



Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation Strategy



Version 3

The following strategy has been developed in recognition of the particular risks associated with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). However the issues and actions described take place within a broader context of safeguarding activities and a well-established legislative framework supported by statutory guidance. As a result this document is designed to be read in conjunction with the 'online' Berkshire LSCB Child Protection Procedures (<http://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/bracknell/>)

1. Introduction and Key Principles

Sexual exploitation of children and young people has been identified throughout the UK, in both rural and urban areas, with both victims and perpetrators coming from a range of social and ethnic backgrounds. It affects boys and young men as well as girls and young women. It is a form of sexual abuse and can have a serious impact on every aspect of the lives of children involved. A fuller definition of CSE can be found below in section 2 of this document.

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child establishes a number of important duties in respect of children's lives, rights and freedoms. Within the 54 Articles of the convention, the obligations set out below have particular relevance for Child Sexual Exploitation and require Governments to:

- Do everything to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation (including prostitution) and sexual abuse (Article 34)
- Do everything to protect children and young people from being taken away, sold or trafficked (Article 35)

(<http://www.unicef.org.uk>)

During recent years, the scale of this abuse has become much clearer, with complex police investigations leading to successful prosecutions of multiple abusers. Knowledge of CSE has also increased due to the substantial research evidence recently gathered, which in turn led to the launch of an Inquiry into sexual exploitation involving gangs and groups by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England. (<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/info/csegg1>)

In 2011, the Government acknowledged the prevalence of this abuse by appointing the Children's Minister as its lead for child sexual exploitation and by producing a National Action Plan to ensure that 'everything which can be done is done to make our children safer from sexual exploitation'.

The Department for Education (DFE) published the Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan in 2011 which includes a requirement for all Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) to 'develop an effective local strategy ensuring there is a coordinated multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation based on a robust, thorough risk assessment of the extent and nature of child sexual exploitation locally.' (<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-action-plan>).

In recent years much learning has been identified as a result of high profile investigations and more rigorous inspection of services and is routinely shared by the LSCB, its sub groups and within training and development activities.

Bracknell Forest, like most other areas of the UK, is faced with the challenge of tackling the issue of children being abused through child sexual exploitation. This strategy and action plan therefore sets out how Bracknell Forest will coordinate services across all local agencies to respond effectively to the local issue. It is important to also recognise that cooperative working with our neighbouring areas is crucial as child sexual exploitation often involves the 'trafficking' of victims from one area to another.

2. Definition of child sexual exploitation

Although the subject of a recent Government consultation, within current statutory guidance sexual exploitation of children is described as:)

"involving 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 their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child 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's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability."

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00689-2009>

Children involved in any form of sexual exploitation should be treated primarily as the victims of abuse and their needs carefully assessed; the aim should be to protect them from further harm and they should not be treated as criminals. The primary law enforcement response should be directed at perpetrators who groom children for sexual exploitation.

Statutory government guidance requires agencies to work together to:

- Develop local prevention strategies;
- Identify those at risk of sexual exploitation
- Take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of particular children and young people who may be sexually exploited: and
- Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way

3. What do we know about child sexual exploitation?

Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. Sexual exploitation results in children and young people suffering harm, and can cause significant damage to their physical and mental health. It can also have profound and damaging consequences for the child's family. Parents, carers and siblings are often traumatised by the effect on the victim.

There are strong links between children involved in sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as going missing from home or care, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, truancy and substance misuse.

In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those in residential or foster care, those leaving care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, and those involved in groups and/or gangs.

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship, but where sex is in fact exchanged for attention, drugs and/or alcohol, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. Evidence shows that children and young people are often sexually exploited by people with whom they feel they have an intimate relationship, e.g. a boyfriend/girlfriend.

Due to the nature of the grooming methods used by perpetrators, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. Young people may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and may not recognise, or be reluctant to accept that they are being sexually exploited.

As a result, it is important that all those working with children/young people and their families are aware of the sophisticated dynamics associated with the influence and control often present within child sexual exploitation. Evidence shows that perpetrators seek to establish power over victims, increasing the dependence of victims as the exploitative relationship develops. In turn some children may actively seek attention and friendship through such relationships due to adverse experiences they suffered at an earlier stage of their childhood.

In regard to organised exploitation and trafficking, the perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and can use sophisticated tactics. Victims are trafficked through criminal networks, often between towns and cities, and forced or coerced into sex with multiple abusers. They may also be used to recruit new victims to abuse by manipulating their victims to encourage their friends to become involved. Perpetrators are known to target areas where children and young people gather without much adult supervision, e.g. parks or shopping centres or sites on the Internet. Technology can therefore play a significant part in sexual abuse, for example, through its use to record abuse and share it with other like-minded individuals or as a medium to access children and young people in order to groom them. A common factor in many cases is the lack of appreciation of the potential risks and therefore any truly informed consent to the acts performed.

Signs of risk and vulnerability

The following section reflects the developing evidence base in respect of child sexual exploitation. Therefore, the following factors that may be associated with child sexual exploitation do not provide an exhaustive list of key issues and must be considered in the context of the child/young persons, individual circumstances.

Experience has shown that commonly the following vulnerabilities may be present in children prior to child sexual exploitation taking place:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, and parental criminality)
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang associated child sexual exploitation only)

- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited
- Learning disabilities
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited
- Homelessness
- Lacking friends from the same age group
- Living in a gang neighbourhood
- Living in residential care
- Living in inadequate accommodation
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence
- Young carers.

The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited:

- Missing from home or care
- Physical injuries
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Offending
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- Absence from school
- Change in physical appearance
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites
- Estranged from their family
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations
- Poor mental health
- Self-harm
- Thoughts of or attempted suicide.

Evidence shows that any child displaying vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at possible risk of sexual exploitation.

However, it is important to note that children without pre-existing vulnerabilities can still be sexually exploited and that an in-depth assessment of children's lives is required that explores consideration as to the broader safeguarding issues for them, their siblings and others living in the area. Child Sexual Exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition. As such these assessments should incorporate information about children's use of the internet and their understanding of and resilience around the potential risks. Similarly, such assessments must consider how plans can be developed to address the needs/risks of alleged perpetrators of CSE.

4. The extent of the problem locally

The LSCB's Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children Strategic Sub Group meet on a quarterly basis to oversee and coordinate progress, activity and outcomes of multi agency work to address CSE and Missing Children in Bracknell Forest.

On an operational basis children and young people are safeguarded through robust inter agency planning coordinated through a monthly Sexual Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (SEMRAC) that is integrated within local safeguarding procedures.

The SEMRAC is jointly chaired by Bracknell Forest Children's Social Care and Thames Valley Police and meets monthly. The aim of this group is to reduce the risks to children and young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation through multi agency and collaborative working.

The context for the group is provided by the Department for Education (DfE) paper "*Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: Action Plan*" (November 2011), which identified the need for "an effective local strategy ensuing there is a co-ordinated multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation based on a robust, thorough risk assessment of the extent and nature of child sexual exploitation locally".

In relation to Missing Children, the criteria for the group is to have an overview of all children who go missing on 3 or more occasions in 90 days, missing for more than 24 hrs or any missing that appears concerning. Further details of the 'Children who Run Away and are Missing from Home and Care: Policy and Procedure' can be found at: (<http://boris.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/children-missing-from-home-and-care-policy-2015.pdf>).

The group looks at the areas of cross over with those at risk of CSE, discusses general themes and identify patterns of behaviour.

Ongoing cases are also discussed and intervention plans are revised where appropriate.

Since September 2014 scoping exercises have been carried out amongst LSCB partner agencies in order to identify cases of young people known to local agencies who were victims of CSE and/ or those young people assessed as being 'at risk' of such abuse. Partner agency responses have been analysed in conjunction with the information about young people who had been referred in to the SEMRAC for multi agency discussion and action planning. The scoping exercises have so far not revealed any names not already known to the SEMRAC.. However, a number of possible offenders (persons of interest) have been brought to the attention of the group. It is important to recognise that some of the perpetrators were also vulnerable young people themselves and in addition to forensic responses such young people need to be helped to disengage from abusive behaviour.

As of June 2016 the main model of CSE presented at SEMRAC continues to be the **inappropriate relationship model**:

- Usually involving one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person (physical, emotional or financial).
- One indicator may be a significant age gap. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.

On-line exploitation is the second largest form of CSE presented to SEMRAC:

- This might involve an adult pretending to be a child befriending the child through online chat room, social networking websites, emails and telephone messaging. They may ask children to share indecent images of themselves or display sexual acts which they then record.

There have also been concerns for smaller numbers of children regarding the **Party model of exploitation:**

- Parties organised by groups of men to lure young people, drink, drugs and car rides are offered. Children are introduced to an exciting environment where sexual promiscuity and violence are normalised. Children are encouraged to invite peers to attend.

There continues to be links between drug use and these children vulnerable to CSE, particularly in regard to Cannabis. However the significant link in respect of MKat during periods in 2014/15 has greatly reduced. As of June 2016 there are no children discussed at SEMRAC where MKat is of concern.

The specialist special worker for CSE/Missing continues to sit on the multi agency Bracknell Forest Mephedrone working group. to ensure that links between drug related issues and CSE are identified and actioned were appropriate.

Locally those thought to be at most risk of sexual exploitation are predominantly white British girls, aged between 12 – 19 yrs, and the perpetrators are mostly young white males within the age range 17 – 24 yrs. There are also a smaller number of predominantly white older males identified as potential abusers. We are also aware that there are likely to be barriers to young people disclosing this type of abuse and therefore whilst we have developed a good understanding of the extent of our local problem, there are probably cases that we are not aware of. Boys and young people from minority ethnic groups may be under reported. As part of this strategy's action plan regular analysis will continue to be undertaken to scope the nature and prevalence of child sexual exploitation in the Bracknell Forest area. This work is further informed by Thames Valley Police analysis and 'problem profiling' of CSE across the regions and the valuable information and learning exchanged within the Pan Berkshire CSE Leads Forum, established in 2015, which is hosted by the LSCB.

5. What do we need to do?

Bracknell Forest's holistic approach to tackling child sexual exploitation has four strands:

Prevention, Identification, Support and Disruption/Prosecution

The need for focussed, coordinated action in relation to these areas was highlighted in the 2012 Barnardos report Tackling child sexual exploitation: Believe in Children www.barnardos.org.uk/tackling_child_sexual_exploitation.pdf

An action plan setting out the work that will be undertaken under the above 4 headings by agencies working in partnership to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation is attached (Appendix 1).

6. Links to other areas of safeguarding

Bracknell Forest LSCB recognises that children/young people at risk of child sexual exploitation may have a range of additional needs and can be vulnerable to other forms of harm.

As a result, in addition to the delivery of its core business the LSCB has identified 'Targeted Priorities' that support its wider work and can also relate to child sexual exploitation. These are set out in the Board's current Safeguarding Plan and is available at: <http://www.bflscb.org.uk/sites/default/files/lscb-safeguarding-plan-2016-to-2019.pdf>

In order to support this work, the Board is dependant on the commitment of its partner agencies from across Bracknell Forest, LSCBs and Strategic Partnerships across Berkshire and the Thames Valley. In particular, the priority for the Bracknell Forest Community Safety Partnership to address '**E**' Safety and the misuse of technology is a key strand which links to the work related to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation.

LSCB Sub Groups will play an important role in improving outcomes for children/young people who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation

The action plan, Appendix 1, attached to this Strategy has actions allocated to the sub groups above for inclusion in their workplans.

7. Implementation, Monitoring and Review

The LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children Sub Group has lead responsibility for ensuring implementation of the action plan. This group has Strategic level representatives from key organisations and links with statutory and non statutory services who in turn, engage children/young people and their families/carers.

Terms of reference for this group are attached (Appendix 2)

The Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Children Sub Group will report to the LSCB biannually on the progress of the Action Plan.

This Strategy and Action plan (Appendix 1) will be reviewed annually by the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Sub Group.

8. Key links and resources check and update

Office of the Children's Commissioner
<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

The National Working Group on Child Sexual Exploitation
<http://www.nationalworkinggroup.org/>

National Crime Agency (NCA) – Human Trafficking
<http://www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk/crime-threats/human-trafficking>
The NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line
www.nspcc.org.uk/ChildTrafficking

Barnardos

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/what_we_do/our_projects/sexual_exploitation.htm

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre

<http://ceop.police.uk>

Key Reports

[Tackling Sexual Exploitation Action Plan](#) (DfE, 2011)

[Tackling Sexual Exploitation Progress Report](#) (DfE, 2012)

[I thought I was the only one, the only one in the world Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry Interim Report](#) (OCC, 2012)

[If Only Someone Had Listened: Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report](#) (OCC, 2013)

['Unheard Voices' The Muslim Women's Network report on CSE](#) (MWN, 2013)

[Parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness of legislation for tackling child sexual exploitation and trafficking within the UK](#) (Barnardo's, 2014)

[OCC's Response to the Cross-Party Parliamentary Inquiry](#) (OCC, 2014)

[Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham](#) (Alexis Jay, 2014)

['Real Voices' Ann Coffey MP's report on CSE in Greater Manchester](#) (October 2014)

[It couldn't happen here, could it? Ofsted review of local authorities](#) (Ofsted, 2014)

[Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#) (DCLG, 2015)

["If it's not better, it's not the end": Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups: One year on.](#) (OCC, 2015)

Appendix 1 Action Plan to support the Bracknell Forest Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy

PREVENTION, IDENTIFICATION, SUPPORT AND DISRUPTION / PROSECUTION

1.	Prevention		
	Action	Lead Group/Officer	Outcome
1.1	Ensure that awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation is raised within the local community so that all members of the community including vulnerable, young people and their parents/carers know how to report concerns about Child Sexual Exploitation.	LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group	Children / young people are able to contact service providers for Child Sexual Exploitation
1.2	Partner agencies develop a range of resources and guidance which can be accessed by children / young people, and their parents/carers to inform and raise awareness of Child Sexual Exploitation and the associated risks.	LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation strategic sub group reps Lead Professionals in Agencies	Children, young people made aware of Child Sexual Exploitation and resources accessible to them
1.3	Ensure that all staff and volunteers across the children's workforce have access to and undertake training to raise their awareness of the risk factors associated with Child Sexual Exploitation	Employers/Agency Leads LSCB Training Sub Group	Staff and volunteers / young people aware of risk factors and how to protect young people with advice
1.4	TVP and partner agencies co-ordinate efforts to prevent and disrupt Child Sexual Exploitation by gathering and acting on intelligence in respect of suspected perpetrators, and their potential victims	Thames Valley Police and Lead Professionals in Agencies	Suspected perpetrators identified Safety plans agreed for victims at the time of investigation
1.5	Those working directly with victims and perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation disseminate their knowledge and understanding of the dynamics associated with such abuse.	SEMRAC	A wide range of professionals maintain an understanding of the dynamics associated with such abuse.
2.	Identification		
	Action	Lead Group/Officer	Outcome
2.1	Undertake annual analysis (informed by emerging research, practice experience and local knowledge), to scope the nature and prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation within Bracknell Forest which includes specific focus on vulnerable groups i.e looked after children, care leavers	LSCB Partnership Performance and Project Officer BFC Thames Valley Police	The implementation of the strategy and outcomes based on evidence
2.2	Partner agencies ensure that staff and volunteers have access to a range of materials including information leaflets, on line information and advice and support from a lead professional to assist them in recognising the signs of sexual exploitation and identifying young people who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation.	E Safety Sub Group Child Sexual Exploitation Lead Professionals	All partner agencies and volunteers are alert to the signs of sexual exploitation and know how they can help a young person if they are a professional for
2.3	Partner agencies have processes in place to ensure that staff and volunteers share information at the earliest opportunity to identify young people in Bracknell Forest who are vulnerable to, or are	Child Sexual Exploitation strategic sub group SEMRAC	The potential for Child Sexual Exploitation are identified and reported

	experiencing sexual exploitation.		
2.4	Former CSE operation group joins with Missing Children Panel to form SEMRAC. Links with neighbouring LSCBs, regional and national forums are maintained and those attending these forums ensure that learning, emerging themes and developments in addressing Child Sexual Exploitation are incorporated into the work plan of the relevant LSCB sub groups	Chair of SEMRAC, Pan Berkshire LSCB Chairs and Business Managers Chairs of LSCB sub groups	Emerging themes in respect of Child Sexual Exploitation across local, regional and national forums

3.	Support		
	Action	Lead Group/Officer	Outcome
3.1	Partner agencies identify a lead professional to coordinate services within their agency to respond to children and young people who are vulnerable to or are experiencing sexual exploitation	LSCB Executive	Services to be developed to support children and young people who are vulnerable to or are experiencing sexual exploitation
3.2	Develop a risk assessment tool to be used by all agencies from which a multi agency support plan can be developed in relevant cases	SEMRAC TVP CSE team	Risk assessment tool developed and used by all agencies and resources shared
3.3	Provide a range of training programmes for practitioners to enable them develop the necessary skills to support young people who are at risk of, or are experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation	LSCB training sub group	Skills of practitioners improved to support young people who are at risk of, or are experiencing Child Sexual Exploitation
3.4	Develop the multi agency SEMRAC to lead on information sharing and action planning in specific Child Sexual Exploitation cases referred to the group by local agencies	Chair, SEMRAC	Child Sexual Exploitation cases referred to the group by local agencies are managed effectively through the SEMRAC operating as a multi agency support plan for persons referred to the group
3.5	Partner agencies to have clear procedures in place for referral to multi agency forums for information sharing and joint action planning	Child Sexual Exploitation Lead Professionals in Agencies	Relevant cases referred to multi agency forums in a timely manner
3.6	Ensure that particularly vulnerable groups i.e looked after children, care leavers are supported to disclose and report sexual exploitation	Child Sexual Exploitation Lead Professionals in Agencies Heads of Service, Children's Social Care, BFC	Groups of particularly vulnerable children and young people supported to disclose and report sexual exploitation through appropriate channels

4.	Disruption/Prosecution		
	Action	Lead Group/Officer	Outcome
4.1	Partner agencies to have a process in place to provide Child Sexual Exploitation intelligence/information to Thames Valley Police in accordance with TVP's intelligence reporting	CSE Strategic Sub Group	Intelligence and Information is passed on to TV Police and shared between the relevant agencies in an efficient way

	procedures, and to share information with all relevant partners		
4.2	Partner agencies work with Thames Valley Police to support the implementation of their Statement of Intent and action plan	CSE Strategic Sub Group	TV Police Statement of Intent and Action Plan are implemented effectively
4.3	Relevant agencies to have specialist interventions in place to offer young people and adults who are identified as potential perpetrators of Child Sexual Exploitation and access to training for practitioners to deliver these services.	National Probation Service/ Community Rehabilitation Company Bracknell Forest YOS	Targeted interventions are provided to perpetrators and potential perpetrators to reduce risk of offending / reoffending
4.4	Partner agencies develop a process for accessing the appropriate support and protection for child witnesses	Child Sexual Exploitation Lead Professionals in Agencies	Child witnesses are supported and protected
4.5	Support the Thames Valley Probation Service to deliver actions in their briefing paper for working with perpetrators of group or gang associate sexual exploitation, victimisation and abuse through effective disruption and information sharing	Child Sexual Exploitation Lead Professionals in Criminal Justice Agencies	TV Probation Service's work with perpetrators is effective
4.6	Maintain links with neighbouring police forces and LA Child Sexual Exploitation leads to share intelligence regarding cross border Child Sexual Exploitation and trafficking	TVP representative on Child Sexual Exploitation strategic sub group	Cross border Intelligence is shared efficiently