



Hull Safeguarding Children Board

Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2014 - 2017

Chair's Foreword

In our introduction to this strategy, and in our overall framework, we draw heavily upon a plethora of recent research and learning from cases, including, most prominently, from the recently published report (*'If only someone had listened'*) published by the Children's Commissioner. The report is the culmination of the most comprehensive and far-reaching enquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups, and it is vitally important that we use the lessons learnt to inform the further development of our joint work on child sexual exploitation in Hull.

Amongst the most shocking aspects of the report, and in learning from Serious Case Reviews, are the ongoing failure to acknowledge (within local areas) that children are being sexually exploited, together with continued references to children "putting themselves at risk", rather than perpetrators being the risk to children. The inquiry found repeated evidence at all levels of children being blamed for their own abuse – one LSCB Chair is reported to have said *"they are just prostituting themselves"*.

This strategy is a timely opportunity to reaffirm our collective determination to continue to tackle child sexual exploitation in Hull and to re-state some basic, simple truths. Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. It is a child protection issue. No child can consent to their own abuse. No child is to blame for their own abuse. Perpetrators are responsible for their actions. There are children and young people in Hull today who are the victims of child sexual exploitation and others who are 'at risk'. Our duty, as a Safeguarding Board and as individual agencies, is to work effectively together to prevent CSE, intervene early when risks are identified, help, protect and support children who are being exploited and determinedly pursue the perpetrators. We should aim to make Hull a hostile place for would-be perpetrators.

The strategy aims to build on the history of pro-active multi-agency work on CSE which, in Hull, dates back to 2006/07. It additionally makes some key strategic commitments, including an undertaking to use a 'learning from practice' approach to help us understand what is currently working well and what needs to be further developed, and to undertake a self-assessment with the active involvement of Board members, frontline staff and young people. We will make sure that our learning from this informs the planning and design of future services.

We will re-double our efforts to keep children safe from sexual exploitation.

Rick Proctor
Independent Chair – Hull Safeguarding Children Board

Introduction

The recently published final report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, entitled "*If only someone had listened*"¹ is the latest in a series of publications relating to Child Sexual Exploitation. These publications include academic research, best practice guides, government publications and Serious Case Reviews.

Our strategy draws heavily on the work of the Children's Commissioner's Office. All Local Safeguarding Children's Boards and Police Forces gave evidence to the inquiry. The inquiry gathered an unprecedented body of evidence over a two year period from children and young people, parents, carers and a variety of professionals and agencies, as well as evaluations of interventions in place.

All of the reports point to similar failings which allow children who are victims of child sexual exploitation to 'slip through the net', including: children being overlooked or lost by the 'system'; a failure to engage properly with children who are victims or are 'at risk'; a lack of leadership, leaving professionals working in a vacuum; an absence of strategic planning; denial of the extent and prevalence of child sexual exploitation; a lack of joined up working, leaving agencies operating in isolation; and a failure to monitor outcomes.

The conclusion of the inquiry was that, despite a growing recognition of the scale and nature of child sexual exploitation and a heightened focus on the need to tackle the issues, the picture nationally remains patchy:

"Children and young people continue to be let down. Nowhere in any part of the country can we conclude that there is a fully joined-up multi-agency, child-centred approach to address child sexual exploitation ... too often victims are being overlooked or slipping through the net because agencies and individuals fail to listen to them, and fulfil their responsibilities with regard to child protection, or that there was not sufficient strategic and managerial oversight to coordinate their actions." (CSEGG report, page 16)

Professionals told the inquiry that many agencies simply ignored the glaring reality that there were sexually-exploited children within their local area. The evidence gathered concluded that:

"Many people who should be protecting children and young people remain in denial that the problem exists despite the mounting public, political and media interest in child sexual exploitation" (CSEGG report, page 26)

The inquiry also learned from areas and agencies that are being proactive in protecting and caring for victims and disrupting and apprehending the perpetrators. As a result it identifies nine "key foundations" of good practice in protecting children and young people from sexual exploitation. These include: a clear focus on the child, who must be at the centre of professional decision-making about their safety, welfare, care and protection; the importance of sustained and consistent relationship building to gain a child's confidence and

¹ "If only someone had listened", Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, Final Report, November 2013.

trust; strong local leadership; strategic planning; an alertness to the issue across and beyond local professional networks which leads to greater and earlier recognition of the warning signs; joined-up working, including making the link between child sexual exploitation and 'missing' and; effective scrutiny and oversight.

The inquiry found compelling evidence that:

“Where there are committed local leaders who do not flinch from the grim reality of child sexual exploitation, children and young people are much more likely to be effectively protected” and;

What is child sexual exploitation?

The definition of child sexual exploitation which is most commonly used is that derived from the supplementary guidance to Working Together issued by the Government in 2009, *‘Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation’*:

“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 choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.”

As we say simply in the foreword to this strategy, child sexual exploitation is fundamentally a child protection issue: it is child abuse. The current reality of child sexual exploitation is perhaps best described in *‘If only someone had listened’*:

“CSE involves the abusive exercise of power by perpetrators over those who are vulnerable. We were informed of cases involving victims from a range of backgrounds and ethnicities, both males and females, some of whom were disabled.

....control is exerted over victims in many different ways including: threats of reprisals; violence; terrorising, victimising, corrupting, isolating, filling them with a fear of not being believed if they report what is happening to them; grooming; and coercion.

The majority of victims are girls whilst boys comprise a significant minority. The vast majority of perpetrators are males, of all ages. Boys and young men comprise 28% of perpetrators about whom we received evidence.

[We] documented cases involving children and young people who had been subjected to the most significant and diverse types of sexual violence. The abuse can impair the physical, emotional, sexual and mental health of victims.

We noted the methodical, devious and violent ways used by perpetrators to control children and young people and do with them what they wished”

What are we currently doing?

In Hull, we do not “flinch from the grim reality”. Neither have we only just awoken to this reality. The Board has had in place a multi-agency work stream on Children who go missing and Child Sexual Exploitation since 2008. Prior to this, a group of frontline service managers began to come together to share information about vulnerable children and young people. This group continues to meet regularly, with good involvement from a range of key partners – in effect it is our local ‘virtual’ multi-agency ‘missing and child sexual exploitation’ safeguarding hub.

In addition to these multi-agency strategic and operational arrangements, we have a range of other services and provision in place:

- The Children at Risk of Exploitation (CARE) (part of ‘Cornerhouse’) project is jointly funded locally and by Children in Need grant. The CARE project provides a range of services focused specifically on child sexual exploitation, including: prevention work, linked to PSHE, across secondary and primary schools in Hull; targeted work on prevention with ‘vulnerable’ groups; direct individual and group work with young people ‘at risk’ of exploitation and those known to be being exploited; support to the parents of children and young people ‘at risk’.
- The HSCB provides training on the impact of Child Sexual Exploitation as part of its core training offer and messages about CSE are embedded within other safeguarding courses
- Work has started locally to implement the national “See Something, Say Something” campaign and engage with hoteliers, taxi drivers, and other licensees in a bid to ensure that Hull is a hostile environment for perpetrators.
- The HSCB runs the Young Witness Service which provides support to children and young people giving evidence (as either a witness or victim) in criminal trials.
- HSCB existing guidelines and procedures include specific information for practitioners on working with child sexual exploitation. The Board has also promoted a localised version of *‘What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited: A step by step guide for frontline practitioners’* and has twice cascaded this via Board members.

What do we need to strengthen?

Despite the longstanding strategic and operational joint focus on child sexual exploitation and missing children we have not previously agreed a single strategy on Child Sexual Exploitation and a thorough review of the effectiveness of our current joint working arrangements has not recently been undertaken. We know there is more that we can do to:

- Raise local awareness about child sexual exploitation so that we can engage more broadly with all sections of our local community and increase the number of sets of 'eyes and ears' which are alert to the threats and able to take action to help disrupt perpetrators and protect children,
- Ensure that there is a consistent 'offer' to all children, young people and parents across the city which delivers age-appropriate messages about risks and how to stay safe,
- Ensure that frontline staff in key agencies and roles understand the risk factors and the potential indicators of child sexual exploitation,
- Strengthen the existing inter-agency operational arrangements and ensure that there is excellent intelligence gathering and sharing, both to protect children and to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators,
- Ensure strong leadership on the issue at Board level and within key agencies
- Scope the resources needed in the longer-term to provide universal education, targeted work with vulnerable groups of young people and high quality support to young people most 'at risk' and ensure that this informs commissioning and service planning decisions, informed by a comprehensive and regularly updated 'problem-profile'.

How many children and young people in Hull are being sexually exploited?

We are no different to any other area of the country in being unable confidently to answer this question: child sexual exploitation is a 'hidden' form of child abuse. Perpetrators act covertly and are usually highly manipulative. Some young people do not always consider themselves to be victims of abuse and may, for a variety of reasons, find it difficult to talk about their experiences to others.

But we do know that some children and young people are being exploited and that others are at significant risk. The Children at Risk of Exploitation (CARE) project received 52 direct referrals of young people considered to be at risk of being the victim of child sexual exploitation during the last year. This represents an increase in the volume of direct referrals compared to the previous year, though this should not necessarily be interpreted as being indicative of a growing incidence of abuse.

What have local young people told us?

In 2013, one of the HSCB Professional Practice Officers, along with two support workers from the Children at Risk of Exploitation (CARE) project met with a small number of young people who had previously received, or were still receiving, support in respect of CSE. The purpose of the session was to ascertain their views, thoughts and feelings. These views are reflected in the strategy and a number of the young people's ideas and suggestions are already being taken forward. This is a brief summary only of their insights.

- They stressed the importance of starting early (primary school age) with safety messages, including in relation to staying safe online.
- They talked about the need for posters and leaflets in places where “kids” go: leaflets need to be attractive to young people, use the right pictures etc.
- They talked about raising awareness in schools: with a particular emphasis on the right people going into schools and the direct involvement of young people (including peer education)
- They identified the importance of using different media, attractive to young people, for getting messages across: documentaries, plays, posters and leaflets, videos, a genuine Facebook page about sexual exploitation.
- Young people talked about their ‘wish list’ for a bespoke service. Amongst the features important to them were: *“a building in which young people can feel safe and relax, where it’s warm and welcoming”*; toilets, with mirrors, showers and toiletries; an office run by a charity; an art room, kitchen (where young people can make food and learn to cook), library, games room etc.

These young people identified above all else the importance of workers who can be trusted. They all identified the need to be able to be involved in everyday activities in a safe place.

The Purpose of the Strategy

The strategy reaffirms the commitment of the Hull Safeguarding Children Board to determinedly tackle the issue of child sexual exploitation. It builds on the work already undertaken (since 2008) on this issue. It signals the Board's determination to ‘take stock’ of existing practice and provision and continue to develop effective responses.

It describes a number of key principles of effective practice and our framework for action. It identifies some key commitments: for example, a multi-agency audit of current practice and a child sexual exploitation self-assessment by the Board. Our action plan is being refreshed – and this will be further informed by our self-assessment. We will continue to consult with and involve young people in the further development of strategy and action plans.

Hull's Child Sexual Exploitation Framework

Our framework is simple, and it closely mirrors the **'See Me, Hear Me'** framework. We will focus on:

1. Prevention and Early Intervention

To ensure that an awareness raising and training programme is in place for all professionals in Hull, that all children and young people have access to high quality information about exploitation and that preventative services are in place, by:

- Working with schools (primary, secondary and special) to ensure the provision of universal, consistent and high quality PSHE and sex education
- Encouraging the development of 'whole school' approaches, learning from best practice elsewhere
- Providing targeted work with groups of young people identified as being particularly vulnerable (to child sexual exploitation)
- Providing high quality training for the local work force and additionally targeting this towards staff in key roles
- Continuing to develop work with parents using the 'Parents Protect' and 'Pace' materials increasing the number of local professionals using these materials
- Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation across the city by rolling out 'Say Something if you See Something' and publishing the posters and leaflets developed by young people
- Identifying 'hotspots' (where children have been targeted) and working directly with staff and young people to reduce risks
- Continuing to support the development (by the CARE monkeys) of the 'Staying Safe' mobile app and helping to promote this across local networks
- Supporting the development of peer mentoring in conjunction with the CARE project.

2. Protection and Support

To ensure that a safe, responsive and effective service is provided to children and young people who are at risk of / vulnerable to or who are experiencing sexual exploitation by:

- Strengthening existing multi-agency working aimed at identifying victims and perpetrators
- Ensuring that agencies are supported to share information and intelligence effectively and sustaining Hull's virtual child sexual exploitation 'hub'
- Introducing a standard assessment tool for local use
- Ensuring the provision of bespoke, specialist support for young people which is based on their experiences and expressed views, and which allows young people to build trust and relationships with consistent adults
- Developing the capacity and confidence of the local work force to support young people who are assessed as being at 'lower risk' (of child sexual exploitation)

- Ensuring that there is good quality supervision and support for workers supporting young victims (including emotional support)
- Working with providers and commissioners to ensure that there are clear pathways for young people to access the more specialised therapeutic support and intervention which they may need

3. Disruption and Effective Prosecution

To disrupt the activity of perpetrators and secure justice for victims and to ensure that young people are properly safeguarded in the course of criminal proceedings by:

- Using abduction notices and sex offender orders when it is deemed safe and appropriate to do so.
- Continuing to adopt a pro-active approach to the collection and development of multi-agency intelligence leading to the identification and apprehension of perpetrators
- Building a case against perpetrators using: mobile phone technology, car number plates, online communications, intelligence held by partner agencies etc
- Jointly investigating allegations according to ‘*Achieving Best Evidence*’ guidelines
- Monitoring perpetrators who are deemed to pose an ongoing risk to children before and during any trial
- Supporting child victims and witnesses before and during any trial to ensure they are as prepared as possible to give their best evidence
- Ensuring effective work with offenders which reduces the risk of re-offending
- Working with criminal justice agencies and the courts to develop a better awareness of child sexual exploitation and the impact on victims

Principles

The following key principles of effective practice in tackling child sexual exploitation will underpin our ‘system’ in Hull:

- **A child-centred approach.** The child’s best interests must always be the top priority. The child must be visible and must be heard. Child victims of sexual exploitation must have access to specialist services which focus on child sexual exploitation. Children and young people may not always see themselves as victims nor recognise the dangers: as one young woman told us: “*When you’re in this (CSE) you think you’re invincible.*”
- **Participation of children and young people.** We will continue to engage in a dialogue with children and young people who are at risk of or who have been involved in sexual exploitation in order to improve understanding of the issues, ensure they have a say in how they are being protected and cared for, learn from their experiences of services and ensure they can influence the design of their services. Young victims of child sexual exploitation must also have the opportunity to take part in activities unrelated to sexual exploitation – this point was very important to the young people who shared their experiences with us.

- **Enduring relationships and support.** Nationally, children and young people who are victims of child sexual exploitation identify one point above all others: the importance of continuing and consistent support. Locally, this holds true for young people who have received support from the CARE project: the most important thing is: “...*one to one support from a person who has knowledge/experience about sexual exploitation [and who] does not make a judgement [about me]*”. Young people identified a number of essential characteristics: a bond; a feeling of connectedness; someone who was not judgemental; someone who believed in them; not a social worker or police officer; someone who would spend time with them; someone who would really listen.
- **Comprehensive problem-profiling.** It is important to build and maintain a comprehensive local picture about the number of children who are vulnerable (from collating and matching multi-agency data) and from various sources of intelligence. Such a profile, which should usefully be developed as part of the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, will inform the ongoing development of strategy and action plans, the commissioning of services and the delivery of training.
- **Effective information sharing.** This is a necessary and essential precursor to the effective safeguarding of children and young people. In relation specifically to child sexual exploitation there is a need for an information sharing protocol which will stipulate the information which needs to be shared, and the circumstances and process for sharing it.
- **Supervision, support and training for staff.** Professionals working with children and young people require training to: understand the nature of child sexual exploitation; spot the warning signs; know who to refer to if they have concerns that a child or young person is at risk or is being exploited; and, know and understand their responsibilities. Staff who are working in specialist child sexual exploitation services must also have access to regular reflective practice supervision, which takes full account of the emotional impact of the work.
- **Evaluation and review.** It is important that there is an ongoing process of evaluation and review which engages key strategic leaders, providers and commissioners of services, frontline practitioners and, most importantly, children, young people and their families. Learning from evaluation and review must be used to inform practice development, as well as service design, strategy and action plans and commissioning
- **Clear and effective strategic leadership (at the Board and within agencies).** As the Children’s Commissioner report states: “*CSE is tackled effectively – from prevention to protection, enforcement, securing justice and long-term recovery – when there is clear and committed leadership that imports unambiguous messages stressing the importance of doing this work*”. All relevant HSCB partner agencies will appoint/nominate a lead CSE professional and the Board as a whole will nominate a ‘CSE Champion’ who will act as the conduit between the Board, the Board’s work stream and the multi-agency operational arrangements.

Our strategy is supported by a more detailed action plan which will be implemented by the HSCB 'Missing Children and Child Sexual Exploitation' work stream and overseen by the Board.

Next Steps

Our action plan captures both a number of newly identified pieces of work and also some existing 'work in progress' (for example, the design of posters and leaflets by young people, work to strengthen existing multi-agency 'hub' arrangements, the development of a 'Say Something if you See Something' campaign, ongoing work to enhance support to parents).

Our key strategic priorities over the next six months are to:

- Complete a multi-agency 'learning from practice' process (involving frontline practitioners and young people) ('multi-agency audit')
- Convene a 'self-assessment' workshop involving a cross-section of Board members, managers, frontline staff and young people, to further develop strategy and commissioning plans
- Identify a Board 'Champion' for child sexual exploitation (and children who go missing)
- Audit, with the help of schools, the current PSHE provision and how young people are informed about child sexual exploitation and on-line safety
- Agree, jointly with the Health and Well-being Board and key partners, a process and methodology for producing a problem-profile for the city.
- Use all of this intelligence, by end September 2014, to inform commissioning plans for 2015/16 and beyond, mindful of the short-term funding arrangements currently in place for key local services.

Appendix 1 : Resources

- What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited - A step by step guide for frontline practitioners – **see Appendix 2**
- [Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked](#) (HM Government, 2011)
- [What's going on to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation-how local partnerships respond to child sexual exploitation](#) (University of Bedfordshire, 2011)
- [Puppet on a string - the urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation](#) (Barnardo's, 2011)
- [Tackling child sexual exploitation Action Plan](#) (DfE, 2011)
- [Tackling child sexual exploitation Action Plan Progress Report](#) (DfE, 2012)
- [Tackling child sexual exploitation - helping local authorities to develop effective responses](#) (Barnardo's, 2012)
- [Cutting them free - how is the UK progressing in protecting its children from sexual exploitation](#) (Barnardo's, 2012)
- [Be aware, stay alert, keep safe! How to keep you and your friends safe from exploitation](#) (Barnardo's)
- [Are you a parent or carer? Help cut children free from sexual exploitation](#) (Barnardo's)
- [Do you work with young people? Help cut children and young people free from sexual exploitation](#) (Barnardo's)
- ["I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world" - The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Gangs and Groups](#) (Children's Commissioner, 2012)
- [Caught in a trap - the impact of grooming in 2012](#) (Childline)
- [Research into gang-associated sexual exploitation and sexual violence](#) (University of Bedfordshire – interim report November 2012)
- [The Tangled Web - how child exploitation is becoming more complex](#) (Barnardo's, 2013)
- [Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation - supplementary guidance to 'Working together to safeguard children'](#) (HM Government, 2009)
- [Children and Young People Health and Lifestyle Survey, Hull 2012](#) (Hull City Council/NHS Hull, 2013)
- Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE UK)
www.paceuk.info/
- Parents Protect
www.parentsprotect.co.uk/resources.htm

Appendix 2



What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited

Step-by-step guide for frontline practitioners

This guidance was originally produced by the Department for Education in 2012. It has been adapted to reflect local processes in Hull, through consultation with the Hull Safeguarding Children Board 'Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing' multi agency workstream.

May 2013

1. This step-by-step guide complements, and should be read in conjunction with, the *Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation* statutory guidance published in 2009. It is intended for frontline practitioners in the statutory and voluntary and community sectors (VCS). It outlines the actions they should take, as a minimum, if they suspect that a child they are in contact with is being sexually exploited.

2. Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse which involves children and young people (male and female, of a range of ethnic origins and ages, in some cases as young as 10) receiving something in exchange for sexual activity. Perpetrators of child sexual exploitation are found in all parts of the country and are not restricted to particular ethnic groups.

3. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) are responsible for ensuring that appropriate local procedures are in place to tackle child sexual exploitation. All frontline practitioners need to be aware of those procedures (including ones for early help) and how they relate to their own areas of responsibility. LSCBs and frontline practitioners should ensure that actions to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are sexually exploited focus on the needs of the child.

Step 1: Identifying cases

4. Frontline practitioners from voluntary and statutory sector organisations (including, for example, health and education) should be aware of the key indicators of children being sexually exploited which can include:

- 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;
- suffering from sexually transmitted infections;
- mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing;
- drug and alcohol misuse; and
- displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.

Practitioners should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such.

4. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point. Return interviews for young runaways can help in establishing why a young person ran away and the subsequent support that may be required, as well as preventing repeat incidents. The information gathered from return interviews can be used to inform the identification, referral and assessment of any child sexual exploitation cases.

6. In assessing whether a child or young person is a victim of sexual exploitation, or at risk of becoming a victim, careful consideration should be given to the issue of consent. It is important to bear in mind that:

- a child under the age of 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex (it is statutory rape) or any other type of sexual touching;
- sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence;
- it is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them;
- where sexual activity with a 16 or 17 year old does not result in an offence being committed, it may still result in harm, or the likelihood of harm being suffered;
- non consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim; and
- if the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence or the threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and therefore offences may have been committed.

Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group.

Step 2: Referring cases

7. Where child sexual exploitation, or the risk of it, is suspected, frontline practitioners should discuss the case with a manager or the designated member of staff for child protection. If after discussion there remain concerns, local safeguarding procedures should be triggered, including referral to Local Authority (LA) Children's Social Care and the Police, regardless of whether the victim is engaging with services or not.

Step 3: Assessment

8. On receipt of a referral to Local Authority Children's Social Care, a qualified Social Worker should discuss the case with other services and professionals that they consider relevant. There should be a decision on a course of action within one working day of the referral. This should always be done in consultation with a Local Authority Decision Maker. Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm, an agency with statutory child protection powers must act quickly to secure the immediate safety of the child.

9. Where child sexual exploitation, or the likelihood of it, is suspected the Local Authority Decision Maker should hold a Strategy Discussion involving the Police and / or Health and / or other relevant statutory and VCS organisations to consider whether enquiries are required under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989.

10. An Assessment will be undertaken to inform decision making. The Local Authority, Health and other partners must follow the process set out in the *Framework for assessment of children in need and their families*. The assessment is not an end or a process in itself, but the means of informing the planning and delivery of effective services for children. The need to make timely, proportionate assessments to understand a child's needs and circumstances is critical to secure good outcomes for the most vulnerable children and young people. The assessment should contain a conclusion as to

whether the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm. At this point consideration should be given to whether a Child Protection Conference should be convened.

If the criteria is not met for undertaking enquiries under a Section 47, an assessment may be undertaken under Section 17 to ascertain whether the child is 'in need'.

11. The child or young person's wishes and feelings should be considered when determining what services to provide and before making decisions about action to be taken to protect individual children.

12. Where the child or young person is not deemed to be in need, the social worker must consider onward referral to agencies who provide services for children and young people with additional needs (for example, a VCS or health organisation; see Step 4 below).

Step 4: Supporting victims out of CSE and in recovery

13. Statutory agencies and voluntary sector organisations should reach agreement on the services to be provided to the child or young person and on how they will be co-ordinated. The types of intervention offered should be appropriate to the needs of the child or young person. They should take full account of both the identified risk factors and the child or young person's family and wider circumstances. The latter might, for example, include previous abuse, running away from home or care, involvement in gangs and groups and/or child trafficking. The health services provided might include sexual health services and mental health services or counselling.

14. Because the effects of child sexual exploitation can last well into adulthood, such support may be needed over a long period of time. For this reason, effective links should be made between children and adult services and between statutory and VCS organisations.

15. Consideration should also be given to supporting the families of victims, including through the work of organisations like the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping.

Step 5: Identifying and prosecuting perpetrators

16. The Police and criminal justice agencies lead on the identification and prosecution of perpetrators. All frontline practitioners involved with victims of child sexual exploitation should continually gather, record and share information with the Police as soon as practicable, including data on running or missing episodes.

Step 6: Ensuring child victims are supported through related legal proceedings

17. Child victims should be supported throughout the prosecution process and beyond, including through the use of special measures where appropriate. Independent Sexual Violence Advisers or specialist VCS services, where available, may also have an important role to play.

Further information

Further information on child sexual exploitation can be found on the Department for Education website.

Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation statutory guidance
<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00689-2009>

Barnardo's checklist based on advice to parents and carers published in August 2011:
<http://www.barnardos.org.uk/cutthemfree/spotthesigns>

Working Together 2013 <https://www.education.gov.uk/aboutdfe/statutory/g00213160/working-together-to-safeguard-children>

Victims and Witnesses section of the Crown Prosecution Service website: www.cps.gov.uk

Further information on Independent Sexual Violence Advisers can be found at:
<http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/crime/violence-against-women-girls/sexual-violence/isva/>

Further information on child sexual exploitation can be found at:
www.education.gov.uk/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation

Hull Safeguarding Children Board guidelines and procedures can be found at
<http://hullscb.proceduresonline.com/index.htm>