has worked with the Council of Europe as a rapporteur for their campaign *One in Five: preventing sexual violence against children*.

**Camille Warrington** has a background in youth work. Her work has focused primarily on the engagement and wider participation of those traditionally excluded from decision-making processes. Camille spent two years coordinating the NWG and, in this role, set up a national young people’s advisory group, *What Works For Us?*, which she continues to coordinate. Since 2010 Camille has been leading work on young people’s participation while undertaking a professional doctorate exploring young people’s experience of sexual exploitation support services and their involvement in decision making.
Annex C The project Advisory Group

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chair:</th>
<th>Professor Susanne MacGregor</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Members:</td>
<td>ADCS</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bamardo’s</td>
<td>Julie Harris, Carlene Firmin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>BASW</td>
<td>David Barnes, Sue Kent</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEOP</td>
<td>Zoe Hilton, Graham Ritchie</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Comic Relief</td>
<td>Debbie Walmsley</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CROP</td>
<td>Aravinda Kosanju, Natasha Canfer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Crown Prosecution Service</td>
<td>Pam Bowen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department for Education</td>
<td>Andrew Sargent, Jean Pugh</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Department of Health</td>
<td>Tania Celani, Monique Akosa</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ECPAT UK</td>
<td>Hannah Pearce</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Office</td>
<td>Ifeyinwa Okoye, Alastair Noble, Wayne Jones</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Home Office research</td>
<td>Alana Diamond, Laura Blakeborough, Sara Skodbo</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCB representative (Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Group)</td>
<td>Ann Lucas</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Missing People</td>
<td>Martin Houghton Brown</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPIA</td>
<td>Charlie Hedges</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NSPCC</td>
<td>Nasima Patel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>National Working Group</td>
<td>Camille Warrington, Heather Fraser</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Specialist project representative (Safe and Sound, Derby)</td>
<td>Sheila Taylor</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UK Human Trafficking Centre</td>
<td>Martin Reeve, Mike Hand</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Welsh Assembly Government</td>
<td>Sandra Owens, Rebecca Powell</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Annex D The initial survey form

### Local strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>No plans</th>
<th>Planned</th>
<th>Underway</th>
<th>Action complete</th>
<th>Further information/contact point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Is your LSCB planning to review the local response to child sexual exploitation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your LSCB developed specific local procedures?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>Has your LSCB set up a sub group to address sexual exploitation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Have lead professionals been identified in key agencies?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your LSCB appointed/identified a sexual exploitation coordinator?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Has your LSCB provided advice on reporting concerns for:</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) professionals?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) parents and carers?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) young people?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Is there a specialist service in your area providing support for young people at risk, or experiencing sexual exploitation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Does your local response include disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Training

<table>
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<tr>
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<th>Planned</th>
<th>Underway</th>
<th>Action complete</th>
<th>Further information/contact point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you use any local training on:</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>(c)</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) how to identify young people at risk, or experiencing, sexual exploitation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) how to safeguard young people from sexual exploitation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) how to gather evidence of sexual exploitation?</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Data monitoring

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Yes</th>
<th>No</th>
<th>Further information/contact point</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Do you collect data on the number of young people who are being worked with in your area:</td>
<td>(a)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
<td>(c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) believed to be at risk of sexual exploitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) believed to be experiencing sexual exploitation</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) using other categories</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Topic 1 – What is known about child sexual exploitation in the area?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No/DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1.1 Are there any relevant local demographic or geographic features?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.2 Has a scoping exercise been undertaken?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.3 Is data held locally on prevalence?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1.4 Are you aware of/have you worked with/do you have data for the following in your area in the past year?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) children believed to have been trafficked</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) sexual exploitation involving the internet</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) sexual exploitation involving gang activity</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) sexual exploitation involving grooming by adults</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) sexual exploitation involving peer recruitment</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 2 – The development and implementation of the local CSE strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No/DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>2.1 Is child sexual exploitation a priority issue for your LSCB?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.2 Is there a specific CSE protocol?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.3 Is there a sub group addressing this issue?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.4 Have lead professionals been identified?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.5 Has a coordinator been identified/appointed?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.6 Is the coordinator also the CP coordinator?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.7 Which agencies are most active in this area? (Please specify)</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.8 Is there a local specialist service?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) a statutory service?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) an NGO?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) no such service</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2.9 Have young people been involved in the development of the strategy?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 3 – Delivering the strategy – identification

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No/DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>3.1 Is awareness raising undertaken?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) with practitioners in child care statutory agencies?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) with other statutory agencies?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) with practitioners in specialist NGOs?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) with other NGOs?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) with the police?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) with parents/carers?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) with children and young people?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.2 Is training on identification provided for key agencies?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.3 Is there a specific information sharing protocol?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.4 Does the CSE strategy focus on specific at risk groups?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) children regularly absent from education</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) children who regularly go missing</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) children affected by gang activity</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) children with mental health issues</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) children abusing drugs or alcohol</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) children with disabilities or special needs</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) looked after children</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3.5 Are referral routes clearly signposted?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 4 – Delivering the strategy – intervention

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Question</th>
<th>Yes/No/DK</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>4.1 Is training on intervention provided for key agencies?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.2 Who carries out assessments?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) statutory children’s services?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) specialist project – statutory?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) specialist project – NGO?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.3 Is intervention discussed at a specific strategy meeting?</td>
<td>Yes/No/DK</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4.4 Does intervention include:</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) therapeutic outreach?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) input from education?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) input from health?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) input from drug and alcohol projects?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) other agencies (Please specify)</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) support for families/carers?</td>
<td>(Please specify)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
### Topic 5 – Delivering the strategy – disruption

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.1 Is training on disruption provided for key agencies? (please specify)</th>
<th>yes/no/dk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>5.2 Which agencies are involved in disruption tactics?</td>
<td>Tick all boxes that apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) police? (please specify which Unit)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) licensing authorities? (please specify)</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) CPS?</td>
<td>(c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) statutory children’s services?</td>
<td>(d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) NGO specialist service?</td>
<td>(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) health?</td>
<td>(f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) carers? (inc parents, foster carers, residential carers)</td>
<td>(g)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(h) other? (please specify)</td>
<td>(h)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>5.3 What disruption tactics are used?</th>
<th>Tick all boxes that apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) overt surveillance</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) abduction notices</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) cooperation with licensing authorities</td>
<td>(c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) other (please specify)</td>
<td>(d)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 6 – Delivering the strategy – prosecution

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.1 Is training on investigating sexual exploitation provided to key agencies? (please specify)</th>
<th>yes/no/dk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.2 Which agencies are involved in gathering evidence?</td>
<td>Tick all boxes that apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(a) police? (please specify which Unit)</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) CPS</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) statutory children’s services</td>
<td>(c)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(d) NGO specialist service</td>
<td>(d)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(e) health</td>
<td>(e)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(f) carers</td>
<td>(f)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(g) other (please specify)</td>
<td>(g)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.3 Which investigative techniques have been used?</th>
<th>Tick all boxes that apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) covert surveillance</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) forensics</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) other (please specify)</td>
<td>(c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.4 Which agency provides support for the victim/witness?</th>
<th>Tick all boxes that apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>(a) specialist CSE service?</td>
<td>(a)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(b) specialist witness service?</td>
<td>(b)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(c) other (please specify)</td>
<td>(c)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>6.5 Have there been specific police operations focused on CSE within the last year?</th>
<th>yes/no/dk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>6.6 Have there been prosecutions of perpetrators for CSE crimes within the last year?</td>
<td>yes/no/dk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 7 – Data collection

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>7.1 Is data collated routinely by your LSCB?</th>
<th>yes/no/dk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>7.2 Is data collated routinely by your agency?</td>
<td>yes/no/dk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>7.3 Is there a shared database?</td>
<td>yes/no/dk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 8 – Further development of the local CSE strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>8.1 Is the local strategy under review? (a) in respect of identification? (b) in respect of engagement? (c) in respect of disruption? (d) in respect of prosecution?</th>
<th>Tick all boxes that apply</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>8.2 Are there plans to develop links with other agencies?</td>
<td>yes/no/dk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>8.3 Are there any plans to develop links with other areas?</td>
<td>yes/no/dk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 9 – Following the DCSF 2009 guidance

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>9.1 Does the local strategy follow the DCSF 2009 guidance?</th>
<th>yes/no/dk</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>9.2 Are aspects of the guidance not adopted (a) in respect of identification? (b) in respect of engagement? (c) in respect of disruption? (d) in respect of prosecution?</td>
<td>Tick all boxes that apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.3 Are there any additional tools that you would find helpful? (please specify)</td>
<td>yes/no/dk</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>9.4 Have other organisations been helpful with the delivery of the strategy? (please specify)</td>
<td>yes/no/dk</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Topic 10 – Resourcing the child sexual exploitation strategy

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>10.1 What funding/resources does the LSCB contribute to: (a) training (b) specialist projects (c) other (please specify)</th>
<th>Tick if information provided</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>10.2 What funding/other resources to partner agencies contribute to the implementation of the strategy? (a) police (b) children’s services (c) health (d) education (e) other (please specify)</td>
<td>Tick all boxes that apply</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>10.3 Where a specialist project is in place, how is it funded? (a) local authority (b) PCT (c) trusts and foundations (d) Comic Relief (e) other (please specify)</td>
<td>Tick all boxes that apply</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
This checklist has been designed to assist LSCBs to assess their progress against the requirements of the guidance to deliver an effective child sexual exploitation strategy and to identify areas in which to focus future activity. It is suggested that the checklist is incorporated into local plans and that each outcome is assessed as

A – in place;
B – under development, or partially achieved or
C – yet to be addressed, or at a very early stage of development.

To identify child sexual exploitation

- A scoping exercise has been conducted focusing on victims, perpetrators and locations
- Key agencies work with a range of other organisations to reduce the risks of child sexual exploitation, according to local need

To coordinate joint working and develop a child sexual exploitation strategy

- The LSCB has fully signed up to the 5 principles underpinning a CSE strategy
  - a shared responsibility
  - an integrated approach
  - a proactive approach
  - a child-centred approach and support for parents and carers
  - recognising criminality
- The LSCB supports a sub group to drive forward work to tackle child sexual exploitation
- All key agencies are represented at the sub group, lead professionals are identified and the expectations of each agency clearly understood
- Child sexual exploitation is championed at the highest level in partner agencies
- An up-to-date and specific child sexual exploitation protocol has been agreed and disseminated, focusing on identification, engagement, disruption and prosecution
- The child sexual exploitation protocol is aligned with other relevant strategies
- There is a coordinator in post whose function is recognised in the local area so that referral routes for concerns are widely understood
- Local partners have agreed to share all relevant information and there is a process for safeguarding children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation

To support young people and their families and carers

- All practitioners working with children and young people have the requisite skills and knowledge to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation
- Through training and awareness raising, all local practitioners working with children and young people are aware of the risk factors, including local factors, for child sexual exploitation
- There is a programme in place to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation with children and young people
- There is a programme in place to raise awareness with parents and carers
- The community is aware of the risks of child sexual exploitation and where to report concerns locally
- In all cases of children and young people going missing, the risk of sexual exploitation is specifically considered
- Children and young people who have been victims of child abuse or witnesses of domestic violence are monitored to minimise the risk of sexual exploitation
- Preventative work is delivered as early as possible with children and young people identified as at particular risk, and with their parents/ carers
- Preventative strategies are delivered in a way that is accessible to young people and their families, regardless of gender and community

- Services are accessible to all young people who may need them, regardless of gender, ethnicity or any other characteristic
- Services are flexible to meet the needs of both young children and adolescents
- Services are available to children and young people believed to be at risk or, or experiencing, sexual exploitation regardless of whether or not they have made a formal disclosure
- Children and young people attend strategy meetings and care pathways are discussed and explained
- Parents and carers attend strategy meetings and care pathways are discussed and explained
- Transition arrangements are in place for young people reaching the age of 18 and still in need of services
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

- Where parents/carers are not implicated in child sexual exploitation, access to support is available
- Feedback from service users is taken into account in the development/review of services
- A process has been developed for professionals to meet and agree a plan as soon as concerns have been recognised
- A wide range of services are available to respond to the needs of children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation

To identify, investigate, disrupt and prosecute abusers

- All local practitioners working with children and young people recognise that those at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation suffer significant harm and should not be regarded as displaying bad or immoral behaviour
- Proactive investigation of location ‘hot spots’ and to identify potential abusers is undertaken
- Cases are managed in a way that supports the gathering of evidence
- All agencies in direct contact with children and young people understand how to record information for evidential purposes
- Action is taken promptly to disrupt child sexual exploitation, involving all relevant agencies
- Prosecutions are pursued wherever possible to prevent re-offending
- Investigative methods have been developed to minimise the reliance on the evidence of the child or young person who is the victim of child sexual exploitation
- Where criminal proceedings take place against exploiters, access to special measures are requested where appropriate
- Arrangements are in place to support young people and their families throughout any investigation and court proceedings process and beyond to avoid re-victimisation
- Parents, carers and young witnesses are kept informed of progress at all stages
- Arrangements are in place to support young people after any court proceedings have concluded to minimise the risk of re-victimisation

To collect and manage data

- The LSCB coordinates a data collection system to monitor the nature and prevalence of CSE locally, and to assess outcomes for children and young people
- The LSCB contributes data to a national snapshot coordinated by CEOP
Annex G Training briefing

• 72% of (89) interviews reported that training was available on the identification of child sexual exploitation
• 52% of (89) interviews reported training on ways to engage with young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation
• 31% of (89) interviews reported that local training covered disruption
• 30% of (89) interviews reported that local training covered investigation

Who is providing training?
• The research has found that, in some areas, the provision of training is comprehensive and well received; but many areas provide little or no training. The scoping data revealed that ‘training’ could mean anything from access to information through the LSCB website to formal training courses.
• Where training is provided it is sometimes bought in from training consultancies but is more often delivered by those working in specialist projects on a multi-agency basis, reflecting their own experiences:
  ‘its self taught, we’re self taught just by reading literature, national literature and your literature, and going to conferences.”
• Where multi-agency training is available it is seen as immensely valuable. It provides information based on local knowledge, delivered by those with expertise in this area of work, and helps to cement inter-agency working. Outcomes were said to underline the value:
  ‘as soon as you start doing training to a specific group, the referrals from that group increase’
• Recent research has shown that the delivery of multi-agency services benefits from multi-agency training in that:
  ‘there were very substantial improvements in their self-reported understanding of the roles of different professions…and in their confidence and comfort in working with these colleagues’
• However, multi-agency training is sometimes difficult to deliver. From some agencies, the opportunity to participate is highly valued, but there is a low take up from others. It is also unlikely that such training ‘reaches’ senior staff

Who pays?
• Despite the requirement on LSCBs to provide training to enable professionals to deliver a child sexual exploitation strategy, there are no ring-fenced resources to meet the cost
• In some areas the LSCB funds multi-agency training, sometimes bringing in a training consultancy

What is needed?
• The experience of sexually exploited young people suggested that there is still an unmet need. It was suggested that many agencies working with young people were unaware of the way in which exploitation takes place. This not only means that signs are overlooked and the opportunities for early intervention are missed but also affects the way that generic services are delivered
• As a minimum, and in accordance with the guidance, LSCBs need to ensure that all practitioners have access to training to enable them to deliver the different elements of a child exploitation strategy – identification, engagement, disruption and prosecution
• Where there is a local specialist project they may be best placed to provide training on identification and engagement
• Specific training from the police on gathering evidence is required to ensure that welfare agencies understand how to record information so that it has a potential evidential value
• There is a need to develop appropriate training from the significant recent experience from multi-agency teams investigating individual cases and from major operations set up to investigate networks of abuse through exploitation. At seminars with the police and also in discussion with police interviewees, specific requests were made for training on how to investigate child sexual exploitation
• It should be a statutory requirement for child sexual exploitation to be on the curriculum for trainee social workers, youth workers, youth offending team practitioners, health workers (primary and secondary care workers); CPS staff and education practitioners including head teachers, teachers,
teaching support staff and education social workers.

- In line with a recent review of LSCB training, consideration should be given to building LSCB inter-agency courses into the post-qualifying professional development frameworks for different groups of professional staff. This would both raise the status of courses and might also help to draw in professional groups who are currently under-represented, such as more experienced/senior staff, and doctors.\textsuperscript{341}

### Resources

A number of organisations provide professional training on child sexual exploitation:

- **BLAST**: the BLAST Project, which supports boys and young men at risk of, or being groomed for sexual exploitation also provides professional training. For information contact Phil Mitchell (p.mitchell@mesmac.co.uk)
- **CEOP**: provides a range of training for professionals – see www.ceop.police.uk/training
- **ECPAT**: for information on the ECPAT UK National Training Centre, contact info@ecpat.org.uk
- **Just Whistle**: provides information and training on tackling sexual exploitation, through formal training, seminars and conferences. See www.justwhistle.org.uk
- **NSPCC**: NSPCC Child Protection Learning Resources are available from www.nspcc.org.uk/inform/trainingandconsultancy
- Training may be offered locally by specialist projects, including Barnardo's projects. A regularly updated compendium of training resources can be found at www.cropuk.org.uk or www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk

### Abbreviations

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>ACPCs</td>
<td>Area Child Protection Committees (precursors to LSCBs)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ACPO</td>
<td>Association of Chief Police Officers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ADCS</td>
<td>Association of Directors of Children's Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>AMHS</td>
<td>Adult Mental Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAIU</td>
<td>Child Abuse Investigation Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>Child &amp; Adolescent Mental Health Services</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CEOP</td>
<td>Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>CPS</td>
<td>Crown Prosecution Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>DCSF</td>
<td>Department for Children, Schools and Families (now Department for Education)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LSCB</td>
<td>Local Safeguarding Children Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MAPPA</td>
<td>Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NPIA</td>
<td>National Policing Improvement Agency*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PPU</td>
<td>Public Protection Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SPOC</td>
<td>Single Point of Contact</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UKHTC</td>
<td>United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre*</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>WWFU</td>
<td>What Works For Us, young people’s participation project</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOS</td>
<td>Youth Offending Service</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>YOT</td>
<td>Youth Offending Team</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*During the course of the research project all became part of the new National Crime Agency
available from www.npia.police.uk
available from www.npia.police.uk
Barnardo’s (2011) Puppet on a string: The urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation, London: Barnardo’s
Barnardo’s (2011) Reducing the risk, cutting the cost, London: Barnardo’s
available from www.bamardos.org.uk/reducing_the_risk_cutting_the_cost_final.pdf
Barnardo’s (forthcoming) Associations between child sexual exploitation and youth offending, London: Barnardo’s
available from www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research
available from www.policing.oxfordjournals.org/content/5/2/132.full.pdf
available from www.scie.org.uk
available from www.ceop.police.uk/Publications
CEOP (2011) Out of Mind, Out of Sight: Breaking down the barriers to understanding child sexual exploitation, London: Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre
available from www.ceop.police.uk/Publications/ (the Executive Summary is available from www.ceop.police.uk/Documents/ceopdocs/ceop_thematic_assessment_executive_summary.pdf)
Children & Young People Now, Good Practice: How a unified approach is helping Blackburn agencies to fight child sexual exploitation, published on 9 August 2011 available at www.cypnow.co.uk/news/1081764
Cook, B (2009) Teenagers need safeguarding too in Children & Young People Now, 3–9 Dec: 14
Dennis, J. (2008) Women are Victims, Men make Choices: The Visibility of Men and Boys in the Global Sex Trade, Gender Issues, No 25, pp 11–26
available from www.education.gov.uk/publications
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available from www.education.gov.uk/munroreview/downloads/GovernmentResponse/Munro
available from www.dh.gov.uk/en/Publicationsandstatistics
Derby Safeguarding Children Board (2010) Serious Case Review BD09 Executive Summary
available from www.derbyscb.org.uk/scb2
What's Going On to Safeguard Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation?

Provisions in the UK

NWG available from www.education.gov.uk/publications


StreetReach Doncaster/ University of Bedfordshire (2010) Out of the Box: young people’s stories, Luton: University of Bedfordshire available from cara.senouni@beds.ac.uk


What’s Going On? Interim Report available from cara.senouni@beds.ac.uk

What Works For Us (forthcoming) Young people’s views on sexual exploitation support projects: findings from the questionnaire and consultation project, London: WWFU Group

Wellard, S (1999) Exit Strategy in Community Care, 11 – 17th February

