



**South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children's Board
Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2016**

SAY SOMETHING IF YOU SEE SOMETHING

National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and The Children's Society 2012

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SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE PLEDGE

Sexual exploitation of children is completely unacceptable; the only effective way to tackle sexual exploitation of children is via effective multi-agency and partnership working. We recognise that sexual exploitation can have a serious long term impact on every aspect of the child or young person's life; it can also damage the lives of families and carers.

In South Gloucestershire we acknowledge our collective responsibility to identify and protect children and young people at risk of or who have been sexually exploited. It is also our responsibility to prevent children and young people becoming victims of this form of abuse and reassure our communities we can perform our duties effectively.

We will pursue the perpetrators of child sexual exploitation so that they know they will not get away with exploiting children.

It is our intent to improve the lives of the children and young people living in South Gloucestershire.

INTRODUCTION

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is fundamentally a child protection issue.

Child Sexual Exploitation is a criminal act that has a devastating impact upon children and young people and has an increasing profile following significant investigations that have led to prosecutions.

Perpetrators and victims of CSE come from all age ranges and ethnic groups. Most sexually-exploited children live at home when their abuse begins. It is clear that raised awareness amongst parents and young people, carers, professionals across the system and the wider public of the nature and the indicators of CSE is essential to both preventing the risk and ending ongoing exploitation.

Agencies cannot address CSE alone or in isolation from other related safeguarding issues. South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board has a significant role in ensuring that all the work of all agencies is coordinated, confirming unique and shared roles and functions to ensure that children and young people are protected and other important outcomes are achieved.

South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board has identified CSE as a priority and is committed to implementing a strategy to ensure a shared approach to tackle the problem. Guidance identifies that South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board has a key strategic role in addressing CSE.

Governance is key and South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board will be informed about and given the opportunity to challenge progress through quarterly reports coordinated through the CSE sub group.

Children who are sexually exploited are the victims of sexual abuse and should be safeguarded from further harm. Sexually exploited children should not be regarded as criminals and the primary law enforcement response must be directed at perpetrators who groom children for sexual exploitation.

Parents and carers can play the most important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their children. Parents are often the first to notice something is wrong with their child. We must work collaboratively with parents and carers to address CSE when it is appropriate to do so.

LEGAL

The sexual offences act 2003 introduced 71 new offences to deal with those who abuse and sexually exploit children young people. This also includes sections relating to the domestic and international trafficking of children and young people.

PURPOSE

The focus of the strategy is to:

- Keep children and young people at the heart of planning and delivering services.
- Support and engage parents and carers within this agenda.
- Mitigate the impact of child sexual exploitation by improving outcomes and reducing harm to young people who are vulnerable to or at risk of exploitation
- Learn from national best practice
- Define and understand child sexual exploitation and the implications at a strategic level through to front line practice.
- Assess risk in South Gloucestershire based upon intelligence, incidents and activity data.
- Take forward an action plan based upon the principles of prevent, protect and pursue and be clear about accountability, roles and responsibilities at an individual, agency and partnership level.
- Ensure that South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board understands the scale of the problem in South Gloucestershire and develop a co-ordinated multi-agency response as part of ongoing work.

- Ensure that there is clarity about sharing information with partner agencies.
- Disrupt activities that may present a risk of CSE to children and young people by pursuing individuals believed to be involved.
- Seek prosecution of perpetrators of CSE, and supports children and young people through the legal process and beyond.
- Raise awareness of the issue through education and training.

DEFINITION

The Statutory Guidance on Safeguarding Children and Young People from Child Sexual Exploitation 2009 defines CSE as:

"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."

Because of the vulnerabilities of care leavers and the need to address the issue of CSE holistically, this strategy also addresses our role, in liaison with other agencies, to tackle exploitation of vulnerable young adults up to the age of 25.

WHAT IS CSE

Whilst CSE can take a number of forms three areas have been identified by Barnardo's:

- 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/net worked sexual exploitation or trafficking - young people (often connected) are passed through networks possibly over geographical distances between towns and cities, where they may be forced/coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'sex parties', and young people who are involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised 'buying and selling' of young people by perpetrators.

Barnardos: Puppet on a String 2011

SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE CONTEXT

In line with national concerns CSE is currently one of the most important challenges facing South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.

The Board recognises that Child Sexual Exploitation can have a serious long term and lasting impact on children and young people affecting physical and emotional health and wellbeing, educational attainment, personal safety, relationships and future life opportunities. Consequently South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board is committed to ensuring a multi agency response at a strategic, service level through to front line practice. The statutory duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people in the face of growing concerns around sexual exploitation extends across all Children's Services including schools, Police, health services and Voluntary organisations.

In South Gloucestershire we want to ensure that we are working in partnership with our young people and their families or carers to ensure that we effectively tackle sexual exploitation.

In South Gloucestershire we will ensure that there is:

- An integrated approach
- A child centred approach
- Safeguarding for children and young people from Sexual Exploitation
- A proactive approach
- A shared responsibility
- Consultation with support for parents and carers when required
- An approach that focuses the responsibility for criminal acts on the perpetrators.
- Prevention and early intervention.

RESPONSIBILITIES OF SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD (SGSCB) GOVERNANCE

Government guidance recognises the widespread prevalence of CSE and highlights the need for local responses to be set in place:

'Every Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) should assume that sexual exploitation occurs within its area unless there is clear evidence to the contrary, and should put in place systems to monitor prevalence and responses'

South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board should receive sufficient information and data to be assured that:

- There is a focus on early intervention.
- The needs of children and young people who have been or may be sexually exploited and their families are considered when planning and commissioning local services
- Specific local procedures are in place to address and minimise the sexual exploitation of children and young people
- A clear response is available for children and young people including the response to perpetrators and these will be developed in conjunction with young people and the partner agencies of South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board.
- Local safeguarding training includes information about how to identify the signs of sexual exploitation and an understanding of how to gather evidence which can be used to bring prosecutions against abusers as advocated in safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation HM Government 2009

- Where sexual exploitation is known to be prevalent local specialist training is available for key professionals
- Systems are in place to track and monitor cases of sexual exploitation that come to the attention of local agencies
- Arrangements are in place to co-operate with neighbouring areas and those areas where children who have been sexually exploited are believed to have lived or been present
- Children/young people that are at risk or are being sexually exploited, missing children or children missing education will be tracked and reports will be produced to ensure that agencies are working collaboratively to progress work in these areas.
- Specialist support will be available to children identified as victims of CSE.
- Management information is used to identify what specialist resources or services should be provided to children who have been or are likely to be sexually exploited and their families in the local area.

THREE STRATEGIC PRIORITIES TO TACKLING CSE IN SOUTH GLOUCESTERSHIRE

South Gloucestershire's approach to tackling CSE is based on three key strands:

PREVENT

Making it more difficult to exploit children and preventing children becoming victims through education and awareness raising and assuring local communities that agencies take the issue seriously.

1. There will be work undertaken with the local community, parents, carers and young people so that they feel empowered to address issues in relation to CSE in their local area. A CSE communications plan is currently being developed.
2. Process mapping needs to be undertaken and CSE pathways developed so that there are clear workflows between the various teams within Children's Social Care and other services in a position to respond to lower level CSE referrals. This is outlined more in the CSE guidance.
3. Regular use of Victim / Service User profiling should be utilised to further understand the needs across SG and the multi-agency service response that is required.
4. The SERAF has been agreed as the risk assessment tool. This is being used consistently by all agencies to assess and review risk when CSE is identified.
5. A programme of multi-agency auditing should be introduced in order to evaluate the effectiveness of service provision and outcomes for children and young people at risk of CSE.
6. A longer term training and awareness strategy is required in order to keep the workforce skilled and knowledgeable year on year. The current training provision is coming to an end but a programme of train the trainer has been introduced to ensure a range of regularly delivered training is available.
7. Managers will oversee all individual child sexual exploitation cases.
8. Information relating to child sexual exploitation activity will be considered quarterly as part of performance framework should be in our performance framework - this should enable a clear understanding of how effectively agencies are responding.
9. Schools must ensure that they cross-reference absence information with risk assessments for individual children and young people
10. Local strategies and plans should be informed by the opinions and experiences of those who have been at risk of or have suffered from child sexual exploitation

11. Greater focus should be upon the PHSE curriculum to ensure that local schools are effective in raising awareness and protecting children at risk of or who have suffered from sexual exploitation.
12. Ensure that every child returning from a missing episode is given a return interview by an independent person. South Gloucestershire has established a set of practice standards for these interviews and ensure that these are consistently met. Information obtained from the interviews centrally collated and used to inform and improve future operational and strategic activity
13. South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board have ensured that the core training made available to all professionals who come into contact with children and young people includes information on warning signs, and impact of child sexual exploitation, to ensure victim identification.
14. Establish a targeted preventative and self-protection programme on child sexual exploitation for looked after children.

PROTECT AND SUPPORT

The best approach is to work in partnership with the young person and their family. The aim is to support and empower young people and their families to find solutions themselves wherever possible.

1. Ensure that all partners routinely follow child protection, CIN and SAFeh procedures for all children and young people at risk of or who have suffered from child sexual exploitation
2. The local authority, as corporate parent for looked after children, to provide the South Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Board with assurance that Looked After Children and Young People placed out-of-area who go missing receive timely return home interviews which contribute to risk assessments and safety plans. This is achieved via quarterly reports to the Board.
3. Ensure that sufficient appropriate therapeutic support is available to meet the needs of local young people at risk of or who have suffered from child sexual exploitation, including care leavers.
4. Enable professionals to build stable, trusting and lasting relationships with children and young people at risk of or suffering from child sexual exploitation.
5. A needs assessment and mapping exercise should be undertaken in relation to the provision of post-sexual abuse support utilising existing commissioning frameworks.

PURSUE AND PROSECUTE

We are committed to ensuring that we will do all we can to disrupt perpetrators who are sexually exploiting children and young people and where possible prosecute them.

1. Ensure that information and intelligence is shared proactively across the partnership to improve the protection of children in their area and increase the rate of prosecutions
2. All police forces should work with partner agencies, including third sector specialist organisations, to log information on the young people (we have seen boys and trans gender young people exploited through this model) linked to gang members and then risk-assess these young people for sexual exploitation.

3. Police forces should review their local multi-agency intelligence collection processes and existing information to proactively identify perpetrators of CSE.
4. Police forces should use multi-agency intelligence to proactively profile local risk, as well as to direct enforcement and disruption activity.
5. Police forces should improve their recording of sexual offences to enable the recording of multiple perpetrators.
6. CSE strategy meetings and the CSE network meetings should be used to plan disruption responses and consideration given at all stages of the process to identify and disrupt perpetrators.
7. CSE strategy meetings and CSE network meetings to be used as a forum to share intelligence regarding CSE.

CSE IS EVERYONE'S RESPONSIBILITY. AWARENESS RAISING AND DISSEMINATION IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF ALL BOARD MEMBERS.

EVALUATION OF THE STRATEGY

This strategy will be reviewed and operated by SGSCB, the CSE sub group and agencies involved with the sub group will be committed to ensure that the strategy is effectively implemented.

The impact of the strategy will be reviewed in 2017.