

Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group

Operational Executive – 25 March 2013

Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation

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Purpose:

Sexual exploitation is a curious term; it runs the risk of glossing over the reality of what is done to children and young people. The reality is that each year thousands of children in England are raped and abused from as young as 11 years by people seeking to humiliate, violate and control them; the impact on their lives is often devastating.

This report is my interpretation of the recent sexual exploitation conference held in Rotherham on 8 March 2013 and the proposed Rotherham multi agency sexual exploitation strategy and action plan. The strategy aims to reduce the impact of sexual exploitation on Rotherham children and young people and places an expectation that RCCG will support this multi agency approach. See Appendix 1 for Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Appendix 2 for a briefing and interpretation of the regional conference Never Giving Up: The Challenges in Tackling Sexual Exploitation held 08.03.2013.

Background:

In November 2012 the [Office for the Children's Commissioner](#) undertook to investigate and research the size of the problem around sexual exploitation, gangs and groups at the same time allegations were being made around Jimmy Savile and the perceived conspiracy of organisational silence which allowed him and those who acted with him to continue to rape children with impunity for decades. It has since been accepted that is too easy to simply blame the BBC, the Police or the Hospital Trusts highlighted and castigated by the media as if what happened was entirely due to organisational failure. The truth in sexual exploitation is much more difficult and challenging and therefore the multi agency strategy and associated action plan are essential to help tackle this insidious crime.

What is known nationally is that children who have been abducted, trafficked, beaten and threatened after being drawn into a web of sexual violence by promises of love and others who have suffered in silence for years as they are casually and routinely raped by boys/men in their Neighbourhoods have long term and often chronic health problems. This is an issue which needs tackling on several fronts.

Based on evidence submitted to the Office of Children's Commissioner, at least 16,500 children were identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation during one year and 2,409 children were confirmed as victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups during the 14-month period from August 2010 to October 2011. Evidence indicates that in any given year the actual number of children being abused is far greater than the 2,409 that have been confirmed. In terms of Rotherham numbers, child sexual exploitation is difficult to quantify. A robust referral process to Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) is now in place and all referrals where child sexual exploitation is thought to be a concern are to a multi agency specialist team.

Analysis of key issues and of risks

The regional conference held on 08.03.2013 was thought provoking and challenging of all agencies, see Appendix 2. It was particularly interesting to note the level of attendance from Rotherham Local Authority, Councillors and Police and the no show from Andrew Norfolk (Times). Based on evidence from the conference and from the Office of Children's Commissioner report provider health services will need to be much more involved in this area

over the next few months and that the NHS Commissioning Board Area Team along with Public Health will need to consider this in the wider regional context.

In order to reduce the impact on young people and families lives in Rotherham the Local Safeguarding Children Board has consulted and produced a strategy and action plan to ensure that all agencies work together effectively to achieve a shared understanding and a shared goal at reducing the numbers of children drawn into sexual exploitation and pursuing the perpetrators of such heinous crimes against young people. The key strategic priorities in this area for 2013 – 2016 are;

- **PREVENT** children becoming victims of child sexual exploitation (CSE) thorough education and awareness raising and assuring local communities that agencies take the issue seriously.
- **PROTECT** children and safeguard them from risk of harm from CSE.
- **PURSUE** the perpetrators of CSE and ensure appropriate multi-agency plans are in place to support victims and to enable them to safely disclose the abuse and provide the evidence to prosecute offenders.

GUM and CASH services therefore nationally and locally have a pivotal role in preventing and protecting children and young people and in supporting enforcement agencies such as police and crown prosecution services in pursuing offenders. Locally the support of GUM and CASH is very much appreciated by Rotherham agencies who acknowledge their dilemma of providing care and of preventing this form of abuse – there are recent incidents where the GUM service has had a conflict around providing information and an adult service user's right to confidentiality. Following legally advice GUM has been advised to share data in the public interest.

The health services need for confidentiality has and is regarded as a barrier that we need to consider and find an acceptable solution to, as it is protecting perpetrators and not victims. Equally we have a balance around confidentiality and young people's right to have relationships Local research/evidence is that victims and perpetrators are 'CASH Shopping' to evade detection similar to the 'hospital shopping' seen in physical abuse – so we need to look at our border as well as children presenting from out of area into our A&E and WICs. Our need to find an information sharing solution to this issue across South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw Are Team is therefore crucial.

The following organisations, agencies and disciplines need to take account and work together to identify children and young people showing the warning signs of, or who are vulnerable to, child sexual exploitation, and act accordingly:

- Accident and Emergency Departments.
- CAMHS services.
- Drop-in clinics and community based health services.
- Drugs and alcohol misuse services.
- Educational institutions (including schools, pupil referral units, academies, private schools, special schools, and extra-curricular provision) – School Nursing
- GP surgeries.
- GUM and family planning clinics.
- Midwifery and health visitors.
- Residential children's homes. LAC Health Team
- Sexual Assault Referral Centres.
- Violence against women agencies (including rape crisis and refuge provision).
- Specialist agencies working with children and young people (FNP)

Data is not routinely collected on all of the risk indicators identified by the Office Children's Commissioner; the areas being suggested for 'health' to collate are:

Table 1: Child Sexual Exploitation Gangs and Groups (2012) indicators, dataset and source

	Indicator	Data Set	Source
10.	Self-harm Or Thoughts of or attempts at suicide	Children who are self-harming or showing suicidal intent.	PCT/Child and Adolescent Mental Health Service
11.	Drug or alcohol misuse	Children misusing drugs and/or alcohol	PCT/Drug and Alcohol Team

The broad definitions in child sexual exploitation are:

- **gang** – mainly comprising men and boys aged 13 – 25 years old, who take part in many forms of criminal activity, such as knife crime or robbery, who can engage in violence against other gangs, and who have identifiable markers such as territory, a name, sometimes clothing etc. While children can be sexually exploited by a gang, this is not the reason why a gang is formed.
- **Group** - involves people who come together in person or online for the purpose of setting up, co-ordinating and/or taking part in the sexual exploitation of children in either an organised or opportunistic way.
- **Perpetrators** - the vast majority of this terrible crime are male. They range in age, come from all ethnic groups and so do their victims – contrary to what some may wish to believe. The failure of agencies to recognise this means that too many child victims are not getting the protection and support they so desperately need.

Patient, Public and Stakeholder Involvement:

Multi Agency Conference held in Rotherham 08.03.2013
Report shared with TRFT safeguarding Committee on 19.03.2013

Equality Impact:

Whilst this report is specifically on children who are sexually exploited it is not specific to gender ethnicity, race and culture as male victims as well as female victims need to be considered.

In addition consideration needs given to vulnerable adults.

Financial Implications:

Agencies in Rotherham are hoping to set up a multi agency team that will include health professionals. The health professionals with the most significant skill set for this work include GUM, CASH and/or community public health (School Nursing).

Approval history:

TRFT Safeguarding Committee 19.3.2013
RCCG OE 25.3.2013

Recommendations:

- Read and accept the report including the data set suggested for health.
- Work with the multi agency arena to source solutions to the issue of confidentiality and data sharing, considering who in health is most appropriate to ensure that each of the areas identified as critical to share information is made aware and held to account for sharing appropriately.
- Ensure that sexual exploitation and the trafficking of children is highlighted in all safeguarding training.

Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2013-16



Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is an insidious form of child abuse that has a damaging and long lasting impact on those involved. In order to address this problem, effective multi agency partnership working is essential, where partners work to the principle that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility, and are clear on their respective roles and responsibilities. Together, as partners, we will work to eradicate child sexual exploitation from the borough.

CSE is recognised nationally as one of the most important challenges facing agencies today. It is therefore one of Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children's Boards (RLSCB) key priorities. We recognise the serious long term and lasting impact CSE can have on every aspect of a child or young person's life, including their health, physical and emotional wellbeing, educational attainment, personal safety, relationships, and future life opportunities. The impact of CSE on family life can be significant, placing considerable strain on all family members and can ultimately lead to family break down.

What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

CSE is defined nationally in the Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation 2009 as the;

'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 be via the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability'

CSE can take a number of forms and Barnardos has identified three areas;

- Inappropriate relationships involving a lone perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person, whether physical (including domestic abuse), emotional or economic. There is likely to be a significant age gap between the perpetrator and victim. The young person may believe that they are in a loving, equal relationship.
- The 'boyfriend' model of exploitation and peer exploitation – The perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a 'relationship' and subsequently coerces them to have sex with friends or associates. This includes gang exploitation and peer-on-peer exploitation.
- Elements of organised/networked sexual exploitation or trafficking – Young people are passed through networks of offenders, possibly between towns and cities, where they may be coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Victims

may also be used as agents to recruit other children and young people. Where there are groups of offenders in a network, these should be considered as Organised Crime Groups (OCGs).

Possible Indicators

There are a number of key indicators that may suggest a child is being sexually exploited and these are being used as a screening tool locally by the Rotherham Contact and Referral Team (CART), as well as the local Early Help Assessment Team (EHAT).

The list is not exhaustive but includes;

- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late;
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part in education;
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions;
- Associating with other young people involved in exploitation;
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends;
- Contracting sexually transmitted infections;
- Mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing;
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Displaying overtly sexualised behaviour.
- Involvement in gang activity

When children and young people display any of the above characteristics, consideration must be given to an assessment being undertaken to establish if they are at risk of, or are being abused through CSE. All organisations involved with children should be able to recognise these risk indicators, such as schools, youth services, voluntary sector organisations, health, social care. Local research indicates that unauthorised absences from school as well as missing from home or care episodes are currently the most significant indicators of CSE.

Priorities

Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board is pivotal in ensuring all partners work together effectively to achieve the shared key strategic priorities in this area for 2013 – 2016, which are;

- **PREVENT** children becoming victims of CSE through education and awareness raising and assuring local communities that agencies take the issue seriously.
- **PROTECT** children and safeguard them from risk of harm from CSE.
- **PURSUE** the perpetrators of CSE and ensure appropriate multi-agency plans are in place to support victims and to enable them to safely disclose the abuse and provide the evidence to prosecute offenders.

This CSE Strategy and its action plan will ensure that there is a clear vision and strong focus shared by all agencies on CSE.

The Rotherham Perspective

Due to the very nature of CSE, and its emotive nature, there has been national media attention. Rotherham has featured in this from both positive and negative perspectives. In 2010, the media praised Rotherham agencies for the way that five men were prosecuted following Operation Central, with reports that “this case shows how seriously South Yorkshire Police and Rotherham Council treat the issue of child sexual

exploitation". By contrast, there is also the potential for highly negative press where failings are found. This has been seen in Rotherham in the months following the publication of articles in The Times in September 2012. Since then, Council and South Yorkshire Police senior representatives have been required to attend and answer to the Home Affairs Select Committee and the findings have been published in the national press.

The role of the local community in Rotherham is vital in sharing information, and identifying area of concern. Local residents are very often the eyes and ears of the community, and have a duty to pass on any concerns to any of the partner agencies. Part of the work of the CSE Service is to raise professional and public awareness. This is being undertaken through the delivery of multi-agency training for professionals, briefings to elected members, development of leaflets for children and young people, parents and carers, targeted consultation and community engagement activity, as well as a positive working relationship with the local media.

It is crucial that RLSCB has a robust response to minimise CSE and its effects. The issue has an impact across many different areas and as such, a variety of agencies can positively intervene to improve outcomes for children and young people. Schools, Police, NHS, Fire and Rescue Services, Local Authority and the Community and Voluntary sector are all integral to identifying and minimising CSE and its effects. The purpose of this strategy and its action plan is to ensure all agencies have a common purpose and focus.

On 1st October 2012, Children's Social Care and South Yorkshire Police co-located to create a specialist CSE service, including Police officers, social workers, youth workers and other council support staff. The team are based within the Public Protection Unit at Maltby Police Station.

The remit of the Child Sexual Exploitation Team is to:

- Develop and build on current education programmes and engage with schools to reduce and prevent CSE;
- Raise awareness of CSE risk indicators and referral processes within all agencies;
- Provide a rapid response to the investigation of CSE;
- Reduce and prevent CSE by deterring, disrupting and prosecuting offenders.
- Support young people to be able to identify themselves as victims of CSE
- To support parents and carers in understanding the implications of CSE and reducing the risks

The work of the CSE service also involves collaborative work with the Taxi Licensing Board, Alcohol Licensing and Housing. These agencies can not only help by providing vital information to help identify hotspots but also provides a multi-agency approach to securing evidence to suspend or revoke licenses.

In terms of numbers, CSE is difficult to quantify, and we continue to endeavour to measure this more effectively. A robust referral process to CYPS is now in place and all referrals where CSE is thought to be a concern are referred through CART. The screening tool is used within CART to consider CSE even when this has not been raised as an issue by the referrer. These cases are then passed to the CSE Team, and assessment is undertaken by qualified social workers. Police systems have been developed across South Yorkshire to record intelligence when information received does not name a particular child. This has allowed geographical areas to be identified as potential 'hot spots' and has resulted in multi agency disruption tactics being

deployed. This has involved a heightened Police presence in identified areas and joint working between safer neighbourhood teams, social workers, and detached youth workers. The impact of this work is to make potential perpetrators aware that Police are observing their activities, and deter them from approaching children and young people, as well as then considering the needs of the individual young people. Where required young people are referred for assessment and specialist support.

This strategy is underpinned by a number of national guidance documents, key research and tools including;

- Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation 2009
- University of Bedfordshire 2011 research into Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) response to CSE
- Department for Education 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation–Action Plan' 2012
- Munro Review of Child Protection
- Barnardo's 'Puppet on a String' and 'Cutting them free'
- CEOP's Thematic Assessment 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind',
- Blackburn and Darwen's good practice

The following diagram, the 'plan on a page', sets out the key actions that will need to be delivered in 2013-16, underpinned by a strategic performance management framework and a suite of performance measures to enable the RLSCB to ensure its delivery and to measure outcomes. RLSCB will also hold agencies to account through the outcome of Serious Case Reviews, joint CSE operations and a review of implementation of Learning Lessons Reviews.

To underpin the CSE Strategy and action plan each partner will have in place its own agency action plan to support overall delivery of this strategy in their service. The RLSCB will review progress on the delivery of the strategy on a quarterly basis.

Prevent

making it more difficult to exploit children

Ensure that the RLSCB has an effective strategy, governance arrangements, protocols, policies and procedures in place to ensure a co-ordinated multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation

Engage with children and young people to gain a better understanding of the practice of CSE and develop activities which will dissuade children and young people becoming involved in CSE and identify those at risk

Ensure all agencies working with or in contact with children understand the indicators of CSE, have established intelligence gathering processes and develop intervention strategies.

Deliver a universal education programme to the children and young people of Rotherham to raise awareness and reduce risk

Raise awareness of CSE within the Rotherham community through a universal awareness raising campaign

Ensure there is a robust multi-agency training and awareness programme in place to respond to child sexual exploitation

Utilise multi-agency disruption techniques to reduce high risk or hot spot locations

Protect

identifying and safeguarding children who are at risk

Through the Child Sexual Exploitation service, protect and support victims, utilising deterrent and disruption activity with abusers.

Identify, locate and protect children and young people from sexual exploitation through effective risk assessment.

Put in place a multi-agency framework for intelligence gathering and information sharing.

Ensure that the national guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation is the minimum standard across Rotherham.

Ensure that we continually scrutinise the delivery of standards, policies, procedures and practice in service delivery to ensure that children are safe.

Ensure that voluntary and community groups are best placed to support victims of CSE and their families and incorporate in their services within risk management plans.

Ensure there is a clear referral pathway to effective information sharing, assessment and subsequent co-ordinated services.

Pursue

identifying offenders, disrupting and stopping their activity

Provide specialist support and services that enables offenders to be brought to justice and deters future offending.

Ensure victims continue to be supported throughout the police investigations and any subsequent criminal proceedings

Ensure suitable recording processes are in place for all front line agencies to develop effective ways of recording data relating to known or suspected cases of CSE

Learn more about the nature of sexual abuse involving children from offenders' and victims' perspectives to deepen understanding of the behaviour and motivation of offenders and help police forces with strategies for interviewing suspects

Learn from previous, current and future prosecutions to ensure all investigations into CSE are undertaken by professionally trained staff and increase the likelihood of prosecution

Ensure we respond to information and take appropriate action which could include disruption or investigation by the police