



Keeping children safe is everyone's responsibility

Brent LSCB

Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy

2015-2018

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1 Introduction

- 1.1. The governance with regards to CSE is due to change with the overarching governance being held by the Safer Brent Partnership Board (subject to agreement).**



- 1.2. The LSCB will focus on safeguarding the victim with all partners gathering and sharing intelligence with regards to location.**
- 1.3. The Ofsted review of the effectiveness of Brent Local Safeguarding Children Board took place from 14th September 2015 to 8th October 2015. They found;**

"Work around child sexual exploitation has progressed since the Ofsted thematic inspection in 2014. Although further improvement is needed, particularly with regards to the risks to children missing from home or care, there is a sharper strategic focus, with better coordinated activity to pull together information data and intelligence that is being used to build up a picture of activity across the Borough. Work with the Clinical Commissioning Group, Police and the Safer Brent Partnership has improved understanding and there is investment from board partners to resource future work, including the appointment of a dedicated child sexual exploitation analyst."

- 1.4. This strategy describes the LSCB's continuing commitment to addressing the issue of CSE and support and safeguarding of children and young people in Brent from this type of abuse through a multi-agency approach based on a thorough risk assessment of the extent and nature of CSE locally.**

- 1.5. It is important to emphasise that CSE is a form of child sexual abuse. The definition of child sexual abuse is identified in "[Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015](#)", the government's statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.**

"Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts, such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing. They may also include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet). Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children."

- 1.6. This strategy uses the nationally agreed Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) definition which underpins the [Metropolitan Police Service's Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol March 2015](#).**

*"Sexual exploitation of children and young people **under 18** involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person (or third person/s) 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."*

- 1.7. There are strong links between children being at risk of sexual exploitation and other behaviours, in particular missing from home or care. Significant evidence highlights that children and young people who go missing from home or care are at increased risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation.**
- 1.8. It is therefore essential that all partner agencies act rigorously to reduce incidents of children/young people going missing. In addition, robust efforts to locate a child or young person if known to be missing are required, and once located, agencies must ensure that they have processes in place to assess why a child/young person went missing, what they experienced whilst missing and how any future risk of that child/young person going missing could be reduced.**

- 1.9. The LSCB CSE Sub Group and the Brent Council Community Safety Team will share data and information about people and areas of risk in the borough so that joint analysis can take place that informs both Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) and CSE strategies and action plans. This will include sharing data and information to address Gang violence and exploitation. Gangs are becoming less visible in public, and more fluid in the way they organise. In particular, it is important that local partners are able to respond to the exploitation of children and young people by gangs, especially as the problem is often hidden and not always understood in some local areas where it is taking place.**
- 1.10. The strategy will be reviewed in 2018 and refreshed annually.**
- 1.11. The action plan will reviewed on a regular basis by the LSCB through the Child Sexual Exploitation sub group who will report on amendments.**

2 The Purpose of the Strategy

- 2.1. To promote collaborative work to ensure the safeguarding and welfare of children from child sexual exploitation.**
- 2.2. To ensure that children and young people and the wider community in particular parents and carers, are aware of child sexual exploitation and its effects.**
- 2.3. To enhance awareness raising and training for professionals so they are able to identify those at risk of CSE.**
- 2.4. To support the prosecution of perpetrators of child sexual exploitation and use legal routes to prevent children being harmed.**
- 2.5. Ensure that children and young people who are identified as being at risk or victims of CSE are properly safeguarded and supported.**

3 Principles

- 3.1. This strategy is written with reference to Working Together, supplementary guidance 2009 and the London Child Protection Procedures 5th Edition 2015.
- 3.2. The LSCB accepts that to tackle CSE effective joint working across the partnership is underpinned by:
 - A strong commitment from leaders and senior managers to tackle CSE and a recognition that that CSE is a form of child sexual abuse and is dealt with under the Child Protection Procedures.
 - A shared understanding of the definition and problem of sexual exploitation.
 - Effective coordination by the LSCB supports and protects vulnerable children.
 - Agencies are held to account for their effectiveness in the area of tackling CSE.
 - Sharing information supports the identification of victims and prevention of harm.

4 Objectives of this Strategy

- 4.1. To enable partners to identify how this strategy will address the 6 strategic objectives to inform, identify, prevent, support, disrupt and protect that are in place under which the work to address CSE will continue in Brent.
- 4.2. The LSCB are working to achieve these objectives through the following activity:

Inform

- Have oversight and understand the prevalence of CSE in Brent
- Increase referrals and information sharing with and by partner agencies to develop a multi-agency approach to raising awareness of sexual exploitation.
- Engage children, families and communities to raise awareness so they understand the nature of CSE and how to get support.
- Monitor and evaluate outcomes to inform training and practice.

Identify

- Further develop the Vulnerability Matrix and populate and analyse our data set and promote the importance of sharing intelligence between partners within and outside the council relating to possible individuals or groups who sexually exploit.
- All agencies have policies and procedures in place to tackle CSE.
- Screen children who may be at more risk of CSE which includes those referred to YOT, missing or looked after, those affected by gang activity, homeless and asylum seeking children and children with disabilities.
- All children who have been identified of being at risk have the correct notifying marker on agency records e.g. Police CSE flags on CRIS so that correct approach can be taken by anyone who subsequently works with the child to protect them.
- All children who are at risk or known to be a victim of CSE are referred to the MASE panel.

(This is a multi-agency network or planning meeting that determines the level of risk to the child or young person and identifies if the risk management plan to reduce the risks the child is facing is robust or requires further actions.)

Prevent

- Establish a cross agency approach to tackling CSE and clarify how their agency can contribute to risk reduction and safeguarding plans for individual children through the MASE panel.
- Develop and share information about hotspots, perpetrators and vehicles with professionals
- Develop interventions to interrupt abuse and ensure offenders are identified/targeted.
- Using established community information sharing mechanisms (LSCB Community Reference Group, Multi Faith Forum) to reach community members.
- Learn from previous, current and future prosecutions to ensure all investigations into CSE are undertaken by professionally trained staff.

Disrupt

- Increase the disruptions in the borough.
- Ensure children involved in sexual exploitation are treated as victims and the focus of the investigation is on the abusers.
- Ensure abusers are brought to justice.
- Serve abduction orders or use other legal means to disrupt activities of abusers.

Protect

- **Increase the number of prosecutions.**
- **Plan and offer support to children to recover a healthy lifestyle.**
- **Offer opportunities for children to disclose abuse (return interviews after missing episodes).**
- **Offer expert guidance and consultation for staff that equips them to manage individual case work for CSE.**
- **Evaluate the effectiveness of service provision and identify and fill any gaps in service provision in supporting children and their families.**
- **Target specifically vulnerable groups for tailored prevention work, LAC children and asylum seeking children.**

Support

- **Promote the joint commissioning of services to support those who have been exploited.**
- **Spot purchase specialist placement resources for LAC at risk or who are victims of CSE.**
- **Use recourse to legal means to secure a child's welfare such as care orders and secure placements.**
- **Make use of specialist resources from a partnership with Safer London.**

5 Good Practice Guidance for Professionals

- 5.1 Each agency is required to appoint a lead for CSE and their details should be made known to staff for reference, consultation and issues related to CSE.**
- 5.2 The lead should support the use of the screening tool as a method of identification and referral of concerns. Copies of the screening tool are on the [LSCB website](#).**
- 5.3 The Leads that have been identified are listed in Appendix 3.**
- 5.4 A Brent specific operating protocol is being developed.**

6 Information Sharing

- 6.1 The information sharing guidance governs the sharing of information and in doing so it:**
- Clarifies the legal background in respect of information sharing
 - Sets out the current codes of practice, best practice and guidance
 - Outlines the principles of the process of information sharing
 - Provides practical guidance on how to share information.
- 6.2 The information sharing guidance affects all staff engaged with work that requires information to be shared with or is given to them by other organisations and how to use this information.**

7 Cross Borough Working

- 7.1 The LSCB is committed to sharing information across borough boundaries and where information comes to light about a known or possible perpetrator or child at risk who lives elsewhere this will be shared with the appropriate authority in the home borough. Contact should be made with either the CSE lead or MASE panel chairs in each borough to inform them of a cross borough issue.**
- 7.2 Professionals should refer to the London Child Protection Procedures Part A, Chapter 6 for general guidance on working with mobile families.**

8 Escalations of Concern and Whistleblowing

- 8.1 Safeguarding is everyone's responsibility and the LSCB and partner organisations have routes which professionals and volunteers can use to raise concerns.**
- 8.2 Occasionally situations arise when workers within one agency feel that the actions, inaction or decisions of another agency do not adequately safeguard a child. Where this happens a local resolution should always be attempted first.**
- 8.3 Where local resolutions are unsuccessful agencies can turn to the LSCB Escalation Policy on the LSCB website for further guidance.**
- 8.4 Where concerns are more serious agencies or individual professionals should look to the Whistle Blowing Policy.**
- 8.5 The NSPCC has established a new [helpline](#) for professionals to share any concerns they feel are not being appropriately addressed.**

Appendix 1 – Signs and Symptoms

- a) **Both girls and young women and boys and young men can become victims of sexual exploitation.**
- b) **The risk of boys and young men becoming victims of sexual exploitation by both male and female offenders is underestimated and less well understood than those relating to girls and young women.**
- c) **Boys and young men also face additional barriers to disclosing their experience because they may be coerced into engaging in heterosexual and homosexual sexual activity (even though they are heterosexual) as part of their abuse. Barriers include:**
 - **fearing that their sexuality/masculinity will be questioned**
 - **being perceived as being gay when they are not**
 - **worrying that they will not be believed**
 - **not perceiving themselves as a victim because their abuser is female.**
- d) **Sexual exploitation can seriously affect a victim's life into adulthood. The trauma of the exploitation may affect an individual's:**
 - **ability to form loving and trusting relationships**
 - **confidence and self-esteem (which can lead to self-harming, eating disorders, drug abuse and/or criminal activity)**
 - **mental and physical health**
 - **education**
 - **capacity and ability to be a parent.**
- e) **Victims may also suffer sexual and reproductive health problems as a result of the exploitation they have suffered.**
- f) **Even when children or young people appear to have recovered or overcome the psychological, physical and emotional effects suffered from the sexual exploitation, they may still be unable to stay in the area where they live if it has associations with the abuse against them. This can lead to family breakdown.**
- g) **Often children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation and those caring for them do not recognise that they are at risk or are being abused.**
- h) **Certain circumstances encountered by children may increase their risk of CSE and professionals should be aware of risks when they come into contact with young people in these groups.**

- i) **A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation. This lack of recognition by a child is achieved through the grooming process perpetrated by the adult in a range of ways which then leads to control over that child.**
- j) **There may be no criminal activity present and an open mind while assessing a young person is necessary to ensure any aspect of possible CSE is detected.**
- k) **There is a strong link between CSE and children who go missing from home or education and it can be one of the 'influencing' factors in them running away.**
- l) **Children who are already deemed vulnerable, particularly those 'looked after' by the local authority are at disproportionate risk of being sexually exploited. Disabled children have added vulnerabilities that make them more open to sexual exploitation.**
- m) **In some cases children may be drawn into sexual exploitation by their peers who are already involved. Older children in particular can be coerced into sexual exploitation by an older person, who poses as a caring friend, partner or relative.**
- n) **Sexual Exploitation can be linked to other types of crime including:**
- **Child trafficking, (into, out of and within the UK)**
 - **Domestic violence**
 - **Sexual violence in intimate relationships**
 - **Grooming, on and off line**
 - **Abusive images of children and their distribution**
 - **Organised sexual abuse of children**
 - **Drugs related offences (dealing, consuming and cultivating)**
 - **Gang related activity**
 - **Group related activity (definition in OCC report)**
 - **Immigration related offences**
 - **Domestic servitude**
 - **Forced Marriage**
 - **Female Genital Mutilation**
 - **The threat of Honour based Violence.**
- o) **It is important that professionals are aware of the links between these activities and the possibility of child sexual exploitation when managing referrals and assessing children's needs and providing a service.**
- p) **An open mind while assessing a young person is necessary to ensure any aspect of possible CSE is detected.**

- q) **The Brent multi-agency response to the sexual exploitation of children includes the principles and beliefs that the following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who have an increased risk of CSE:**
- **Sexual exploitation includes sexual, physical assault, rape and emotional abuse, as well as, in some cases, parental or carer neglect.**
 - **Sexually exploited children are 'children in need' of services under the Children Act 1989 and 2004. They are also children in need of protection.**
 - **Actions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are sexually exploited should be child centred, focusing on the child's needs and inclusive of their families.**
 - **Sexually exploited children should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders. It is never acceptable to label young people at risk of CSE.**
 - **Children under sixteen cannot consent to sexual activity; sexual activity with children under the age of 13 is always treated as statutory rape.**
 - **Children under sixteen will always be dealt with as actual or potential victims.**
 - **From sixteen to eighteen, consideration may be given, in very limited circumstances and where all other options have failed, to the use of care proceedings or criminal justice action where a person in a position of trust or loco parentis has breached the boundaries of trust.**
 - **Children and young people are considered to be able to make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation, but to do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation.**
 - **Many sexually exploited children have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices around sex and sexuality and the sexual activities they are coerced into. They do not have the life experience to identify the level of manipulation they have been subject to.**
 - **The primary law enforcement effort must be against the coercers and sex abusers, who may be adult, but could also be the child's peers or young people who are older than the child.**
 - **It is crucial to identify problems and issues as early as possible and take prompt preventative actions.**
 - **All children or young people considered at risk of sexual exploitation MUST be presented to the MASE Panel.**

Child Protection Procedures must be followed in all cases where CSE is suspected or confirmed and the decision on how to proceed be recorded on the child or young person records.

Appendix 2 – References

The following documents have been used as reference

[The London Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol – 2nd Edition March 2015](#)

[London Safeguarding Children Board supplementary guidance on CSE 2009](#)

[DfE Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance on CSE 2009](#)

[The National Working Group on Child Sexual Exploitation](#)

[The NSPCC; Policy and guidance on child sexual exploitation](#)

[Department for Education, Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation - Action Plan & Action Plan Update Report - July 2012](#)

[Office of the Children's Commissioner Accelerated report on the emerging findings of the OCC's Inquiry into Child Sexual](#)

[Exploitation in Gangs and Groups with a special focus on children in care.](#)

[CEOP publications; 'Out of Sight, Out of Mind' - CEOP Thematic Analysis - Full Report](#)

[Child sexual exploitation and the response to localised grooming, The Government Response to the second report from the Home Affairs committee session -14 HC 68](#)

[Sexual exploitation of children: Ofsted thematic report - The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it?](#)

[Ending gang violence and exploitation - January 2016](#)

Appendix 3 – List of CSE Leads

Each agency is required to appoint a lead for CSE and their details should be made known to staff for reference, consultation and issues related to CSE.

The Leads that have been identified are listed below:

- **Head of Safeguarding and Quality Assurance – Brent Council**
- **Brent Borough Superintendent - Metropolitan Police**
- **Head of Stakeholders and Partnership - London Community Rehabilitation Company Ltd**
- **Deputy Chief Nurse – London North West Healthcare Trust**
- **Assistant Chief Officer - National Probation Service**
- **Designated Nurse Safeguarding Children – Brent Clinical Commissioning Group**
- **Named Nurse - Central West London health NHS Trust (CNWL)**
- **Safeguarding Children Lead - Central Middlesex Urgent care Centre (UCC)**
- **Safeguarding Children Lead GP - Wembley GP Access Centre**