

## Safeguarding Information and Research Digest

### Issue 15 - July 2014

### Special Edition Child Sexual Exploitation

This special edition of the LSCB Safeguarding Information and Research Digest provides a summary of the key findings including the definition of what is meant by child sexual exploitation (CSE) in gangs and groups, the 13 patterns of CSE and the warning signs to enable identification of children and young people at risk or involved in CSE that was identified in the final report [“If only someone had listened”](#) of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner for England’s 2 year inquiry into the nature and extent of child sexual exploitation in England.

The final report of the inquiry, published in November 2013, focuses on what can and should be done to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation, how to support those who have been victims and how to reduce the prevalence of sexual violence perpetrated by gangs and groups’.

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#### **Key Findings**

- Children and young people are slipping through the net and falling prey to predators, despite increased awareness of CSE.
- Serious gaps remain in the knowledge, practice and services required to tackle this problem
- Many agencies only began to tackle the issue recently, despite statutory guidance since 2009.
- Only 6% of LSCB’s were meeting the requirements in full.
- Substantial gaps remain in the availability of specialist provision for victims of CSE.
- Many of the known victims had been badly let down by the agencies and services that should have been protecting them.
- The Interim Report (Nov., 2012) reported that 2,409 children and young people were confirmed victims of CSE in gangs and groups from August 2010 to October 2011. Between April 2010 and March 2011 there were 16,500 children and young people who were at risk of CSE.
- The majority of the victims are girls, whilst boys comprise a significant minority. The majority of the perpetrators are male of all ages. Boys and young men comprise 28% of perpetrators about whom evidence was received by the Inquiry.
- Definitions of what is meant by CSE in gangs and groups as well as definitions of gangs and groups used in the Inquiry and 13 patterns of child exploitation in gangs and groups were identified (see below).

- A list of warning signs and check list to enable identification of victims of CSE and the prevention of this abuse has been developed (see below).
  - The inquiry found 9 significant failings in the response to tackle and address sexual exploitation and 9 foundations of effective practice for safeguarding children and young people from the evidence of good practice and information that was collected.
  - A new operational framework See Me Hear Me was developed. This is based 7 principles of effective practice, which focuses on what needs to be done and how, and focuses on the voice of the child, voice of the professionals and protecting the child.
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### ***Definitions of CSE in Gangs and Groups***

"[This] 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 of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability' (DCSF, 2009)"

"Gangs are relatively durable, predominantly street-based, social groups of children, young people and, not infrequently, young adults who see themselves, and are seen by others, as affiliates of a discrete, named group who (1) engage in a range of criminal activity and violence; (2) identify or lay claim to territory; (3) have some form of identifying structural feature; and (4) are in conflict with similar groups".

"Groups are two or more people of any age, connected through formal or informal associations or networks, including, but not exclusive to, friendship groups".

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### ***13 patterns of child exploitation in gangs and groups***

- Group-associated child sexual exploitation
- Sole perpetrator linked to a network of individuals
- Networks of individuals using transport hubs
- Online sole-perpetrator linked to wider groups/networks
- Linked to abuse within families
- Linked to adult prostitution
- Organised crime groups and networks

- Peer-on-peer CSE: school based CSE and neighbourhood based CSE
  - Gang-associated child sexual exploitation
  - Inter-Gang exploitation-punishment/retribution/threat
  - Intra-Gang exploitation – ad hoc and opportunistic
  - Intra-Gang exploitation – punishment of males
  - Intra-Gang exploitation – punishment of females
  - Inter-Gang Exploitation – ‘set-up’ scenarios
  - Intra-Gang exploitation – imitation of males
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### ***Warning signs and vulnerability checklist***

Typical vulnerabilities in children **prior to abuse**:

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, 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 CSE 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.
- Homeless.
- Lacking friends from the same age group.
- Living in a gang neighbourhood.
- Living in residential care.
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer.
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Young carer.

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.
- Involvement in offending.
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- Absent 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.

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### ***Further information***

The final report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (November 2013)

[http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content\\_743](http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_743)

Office of the Children's Commissioner for England

<http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/>

National Working Group Network (NWG) – tackling child sexual exploitation

<http://www.nwgnetwork.org/>

National Referral Mechanism (NRM)

The Government's National Referral Mechanism guidance and referral forms can be accessed at the link below. The referral and assessment forms should be used to report potential victims of human trafficking

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland Safeguarding Children Boards' Procedures

<http://llrscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/contents.html>

Leicester Safeguarding Children Board <http://www.lcitylscb.org/>

Telephone: 0116 4546520 E-mail: [lcitylscb@leicester.gov.uk](mailto:lcitylscb@leicester.gov.uk)