



HM Government

# Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation

Supplementary  
guidance to Working  
Together to Safeguard  
Children



department for  
children, schools and families

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# Foreword

The sexual exploitation of children and young people has been identified throughout the UK, in both rural and urban areas, and in all parts of the world. It affects boys and young men as well as girls and young women. It robs children of their childhood and can have a serious long-term impact on every aspect of their lives, health and education. It damages the lives of families and carers and can lead to family break-ups. Sexual exploitation of children and young people is completely unacceptable and we are determined to do all we can to help eradicate it.

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.

Lord Laming has emphasised in his recent report, *The Protection of Children in England: A Progress Report*, that although there have been welcome improvements in services for children and families, it is clear that the need to protect children and young people from harm and neglect is ever more challenging. This new guidance should help police, teachers, social workers and health workers to rise to the particular challenge of identifying children at risk through sexual exploitation, taking steps to protect them and taking action against perpetrators. I hope it will also help to safeguard children and young people who are already being sexually exploited from further harm, and to prevent other children and young people from being sexually abused in this way.



**DELYTH MORGAN**  
**BARONESS MORGAN OF DREFELIN**

# Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation: Executive Summary

This guidance document sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people from sexual exploitation. It is supplementary to, and should be read in conjunction with, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (HM Government, 2006).

This executive summary is provided to help readers gain an overview of the guidance.

## Chapter 1 – Scope and purpose

Chapter 1 sets the context for the revised guidance and provides a definition of sexual exploitation for the purposes of the guidance.

The guidance should help local agencies 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.

## Chapter 2 – Some key principles

This sets out some key principles which inform effective practice in working with children and young people who are at risk of, or are suffering, sexual exploitation. These include the following:

- A child centred approach. Action should be focused on the child's needs, including consideration of children with particular needs or sensitivities, and that children and young people do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative and/or abusive situation.
- Taking a proactive approach focused on prevention, early identification and intervention as well as disrupting activity and prosecuting perpetrators.
- Parenting, family life and services. Taking account of family circumstances in deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.

- The rights of children and young people. Children and young people are entitled to be safeguarded from sexual exploitation, just as agencies have duties in respect of safeguarding and promoting their welfare.
- Responsibility for criminal acts. Sexual exploitation of children and young people should not be regarded as criminal behaviour on the part of the child or young person, but as child sexual abuse.
- An integrated approach. *Working Together* sets out a tiered approach to safeguarding: universal, targeted and responsive. Within this, sexual exploitation requires a three-pronged approach tackling prevention, protection and prosecution.
- A shared responsibility. The need for effective joint working between different agencies and professionals underpinned by a strong commitment from managers, a shared understanding of the problem and effective co-ordination by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB).

### Chapter 3 – The issue of sexual exploitation

Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly ‘consensual’ relationship where sex is exchanged for attention/affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.

Chapter 3 discusses in more detail what is known about child sexual exploitation from practice and research, including information on prevalence and the impact on children and young people and their families.

### Chapter 4 – Roles and responsibilities

This chapter explains the roles, responsibilities and duties of the different organisations and people who work with children and young people including the key role that LSCBs play in coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of the work of their members. In particular, LSCBs should ensure that:

- the needs of children and young people who have been or may be sexually exploited and their families have been considered when planning and commissioning local services;
- specific local procedures are in place covering the sexual exploitation of children and young people;
- 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;
- where sexual exploitation is known to be prevalent locally, 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;

- a LSCB sub-group is put in place to lead on the issue of sexual exploitation, driving work forward and ensuring effective cooperation between agencies and professionals;
- there is a dedicated lead person in each partner organisation with responsibility for implementing this guidance;
- arrangements are in place to cooperate with neighbouring areas and those areas where children who have been sexually exploited are believed to have lived or been present.

This chapter also covers roles and responsibilities of other agencies such as local authority children's social care, Connexions, youth services, leisure services, housing services, the police, the Crown Prosecution Service, youth offending teams, health services, schools and further education colleges, voluntary and community sector organisations and the private sector.

## Chapter 5 – Preventing sexual exploitation

The effects of sexual exploitation are harmful and far reaching for children and young people and the ultimate aim for any local strategy must be to prevent them from being exploited in the first place.

This chapter looks at measures to reduce the risk that young people become victims of sexual exploitation through:

- reducing their vulnerability;
- improving their resilience;
- disrupting and preventing the activities of perpetrators; and
- reducing tolerance of exploitative behaviour.

This chapter discusses awareness raising for all young people to help them to develop the knowledge and skills they will need to make healthy choices, and targeted prevention work for groups of children known to be more vulnerable to exploitation.

## Chapter 6 – Managing individual cases

Chapter 6 sets out the processes for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children at risk of or suffering from sexual exploitation. It should be read in conjunction with Chapter 5 of *Working Together to Safeguard Children*.

All professionals who work with children and young people should be alert to signs of possible abuse or neglect including sexual exploitation. This chapter includes recognised indicators of sexual exploitation, broken down into personal indicators, behavioural indicators and situational indicators. There are also indicators particular to boys and young men, who make up as many as a third of referrals to some services.

This chapter also discusses the timing and process for referrals to children's social care services, and initial assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989. There is then further advice on immediate protection, the accommodation of sexually exploited children and young people, criminal investigation including the need to gather and protect evidence, and intervention and support.

This chapter also includes information and links to further guidance on children and young people in particular circumstances, who may be particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. This includes young people living in and leaving care, children not receiving a suitable education and children who may have been trafficked.

This chapter concludes with flowcharts taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006) illustrating the process for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

## **Chapter 7 – Identifying and prosecuting perpetrators**

Identifying, disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators must be a key part of work to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation. The police and criminal justice agencies lead on this aspect of work, but the support of other partners is vital, especially in identifying and protecting evidence. Chapter 7 contains guidance relevant for all practitioners working with children and young people on disrupting perpetrator behaviour, as well as identifying possible criminal offences, evidence gathering and information sharing.

Advice is also given on the role of more specialist organisations such as the National Offender Management Service (NOMS), victim and witness support and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA).

# Chapter 1 – Scope and purpose

## Introduction

- 1.1 Sexual exploitation of children and young people has been difficult to identify, but is increasingly recognisable as practitioners gain more understanding of grooming and other methods of sexual exploitation, and begin to take a proactive and coordinated approach to this type of abuse. It is not known how prevalent it is, but sexual exploitation has been identified throughout the UK, in both rural and urban areas, and in all parts of the world.

## Definitions

- 1.2 The sexual exploitation of children and young people is a form of child sexual abuse. *Working Together to Safeguard Children*<sup>1</sup> (2006) describes sexual abuse as follows:

*‘Sexual abuse involves forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual online images, watching sexual activities or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.’*

- 1.3 This guidance uses the following description of child sexual exploitation:<sup>2</sup>

*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 of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.*

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<sup>1</sup> *Working Together to Safeguard Children: A guide to inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children* (HM, Government 2006), paragraph 1.32.

<sup>2</sup> This definition arises from joint work between project members of the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) 2008. The National Working Group is a support group for individuals and service providers working with children and young people who are at risk of or who experience sexual exploitation. The Group’s membership covers voluntary and statutory services including health, education and social services.

- 1.4 Sexual exploitation results in children and young people suffering harm, and causes significant damage to their physical and mental health. Some young people may be supported to recover whilst others may suffer serious life-long impairments which may, on occasion, lead to their death, for example through suicide or murder.
- 1.5 This guidance covers the prevention of sexual exploitation, the protection of children and young people who are being or are at risk of being sexually exploited, as well as the disruption and prosecution of offenders.

## Context of the guidance

- 1.6 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including keeping children safe from sexual exploitation, is a key part of the Government's drive to improve outcomes for children and young people. The Government's *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy*<sup>3</sup> was published in January 2006. *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, the core Government guidance which sets out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, was published in April 2006. In December 2007, the Government published its *Children's Plan*<sup>4</sup>, setting out its ambition to make England the best place in the world for children to grow up by 2020. The *Staying Safe: Action Plan*<sup>5</sup>, published in February 2008, set out how the Government would deliver a key strand of that ambition, including by publishing this guidance. *Healthy lives, brighter futures, the strategy for children and young people's health*, published in February 2009, sets out the Government's long-term strategy to support children's and families' health including a commitment to action to ensure that all organisations with responsibility for child health and wellbeing are fulfilling their statutory responsibilities for safeguarding children.

## Purpose of guidance

- 1.7 This document provides supplementary guidance to *Working Together* and should be read in conjunction with it. The aim of this statutory guidance is to support local agencies in their effective application of the core guidance, *Working Together*, in the specialist area of sexual exploitation. It should help local agencies to:
- develop local prevention strategies
  - identify those at risk of being sexually exploited
  - take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of particular children and young people who are being, or may be, sexually exploited and
  - take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way.
- 1.8 As many situations in which children and young people are sexually exploited cross geographical boundaries (for example, child trafficking and Internet-related activity), it is

<sup>3</sup> *A Coordinated Prostitution Strategy and a summary of responses to Paying the Price* (Home Office, January 2006)

<sup>4</sup> *The Children's Plan: Building brighter futures* (DCSF, December 2007)

<sup>5</sup> *The Staying Safe Action Plan* (HM Government, 2008)

important that the response is coordinated across LA (or LSCB/police), national, and where necessary, international boundaries.

- 1.9 All references in this guidance to children or young people mean those under the age of 18, as defined in the Children Acts 1989 and 2004<sup>6</sup>. This guidance therefore applies to all children and young people up to the age of 18, both male and female. As stated in *Working Together*, the fact that a child has reached the age of 16 or is living independently does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the Children Act 1989.

### Who should read this document?

- 1.10 All Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) and their partners in local areas should take account of this guidance. Sexual exploitation is not limited to particular geographical areas and all LSCBs should assume that it is an issue in their area. Even in areas where there is no apparent, clear evidence of child sexual exploitation, the guidance is relevant in the context of awareness raising and preventative education. The guidance is aimed primarily at LSCB partners, managers and practitioners, but it is relevant for all professionals working with children, young people and families.

### The status of this guidance

- 1.11 This new guidance is issued as supplementary guidance to *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006). It replaces *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution* (Department of Health, Home Office, Department for Education and Employment, National Assembly for Wales, 2000), published as supplementary guidance to the 1999 edition of *Working Together*. The majority of this guidance applies to England only, as matters surrounding child health and welfare are devolved to the Welsh Assembly Government in Wales. However, matters of criminal justice are non-devolved, and will therefore apply to England and Wales equally. The Welsh Assembly Government will publish their draft guidance on this issue for consultation shortly.
- 1.12 This guidance has a broader focus than the 2000 version, reflecting the developing understanding of the nature of sexual exploitation. Like the previous guidance, it sets out an inter-agency approach and has a dual aim of helping to protect children and young people and encouraging the taking of a proactive approach to the prosecution of offenders. It should be used to inform the local policies and procedures drawn up by LSCBs, within the framework of *Working Together*, to ensure that local agencies effectively address this form of child abuse.
- 1.13 **This guidance is issued under section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970, which requires local authorities (LAs) in the exercise of their social services functions to act under the general guidance of the Secretary of State. It should be complied with by LAs carrying out their social services functions, unless particular circumstances indicate exceptional reasons that justify a variation. It is also issued under section 16 of the Children Act 2004 which provides that LAs and each of their Board partners, in**

<sup>6</sup> Children Act 1989 section 105; Children Act 2004, section 65.

**exercising their functions in relation to LSCBs, must have regard to any guidance given to them by the Secretary of State for that purpose.<sup>7</sup> In addition, it is issued by the Home Office as guidance to police forces as a Home Office circular. Equality duties on public sector organisations regarding gender, race, and disability apply to all programmes and services affecting girls and boys, as well as young adults.**

- 1.14 For other organisations the guidance represents a standard of good practice and will help organisations fulfil their duties in cooperation with partners. For example, managers and staff with particular responsibilities in the organisations covered by the duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in section 11 of the Children Act 2004 (see: [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding)) should read this document and follow it in conjunction with the section 11 guidance<sup>8</sup>. The same principle applies to educational institutions with duties under section 157 or 175 of the Education Act 2002 regarding safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.

### Links to existing guidance

- 1.15 This guidance should be read in the wider context of meeting the needs of different groups of vulnerable children and young people. Those who are victims of, or at risk of, sexual exploitation are often vulnerable in other ways, for example by going missing or being the victim of child trafficking. Chapter 6 provides links to other guidance for children in particular circumstances.

<sup>7</sup> Section 16 applies to the LA and its Board partners set out in s13(3) of the Children Act (2004):

- district councils in local government areas that have them
- the chief police officer for a police area of which any part falls within the area of the LA
- the local probation board for an area of which any part falls within the area of the LA
- the Secretary of State in relation to his functions under sections 2 and 3 of the Offender Management Act 2007
- the Youth Offending Team for an area of which any part falls within the area of the LA
- Strategic Health Authorities and Primary Care Trusts for an area of which any part falls within the area of the LA
- NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts, all or most of whose hospitals or establishments and facilities are situated in the LA area
- the Connexions service operating in any part of the area of the LA
- CAFCASS (Children and Family Courts Advisory and Support Service)
- the Governor or Director of any Secure Training Centre in the area of the LA
- the Governor or Director of any prison in the LA area that ordinarily detains children.

<sup>8</sup> *Statutory guidance on making arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 – updated March 2007* (HM Government, 2007). <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/resources-and-practice/IG00042/>

# Chapter 2 – Some key principles

## Introduction

- 2.1 Work to tackle sexual exploitation should be grounded in the following important principles which inform effective practice in this area. Several of these principles are common to addressing other forms of abuse or neglect.

## A child-centred approach

- 2.2 Action to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who are sexually exploited should be child-centred and focus on the child's needs. Those working with children and young people should engage with them and their families throughout the process. The particular needs and sensitivities of girls and boys, children with a physical disability or learning disabilities, those from ethnic communities, or those for whom English is not their first language, should be reflected in the provision of services. The wishes and feelings of children and young people as well as the concerns of parents or carers should be sought and taken into account in reaching any decisions about the provision of services which affect them. However, as set out in paragraph 3.23, professionals should be aware that children and young people do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative and abusive situation.

## A proactive approach

- 2.3 Action to tackle sexual exploitation should be proactive, focusing on prevention, early identification and intervention, as well as on disrupting activity and prosecuting perpetrators. It is important for cases to be managed so that interventions to safeguard children and young people also support the gathering of evidence to increase the chance of successful criminal prosecutions of their perpetrators, thereby safeguarding potential future victims.
- 2.4 In order to help children and young people achieve good outcomes it is important to identify issues and problems early and to take prompt preventative action. Early intervention is likely to be far more effective than intervention at a later stage when the impact on the child or young person's health or development is likely to have escalated. Prevention strategies should therefore be regarded as a key part of agencies' approaches to sexual exploitation. Chapter 5 of this document provides guidance on prevention. Similarly, early identification that a child or young person is at risk of, or experiencing, sexual exploitation

and involving their families early in interventions can be a key step in helping them achieve good outcomes, and should underpin action to implement this guidance.

## Parenting, family life, and services

- 2.5 Patterns of family life vary, and there is no one, definitive way to bring up children and young people. Parenting can be challenging, and parents and carers deserve support. Asking for help should be seen as a sign of responsibility rather than a parenting failure. In most cases parents or carers will decide when to ask for help and advice but, in some cases, professionals will need to intervene with support for parents and carers to prevent problems or difficulties escalating. LAs are recommended to have in place comprehensive parenting and family support strategies which set out how a range of support for parents and families will be delivered to meet identified needs. It is important that authorities and their partners consider the need for support services for parents which help them gain the information, and access the services they need to protect and support their children.
- 2.6 Parents and carers play the most important role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their children. If a child or young person is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm through sexual exploitation by someone outside the family, this will not necessarily be as a result of parents or carers having difficulties in meeting their child's needs. While professionals will need to take account of family circumstances in assessing and deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of the child or young person, only in exceptional cases should there be compulsory intervention in family life – that is, where this is necessary to safeguard a child from significant harm. Professionals also need to be aware that, in some cases, parents and carers will be complicit in the exploitation of their children.

## The rights of children and young people

- 2.7 The Government has introduced new legislation, guidance and structures to make the lives of children and young people safer. Children and young people are entitled to be safeguarded from sexual exploitation, just as agencies have duties in respect of safeguarding and promoting their welfare. The UK Government is a signatory to the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse, the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and has ratified the Optional Protocol to the Convention on the Rights of the Child on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography. The UK Parliament introduced laws relating to sexual exploitation in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 (see Annex A for a summary of relevant offences).
- 2.8 The Government has made clear<sup>9</sup> that this legislation is not intended to over-regulate the behaviour of children and young people. Nor, by the same token, is this guidance aimed at controlling young people. Young people's sexual behaviour is primarily a matter for them, guided and informed by parents and carers and by information from a variety of sources. However, because young people can be abused through exploitative and harmful sexual behaviour, there are some key principles which services and others should follow:

<sup>9</sup> Home Office leaflet, *Children and Families: Safer from Sexual Crime*, available from <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/children-safer-fr-sex-crime>

- sharing information at the earliest possible stage where necessary to enable professionals to consider jointly how to proceed in the best interests of the child and to safeguard and promote the welfare of children more generally, as set out in paragraphs 5.23 – 5.30 of *Working Together* and reiterated in this guidance at Annex B,
- intervening to prevent harm to a child or children and young people, and
- taking action against those who sexually exploit children and young people to minimise the risk of further exploitation.

## Responsibility for criminal acts

2.9 The principle that children who are sexually exploited are victims of child sexual abuse was a key message in the previous guidance, *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution* (2000), and was reiterated in the Government's *Coordinated Prostitution Strategy*<sup>10</sup> (2006). Children who are sexually exploited have been or are being seriously abused and are therefore suffering significant harm. The Government remains clear that children and young people who are sexually exploited should not be regarded as having bad or criminal behaviour: they are the victims of sexual abuse. The responsibility for the sexual exploitation of children or young people lies with the abuser: either the person who pays for sex, in some way, or the person who grooms the child and/or organises the exploitation. The focus of police investigations and of prosecutions should be on those who coerce, exploit and abuse children and young people. Annex A sets out the various offences that can be committed in relation to sexual exploitation (including prostitution).

## An integrated approach

- 2.10 Effective measures to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people cannot be seen in isolation from the wider range of support and services available to meet the needs of children and families:
- if processes to safeguard children and young people are to result in improved outcomes for children and young people, then effective plans for safeguarding and promoting each child's welfare should be based on a wide-ranging assessment of the needs of the child and their family, and the wider circumstances, as provided for in the statutory guidance *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (summarised also in *Working Together* Appendix 2).
  - enquiries under section 47 of the Children Act 1989 may reveal significant unmet needs for support and services among children, young people and families. These should always be explicitly considered if the family or a young person so wishes, even where concerns about significant harm to a child are not substantiated.
  - local work to address the issue of sexual exploitation should be integrated into wider work, for example through Children and Young People's Plans (see also paragraph 4.4 of this guidance).

<sup>10</sup> <http://www.homeoffice.gov.uk/documents/cons-paying-the-price/>

2.11 *Working Together* sets out a tiered approach to safeguarding: universal, targeted and responsive. Within that framework, tackling sexual exploitation requires a three-pronged approach: prevention, protection and prosecution. This document provides guidance on all three elements.

### **A shared responsibility**

2.12 Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in this context, like safeguarding children more generally, depends on effective joint working between different agencies and professionals that work with children and young people, including education (e.g. schools and colleges), health services including sexual health services and therapeutic mental health services, youth services, Connexions and children's social care, together with criminal justice agencies and voluntary sector services supporting children and families. Their full involvement is vital if children and young people are to be effectively supported and action is to be taken against perpetrators of sexual exploitation. All agencies should be alert to the risks of sexual exploitation and be able to take action and work together when an issue is identified.

2.13 This joint working should be underpinned by:

- a strong commitment from leaders and senior managers
- a shared understanding of the problem of sexual exploitation
- effective coordination by the LSCB for the area.

# Chapter 3 – The issue of sexual exploitation

- 3.1 This chapter summarises what is known about the sexual exploitation of children and young people. It is important to recognise that the ways in which children and young people are exploited is constantly evolving. Practitioners should ensure that they have an up-to-date understanding of the pattern of sexual exploitation in their area.
- 3.2 Children's charities such as Barnardo's, the National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children (NSPCC) and the Children's Society, law enforcement-led organisations such as The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) and the United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC), Home Office pilot projects in Wolverhampton and Nottingham (1997) and the projects funded through the *Prostitution-What Works?* initiative in Bristol and Sheffield, the work of the National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People, as well as the Coalition for the Removal of Pimping (CROP) and the experiences of affected families and carers themselves have all contributed to a greater understanding of how children and young people are sexually exploited, which should help LSCB partners identify those who are involved.

## The nature of sexual exploitation

- 3.3 Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. This includes boys and young men as well as girls and young women. However, some groups are particularly vulnerable. These include children and young people who have a history of running away or of going missing from home, those with special needs, those in and leaving residential and foster care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, children who have disengaged from education and children who are abusing drugs and alcohol, and those involved in gangs.
- 3.4 Sexual exploitation can take many forms from the seemingly 'consensual' relationship where sex is exchanged for attention, affection, accommodation or gifts, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops. This chapter sets out some of the more common indicators found in cases of sexual exploitation.
- 3.5 Sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from their peers to have sex, sexual bullying (including cyber bullying), and grooming for sexual activity. Technology can also play a 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 all cases is the lack of free economic or moral choice.

- 3.6 Many children and young people are groomed into sexually exploitative relationships but other forms of entry exist. Some young people are engaged in informal economies that incorporate the exchange of sex for rewards such as drugs, alcohol, money or gifts. Others exchange sex for accommodation or money as a result of homelessness and experiences of poverty.<sup>11</sup> Some young people have been bullied and threatened into sexual activities by peers or gangs which is then used against them as a form of extortion and to keep them compliant.<sup>12</sup>
- 3.7 Child sexual exploitation must be tackled effectively to prevent further problems in later life. Many adults involved in prostitution report difficult childhood histories that include domestic violence, familial child abuse, neglect, emotional abuse, time spent in care, disrupted schooling and low educational attainment. Many were also coerced into sexual exploitation as children or young teenagers.
- 3.8 Although the predominant evidence is of men sexually abusing children and young people, both men and women have been known to sexually exploit young men and young women. There is a presumption that children and young people are sexually exploited by people they do not know. However, evidence shows that they are often abused by 'boyfriends' or people with whom they feel they have a relationship. Professionals should also be alert to organised familial abuse or abuse within closed community groups, including sexual exploitation and the making and distribution of abusive images of children and trafficking of children into, within and out of the UK.
- 3.9 The perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and use sophisticated tactics. They are known to target areas where children and young people might gather without much adult supervision, such as shopping centres, cafes, takeaways, pubs, sports centres, cinemas, bus or train stations, local parks, playgrounds and taxi ranks, or sites on the Internet used by children and young people. The process of grooming may also be visible in adult venues such as pubs and clubs. In some cases perpetrators are known to use younger men, women, boys or girls to build initial relationships and introduce them to others in the perpetrator networks.
- 3.10 However, young people can also be sexually exploited by informal and unorganised groups of people. Children and young people, who are themselves the victims of exploitation, may introduce other young people to their abusers. This may not be a deliberate attempt to groom others into sexual exploitation, but rather a way of ensuring that their abuser's attention is deflected away from themselves. These children and young people are themselves victims and should not be prosecuted except as a last resort when other interventions have failed and there is an absolute need to protect others.

11 For a full description of different models of entry, and for local government and children's charities' interventions, and for specific work with young men and with black and ethnic minority communities see Lowe K and Pearce JJ (2006) Special edition on 'Young People and Sexual Exploitation' *Child Abuse Review*, Vol 15. Further useful research is contained in:

Pearce, JJ and Williams, M and Galvin, C (2002) *It's Someone Taking a Part of You: a study of young women and sexual exploitation*, London: The National Children's Bureau. ISBN 1-900990-83-0.

12 Sara Swann.

- 3.11 Similarly, children and young people may be groomed into 'party' lifestyles where they go to houses/flats with numerous men and other young women. These 'parties' often introduce children and young people to alcohol and drugs and offer a space to 'chill'. No single relationship is formed but a general network is created. Young men may be groomed through 'casual' social relationships formed at common meeting places with perpetrators introducing them to a 'macho' lifestyle of cafes/bars/arcades, etc. This may develop into socialising and making money from criminal activities such as shop lifting or car theft and be linked to other risky behaviours such as drinking and smoking. Many young men and boys who are being exploited will be secretive or ambiguous about their actual sexual orientation.
- 3.12 Other perpetrators will include friends, peers and friends of older siblings. In some cases, perpetrators may target young people through their parents or carers, by providing drugs, alcohol or money to the parents or carers. This can often mean that the parents or carers approve of the perpetrator as a potential boyfriend or girlfriend as they are trusted and needed by the family.
- 3.13 The majority of sexually exploited children and young people will be hidden from public view. They are unlikely to be loitering or soliciting on the streets of red light areas. Sexual exploitation is also more likely to take place in private premises than the more 'visible' saunas or massage parlours. Young people are groomed to be secretive about their meetings, which are usually arranged over mobile phones or the Internet, and the places and people they are meeting, so the activities are concealed from parents or carers. As sexual exploitation can be difficult to identify, and services working with children and young people may be unaware of the indicators of sexual exploitation, it is difficult to quantify the number of children and young people who are abused in this way.
- 3.14 Research and practice has, however, helped move the understanding of sexual exploitation by practitioners and policy makers away from a narrow view of seeing sexual exploitation as a young person standing on a street corner selling sex. As discussed, this is only a very small part of the picture. Policies and services therefore need to be broad enough to take into account a wide range of needs, local variations, different models of exploitation in different communities, and to identify children and young people at risk or who are victims of exploitation (see Chapter 6). This broad model also needs to be made clear in preventative education and in awareness raising, early intervention through work in schools or targeted work with those missing school and their families. Similarly, early identification through health service provision for young people with sexual health or with behavioural difficulties and mental health problems is important (see Chapter 5).

## Information on prevalence

- 3.15 Estimating the extent of child sexual exploitation nationally is difficult given the low awareness of the indicators of this abuse among service providers and the varying responses from local areas in terms of assessing their local situation. Research commissioned in 2002<sup>13</sup> following the publication of *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution* reviewed local area

<sup>13</sup> *Safeguarding Children involved in Prostitution, Guidance Review*, Sara Swann MBE and Valerie Balding (Department of Health, 2002)

take-up and found that children were known to suffer sexual exploitation in 111 (of the then 146) Area Child Protection Committee districts – with an average of 19 girls and 3 boys in each area.

- 3.16 Smaller-scale studies since then suggest that this is a considerable under-estimate of the extent of the problem. Barnardo's research in London from 2003-05<sup>14</sup> found 507 separate cases where child sexual exploitation was known or indicated, with cases identified in every London borough. The total number of people estimated to be at risk across London was 1,002. CROP research, *Parents, Children and Pimps: Families speak out about sexual exploitation* (2005), considered 107 affected families between August 2002 and June 2005. A CEOP scoping study in 2007<sup>15</sup> found that 59 children of the 330 children profiled as potentially trafficked were identified or suspected as being sexually exploited. Of these, only one was a UK national and the rest were from Africa, Asia and Eastern Europe. In all situations, however, there are likely to be further numbers of children and young people, particularly boys and young men, who have not yet been identified.
- 3.17 LSCBs should put in place systems to monitor prevalence and responses to child sexual exploitation within their area (see paragraph 4.16). They should start from the basis that there is a problem to be addressed in their area – this would include gathering data from Board partners and other local stakeholders. Research suggests that sexual exploitation does indeed take place in most areas across the country<sup>16</sup>.
- 3.18 It is also a crime that knows no borders and can be global in nature. It is important to respond with cross-border cooperation as it is possible that activity in one area may push perpetrators across a border, together with their young victims. Chapter 6 contains more information on and links to guidance on child trafficking.

## Sexual exploitation and wider harm to children and young people

- 3.19 Sexual exploitation is often linked to other issues in the life of a child or young person, or in the wider community context. It should not be regarded as an isolated issue. This is why a child who may be sexually exploited should be the subject of a holistic assessment of their needs, like any other child who may be in need, including those who may be suffering significant harm (see Chapter 6). Similarly where a child has been identified as being at risk of significant harm and/or faces a complex range of difficulties, it is important that professionals consider whether they are also being sexually exploited.
- 3.20 Sexual exploitation has links to **other types of crime**. This includes:
- child trafficking (into, out of and within the UK)
  - domestic violence
  - sexual violence in intimate relationships
  - grooming (both online and offline)

<sup>14</sup> *Meeting the needs of sexually exploited young people in London*, Zoe Harper and Sara Scott (Barnardo's, 2005)

<sup>15</sup> *A Scoping Study into Child Trafficking in the UK* (CEOP, 2007)

<sup>16</sup> Melrose, M with Barrett, D (2004) eds *Anchors in Floating Lives: Interventions with Young People Sexually Abused Through Prostitution* (Lyme Regis, Russell House Publishing).

- abusive images of children and their distribution (organised abuse)
- organised sexual abuse of children
- drugs-related offences (dealing, consuming and cultivating)
- gang-related activity
- immigration-related offences
- domestic servitude

3.21 It also has links to **other factors likely to affect the welfare of children and young people** including:

- running away from home and going missing
- drug and alcohol misuse
- sexual health
- sexually risky behaviour
- bullying
- domestic servitude, neglect and violence
- teenage pregnancy
- long-term sexual, physical and psychological harm
- forced marriage
- self-harm and suicide

3.22 And it can be related to **other factors in the lives of children and young people:**

- mental health issues
- non-attendance at school and school phobia
- learning disabilities
- being in residential and foster care
- forced isolation from community and family
- immigration status

### Attitudes of children and young people

3.23 Because of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. The needs of children and particularly of young people aged 16 and 17 years are likely to be overlooked for this reason. Although faced with limited choice, they may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily. It may take many weeks or months for practitioners who work with young people to build up their trust, help them to recognise that they are being sexually exploited by challenging their perceptions with factual information, and overcome their resistance to interventions.

## Impact of sexual exploitation on children and young people

3.24 Sexual exploitation can have a serious impact on the life of children and young people. It can lead to difficulties in forming relationships with others, a lack of confidence or self-esteem and can affect their mental and physical health. Sexual exploitation can create feelings of worthlessness within children and young people, which can lead to acts of self-harm, including cutting themselves, overdosing and eating disorders. It can put the young person at increased risk of sexually transmitted infections including HIV, unwanted pregnancy and abortion, as well as long-term sexual and reproductive health problems. It can also ultimately impact on their parenting capacity in the future. Where children or young people manage to recover to some extent from sexual exploitation they will sometimes feel unable to stay in their local area because of the associations it holds for them (or because of very real threats from networks around their abusers) leading to family break-ups and isolation from family and friends.

## Impact of child sexual exploitation on families

- 3.25 Sexual exploitation can have profound and damaging consequences for families, including parents and carers, siblings and extended members, and impact on their health, work life, family cohesion, economic stability and social life<sup>17</sup>. The use of technology can further complicate this, where abusive images have been posted on or shared through the Internet. Once these images have been distributed in this way there is no control over who can access them, leading to the repeated victimisation of the child.
- 3.26 Targeting and grooming children and young people often has psychological implications for parents and other family members: life becomes difficult to manage and the stress of a situation which they do not understand can lead to despair, limiting their capacity to respond to the needs of their children and to deal with crises that occur as a result of the exploitation.
- 3.27 Parents and carers are often distraught, traumatised and under severe stress. They feel helpless and guilty for not being able to protect their children from sexual predators. They are likely to suffer verbal and physical aggression from the exploited child as well as violence or threats of violence from the perpetrators. Sexual exploitation of their children also places strain on family relationships. Sexual exploitation of one child in the family places other siblings at significant risk of being groomed and exploited. Siblings can be alienated and faced with bullying and their self-esteem and performance affected. Parents, carers and siblings can themselves suffer serious threats of abuse, intimidation and assault at the hands of perpetrators.

<sup>17</sup> *Parent Children and Pimps: Families speak out about sexual exploitation* (CROP, 2005)

# Chapter 4 – Roles and responsibilities

- 4.1 Chapter 2 of *Working Together* (2006) sets out in detail the roles and responsibilities of the organisations involved in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, while Chapter 3 of *Working Together* explains the role of LSCBs. This chapter should be read in conjunction with these and focuses on how roles and responsibilities apply specifically to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people in the context of sexual exploitation.
- 4.2 Persons and organisations subject to the duty to make arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 should consider children and young people who are sexually exploited in fulfilling their statutory responsibilities.<sup>18</sup>

## Local Safeguarding Children Boards

- 4.3 LSCBs have a key role to play in coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of the work of their members. They should act in accordance with this guidance in carrying out their functions.

## LSCB functions

- 4.4 In fulfilling their function to *participate in planning and commissioning*, LSCBs should ensure that the needs of children and young people who have been or may be sexually exploited, and their families, have been considered when planning and commissioning local services and that this form of abuse is addressed in the LSCB's operational planning and reporting mechanisms and as necessary in the Children and Young People's Plan (CYPP).
- 4.5 As explained in Chapter 1, every LSCB should assume that sexual exploitation occurs within its area unless there is clear evidence to the contrary. Sexual exploitation should be considered in local needs assessments and, where it is a significant issue, the LSCB should help ensure it is regarded as a priority by the Children's Trust.
- 4.6 Local activity should include measures to prevent children and young people becoming exploited (see Chapter 5) as well as measures to help young people who are exploited and to take action against perpetrators.

<sup>18</sup> Statutory guidance on arrangements to safeguard and promote the welfare of children under section 11 of the Children Act 2004 – updated March 2007.

- 4.7 In fulfilling their function of developing *policies and procedures*, LSCBs should ensure that specific local procedures are in place covering the sexual exploitation of children and young people. These should be developed in line with this guidance (in particular Chapter 6 which addresses the management of individual cases) and set out clearly the respective roles and responsibilities of local agencies and professionals. These procedures should be a subset of the LSCB procedures for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, and be consistent with local youth offending protocols. The strong associations that have been identified between different forms of sexual exploitation, running away from home, child trafficking and substance misuse should also be borne in mind.<sup>19</sup>
- 4.8 All agencies with responsibilities for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people should be involved in drawing up these procedures, including local and national voluntary child and family support agencies and national voluntary child care organisations which have a local presence. It would also be helpful to involve the Crown Prosecution Service as local procedures should include reference to disruption plans and gathering evidence for prosecutions of the perpetrators. Survivors of sexual exploitation and those who have been indirectly affected, such as parents, carers and other family members, who are willing to be involved with developing the procedures, should also be involved as appropriate. However, any direct involvement of young people in developing local procedures should be carefully managed, ensuring that children and young people's potential needs for support and safeguarding throughout this process are adequately met and their contributions appropriately valued.
- 4.9 Local areas should continually assess how young people are being groomed for sexual exploitation and make enquiries about the other routes into sexual exploitation taking place in their area. They should amend their intervention approaches to take account of new knowledge as the models of exploitation change over time.
- 4.10 As a minimum, the procedures should specify:
- how to identify signs of sexual exploitation
  - how professionals can seek help and advice on this issue
  - how professionals can and should share information about concerns, appropriately and at the right times, with all relevant agencies in line with the Government's information sharing guidance<sup>20</sup>
  - the establishment of lead professionals in the key agencies, the routes for referring concerns – preferably through a child sexual exploitation coordinator, and how concerns about sexual exploitation, including those that may arise from use of the Common Assessment Framework, relate to thresholds for referral to statutory agencies in line with the guidance set out in Chapter 5 of *Working Together*
  - how professionals can work together to deliver disruption plans

<sup>19</sup> See also *Gathering evidence of the sexual exploitation of children and young people: a scoping exercise*, Sue Jago and Jenny Pearce (University of Bedfordshire, 2008)

<sup>20</sup> Information Sharing Guidance (HM Government, 2008)

- the role of professionals in gathering and preserving the integrity of evidence about perpetrators of sexual exploitation
  - the processes and possible responses for supporting children and young people who have been identified as being at risk of sexual exploitation or are being sexually exploited
  - how to manage situations in conjunction with neighbouring and other LA areas where children and young people who have been sexually exploited are believed to have lived or temporarily been present or where abusers and coercers have been present
  - how to deal with issues relating to migrant children in situations which make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation
  - how to manage situations of sexual exploitation through the use of technology such as the Internet.
- 4.11 The procedures should be clear that the identification of a child or young person who is being sexually exploited, or at risk of being sexually exploited, should always trigger the agreed LSCB procedures to ensure the child's safety and welfare, and to enable the police to gather evidence about abusers and coercers.
- 4.12 In their function of ensuring that the *training of people who work with children or in services affecting the welfare of children is provided*, LSCBs should ensure that local safeguarding training includes information about how to identify the warning signs of and vulnerabilities to sexual exploitation, and covers all the issues outlined at 4.10 above.
- 4.13 Local training should also help to develop an understanding of how to gather evidence which can be used effectively against abusers. Where sexual exploitation is known to exist locally, LSCBs should ensure that specialist training is available for all key professionals.
- 4.14 Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnerships (RIEPs) have a central role in setting the strategic vision for improvement and efficiency and provide councils and partnerships with a mechanism to have a single conversation about improvement needs in their localities. They could therefore have an important part to play in supporting, training and sharing good practice in tackling sexual exploitation in the region.
- 4.15 In relation to their *communicating and raising awareness function*, LSCBs should identify any issues around sexual exploitation, including those arising from the views and experiences of children and young people in their area. Guidance for the local community on sexual exploitation should include:
- awareness raising activities focused on young people
  - publicity for sources of help for victims
  - how and where to report concerns about victims and offenders
  - public awareness campaigns more generally
- 4.16 In their *monitoring and evaluation* of case work, LSCBs should put in place systems to track and monitor cases of sexual exploitation that come to the attention of local agencies including schools, colleges and other education organisations, health, the police, social care, housing services and voluntary and community sector organisations. It would clearly be

helpful if LSCBs could share key data with one another and with national organisations to improve the evidence base on sexual exploitation and work to address it.

- 4.17 In considering when to undertake a *Serious Case Review*, LSCBs should bear in mind the harmful nature of sexual exploitation and the likelihood that similar situations will recur unless services are alert and effective. *Working Together* explains that ‘A LSCB should always consider whether to undertake a serious case review where a child has sustained ... serious sexual abuse... **and** the case gives rise to concerns about the way in which local professionals and services work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.’<sup>21</sup> A review may help focus local attention and learning on the issue of sexual exploitation and how services can better address it.

### LSCBs ensuring cooperation

- 4.18 LSCBs should consider how best to involve their members and other agencies in work to address sexual exploitation. LSCBs can for example be a key link between voluntary and statutory agencies:
- the voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations involved in service delivery to those sexually exploited and their families – and those who are at risk of being exploited – will be key partners and will have information and intelligence which LSCBs and their statutory members should draw on in planning and commissioning services. The VCS should be involved in drawing up local policies and procedures.
  - other local partnerships, including local domestic violence partnerships and Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships (CDRPs), also have a key role to play. LSCBs should already have links with CDRPs and these can be used to ensure a common understanding of the nature of the problem, local priorities, and how different agencies will cooperate to address it.
  - Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA). See paragraph 7.26 for further information).
- 4.19 LSCBs should consider what types of structures both within the LSCB and in local agencies and partnerships will effectively support the implementation of this guidance.
- 4.20 LSCBs should identify a sub-group, reporting to the Board, to lead on the issue of sexual exploitation, drive work forward and ensure effective cooperation between agencies and professionals. This group could be tasked with developing and ensuring the implementation of the procedures referred to above. It should develop close working links with other sub-groups already working on linked topics such as child trafficking, e-safety or missing children.
- 4.21 LSCBs should ensure that there is a dedicated lead person in each partner organisation with responsibility for implementing this guidance. They should also put in place appropriate arrangements for ensuring that work with children and young people who have been or may be likely to be sexually exploited is undertaken in a coordinated way. For example, some areas have put in place co-located dedicated units which bring together expertise

<sup>21</sup> Paragraph 8.6, *Working Together to Safeguard Children (2006)*

from a range of agencies, while others have appointed a dedicated coordinator who can ensure a 'virtual' team response.

4.22 LSCBs should put in place arrangements to cooperate with neighbouring areas, and other LA areas where children and young people who have been sexually exploited are believed to have lived or temporarily been present in other areas. These arrangements may be part of more general cooperative arrangements between LSCBs.

4.23 LSCBs should also consider:

- auditing periodically how multi-agency plans for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people, support for parents and carers and action on offenders are effectively developed and implemented in line with this guidance and *Working Together* (see paragraph 3.3 of *Working Together*) and
- using its management information 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.

**Portsmouth's** LSCB received anecdotal evidence from various professionals that sexual exploitation of children and young people was taking place in Portsmouth. This was hidden and therefore it was difficult to judge the scale of the problem.

They identified three key factors:

- lack of knowledge and awareness amongst professionals working with children and young people about the issues of sexual exploitation itself
- insufficient evidence of such activity taking place so professionals would be reluctant to acknowledge the scale and nature of child sexual exploitation
- children and young people potentially involved were unlikely to disclose that they had been exploited.

They commissioned a 12 month scoping exercise from Barnardo's who were already well established in Southampton. At the end of the scoping work Barnardo's produced a report which set out a series of recommendations and proposals.

The report recommended that Portsmouth adopt joint working and intelligence sharing with Southampton, whereby a manager would oversee child sexual exploitation work, carried out in conjunction with Southampton. The manager would be someone from Barnardo's but funded by the LSCB.

Under this arrangement there would be one and a half workers based in Portsmouth but managed by Southampton. Where there were issues of joint training there would be a cross-over of staff. The one and half workers based in Portsmouth would act as a central point for receiving and acting on referrals and providing advice.

As one professional noted, "*the harsh reality is that we have to work with limited resources and working alongside your counterpart in other local areas ensures that you gain the benefits of economies of scale*".

## Common features for all agencies

- 4.24 As set out in *Working Together*, all organisations that provide services for, or work with children, need to have arrangements in place to fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 4.25 In relation to child sexual exploitation, all these organisations should ensure that:
- safeguarding training and refresher training includes an awareness of sexual exploitation, the recording and retention of information and gathering evidence
  - their policies for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people are compatible with the LSCB's policies and procedures that relate to sexual exploitation
  - information sharing protocols are in place and working well so that relevant information is being shared with other agencies where this is in the best interests of the child.
- 4.26 All agencies should be aware of and should follow the guidance in *Working Together* on sexually active young people (see paragraphs 5.23 to 5.30 of *Working Together*) as implemented through local protocols or procedures. This guidance is repeated in Annex B to this document.

## Local Authorities

### Local Authorities that are children's services authorities<sup>22</sup>

- 4.27 LAs take a lead role in bringing together local services to improve the welfare of children. This is based on the Children Act 2004, which requires LAs to set up arrangements to promote cooperation to improve children's well-being and places a reciprocal duty on named 'relevant partners' to cooperate with the LA in connection with these arrangements. This is the statutory underpinning of the Children's Trust.
- 4.28 The Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Bill builds on these cooperation arrangements to include a Children's Trust Board. So, subject to the will of Parliament, each LA will be required to set up a Children's Trust Board which will take the lead in local planning and commissioning of services by drawing up, publishing and reviewing the local CYPP. The Board will also be required to monitor and publish an annual report on the extent to which the Children's Trust Board members are acting in accordance with their commitments in the CYPP.
- 4.29 LAs also have their own responsibilities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children as set out in the Children Act 1989 and in other legislation (see Annex A).

### Planning and commissioning services

- 4.30 LAs should, with their Children's Trust partners, ensure that when conducting their local needs assessments, in connection with the CYPP, they consider the issue of sexual exploitation. In their local planning and commissioning, LAs and their partners should

<sup>22</sup> County level or unitary authorities are defined as children's services authorities in the Children Act 2004. Section 65 of the Act sets out the full definition.

consider what services are needed to address the needs of young people who have been sexually exploited. The services which might be considered include the provision of therapeutic care, day care, drop-in facilities, outreach and residential services.

### Children's social care

4.31 Following a referral, LAs, under section 17 of the Children Act 1989, should ensure that the needs of all children and young people who are being, or are at risk of being, sexually exploited are assessed and that appropriate multi-agency engagement and appropriate interventions are undertaken in line with *Working Together*, the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*, and with Chapter 6 of this guidance. The duties on LAs under the Children Act 1989 apply to all children and young people aged under 18 years. Children's social care staff should also be alert to the possibility of sexual exploitation of children who are already in receipt of services.

### Connexions – services provided under section 114 of the Learning and Skills Act 2000

4.32 Connexions staff are likely to work with young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation or who are being sexually exploited. They should be alert to the signs of sexual exploitation and should be aware of the local protocols and procedures to be followed. They may need to be involved in providing ongoing support as part of an agreed child protection or care plan or as part of action to support a child in need.

### Youth services

4.33 Youth and community workers (YCWs) have close contact with children and young people and will be in a key position to identify signs that someone is at risk of, or is being, sexually exploited. LA Youth Service instructions to YCWs on safeguarding children should include information on sexual exploitation. There should be a clear expectation that sexual exploitation is not something which should be kept confidential. YCWs should discuss the issues with senior colleagues and should refer to other agencies when this is identified. The instructions should also make clear the potential ongoing role of YCWs in supporting a child or young person who is being sexually exploited, as part of action agreed with other agencies. Volunteers within the youth service should be subject to the same requirement. This should also be part of the arrangements to safeguard children and young people that are put in place when the LA funds local voluntary youth organisations or other providers through grant or contract arrangements.

### Leisure services

4.34 Sport and cultural services designed for children and families – such as libraries, parks and gardens, sport and leisure centres, events and attractions, museums and art centres – are directly provided, purchased or grant-aided by LAs, the commercial sector and by community and voluntary organisations. Many activities take place in premises managed by authorities or their agents.

- 4.35 Staff who provide these services may have contact with children and young people at risk of or being sexually exploited. In some cases activities relating to sexual exploitation may take place in or around these facilities. These services should ensure appropriate arrangements are in place including:
- safeguarding training for staff, and where necessary for volunteers and contractors, which should include the need to be alert to sexual exploitation
  - procedures for staff and others to report concerns they may have
  - appropriate codes of practice for staff, including sports coaches, such as the codes of practice issued by national governing bodies of sport, the Health and Safety Executive, or the Child Protection in Sport Unit.
- 4.36 Public areas such as parks and leisure centres are often used by perpetrators to target victims. Managers should comply with requests for assistance from the police and other agencies, for example in helping to disrupt activity.

### Housing service

- 4.37 Housing staff in LAs can play an important role in safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation as can housing managers, whether working in a LA or for a registered social landlord, and others with a front-line role such as environmental health officers. In identifying needs and welfare issues relating to children and young people they should be aware of the issue of sexual exploitation. They may also identify adults about whom they have concerns as possible perpetrators of sexual exploitation. They should follow up these concerns according to local procedures.

## Criminal justice organisations

### The police

- 4.38 This section should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 2.97 – 2.105 of *Working Together*, which set out the principles applying to the police role in child protection investigations.
- 4.39 The role of the police is to assess and manage risk to children and young people to prevent harm where possible, and to reduce the likelihood and the impact of any harm. The sexual exploitation of a child or young person will almost certainly involve the commission of a crime or have the potential for a crime to be committed. As emphasised in Chapter 2, the sexual exploitation of children and young people is child abuse. It should therefore receive the same level of response as other forms of child abuse. Investigations should be carried out by officers trained in child protection procedures and familiar with the risk indicators for child sexual exploitation.
- 4.40 The investigation of child sexual exploitation requires a proactive approach to explore the nature and patterns of sexual exploitation locally, and to share information with partner agencies about those at risk and potential perpetrators. Linking this work to the response to missing young people and other public protection issues can help to identify and manage risk at an early stage.

- 4.41 It is important that the police work closely with partner agencies to develop a coordinated response to any concerns about child sexual exploitation, and to ensure that the response is in the best interests of the child whose welfare and safety should be paramount.
- 4.42 Similarly partner agencies need to involve the police as early as possible to ensure that no information is lost that may be critical to a prosecution case, and so that a disruption plan can be put in place (see paragraph 7.4) for the perpetrator. It is also vital that information is collated that may be vital to a prosecution even in cases where a young person has made no formal complaint. In many cases the processes of supporting a young person to recognise the exploitative nature of their relationship will be lengthy. By the time a formal disclosure is made vital information may have been lost unless there is a strategy of evidence gathering from the outset.
- 4.43 The police service is the prime agency for gathering evidence in connection with criminal cases, and tackling perpetrators. However, in many cases of sexual exploitation this process will only be achieved by working closely with agencies in a position to build a trusting relationship with the young victim. Partner agencies may not previously have been involved in the gathering of evidence and may need guidance and support from criminal justice agencies to understand the kind of information that can be useful, and the process for recording that information so that it can be used in evidence where necessary.
- 4.44 It is important for the police to focus on the offender. Alongside forums for sharing information to protect the child or young person, it is useful to have information sharing forums which focus specifically on suspected perpetrators.
- 4.45 Many cases cross force boundaries. It is important for forces to develop strategies for cross-boundary cooperation as well as cooperation between local partnerships in order to manage the risks to young people and address the behaviour of perpetrators. Some of these cases will involve the trafficking of young people into the UK, or from place to place within the UK. The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) will shortly release guidance for police on investigating child trafficking cases. Information and intelligence received by local police forces about such cases should be passed to the UKHTC in order to establish the national picture relating to trafficking for sexual exploitation.
- 4.46 Other cases may involve grooming through chat rooms and social networking sites, or involvement with paedophile rings. CEOP can support forces by helping to coordinate cross-boundary or international investigations involving child sex offender networks, or in the management of high-risk offenders or the location of those who have gone missing.

### **Crown Prosecution Service (CPS)**

- 4.47 Policy guidance has been issued by the CPS on prosecuting cases involving children and young people as victims and witnesses of crime and, in appropriate circumstances, as defendants. This guides prosecutors in ensuring that when they are dealing with cases involving children, the child is given appropriate support and there is consideration as to what is best for the child if a criminal prosecution proceeds. The CPS guidance, *Safeguarding Children – Guidance on Children as Victims and Witnesses*, sets out in detail the guidance

relating to this policy and at paragraphs 21 – 38 the application of the evidential and public interest tests to cases involving child abuse.

- 4.48 CPS decisions on prosecuting cases are guided by a Code for Crown Prosecutors<sup>23</sup>. The Code provides that the two stages of the Code for Crown Prosecutors be applied to all cases before a decision is taken on whether to proceed. The first is the evidential stage to determine whether there is sufficient evidence to provide a realistic prospect of conviction. CPS should work closely with the police from an early stage to build a strong case evidentially. There are a number of measures, including recording a child's evidence on video to be played in court, which can help a child or young person to give their best evidence. If the evidence is strong enough, the public interest stage of the test will be applied. Prosecutors must carefully consider the effect on a child before making the decision.
- 4.49 The misuse of a child by a perpetrator involved in a criminal enterprise can be seen as a form of child abuse. Children who may be forced into prostitution will be treated by the CPS as an abused child and victim who needs help rather than as a defendant. The same consideration will be given to those who are coerced into committing crimes or used by adults to commit offences. CPS will prosecute people who organise prostitution and who benefit financially from abusing children.
- 4.50 More detailed guidance to prosecutors expands on these provisions. In cases where there is evidence that a young person has committed an offence whilst in a coerced situation, for example when they have been trafficked, the prosecutor will have to consider whether or not the coercion amounts to a defence of duress. Where it does not amount to a defence and there is sufficient evidence for a prosecution, the circumstances of the young person will be one of the factors for the prosecutor to consider in deciding whether or not it is in the public interest to bring a prosecution.
- 4.51 Whilst the CPS is not a statutory member of LSCBs, they should be invited to contribute to the development of local procedures. This might include providing advice on approaches to be taken including evidential requirements to support criminal offences, what evidence is reliable and can be admitted as evidence and how non-criminal justice agencies can assist in recording and gathering information in a way that will ensure that it can be admitted as evidence.

### Youth Offending Teams (Yots)

- 4.52 Yots are well placed to identify those children and young people known to relevant organisations as being most at risk of being drawn into the criminal justice system. While young people who are sexually exploited should not themselves be regarded as offenders, a number of the young people who come into contact with Yots will be vulnerable and some may be at risk of or suffering sexual exploitation. It is necessary, therefore, for there to be clear links between youth justice and LA children's social care, both at a strategic level and at a child-specific operational level. Yots should ensure that all the needs of young

<sup>23</sup> [www.cps.gov.uk/victims\\_witnesses/code.html](http://www.cps.gov.uk/victims_witnesses/code.html)

people with whom they are in contact, including those at risk of sexual exploitation, are flagged up and addressed according to local procedures.

## Health services

- 4.53 This section should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 2.27 to 2.96 of *Working Together* which set out in detail the role of different health services in safeguarding children.
- 4.54 Health professionals and organisations have a key role to play in actively promoting the health and wellbeing of children. Section 11 of the Children Act 2004 places a duty on Strategic Health Authorities, designated Special Hospitals, Primary Care Trusts (PCTs), NHS Trusts and NHS Foundation Trusts to make arrangements to ensure that, in discharging their functions, they have regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.
- 4.55 Health services are in a key position to recognise children and young people who are suffering sexual exploitation. In addition, health services may also be in a position to identify concerns about adults who may be perpetrators of sexual exploitation. PCTs need to be alert to this issue in their commissioning and all services including GPs, NHS Trusts, sexual health practitioners, PCTs and others need to be alert to this issue in their work with both children and adults. Some services have a particular need to bear this in mind:
- Sexual health services, genito-urinary medicine services and community contraceptive clinics may be aware of sexually active young people and may pick up indicators of sexual exploitation. They should always be alert to these signs and should follow the guidance in *Working Together* on sexually active young people (paragraphs 5.23 to 5.30) as implemented through local protocols/procedures.
  - Mental health services including child and adolescent mental health services (CAMHS), adult mental health services, and alcohol and drug services may encounter children and young people at risk of or suffering sexual exploitation or they may have concerns about adults suspected of being perpetrators of sexual exploitation. As part of assessment and care planning, child and adolescent mental health professionals should identify whether child abuse or neglect, sexual exploitation or domestic violence are factors in a child's mental health problems, and should ensure that this is addressed appropriately in the child's treatment and care. CAMHS professionals have a particular role in the assessment of cases where there is perceived high risk of danger, including cases where multiple victims are involved.
  - Health staff working with looked after children and care leavers have an opportunity in the course of their work to identify concerns in this particularly vulnerable group.
  - Paediatric and Accident and Emergency staff may pick up on signs of sexual and physical abuse or signs of violence when young people present with injuries. Young people may also present due to alcohol or drug overdose or intoxication. These staff may be in a prime position not only to refer to other agencies but also (subject to the patient's consent) to collect forensic and photographic evidence through their medical examinations, which will assist the police with their investigations e.g. DNA from semen and photographs of injuries.

4.56 The Department of Health will be publishing the results of the academic work and research conducted by the Victims of Violence and Abuse Prevention Programme later in 2009.

### Schools and further education institutions

- 4.57 Schools (including Academies, independent schools and non-maintained special schools) and further education (FE) institutions are required (under the Education Act 2002) to make arrangements to ensure that their functions are carried out with a view to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This section should be read in conjunction with paragraphs 2.121 to 2.131 of *Working Together* which set out the general role of education institutions in safeguarding and with Chapter 2 of *Safeguarding Children and Safer Recruitment in Education* (2006) which provides specific guidance on this role.
- 4.58 It is important that education institutions are alert to sexual exploitation and that education staff can identify signs that a child or young person is at risk of or suffering sexual exploitation, and know what action to take in line with local procedures.
- 4.59 Links with other agencies will support schools and FE colleges in their role. Working with PCTs and linking with local school health networks to bring together health and education is important. School nurses have a key role to play in ensuring the safety and welfare of children and young people.
- 4.60 Educational institutions play an important role in helping children and young people gain an understanding of acceptable and unacceptable relationships and sexual behaviour and to gain a sense of self-worth and respect for others. The Personal, Social, Health and Economic education<sup>24</sup> (PSHE) curriculum, which includes Sex and Relationship Education (SRE), and draws on Social and Emotional Aspects of Learning, provides a vehicle for this important learning which can help prevent children and young people becoming involved in sexual exploitation.
- 4.61 Children and young people should also be informed of specific safeguarding risks including the risk of sexual exploitation and made aware of how to seek help and advice on how to deal with those risks. This can include national sources of help such as CEOP ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)) and ChildLine and local projects and agencies including of course the statutory services. In Derby, Safe and Sound<sup>25</sup> have developed a PSHE programme for delivery to schools.

#### **The Awaken project's 'contact card'**

The Awaken project in Blackpool have produced a credit card size 'contact card', which is distributed in schools and youth organisations, to provide a point of contact for young people at risk of becoming involved in sexual exploitation.

4.62 More information on the role of education institutions in prevention is set out in Chapter 5.

<sup>24</sup> On 1 September 2008, Personal, Social and Health Education (PSHE) became Personal, Social, Health and Economic education with two new non-statutory programmes of study – personal wellbeing and economic wellbeing and financial capability.

<sup>25</sup> For more information, contact [info@safeandsoundderby.co.uk](mailto:info@safeandsoundderby.co.uk).

## Voluntary and community sector organisations

- 4.63 Voluntary organisations play an important role in delivering services for children and young people and their families, providing support, and providing activities.
- 4.64 All voluntary and community sector (VCS) organisations in contact with children, young people and families should be aware of the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, should be as able as statutory services to identify concerns about sexual exploitation and to make referrals to statutory agencies as appropriate.
- 4.65 Voluntary organisations can also play a key role in services specifically to address the issue of sexual exploitation. Many young people may be disengaged from mainstream statutory services and be more likely to respond to a voluntary organisation that provides a specialist service. Voluntary organisations are able to offer an independent, confidential service to young people. They can provide intensive support to encourage them to remain engaged with the service and are an advocacy service to ensure that they can access the support they need from other services. Voluntary organisations often provide specialist services that include:
- preventative work through awareness raising and therapeutic outreach
  - intervention as part of an agreed package of support for someone who is at risk of or suffering sexual exploitation. In some cases, partners may agree that someone from the VCS is best placed to act as a lead professional. This intervention should be managed as part of local procedures and in collaboration with statutory agencies
  - therapeutic work with children and young people who have suffered sexual exploitation
  - support to parents and carers to enable them to proactively support their children and
  - long-term intervention to help a young person to fully recover and to prevent re-victimisation.

## The private sector

- 4.66 Private sector organisations provide many services for children and young people or are responsible for environments where children and young people may be present. Examples include shopping centres, cinemas, pubs, cafes, restaurants, the Internet (particularly, social networking sites), and other leisure facilities, including adult venues and gay clubs.
- 4.67 Safeguarding children is everyone's responsibility and the Government is working to promote that understanding even where there is no explicit duty on organisations. The Government's *Staying Safe: Action Plan* sets out the work being taken forward to raise general awareness of the need to take responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and to drive improvements in children's safety.
- 4.68 Private sector organisations are being encouraged to:
- be alert to safeguarding children issues including sexual exploitation

- for Internet and other online service providers, implement codes of practice and other guidance issued by Government-led bodies e.g. the Home Office guidance/code of practice on social networking sites and any future guidance issued by the UK Council for Child Internet Safety (UKCCIS)
- implement safeguarding standards such as Leisurewatch<sup>26</sup> or standards developed by the NSPCC
- cooperate with statutory services' work including LSCBs' outreach work, service planning and coordination
- ensure staff are trained in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, including sexual exploitation
- become closely involved where an issue of sexual exploitation is identified in a particular local area or facility and engage in active cooperation with local agencies, especially the police and LA, to address it.

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<sup>26</sup> Leisurewatch is a scheme delivered and maintained by The Derwent Initiative. Its purpose is to increase public protection by preventing sexual offending in defined public spaces. It brings together trained staff in leisure venues and named police officers responsible for community safety, to reduce the risk of harm to children and young people.

# Chapter 5 – Preventing sexual exploitation

- 5.1 The effects of sexual exploitation are harmful and far reaching for children and young people and the ultimate aim for any local strategy must be to prevent them from being exploited in the first place. This chapter looks at measures that may help to achieve this.
- 5.2 By prevention we mean reducing the risk that children and young people will become victims of sexual exploitation by:
- reducing their vulnerability
  - improving their resilience
  - disrupting and preventing the activities of perpetrators
  - reducing tolerance of exploitative behaviour
  - prosecuting abusers.
- 5.3 Work described in Chapters 6 and 7 will also have a preventative effect by reducing the numbers of children and young people who are sexually exploited, deterring perpetrators and where appropriate, bringing criminal prosecutions.

## Awareness raising and preventative education

- 5.4 It is important that all young people develop the knowledge and skills they need to make safe and healthy choices about relationships and sexual health. This will help them to avoid situations that put them at risk of sexual exploitation or to know who to turn to if they need advice and support. As noted above, SRE, delivered within a planned programme of PSHE education provides the opportunity to deliver age-appropriate information to children and young people that will enable them to understand and manage risks and make informed, positive choices.
- 5.5 At present, schools are required to deliver those aspects of SRE that are included in the statutory science curriculum. Schools are further encouraged to cover broader relationship aspects of SRE within PSHE education. In response to the recent reviews of SRE and drug and alcohol education, Ministers intend to make PSHE statutory and to develop the core content of the programme to be delivered by all schools. This statutory duty will not come into force until September 2011, but interim SRE guidance is currently being developed and will be published in September 2009.
- 5.6 Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation will help to deliver all five of the outcomes for children and young people, especially those that aim to help young people 'stay safe' and 'be healthy.' All children and young people are potentially at risk of being sexually exploited.

This can begin as early as eight years of age. By enabling children and young people to explore what makes a safe and healthy relationship, schools can help to develop the awareness and skills to recognise and manage potential risks of harm, stay safe and seek help if they need it. It is important that this message is repeated throughout a child's time at school to support prevention through the promotion of safe practices. Both primary and secondary schools have a vital role to play in this preventive education and awareness raising.

- 5.7 Specific resources are available to help facilitate discussions around healthy relationships and sexual exploitation as part of the PSHE education curriculum. The Sex Education Forum has produced a factsheet to help teachers at key stages 3 and 4 to plan and deliver effective education on sexual exploitation as part of wider SRE. For those at particular risk of becoming involved in sexual exploitation, further, more in-depth education and support may be required. Links should be made with education and awareness raising about online safety. Some further useful links on all these issues are provided in Annex C.
- 5.8 Awareness raising needs to be well coordinated and well informed. It should:
- be carried out through effective materials tailored to the audience of children and young people;
  - be integrated into the curriculum where possible for school age children, and
  - include signposting to sources of advice and support locally and nationally (such as ChildLine and CEOP's Thinkuknow products and reporting abuse mechanisms).
- 5.9 Preventing sexual exploitation and helping young people to learn about safe, healthy relationships is central to the National Teenage Pregnancy Strategy and the National Strategy for Sexual Health and HIV. It is also a core part of the National Healthy Schools Programme, which aims to equip young people with the skills and attitudes to make informed decisions about their health.
- 5.10 People who are expected to deliver training to children and young people should be trained and equipped to do so. This could form part of LSCB assured safeguarding training programmes. Those delivering education on sexual exploitation may of course encounter children and young people who are or have been victims of sexual exploitation. They should be able to use suitable techniques to enable discussions to take place and should be prepared to consider and deal with any indications of exploitation or indeed other abuse or neglect, in accordance with local procedures and the guidance on managing individual cases set out in Chapter 6.
- 5.11 Specialist services should where possible be involved in education and awareness raising programmes as they can provide powerful illustrations of the issues around sexual exploitation. Making use of the resources and expertise of organisations like CEOP ([www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)) and the UKHTC may also be helpful.

## Targeted prevention

- 5.12 Agencies should consider how parents and carers can be informed about patterns of grooming, indicators of risk of sexual exploitation and the impact of sexual exploitation on children, young people and families. Parents and carers, in particular those responsible for children who are living away from home, should be made aware of where they can access support for themselves and how best to support children who may be at risk of sexual exploitation. LAs should work to raise awareness of the risk of becoming involved in sexual exploitation with foster carers and staff in children's homes.
- 5.13 Some professional groups or agencies may require specific training or awareness raising, especially if they are working with children and young people who are already vulnerable and who may be at particular risk of becoming involved in child sexual exploitation. For example, perpetrators have been known to target **looked after children** for sexual exploitation. LAs and partner agencies should consider how best to raise the awareness of looked after children and those responsible for their care, including through the provision of high quality information, and to provide the support and quality care that they require to reduce their vulnerability to this form of abuse. Yots should consider incorporating promotion of healthy relationships in their work with young people, as well as raising awareness of the risks of becoming involved in sexual exploitation.
- 5.14 Children who are **regularly absent from education**, or who are **not receiving a suitable education** are another vulnerable group, as are **children in pupil referral units**. Children who **go missing from home or who are homeless**, even where they are not already at specific risk of sexual exploitation or being exploited, are nevertheless at an increased risk of abuse compared to children whose lives are more stable. This includes both UK national and migrant children. Again local services should ensure that these children and their families receive the support they need, including awareness raising where appropriate.
- 5.15 Children who have **mental health issues** or who **abuse drugs or alcohol** are more vulnerable to exploitation. Services should again develop preventative work with these children and young people.
- 5.16 Children who have **disabilities or special needs** can also be targeted by perpetrators. Strategies, procedures and guidance will need to be adapted to meet their particular needs.
- 5.17 Additionally, awareness raising activities could target people whose work places them in a position where they will notice and could then report worrying behaviours. These people could include shopkeepers, park attendants, CCTV operators, pub licensees, hotel and hostel managers and a broad range of others in the community who are not traditionally part of the safeguarding community.

### **Police prevention work**

- 5.18 The police need to be aware of the early indicators of risk of sexual exploitation and ensure that appropriate intervention is made at an early stage to build up a relationship with the young person and to begin to gather evidence. Other specialist agencies or educational establishments should be consulted at an early stage. Identifying risk factors and addressing them through early interventions demonstrates care for the young victim and builds trust to enable exploitation to be challenged and minimised.
- 5.19 Good practice has highlighted that the use of the Child Abduction Act 1984 section 2 Abduction Warnings can be an effective tool in harm reduction and severing contact between victims and perpetrators.

### **Health prevention work**

- 5.20 Health services such as health centres, Accident and Emergency services and sexual health clinics are well placed to display awareness raising literature about sexual exploitation services which children and young people will see.

# Chapter 6 – Managing individual cases

- 6.1 As emphasised in Chapter 2, local agencies should be clear that children who are being or are likely to be sexually exploited are victims of child sexual abuse. In all cases where abuse or neglect is suspected as a result of sexual exploitation, the LSCB's safeguarding children procedures apply. This chapter should be read in conjunction with Chapter 5 of *Working Together*, which sets out in detail the processes to be followed when there are concerns about a child's welfare. The practice guidance, *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused*<sup>27</sup>, sets out the process for practitioners and their managers. This process for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is illustrated in the flowcharts reproduced from Chapter 5 of *Working Together*, and set out at the end of this chapter.
- 6.2 The identification of a child or young person involved in sexual exploitation, or at risk of being drawn into sexual exploitation, should *always* trigger the agreed local safeguarding children procedures to ensure the child's safety and welfare, and to enable the police to gather criminal evidence about the perpetrators.

## Identification of those at risk of or suffering from sexual exploitation

- 6.3 The primary concern of anyone who comes into contact with a child or young person who is vulnerable to being sexually exploited must be to safeguard and promote the welfare of that child. All professionals who work with children and young people should be alert to signs of possible abuse or neglect including through sexual exploitation.
- 6.4 Anyone who has regular contact with children and young people is in a good position to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs which may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation, but parents, carers, teachers, social workers, doctors, school nurses, Looked After Children nurses, sexual health practitioners and youth workers are particularly well placed. They should also be able to recognise where children are vulnerable to being sexually exploited and may need targeted measures to prevent this abuse.
- 6.5 Practitioners and their managers should be aware of the potential signs that a person is being groomed for sexual exploitation and be able to identify these. They should also know how to monitor online spaces and be prepared to request access reports where they have suspicions that a child is being groomed online, for example, at school, youth groups or in libraries. In addition, they should be aware of local geographical areas or locations which perpetrators tend to use to target potential victims.

<sup>27</sup> *What to do if you're worried a child is being abused* (HM Government, 2006)

- 6.6 Careful consideration should be given to whether relationships presented by teenagers as being consensual in fact are, or whether they are being sexually exploited. Professionals should be alert to the ways in which perpetrators can operate (see Chapter 7), especially where there is a large age-gap or power imbalance between the individuals involved. Sexual exploitation of teenagers as well as younger children is abuse and should be responded to as such.
- 6.7 The earlier that sexual exploitation, or likelihood of it, can be identified, the more opportunities there are to prevent or minimise the harm suffered by a child or young person. Children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation or who are being sexually exploited may display highly complex and challenging behaviours. They may appear abusive and anti-social and may become involved in bullying and exploitative activities towards others. These behaviours may mean that professionals can experience difficulty in recognising the young people's vulnerability and in responding to it. However, it is also important to recognise that some young people who are being sexually exploited do not exhibit any external signs of this abuse.
- 6.8 The indicators below are recognised as factors linked to child sexual exploitation. They are organised according to the domains and dimensions of the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)*. This is not an exhaustive list and the presence of any of the indicators should not be taken as proof of involvement or as predictive of future involvement in sexual exploitation but they should give rise to considering whether an assessment of the child is required to determine their needs and whether they are or are likely to be suffering harm. For example, the fact that a child or young person is sexually active may be an indicator of risk of sexual exploitation depending on their age, but is not necessarily in itself a matter for concern. Concerns would usually increase the more indicators that are present. The indicators are intended as a guide which can be used during an assessment of the young person's needs and circumstances. In effective practice the facts gathered during an assessment of each child should be considered carefully when making decisions about how best to safeguard and promote their welfare.
- 6.9 The indicators should be used alongside the considerations included in paragraph 5.27 of *Working Together* and reproduced for ease of reference in Annex B. The purpose of these considerations is to help professionals decide when to share information about sexually active 13-15 year olds and they include factors that may be present in exploitative or potentially harmful sexual activity.

### Indicators of possible sexual exploitation

#### Domain: Child or Young Person's Developmental Needs

##### Health:

- Physical symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault)
- Chronic fatigue
- Recurring or multiple sexually transmitted infections
- Pregnancy and/or seeking an abortion
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse
- Sexually risky behaviour

##### Education:

- Truancy/disengagement with education or considerable change in performance at school

##### Emotional and Behavioural Development:

- Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language
- Getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting, stealing
- Secretive behaviour
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults

##### Identity:

- Low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour, e.g. cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity

##### Family and Social Relationships:

- Hostility in relationship with parents/carers and other family members
- Physical aggression towards parents, siblings, pets, teachers or peers
- Placement breakdown
- Reports from reliable sources (e.g. parents/carers, friends or other professionals in contact with the child or young person) suggesting the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation.
- Detachment from age-appropriate activities
- Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited
- Young person known to be sexually active
- Sexual relationship with a significantly older person
- Unexplained relationships with older adults

- Possible inappropriate use of the Internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the Internet.
- Phone calls, text messages or letters from unknown adults
- Adults or older youths loitering outside the child's usual place of residence
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base
- Missing for long periods, with no known home base
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child or young person has no known links

Social Presentation:

- Change in appearance
- Leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people)

**Domain: Parental Capacity**

Ensuring Safety:

- History of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse or neglect

**Family and Environmental Factors**

Family History and Functioning:

- history of physical, sexual, and/or emotional abuse; neglect; domestic violence; parental difficulties

Housing:

- Pattern of street homelessness
- Having keys to premises other than those known about

Income:

- Possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation
- Acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation
- Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding

Family's Social Integration:

- Reports that the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation

- 6.10 Information about a child or young person may only come to light during an assessment, i.e. after information has been shared or following a referral and it is important for professionals to continue to share information and take all relevant information into account as it becomes available. In all cases, it is necessary for professionals to be probing in their assessments and to ask deeper questions to try to identify concerns at an earlier stage.
- 6.11 If a child or young person has been identified as being at risk of, or is being groomed for but has not yet been subjected to sexual exploitation, early intervention measures should be considered. Some areas have developed early intervention programmes intended to raise children's awareness of their situations and help them not to become further involved in sexual exploitation.

### Boys and young men

- 6.12 Sexual exploitation services report that as many as a third of their referrals relate to boys and young men. However, it can be more difficult to detect when boys and young men are at risk of sexual exploitation or are being sexually exploited, as they are generally harder to work with and less willing to disclose this type of information. They may also find it harder to disclose that they are being abused by other men because of issues about sexual identity. It is important that professionals who are assessing young men do not become distracted when exploring their sexual identity and fail to notice that they may be being, or are at risk of being sexually exploited. The following box illustrates possible indicators specific to boys and young men being sexually exploited. These indicators are organised according to the domains and dimensions of the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families*.

#### Indicators of possible sexual exploitation for boys and young men

##### Domain: Child Developmental Needs

###### Health:

- Physical symptoms – sexually transmitted infections, bruising or other marks on body suggestive of physical or sexual abuse
- Drug or alcohol misuse
- Self-harming or eating disorders

###### Education:

- Truancy from school, deterioration of schoolwork or part-time timetable

###### Emotional and Behavioural Development:

- Secretive
- Young offender behaviour or anti-social behaviour
- Secretive about Internet use or using adult networking sites
- Sexualised language

- Aggressive or violent
- Sexually offending behaviour

Family and Social Relationships:

- Associating with other children at risk of sexual exploitation
- Missing from home or staying out late
- Getting into cars of unknown people
- Contact with unknown adults outside of normal social group via face to face meetings, Internet, text messaging or phone calls

Identity:

- Low self-esteem, poor self-image or lack of confidence

Social Presentation:

- Wearing an unusual amount of clothing

**Domain: Family and Environmental Factors**

Income:

- Social activities with no explanation of how funded
- Possession of abnormal amounts of money, gifts, new mobile phones, credit on mobile phones, number of SIM cards

Family's Social Integration:

- Frequenting known high-risk areas or going to addresses of concern
- Seen at public toilets known for cottaging or adult venues (pubs and clubs)

## The legal age of consent to sex

- 6.13 The fact that a young person is 16 or 17 years old and has reached the legal age of being able to consent to sex should not be taken as a sign that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. These young people are still defined as children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 respectively. They can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation and their right to support and protection from harm should not be ignored or de-prioritised by services because they are over the age of 16, or are no longer in mainstream education or training.
- 6.14 Young people under 18, especially girls, can be located in brothels and massage parlours and they may hold fake identification. Where a young person is found in this situation, steps should be taken to establish the validity of their ID and assess their age, and services should always consider what action would be necessary if they are aged under 18 years.

## Discussion of concerns and decision to refer

- 6.15 Concerns about the possibility of a child or young person being sexually exploited should be discussed with a manager, or a named or designated health professional or a designated member of staff, depending on the setting. Concerns can also be discussed – without necessarily identifying the child in question at this point – with senior colleagues in another agency in order to develop an understanding of the child’s needs and circumstances. If, after discussion, these concerns remain, and it seems that the child would benefit from other services, a decision should be made about where a referral should be made.
- 6.16 A child or young person who is suspected of suffering or being at risk of suffering sexual exploitation will by definition be a child who may be in need under the Children Act 1989 and who should therefore be referred to LA children’s social care.
- 6.17 Paragraph 5.16 of *Working Together* makes it clear that “if somebody believes that a child may be suffering, or be at risk of suffering, significant harm, then they should *always* refer their concerns to LA children’s social care”. Paragraphs 2.101 to 2.104 of *Working Together* set out the circumstances in which information about a child or young person should be shared with the police.

## Engaging with children and young people and the timing of referrals

- 6.18 Children and young people who are being sexually exploited are the victims of abuse and will be especially vulnerable. This may manifest itself in a number of ways: for example, they may be defensive and reluctant to engage with professionals or they may be dependent on drugs or alcohol, which may affect their view of the situation. Agencies should recognise that many children and young people might not think that they want or need protection from sexual exploitation and might be resistant to what they perceive as interference from authorities. Perpetrators groom their victims so that they are compliant to being sexually exploited and are frightened to report their abuse. In some instances they may be fearful of being involved with the police or children’s social care and may initially respond best to informal contact from health or voluntary sector outreach workers.
- 6.19 Gaining the child or young person’s trust and confidence is important if he or she is to be safeguarded from harm and enabled to escape from sexual exploitation. Often the process of engaging with children who are being sexually exploited can be difficult and lengthy and it can take time for professionals to build up trust and overcome their resistance to being helped and supported to exit the abusive situation. Chapter 3 covers some of the issues around the attitudes of children and young people.
- 6.20 The wishes and feelings of a child or young person should be obtained when deciding how to proceed in these circumstances. He or she may be at a particularly important turning point in their life and will need to be “enabled to express their wishes and feelings; make sense of their circumstances and contribute to decisions that affect them”. However, professionals who are assessing the views of these children must be aware that perpetrators may have ‘groomed’ them and conditioned their responses and that they may be denying what has happened to them. They may initially reject offers of help or support. It is necessary

to involve the child or young person and to ascertain the concerns of parents and carers at all stages to enable children to successfully escape from sexual exploitation and reintegrate into society. Wherever possible, family members should also be involved and supported in work with the child. Both *Working Together* and the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families (2000)* provide guidance on working with children and their family members.

- 6.21 Where there are concerns about significant harm to a child or young person, as explained above, practitioners should refer their concerns to children's social care. In these circumstances it may be decided that a process of engaging with the child is the most appropriate first step, but this plan should be agreed following a multi-agency discussion.
- 6.22 LSCB policies should clarify the circumstances in which it would be appropriate for non-statutory agencies to engage with a child before involving other statutory agencies. A clear focus must be maintained on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of the child or young person. In those instances where an agency is fearful of losing a young person's engagement by reporting their concern to a statutory service, the service should have a clear named lead within the LA's children's service with whom to discuss these concerns and agree a way forward. In some circumstances the concerns can be discussed in general terms without sharing specific information about a particular child or young person. But all cases should be fully documented, including where a decision is taken not to share information.

## Sharing information

- 6.23 *Working Together* provides guidance about sharing information. It states that in deciding whether there is a need to share information, professionals need to consider their legal obligations, including whether they have a duty of confidentiality to the child. Where there is such a duty, the professional may lawfully share information if the child consents or if there is a public interest of sufficient force. This must be judged by the professional on the facts of each case. Where there is a clear risk of significant harm to a child, or serious harm to adults, the public interest test will almost certainly be satisfied. However, there will be other cases where practitioners will be justified in sharing some confidential information in order to make decisions on sharing further information or taking action – the information shared should be proportionate.
- 6.24 The child's best interests must be the overriding consideration in making any such decision including in the cases of underage sexual activity on which detailed guidance is given in paragraphs 5.23 to 5.30 of *Working Together* and repeated at Annex B of this guidance. The cross-Government guidance, *Information Sharing: Practitioners' Guide*, provides advice on these issues – see [www.everychildmatters.gov.uk](http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk). Any decision whether or not to share information must be properly documented. Decisions in this area need to be made by people with suitable competence in child protection work such as named or designated professionals or senior managers.

## Referral

6.25 When a parent, professional, or another person contacts LA children's social care with concerns that a child is being sexually exploited, children's social care should decide on its course of action within **24 hours**. This will normally follow discussion with any referring professional or service, and involve other professionals and services as necessary, including the police as a criminal offence may have been committed against a child.

## Initial assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989

6.26 This initial consideration of the child's needs and circumstances should address, on the basis of the available evidence, whether there are concerns about impairment to the child's health and development (including actual and/or potential harm) which justifies further enquiries, assessment and/or intervention. If further action is needed, a decision is required on when enquiries and/or intervention should begin and how best to undertake them (see paragraph 5.33 of *Working Together*).

6.27 Children and young people who are sexually exploited, or at risk of being sexual exploited, are a particularly vulnerable group of children who may become 'lost' to the statutory agencies, whose welfare or need for immediate services may be overlooked and for whom subsequent planning and intervention may be less than satisfactory. Particular care and attention is required, therefore, when assessing the needs of children and young people who are sexually exploited and considering how best to help them, both during an initial assessment and a core assessment.

6.28 The initial assessment led by LA children's social care, of any children in need (whether or not there are child protection concerns) should be completed within a maximum of **7 working days** of the date of referral. The urgency of some situations may dictate that the assessment is completed more quickly. Using the framework set out in the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* it should address the following questions:

- What are the needs of the child?
- Are the parents or carers able to respond appropriately to the child's needs? Is the child being adequately safeguarded from significant harm, and are the parents or carers able to promote the child's health and development?
- Is action required to safeguard and promote the child's welfare?

6.29 Part of this assessment should involve obtaining relevant information from professionals and others in contact with the child and family. It should include professionals who have expertise in working with children and young people involved in sexual exploitation. In the course of this assessment, LA children's social care should ask:

- Is this a child in need? (section 17 of the Children Act 1989)
- Is there reasonable cause to suspect that this child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm? (section 47 of the Children Act 1989)

6.30 Agencies with statutory child protection powers<sup>28</sup> must, *at all stages*, consider whether the child may be in need of urgent action to secure his/her safety because of the risk to the child's life or likelihood of serious harm.

### Next steps

- 6.31 An initial assessment may indicate that a child is 'in need' as defined by section 17 of the Children Act 1989, but that there are no substantiated concerns that the child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm. There may be sufficient information available to decide what services should be provided, and by whom, according to an agreed plan. However, a further, more detailed core assessment may be required. In these circumstances, the *Framework for the Assessment of Children in Need and their Families* (2000) provides a framework for a more in-depth assessment of a child's health and development, of the parents' or carers' capacity to respond to their child's needs, and of their wider context. These factors still apply even where the concerns are about abuse by non-family members.
- 6.32 A strategy discussion (as outlined in *Working Together* and in line with the LSCB safeguarding children procedures) between the statutory agencies and professionals with specialist experience in sexual exploitation should take place to consider whether the criteria for initiating a section 47 inquiry are met and as necessary plan the enquiry.
- 6.33 If, however, at any stage:
- there is reasonable evidence that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, significant harm, or
  - the child is in police protection (under section 46 of the Children Act), or
  - the child is the subject of an emergency protection order
- a section 47 enquiry must be undertaken.**

### Immediate protection

- 6.34 Sometimes it may be apparent at this early stage that emergency action should be taken to safeguard a child or young person's welfare. Such action should normally be preceded by an immediate strategy discussion led by children's social care, involving the police and other agencies as appropriate. Where there is a specialist inter-agency group, these members should take part in the strategy discussion. The LA should also consider the involvement of the professionals with specialist experience in sexual exploitation in the strategy discussion.
- 6.35 Paragraphs 5.49 to 5.53 of *Working Together* set out the emergency action that agencies might take to ensure the immediate protection of a child. This might include either ensuring that the child remains in a safe place or removing them from the home of the person who is exploiting them to a place of safety. However, those working with children and young

<sup>28</sup> Agencies with statutory child protection powers are the Local Authority children's social care services, the police and the NSPCC.

people who are being sexually exploited should never under-estimate the power of perpetrators to find the young person (see also Chapter 7).

## Accommodation of sexually exploited children and young people

- 6.36 Decisions about the placement of young people who are looked after by a LA should take account of the young person's individual needs and circumstances. In some cases, it may be that placement in a secure children's home is an appropriate option for children and young people who are being sexually exploited. The criteria for placing a child or young person who is looked after by a LA in secure accommodation are set out in section 25 of the Children Act 1989. These include cases where the young person has a history of absconding – and is likely to abscond – from any other form of accommodation, and where the young person is likely to suffer 'significant harm' if he or she were to abscond. In cases where the child is under the age of 13, the approval of the Secretary of State must be sought to the placement. The procedures which must be followed in such cases are set out on the Every Child Matters website, at: <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/childrenincare/securechildrenshomes/>.
- 6.37 Young people who are being sexually exploited will need good quality placements with carers who have experience of building trusting relationships and skills at containing young people. These placements do not have to be secure. Placing a child or young person in secure accommodation should only be considered in extreme circumstances, when they are at grave risk of significant harm.

## Criminal investigation

- 6.38 While taking steps to protect a child from sexual exploitation, professionals should also consider how best to gather and preserve evidence to prosecute the perpetrators of the exploitation. This will increase the chances of a successful prosecution. The decision of whether to prosecute should be made in the context of considering what is in the best interests of the child and of potential future victims.
- 6.39 In the absence of a complaint being made by a child or young person and where it is in the best interests of the child, other methods should be considered in order to proceed with a prosecution. More information about the prosecution of perpetrators is included in the next chapter.

## Intervention and support

- 6.40 The factors leading to a child or young person being sexually exploited may be complex. One of these factors may be the development of a strong relationship with the coercer or abuser, which may make it difficult for the child or young person to break the relationship and move away from the exploitative situation. Agencies should recognise the strength of this attachment and the time and difficulty there may be in breaking it and helping the young person to develop a meaningful relationship with appropriate adults. A strategy should be developed with the child and family which addresses the child's needs and also

helps them to move on from the exploitative situation. It could include continuing outreach work and engagement with professionals, mentoring to assist a return to education or employment, help to secure appropriate health services, pursue leisure activities and to develop a positive network of friends and relatives to offer continuing support. Follow-up may include specialist therapeutic support, for example through the provision of mental health services.

- 6.41 The Department of Health will be publishing guidelines covering therapeutic interventions with sexually exploited children, and a research report on sexual exploitation in 2009.

### Children and young people in particular circumstances

- 6.42 This section sets out particular factors that should be considered when looking at how to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people who, due to their particular circumstances, may belong to particularly vulnerable groups. It also gives links to other useful guidance.
- 6.43 *Working Together* includes specific guidance on essential safeguards for particularly vulnerable children, for example children living away from home, including foster care and privately fostered children, children and families who go missing and child victims of trafficking. It also refers to *Complex Child Abuse Investigations: Inter-agency Issues* (Home Office and Department of Health 2002), which sets out the approach to be adopted during the investigation of complex (organised or multiple) abuse.

### Looked after young people and those leaving care

- 6.44 All children and young people who are looked after, and/or preparing to leave care must be protected from *all* forms of abuse, neglect and exploitation. There are clear national minimum standards and regulations in place in both children's homes and foster care to ensure the safety and welfare of all looked after children.
- 6.45 All LAs must ensure that looked after children and young people are placed in accommodation that provides a safe, healthy and nurturing environment. Fostering services and children's homes must provide training for their carers covering health and safety, identification of abuse, drug and alcohol awareness, and managing challenging behaviour. There is evidence that looked after young people are particularly vulnerable so this should include training on appropriate strategies to keep children safe from sexual exploitation.
- 6.46 Looked after children in care must be given personalised support in line with their assessed needs which should take into account their wishes and feelings. Importantly, where any child who has been involved in abuse or sexual exploitation (whether as a victim of abuse or in abusing others) their care plan must set out how their LA, their carer and other services will work together to provide the necessary help, support, guidance and advice to respond to their needs, ensuring, as far as possible, that their welfare will be safeguarded in future. The child's wishes and feelings must be taken into account in developing this plan.
- 6.47 When these children are reported as 'missing', it will be essential that the authority works with the police and provides all necessary information so that the child can be located. One

of the requirements set out in statutory guidance, *Children Missing from Care and from Home – a guide to good practice* (2002), is that each LA must designate a senior manager to be responsible for monitoring missing from care incidents to identify any trends and to instigate any action necessary to respond to children’s needs, ensuring that they are properly safeguarded. This guidance also outlines the responsibilities of managers of children’s homes and fostering services for convening multi-agency risk management meetings in circumstances where children are persistently missing from their care placement<sup>29</sup>. The guidance is currently being updated.

### Children not receiving a suitable education

6.48 LAs have a statutory duty to identify children not receiving a suitable education. The named contact or team responsible for identifying children not receiving a suitable education should be made aware of the issue of sexual exploitation as they may encounter children who may have been exploited in this way. The statutory guidance for LAs to identify children not receiving a suitable education<sup>30</sup> was revised in January 2009 and sets out what action LAs should take if they are worried a child is at risk of harm and provides guidance to help them recognise when they should involve the police. If they are concerned about the sexual exploitation of a child, they should contact their social care colleagues or the police immediately.

### Children missing from home or care

- 6.49 It is known that 90% of children who are subject to sexual grooming go missing from their home or care placement at some point. In some cases they run away because they have been groomed by those wanting to exploit them. In other cases, young people have already run away from home or care for other reasons, are ‘befriended’ by inappropriate adults offering young people a warm and dry place to stay, and are subsequently sexually exploited. Either way, all young people who run away from home or care, and in particular those who run away repeatedly, are at serious risk of sexual exploitation.
- 6.50 Local areas should have appropriate measures in place to reduce instances of running away as much as possible. 97% of young people who run away do so from home, rather than from a care setting, often after an argument with their parents, or because their parents are arguing with each other. Local areas should do as much as possible to identify those families who might need additional support, and to help those who come forward and ask for such support. Parenting advisers can help parents to address problems at home before young people feel the need to run away, or work with parents and other statutory or voluntary services to stop repeated instances of running away.
- 6.51 It is also important that local areas respond effectively when young people do run away. This means ensuring that every time a young person who has run away is located or returns home that an appropriate return interview is conducted, to establish the reasons for running away, and to identify what needs to be done to appropriately support the young person. For many children, the safest place to return to whilst they receive help is their family home

<sup>29</sup> *Children Missing from Care and from Home – a guide to good practice* (2002) – p10 (cf footnote 10)  
<sup>30</sup> <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/ete/childrenmissingeducation/>

or the LA care setting from which they have run away, but no young person who has run away should be returned home until it has been established that this is a safe place for them to be. The return interview is a key component in ensuring that this is the case.

- 6.52 An essential tool that LAs have to protect young people who have run away from sexual exploitation is to understand the patterns of running away in their area. Understanding how many young people in their area run away, and being able to break this down by their age and gender is an important first step. Ideally local areas will also be able to identify where missing young people are frequently located, and therefore consider what draws young people to that location. LAs and police forces should also work together to identify patterns of running away by a single individual or groups of young people where the individual or the group are at known risk of sexual exploitation. Understanding these patterns of running away enables the police and LAs to determine what action needs to take place to prevent future instances of running away, and to minimise the risk of sexual exploitation to these vulnerable young people.

### Children who may have been trafficked

- 6.53 *Safeguarding children who may have been trafficked*<sup>31</sup> (2007) provides practice guidance to support agencies and their staff safeguard and promote the welfare of children who may have been trafficked. It is supplementary to, and should be used in conjunction with, *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (2006). The guidance can support those working with children to identify and respond to trafficked children. This can include children and young people trafficked for sexual exploitation both into, and within the UK.
- 6.54 Where children and young people have arrived in the UK as unaccompanied minors and especially when they have been trafficked from overseas, they are particularly vulnerable to being exploited and controlled. For example, they may be concerned about their immigration status if they contact the UK authorities, and they may believe that they or their families may be at risk if they resist the exploitation.
- 6.55 In such cases the multi-agency response should be tailored to the needs of these trafficked children, with relevant agencies such as the UK Borders Agency (formerly BIA) involved, and with the involvement of relevant specialist sections (where they exist) of the police and LA.
- 6.56 LSCBs will need to consider whether they should have inter-agency strategies and protocols in place for the early identification and notification to the relevant agencies of potential trafficking victims. LSCBs should maintain close links with the community groups and have a strategy in place for raising awareness within the local community of the possibility that children are trafficked and potentially sexually exploited.
- 6.57 In cases where children may be trafficked for sexual exploitation within the UK, all agencies should make every effort to work in coordination across LA borders and police force boundaries.

<sup>31</sup> <http://www.everychildmatters.gov.uk/socialcare/safeguarding/>

### Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity

- 6.58 Children and young people associating with or targeted by gang members are at particular risk of being sexually exploited and abused. In some localities female members of gangs are often on the receiving end of violence and extortion and their relationships with other gang members tend to be abusive and submissive. Within a gang girls may be sexually exploited or may sexually service older male gang members in return for a supply of drugs or for fear of worse retaliation if they refuse.
- 6.59 Rape by gang members, as a form of retaliation or as an act of violence in itself, are said to occur quite frequently in some areas but reports to the police are rare due to fear of intimidation or reprisal. Female relatives of gang members can be at particular risk of either being drawn into a submissive sexual role in a gang or of being the victim of sexual violence by another gang. Siblings are particularly at risk of sexual exploitation but other members of the wider family may also be exploited in this way.
- 6.60 LSCB safeguarding children procedures can provide a key tool for all agencies working with young people to ensure that they are working together to prevent young people from being drawn into gangs, to support those who have been drawn into the margins of gangs and to protect those who are at immediate risk of harm because of gangs.
- 6.61 The DCSF launched a consultation on *Safeguarding children and young people who may be affected by gang activity guidance* on 18 March 2009. This good practice guidance will support agencies and professionals ensure that the safeguarding process responds effectively to the needs of children and young people who are at risk of gang-related violence and harm. This is available from [www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/consultations).

**The Sheffield Safeguarding Children Board's Sexual Exploitation Service** is a multi-agency partnership between Sheffield Children and Young People's Services, South Yorkshire Police, Sheffield Futures (Taking Stock) and Turning Point (SHED). The Service uses a child protection model to identify young people at risk of sexual exploitation. Clearly defined indicators within their *Referrers' Manual* alert professionals to the warning signs that a young person may be at risk. The Service raises awareness of risks and indicators through presentations and workshops for professionals, in order to ensure that referrals are made to the service at an early stage.

When a young person is referred to the Service, a sexual exploitation meeting is convened. This is a multi-agency forum that seeks to:

- Gather information about the sexual exploitation of that individual young person
- Identify support for the young person and their family that will help them to exit from sexual exploitation
- Agree a course of action on any offenders identified
- Systematically gather information about associations with adult exploiters and young people. This wider strategy enables the Service to cross-reference associates and shows links between different groups, both young people and offenders, on a city wide basis.

Parents are often invited to attend these meetings except in cases where they are implicated in the sexual exploitation. The Service aims to involve parents as partners with professionals towards the common aim of preventing or stopping the sexual exploitation of young people.

Young people are also invited to attend their own meeting and many of them do using one-to-one support offered by Taking Stock or SHED.

Taking Stock's work with young women allows for long-term support. Their ethos is to work within a youth work model and to begin from the young person's starting point. Their workers carry a relatively small caseload to allow them the flexibility to respond to young people who are extremely vulnerable and who do not always fit neatly into allocated time slots.

In addition to long-term one-to-one support, Taking Stock have also produced an education pack, *Friend or Foe*, which is rolled out in schools through PSHE.

SHED offers intensive long-term one-to-one support to young people. SHED's main focus is to look at their drug and alcohol use, in order to make it as safe as possible and to help them make changes.

The Service has a Sexual Exploitation Enforcement Group, meeting monthly and agreeing coordinated police action on new and existing referrals, in conjunction with other partners. This ensures that organised sexual exploitation and internal trafficking of young people is identified.

Recent developments by the Service include work on the sexual exploitation of boys and young men, Internet exploitation and internal trafficking.

**Croydon** has approximately 82,000 children, the highest recorded number of children resident in a London borough. This does not include those children who also travel into the borough to attend school. They also have an unusually large number of looked after children placed in establishments by other authorities.

Croydon collated information, supported by work already undertaken by Barnardo's, to identify the degree of sexual exploitation of young people in Croydon.

This information was used to fund three posts: a full-time project manager from Barnardo's, a full-time missing person's worker, a part-time project worker and a full-time administrative post. In addition, the sexual exploitation team works with the Quality Assurance Team, a designated missing person health worker and two sexual exploitation investigating police officers.

Young people are offered brief therapy by Barnardo's staff or volunteers. This support provides children and young people with help to rebuild their life through frequent, neutral but positive support. This could be meetings with the young person on a weekly basis and sending daily text messages.

Outreach activities are also provided via schools and children's homes using an education pack, produced by SE1, the umbrella body for a number of Barnardo's teams working in different London boroughs.

Barnardo's offers training to volunteers and professionals who work with children and young people. Specifically, the model of training mirrors the support offered to vulnerable young people as a means of giving volunteers a meaningful insight into the trauma faced by young people who have been sexually exploited.

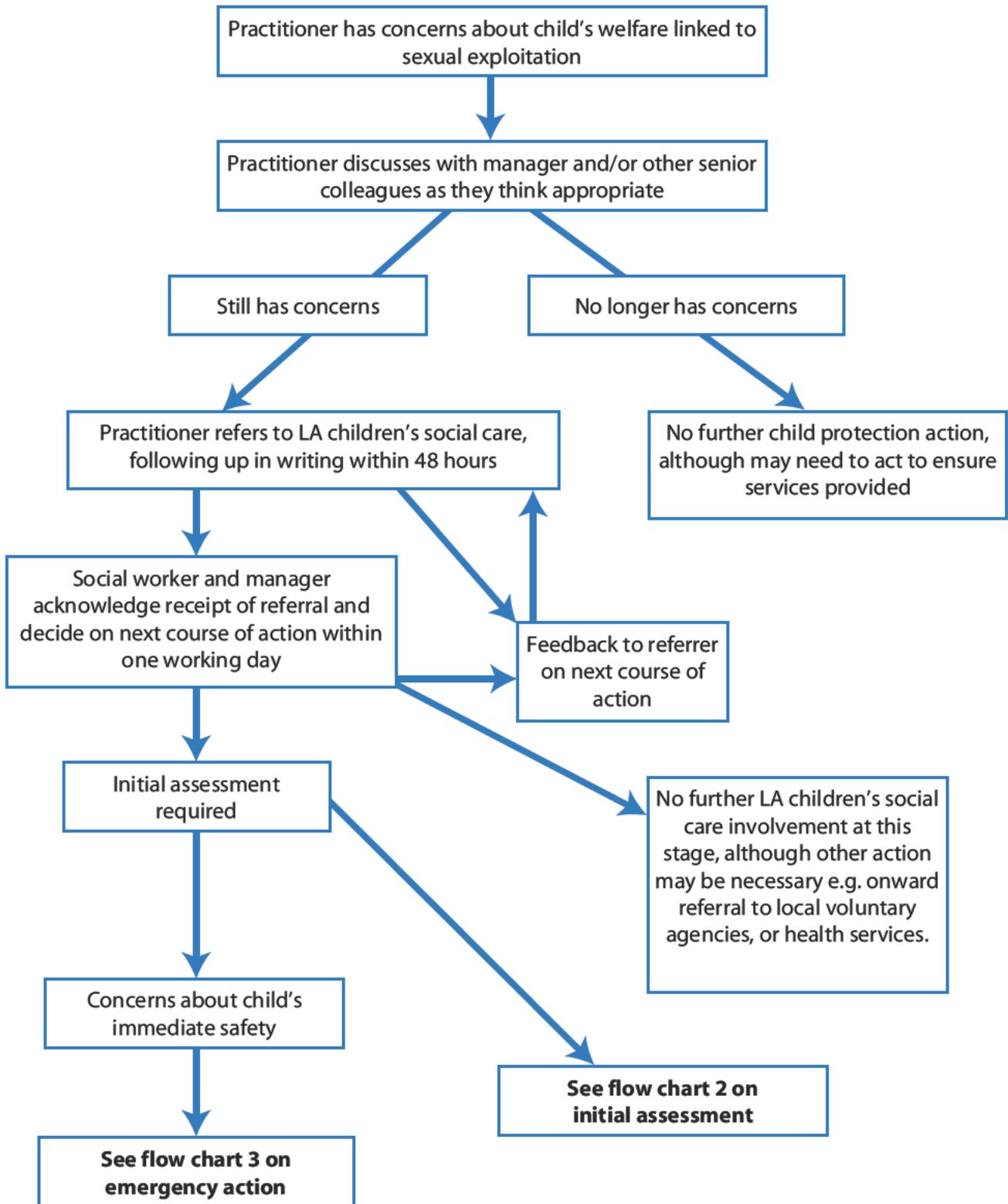
Barnardo's project officers work alongside police to obtain information on sexual exploitation from young people. These joint visits enable police officers to meet and talk with young people whom they would ordinarily have found to be hard to reach. Children and young people feel less suspicious of their services. At the same time it helps demystify the role of police officers in the eyes of the young people.

In addition, patterns of behaviour which may have gone unnoticed, such as older men taking young women to sexual health clinics, are now being monitored and responded to by health and other staff.

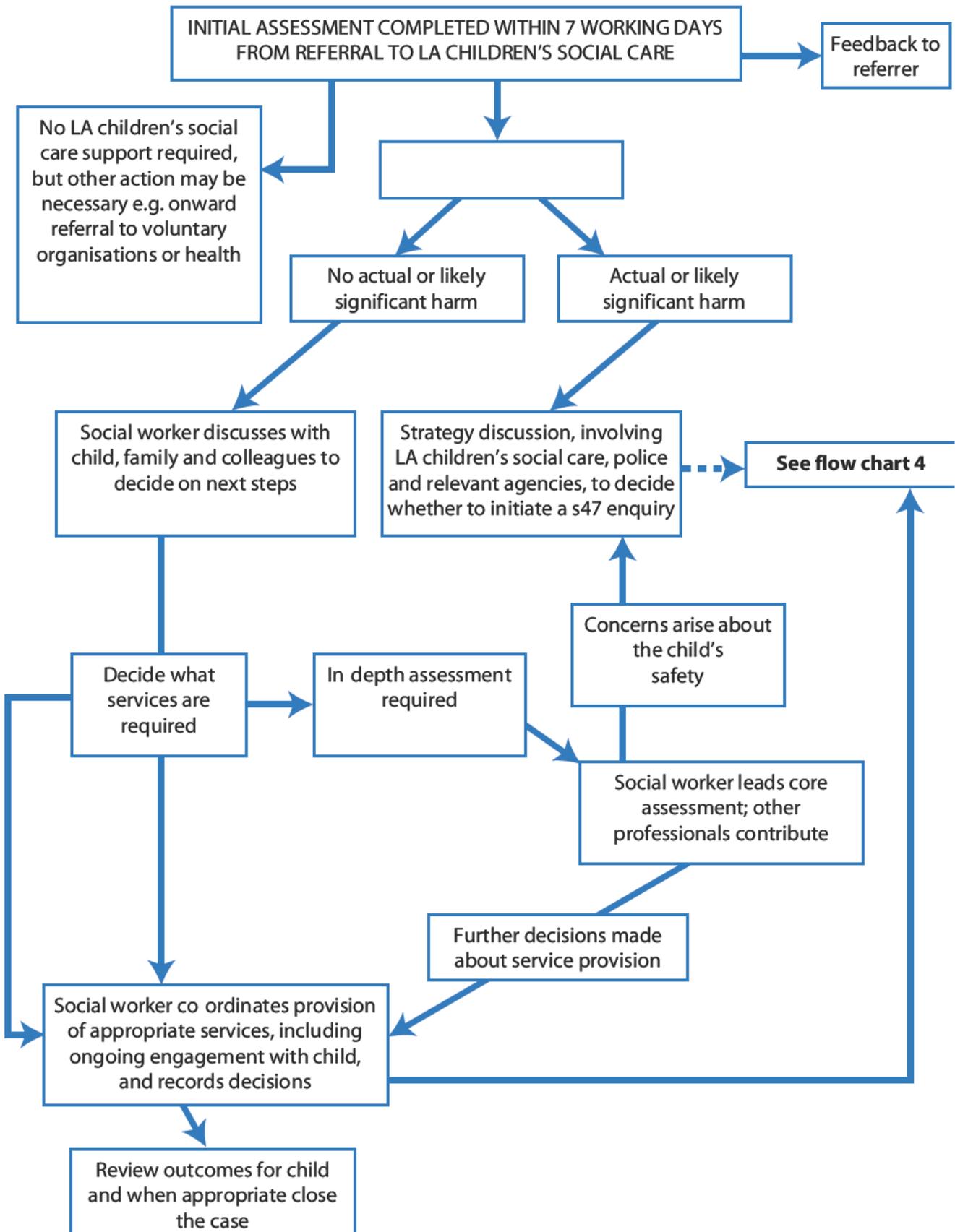
The Chair of the Croydon Safeguarding Children Board manages the sexual exploitation group and provides a trusted presence, and visible evidence of support from senior management.

Note: The following flow charts are taken from *Working Together to Safeguard Children* and should be used for cases involving sexual exploitation

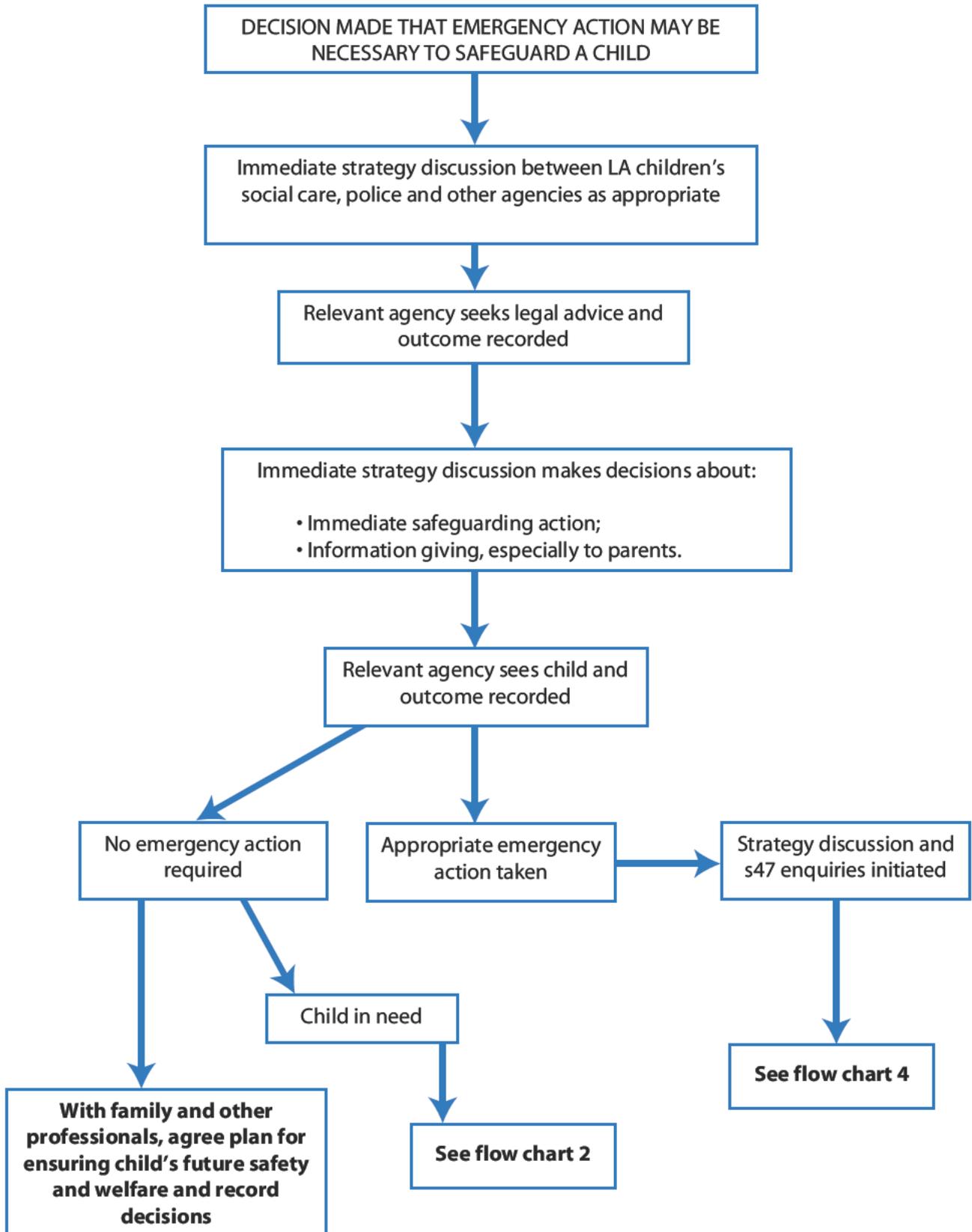
**Flow chart 1: Referral**



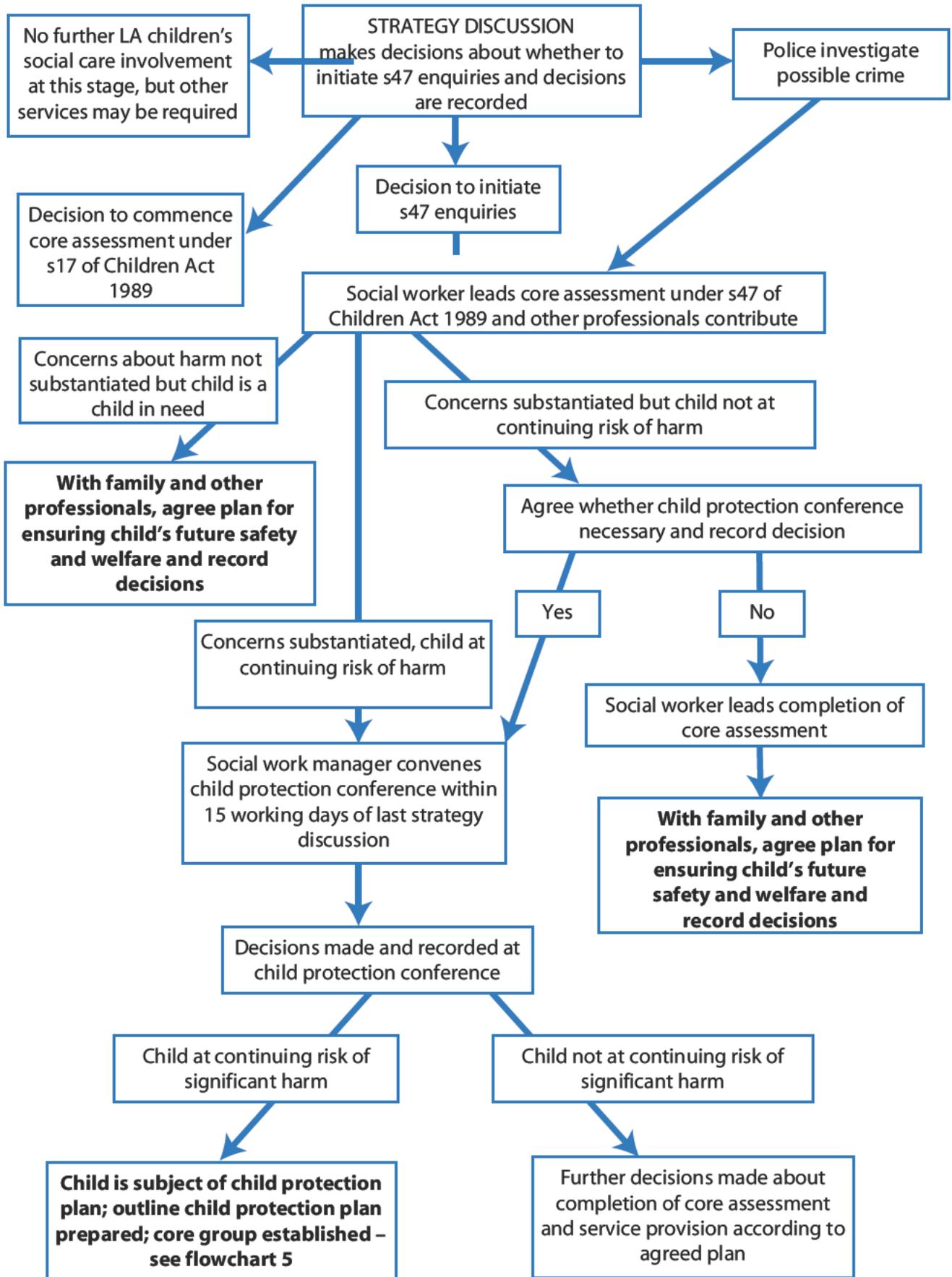
**Flow chart 2: What happens to following initial assessment?**



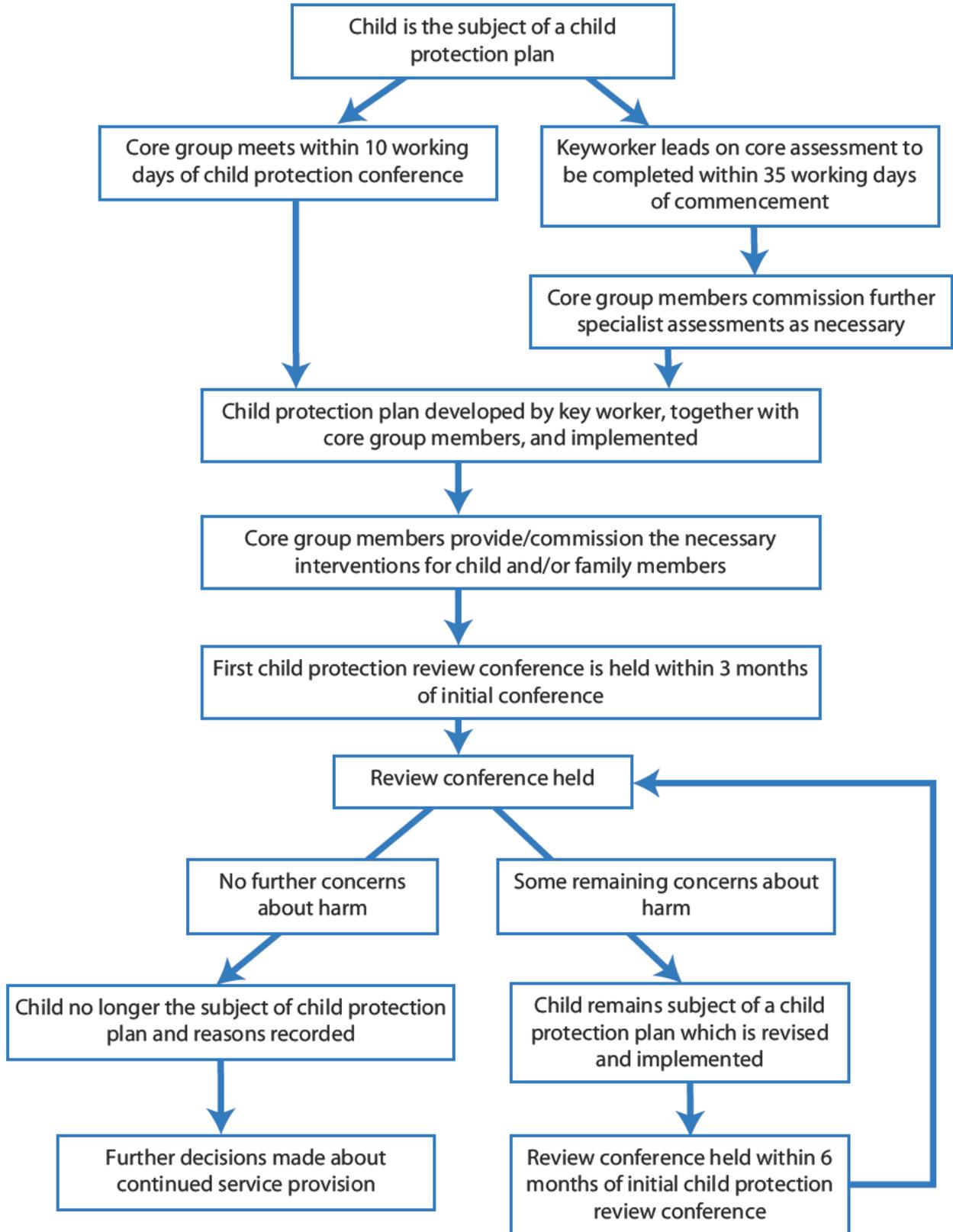
**Flow chart 3: Urgent action to safeguard children**



**Flow chart 4: What happens after the strategy discussion?**



*Flow chart 5: What happens after the child protection conference, including the review process?*



# Chapter 7 – Identifying and prosecuting perpetrators

7.1 Identifying, disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators must be a key part of work to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation. While the police and criminal justice agencies lead on this aspect of work, the support of other partners, for example in recording information and gathering and preserving evidence, is also vital. Identifying and prosecuting the perpetrators should be a key consideration of all agencies working to address the issue of sexual exploitation locally. But any work to identify and prosecute perpetrators should not put children and young people at any further risk of harm.

## Linking prosecutions to the provision of support

7.2 This guidance is clear that local areas need to adopt a three-pronged approach to dealing with child sexual exploitation, including prevention, providing support and protection for young people and prosecuting offenders. These areas of work should not be undertaken in isolation. Work to identify and address the risk factors that make young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation and the provision of support and protection will enable agencies to gain the trust and confidence of the young person, in many cases so that they can be part of the work to tackle the exploitation itself. Specialist agencies, particularly those that are non-statutory, that work with sexually exploited children and young people will most frequently be in this position and it is vital that where a young person wants and is able to be a part of a prosecution, the agency is able to support them through the process and post conviction.

## Taking action against perpetrators

7.3 Work to identify concerns about children and young people may mean that agencies become aware of perpetrators of sexual exploitation. Suspected perpetrators may also be identified through other work such as neighbourhood policing or work to trace organised crime. Agencies and professionals should contribute to action taken against perpetrators. The details will be for local operations and the most effective tactics will change and develop, not least to keep up with perpetrator behaviours. This section sets out some key principles and information.

## Disrupting perpetrator behaviour

7.4 Disrupting perpetrator behaviours should be viewed as an important part of local work to tackle child sexual exploitation. Whilst there should always be a proactive investigation aiming for successful prosecutions, a disruption plan targeting suspected perpetrators can be extremely beneficial. A disruption plan might involve a number of activities, ranging from

simple observation of an individual's activities, to the use of a range of civil orders including sexual offences prevention orders and risk of sexual harm orders<sup>32</sup>, depending on the type of behaviour and evidence available. Other types of legislation, such as anti-social behaviour orders, restraining orders or child abduction notices (see below) can be used to disrupt incidences of sexual exploitation while other measures to safeguard children and young people or gather evidence are taking place. The Licensing Act 2003 can be used to prevent children and young people gaining access to adult venues such as pubs and clubs where they may be especially vulnerable to grooming.

- 7.5 Other local statute can be used to disrupt incidences of sexual exploitation. For example, if practitioners are aware of locations where sexual exploitation is taking place, they can use local licensing or housing departments to close down venues.
- 7.6 Child Abduction notices under section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984 can be used to disrupt contact between an adult and a child or young person where the child is aged 16 or under. It is an offence for a person not connected to the child to take the child away 'without legal authority'. In such cases, the police may remove the child to a place of safety and issue a formal warning to the perpetrator. Although these cases do not require a complaint from the child, it does require the child's parent or guardian to make a statement. Although not a long-term solution to the problem, section 2 notices are a useful tool in terms of immediately breaking contact between the child and the individual exploiting them. They are also useful in ensuring that the suspected perpetrator cannot claim they did not know the age of the child. The perpetrator's details will also be input on to the Police National Computer system.

## Identifying offences committed

- 7.7 In sexual exploitation perpetrators may commit one or more of a range of offences, some more specifically linked than others to the abuse. Police and other agencies should bear in mind the full range of offences that may be relevant.
- 7.8 The Sexual Offences Act 2003 includes three broad categories of specific sexual offences against children:
- Offences against children under the age of 13 (sections 5-8 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003) – sexual activity with a child under the age of 13 is an offence regardless of consent or the defendant's belief as to the child's age. The offences are rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing or inciting a child under 13 to engage in sexual activity. The offences carry a maximum sentence of life imprisonment or 14 years' imprisonment, depending on which offence applies.

<sup>32</sup> More information about the civil orders that might be considered in cases of child sexual exploitation is set out in Annex A.

- Offences against children under the age of 16 (sections 9-15 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003) – these offences apply regardless of whether the child consented to the sexual activity but, unlike with the offences relating to children under 13, an offence is not committed if the defendant reasonably believed that the victim was 16 or over. The offences are: sexual activity with a child, causing or inciting a child to engage in sexual activity, engaging in sexual activity in the presence of a child, causing a child to watch a sexual act, arranging or facilitating the commission of a child sex offence, and meeting a child following sexual grooming (under section 15 an offence is committed if an adult communicates with a child on at least two previous occasions, and then meets the child, arranges to meet the child or (the adult or child) travels for such a meeting, where the adult intends to commit a sexual offence). These offences carry a maximum sentence of 10 years' or 14 years' imprisonment, depending on which offence applies. Where the offender is below the age of 18, the maximum sentence is 5 years' imprisonment. If any of these offences is committed against a child under 13, the defendant's belief as to the age of the child is irrelevant.
- Offences against children under the age of 18 – there are a number of sexual offences in the 2003 Act that apply to all children under the age of 18. These include sexual offences where there is abuse of a position of trust (sections 16-24) and familial child sex offences (sections 25-29). See further the detail at Annex A.

- 7.9 In respect of all children aged 13 or over, the general non-consensual offences in sections 1-4 of the 2003 Act are also relevant. These are rape, assault by penetration, sexual assault and causing a person to engage in sexual activity without consent. These offences all require that the victim did not consent to the sexual activity and the defendant did not reasonably believe that the victim consented.
- 7.10 The Sexual Offences Act 2003 also provides for offences specifically to tackle the use of children in the sex industry, where a child is under 18 (sections 47-50). These offences are paying for sexual services of a child, causing or inciting child prostitution or pornography, controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography and arranging or facilitating child prostitution or pornography.
- 7.11 Sections 57-59 of the 2003 Act provide for offences relating to trafficking for sexual exploitation. These offences may be particularly pertinent for cases of sexual exploitation. These are often overlooked, however, they are applicable to cases of people who are trafficked within the UK as well as those who may be trafficked into or out of the UK for sexual exploitation.
- 7.12 In terms of international trafficking, immigration offences such as facilitation can also be brought against the perpetrator.
- 7.13 Annex A gives more details on the legislative framework.

### Grooming – CEOP work

Grooming is defined as developing the trust of a young person or his or her family in order to engage in illegal sexual conduct.

In the course of its first year of operation, CEOP identified a range of grooming cases featuring a broad spectrum of behaviours including:

- Causing a child to watch a sexual act, e.g. sending sexually themed adult content or images and videos featuring child sexual abuse to a young person;
- Inciting a child to perform a sexual act, e.g. by threatening to show sexual images of a child to their peers or parents (e.g. self-produced material or even a pseudo-image of the child);
- Suspicious online contact with a child, e.g. asking a young user sexual questions;
- Asking a child to meet in person; befriending a child and gaining their trust, etc.
- Other grooming: the range in behaviours that fall into this category are widely variable but reflect the range of strategies often employed by adults to prepare a child for abuse, e.g. using schools or hobby sites such as the Scouts or Girl Guides to gather information about particular children, their location and future events where the child may be present; presenting as a minor online to deceive a child, etc.

## Identifying individual perpetrators

- 7.14 IMPACT Nominal Index (INI) is a new, police-led national information management system which enables an investigator in one police force to quickly identify which other force holds relevant information on a given individual. It was rolled out to all forces by the National Policing Improvement Agency (NPIA) in December 2005, addressing Recommendation 2 of the Bichard Inquiry, which reviewed events surrounding the murders of Holly Wells and Jessica Chapman in Soham in June 2004.
- 7.15 Since its launch in Child Protection Units across England and Wales, INI has been deployed to 63 organisations including all UK police forces, the British Transport Police, HM Revenue & Customs, the Royal Military Police, UKHTC and CEOP, providing an extremely effective, UK-wide law enforcement system with access to over 61 million records. Local child protection agencies can make full use of this key development via their policing contact on the LCSB.

### IMPACT Nominal Index

A request from LA children's services for a police check on the uncle of a 14 year old boy, revealed no concerns, but the INI search showed that he was currently under investigation for grooming young girls for prostitution and sexual harassment. The boy had recently arrived in the country and had asked to live with his uncle. Children's Services presented the INI information at the child's immigration hearing and stopped the uncle having access to the child.

## Tackling child sex offender or organised criminal networks

7.16 Information and intelligence gathered through the joint investigation of sexual exploitation is the starting point for building up local knowledge about people responsible for exploiting children and young people. This should enable police and LA children's social care to recognise situations where organised/complex abuse is taking place, and instigate the necessary investigations. The information from investigations can then be linked together by different authorities/police forces to establish whether or not cross-border networks of exploiters are operating. CEOP and if relevant the UKHTC should also be contacted (see Annex C for information on their roles).

### The Awaken Project, Blackpool

In November 2004 a young person went missing in Blackpool. This later became a murder enquiry. In responding to this enquiry, police alongside social work managers collated information which led them to believe that the young person had been sexually exploited, and that this was part of a wider problem within the area. Over 50 young people were identified as vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

In view of the emerging issues of sexual exploitation in Blackpool, a decision was made to appoint a detective sergeant and three detective constables. Following this appointment, three social workers and a social work manager joined the team as well as an education manager forming the Awaken team. A health professional was later appointed, following a 12 month secondment.

The Awaken team is jointly managed by the Assistant Director of Social Care and a detective sergeant and is joint-funded by the police, children and young people's services, and the Primary Care Trust. Both senior managers sit on the LSCB and embody the strategic link between the Awaken team and the Board. Awaken translate the strategic aims and objectives of the safeguarding board into operational goals and aspirations.

Following a referral to the Awaken team, team members initiate a joint visit by a social worker and a detective, who then report back to senior members of the Awaken team. A decision will then be made as to who will lead the response. In the event that it is more relevant to community safety issues, it will be an enquiry led by detective constables. Where more appropriate, it will be managed by the lead children's service manager.

To date, the Awaken team have undertaken 767 joint visits. Joint visits have led to over 150 best evidence interviews, where young people are asked to give an account on video which can later be used to bring a prosecution. There have been over 95 arrests for various sexual exploitation offences, which have included group rape and grooming of a child or young person. To date, 36 people have been convicted which equals a 96.8% conviction rate. Only one case has been lost in a criminal court.

Where there is no formal complaint, the team use a section 2 Child Abduction notice to disrupt contact between an adult and a child or young person. To date, 99 section 2 notices have been served.

The project has found that there is a better conviction rate when services pool information together. Information from a variety of sources can and will strengthen a claim of exploitation.

## Evidence gathering and information sharing

- 7.17 The effective identification and recording of information and intelligence in relation to individual cases is crucial to the successful disruption and/or prosecution of perpetrators. All people involved in caring for a child or young person who is suspected to be at risk of sexual exploitation or being sexually exploited should continually gather, record and share information with the appropriate authorities. Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported in identifying perpetrators, collecting and preserving evidence (medical, forensic and circumstantial) as well as in supporting their children through the criminal justice process. Such information can form the basis of strong intelligence and can help the police to start an investigation. The child sexual exploitation lead must work in partnership with their counterparts in other agencies to ensure that information and intelligence is recorded and shared appropriately. Effective recording systems should be in place to enable information to be shared between agencies, support individual investigations and enable local areas to monitor and map sexual exploitation to identify specific problems and monitor trends.
- 7.18 Ensuring that evidence is gathered in a way that will be accepted by the CPS and can be used in court is critical. The CPS should work with local partners to discuss how to build a successful case in order to support successful prosecutions.
- 7.19 The police should be robust in seeking evidence to support charges such as grievous bodily harm, unlawful wounding, actual bodily harm, kidnapping, abduction, rape or indecent assault and should not hesitate to use them where this is justified by the evidence. Similarly, where there is an allegation of racially motivated crime, charges relating to this type of offence should be considered. Examples of other charges that may also be considered in particular circumstances are drugs offences, tax evasion and, if the coercer is on benefit, social security fraud. Where appropriate, confiscation of assets should also be considered, although it should not be used if there is a danger that the coercer may further abuse a child to effectively compensate him or her for their loss of assets.
- 7.20 The investigation should seek to identify and assemble evidence that will support charges to reflect the full extent of the abuse. Contemporaneous photographic evidence of physical abuse should be obtained whenever appropriate. It will help in establishing severe abuse even when the child may be unwilling or unable to give evidence. Photographic evidence of the conditions in which a child was kept could also provide valuable evidence for charges of kidnapping or false imprisonment. Care should be taken, however, in obtaining such evidence to ensure that it does not compound the abuse suffered by the young person, and she or he should be made aware that photographs are being taken for evidential purposes. Those investigating criminal actions must understand that the welfare of the child is the paramount concern.

## National Offender Management Service (NOMS)

- 7.21 The focus of the National Offender Management Service's work is managing or supervising offenders, a number of whom will have been identified as presenting a risk, or potential risk of harm to children. NOMS' principal objective here, therefore, will be to ensure that these

offenders are managed so as to protect children from sexual exploitation. This may involve referral into MAPPA (see below) in a small number of cases.

- 7.22 NOMS also, though, provides direct services to children, including a service to child victims of serious sexual or violent offences, supervision of 16 and 17 year olds on community punishment and seconding staff to Youth Offending Teams. In this work, and in all cases involving offenders who are parents/carers of children, offender managers can help to safeguard children from sexual exploitation by maintaining awareness of the indicators and principles set out here, and elsewhere in the *Working Together* guidance.

### Victim and witness support

- 7.23 Given the levels of vulnerability of the victims and witnesses involved in cases of sexual exploitation, victim support is vital in its own right but is also an important aspect of ensuring a successful prosecution.
- 7.24 Many of the issues facing young victims and witnesses are addressed in a CPS policy document on prosecuting criminal cases involving children and young people as victims and witnesses<sup>33</sup> and it would be useful for multi-agency partnerships to identify with their local CPS branch how these procedures are to be delivered locally, and to reflect this in the safeguarding (sexual exploitation) protocol.
- 7.25 Special measures are available for any witness under 17, and can be requested for a vulnerable or intimidated witness of any age. For those under 17 it would be usual for evidence to be video-recorded, and for a live link to be used. These measures can also be made available to vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. Other measures available include the use of screens, communications aids, and clearing the public gallery (for sexual offences). Indeed the court will consider any difficulty faced by the young witness provided that it is brought to their attention. Given the protracted nature of investigations in sexual exploitation cases it is not unusual for a young person to have reached the age of 18 before the case comes to court. It is important that consideration should be given to applying for special measures in these cases.

### Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA)

- 7.26 MAPPA are a set of arrangements to manage the risk posed by the most serious sexual and violent offenders. They bring together the police, probation and prison services into what is known as the MAPPA 'Responsible Authority'. A number of agencies are under a duty to cooperate with the Responsible Authority including local housing, social, health and children's services.
- 7.27 There are four key stages to the MAPPA process: identification, information sharing, assessment and management. Firstly, relevant offenders are identified and there are three categories: registered sexual offenders, those convicted of serious violent offences, and other offenders who pose a risk of serious harm on current assessments. Perpetrators of sexual exploitation will be found in all three categories.

33 *Children and Young People: CPS Policy on prosecuting criminal cases involving children and young people as victims (CPS, 2006).*

- 7.28 The second key MAPPA stage involves sharing of information and it is essential that each of the agencies working within MAPPA exchanges information relevant to protecting potential victims from further exploitation. Generally this will be information about the offender but will also include information about previous and potential victims and others who come into contact with the offender. As a consequence of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008, MAPPA responsible authorities will be under a duty to consider disclosure of information on child sex offenders under their management to members of the public.
- 7.29 Assessing the risk of harm posed by the offender is MAPPA's third stage. It will often be immediately clear on the basis of previous offending who presents a risk of sexual exploitation but, in other cases, this will only become clear on the risk assessment made in light of all the information from the various agencies.
- 7.30 The fourth stage, and the objective of MAPPA, is to ensure that a practicable risk management plan is put into place. MAPPA ensures that attention is focused on those who present the highest risks and that when extra resources are required, these are committed swiftly where they will have the most impact. This could include covert surveillance, specific treatments or interventions and also the targeted use of disclosure of information about the offender to people or agencies which will be in a position to use the information effectively to protect children and young people.
- 7.31 Further information about MAPPA, including contact details and how the arrangements work in the 42 Areas of England and Wales (Annual Reports), and how cases can be referred for MAPPA management (Manual of Guidance), can be found at:  
<http://www.probation.justice.gov.uk/output/page30.asp>.

# Annex A:

## The legislative framework

### Relevant clauses of UK legislation

#### Safeguarding Children

**The Children Act 1989** imposes a range of responsibilities on local authorities for the care and protection of young people under the age of 18. These include:

- Section 17      Every LA has a general duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children within their area who are in need.
- A child is defined as being in need if:
- (a) he is unlikely to achieve or maintain, or to have the opportunity of achieving or maintaining, a reasonable standard of health or development without the provision for him of services by a local authority;*
- (b) his health or development is likely to be significantly impaired, or further impaired, without the provision for him of such services; or*
- (c) he is disabled.*
- Section 20      Requires local authorities to provide accommodation for any child in need within their area who appears to require it or who has no other suitable accommodation.
- Section 31      A court may make a care order if satisfied a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm and the likelihood of harm is attributable to the care being given to the child not being what would be expected from a reasonable parent.
- Section 44A and 44B      The court may make a child the subject of an emergency protection order if it is satisfied there is reasonable cause to believe that the child is likely to suffer significant harm if the child is not moved to a safe place or does not remain in one. When the court makes an emergency protection order, it may include exclusion requirements or accept an undertaking from the relevant person.
- Section 46      The police may take a child into protective custody for up to 72 hours if they have reasonable cause to believe s/he would otherwise be likely to suffer significant harm.
- Section 47      Requires that the local authority make enquiries where they have reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering, or is likely to suffer significant harm, to enable them to decide what action they should take to safeguard or promote the child's welfare.

- Section 48 Enables courts to provide local authorities with powers to locate a child in need of protection when making an emergency protection order for a child whose whereabouts are not known.
- Section 49 Makes it an offence to abduct or induce, assist or incite a child to run away whilst in care, the subject of an emergency protection order or in police custody.
- Section 50 A court can make a recovery order with respect to children who are abducted or who run away or go missing whilst in care, the subject of an emergency protection order or in police protection. A recovery order instructs anyone who knows where a child is to reveal this information or to produce the child if they are in a position to do so. The order also authorises a police officer to search a particular house and a particular person (usually a police officer or social worker) to remove the child.

Under the Protection of Children Act 1978 (as amended), the UK has an absolute prohibition on the taking, making, circulation and possession with a view to distribution of any indecent photograph of a child under 16. This age was raised to 18 in the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Section 160 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 also makes the possession of indecent photographs of children an offence.

**The Children Act 2004.** Local authorities and the other persons and bodies to which section 11 of the Children Act 2004 applies must make arrangements for ensuring that their functions are discharged having regard to the need to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

### Sexual offences

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a range of offences specifically focused on the protection of children from sexual exploitation. The main offences relating to the exploitation of children are summarized below:

- Sections 5-8 Cover offences committed against children under 13. For the purposes of these offences, whether the child ostensibly consented to the act is irrelevant as is the defendant's belief as to the child's age.
- Sections 9-12 Cover offences against children under 16 committed by adults. The fact that a child gives ostensible consent to such sexual activity is not relevant as sexual activity involving a person under the age of 16 is unlawful regardless of such consent. Where there is no ostensible consent, the conduct will fall under the (non child-specific) non-consensual offences in sections 1-4 of the Act, which include rape.
- Section 13 Covers child sex offences committed by children or young persons: this offence covers any of the offences covered by sections 9 to 12 where they are committed by someone under 18.
- Section 14 Provides an offence of arranging or facilitating commission of a child sex offence. The offence being arranged or facilitated may take place anywhere in the world for the purposes of this offence.

- Section 15 Provides an offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming. The original version of section 15 made it an offence for a person aged 18 or over to meet intentionally, or to travel with the intention of meeting, a child under the age of 16 in any part of the world, if he has met or communicated with that child on at least two prior occasions, and intends to commit a “relevant offence” against that child either at the time of the meeting or on a subsequent occasion. Section 72 of the Criminal Justice and Immigration Act 2008 extended the offence to where the person arranges to meet the child in any part of the world or where the child travels with the intention of meeting the defendant in any part of the world. This addition strengthens the offence of meeting a child following sexual grooming.
- Sections 16-19 Cover sexual offences against children under 18 where the offender has abused a position of trust. Roles which constitute a position of trust are set out in section 21. Positions of trust include, for example, employment in a residential home or detention centre or in an educational establishment.
- Sections 25-26 Provide offences for engaging in or inciting sexual activity with a child family member.
- Sections 47-50 Provide a set of offences specifically dealing with the exploitation of children through prostitution and pornography which provide protection for all children up to the age of 18.
- Sections 57-59 Provide the offences relating to the trafficking of people into, outside and within the UK for the purposes of certain sexual offences.
- Section 33A of the Sexual Offences Act 1956 makes it an offence to keep a brothel used for prostitution. The maximum penalty upon conviction was raised to seven years imprisonment under the Sexual Offences Act 2003.
- Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978 makes it an offence to take, make, distribute or show indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children.
- Section 160 of the Criminal Justice Act 1988 makes it an offence to possess indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs of children.
- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 extended the meaning of ‘child’ for the purposes of these two provisions to children aged under 18 (rather than 16).

### Other legislation that may be used against perpetrators

- The Child Abduction Act 1984
- The Children Act 1989
- The Children Leaving Care Act 2000
- The Adoption and Children Act 2002
- Education Act 2002
- Homelessness Act 2002
- The Asylum and Immigration (Treatment of Claimants, etc) Act 2004

- The Children Act 2004
- The Domestic Violence, Crime and Victims Act 2004

### Civil orders under the Sexual Offences Act 2003

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 also provides a number of civil orders.

The aim of these orders is to protect the public or specific members of the public from sexual harm. The police will need to provide evidence of a risk of sexual harm before an order can be imposed.

A sexual offences prevention order can be imposed by a court on an offender who has been convicted of a relevant sexual or violent offence (these offences are listed in Schedule 3 and Schedule 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003) where the court is satisfied that the order is necessary for the purpose of protecting the public or particular members of the public from serious sexual harm. The order can be made at the time of conviction or after conviction, provided that there is a present risk of the offender causing serious sexual harm. This order automatically makes an offender subject to the notification requirements (commonly known as the sex offender's register) in the Sexual Offences Act 2003.

A risk of sexual harm order can be imposed on an offender who has demonstrated behaviour that suggests he may be at risk of committing a sexual offence against children where the court is satisfied that the order is necessary to protect children from harm to the defendant. There have to be at least two specified incidents of concern, but there does not need to be a previous conviction. The acts which would qualify an offender for such an order are set out at section 123(3) of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 and include communicating with a child, where any part of the communication is sexual and engaging in sexual activity with a child.

A foreign travel order can be imposed on an offender who has been convicted of a specified sexual offence against a child (as set out in section 116(2) of the 2003 Act) where a court is satisfied that the offender's behaviour since their conviction makes it necessary for the order to be made for the purpose of protecting children abroad from serious sexual harm from the offender. The order may prevent the offender travelling to a specific country or simply from travelling outside the United Kingdom at all.

A notification order can make an offender who has committed a sexual offence abroad subject to the notification requirements that would have applied if he had committed the same offence in the UK.

## Street offences

### The Street Offences Act 1959

It remains legally possible for a child aged 10 years and over to be charged with the offence of loitering or soliciting for the purposes of prostitution under section 1 of the Street Offences Act 1959, although following the publication of the earlier version of this guidance in 2000, the numbers of prosecutions for under 18s has dropped consistently up until 2006 when there were none. Although the offence remains available for under-18s, this guidance echoes the message

included in the earlier version that the criminal law is rarely an effective or appropriate response to children and young people under the age of 18 found loitering or soliciting for the purposes of prostitution and that the responsibility for the sexual exploitation of children or young people lies with the abuser: either the person who pays for sex, in some way, or the person who grooms the child and/or organises the exploitation. The focus of police investigations and of prosecutions should be on those who coerce, exploit and abuse children and young people.

Section 1 of the Act provides that it is an offence for a 'common prostitute to loiter or solicit in a street or public place for the purposes of prostitution'. The offence is punishable by a fine, not exceeding level 2 (£500) for a first offence and level 3 (£1000) for a subsequent offence.

The offence was made gender-neutral by the Sexual Offences Act 2003. To prove that an individual is a 'common prostitute' requires evidence that he/she has been soliciting for the purposes of prostitution persistently. Persistence in the case of adults is demonstrated by the issuing of a 'prostitutes' caution' under Home Office circular 109/59.

## Special measures

There are special measures to help children under the age of 17 give evidence in the best way to increase its quality and with as little stress as possible. They include:

- using a video of their evidence to give their account of what happened;
- answering questions from the defence using the live link from another room;
- in sexual cases, giving evidence in private by clearing the court of people who do not need to be there;
- advocates and judges in the Crown Court removing their wigs and gowns;
- aids, such as sign and symbol boards, for children who have difficulty speaking;
- screens to prevent a witness who is in court from having to see the defendant;
- an intermediary to help explain the questions or answers if necessary.

## Anti-social behaviour orders

Anti-social behaviour orders (which came into effect in April 1999) were introduced in the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 to combat anti-social behaviour which causes people harassment, alarm or distress. LAs and Chief Officers of Police in consultation with one another can seek an order from the courts to protect the community from the actions of an individual or individuals who cause harassment, alarm or distress to one or more other persons of a different household (i.e. neighbours or the wider community) by their anti-social behaviour. The order will be prohibitive i.e. it prevents the defendant from doing anything specified in the order and remains in force for a minimum of two years, unless both parties agree to discharge the order before that time. If that person breaches the order he or she is guilty of a criminal offence, which carries stiff penalties.

Reports suggest that some local areas have used anti-social behaviour orders against adults involved in prostitution. While this may be the case, ASBOs are not an appropriate response to children who are being sexually exploited, and should be used only as a last resort.

## Annex B: Allegations of harm arising from underage sexual activity – referrals and information sharing: Extract from ‘Working Together to Safeguard Children’ (2006)

- 5.23 Cases of underage sexual activity which present cause for concern are likely to raise difficult issues and should be handled particularly sensitively<sup>34</sup>.
- 5.24 A child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sexual activity. Any offence under the Sexual Offences Act 2003 involving a child under 13 is very serious and should be taken to indicate a risk of significant harm to the child.
- 5.25 Cases involving under 13s should always be discussed with a nominated child protection lead in the organisation. Under the Sexual Offences Act, penetrative sex with a child under 13 is classed as rape. Where the allegation concerns penetrative sex, or other intimate sexual activity occurs, there would always be reasonable cause to suspect that a child, whether girl or boy, is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm. There should be a presumption that the case will be reported to children’s social care and that a strategy discussion will be held in accordance with the guidance set out in paragraph 5.54 below. This should involve children’s social care, police and relevant agencies, to discuss appropriate next steps with the professional. All cases involving under 13s should be fully documented including detailed reasons where a decision is taken not to share information.
- 5.26 Sexual activity with a child under 16 is also an offence. Where it is consensual it may be less serious than if the child were under 13, but may nevertheless have serious consequences for the welfare of the young person. Consideration should be given in every case of sexual activity involving a child aged 13-15 as to whether there should be a discussion with other agencies and whether a referral should be made to children’s social care. The professional should make this assessment using the considerations below. Within this age range, the younger the child, the stronger the presumption must be that sexual activity will be a matter of concern. Cases of concern should be discussed with the nominated child protection lead and subsequently with other agencies if required. Where confidentiality needs to be preserved, a discussion can still take place as long as it does not identify the child (directly or

<sup>34</sup> Further guidance is provided by the Department of Health *Best practice guidance for doctors and other health professionals on the provision of advice and treatment to young people under 16 on contraception, sexual and reproductive health*.

indirectly). Where there is reasonable cause to suspect that significant harm to a child has occurred or might occur, there would be a presumption that the case is reported to children's social care and a strategy discussion should be held to discuss appropriate next steps. Again, all cases should be carefully documented including where a decision is taken not to share information.

- 5.27 The considerations in the following checklist should be taken into account when assessing the extent to which a child (or other children) may be suffering or at risk of harm, and therefore the need to hold a strategy discussion in order to share information:
- the age of the child. Sexual activity at a young age is a very strong indicator that there are risks to the welfare of the child (whether boy or girl) and, possibly, others;
  - the level of maturity and understanding of the child;
  - what is known about the child's living circumstances or background;
  - age imbalance, in particular where there is a significant age difference;
  - overt aggression or power imbalance;
  - coercion or bribery;
  - familial child sex offences;
  - behaviour of the child i.e. withdrawn, anxious;
  - the misuse of substances as a disinhibitor;
  - whether the child's own behaviour, because of the misuse of substances, places him/her at risk of harm so that he/she is unable to make an informed choice about any activity;
  - whether any attempts to secure secrecy have been made by the sexual partner, beyond what would be considered usual in a teenage relationship;
  - whether the child denies, minimises or accepts concerns;
  - whether the methods used are consistent with grooming; and
  - whether the sexual partner/s is known by one of the agencies.
- 5.28 In cases of concern, when sufficient information is known about the sexual partner/s the agency concerned should check with other agencies, including the police, to establish whatever information is known about that person/s. The police should normally share the required information without beginning a full investigation if the agency making the check requests this.
- 5.29 Sexual activity involving a 16 or 17 year old, though unlikely to involve an offence, may still involve harm or the risk of harm. Professionals should still bear in mind the considerations and processes outlined in this guidance in assessing that risk, and should share information as appropriate. 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.
- 5.30 Implementation of this guidance should be through the development of local protocols, supported by inter-agency training. Examples will be available on the everychildmatters website<sup>35</sup>.

<sup>35</sup> [www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/workingtogether/workingtogethertosafeguardchildren](http://www.dcsf.gov.uk/everychildmatters/safeguardingandsocialcare/safeguardingchildren/workingtogether/workingtogethertosafeguardchildren)

## Annex C:

# Sexual exploitation: Intervention following assessment

An assessment of a child or young person who is judged to be, or is likely to be, sexually exploited will identify his or her needs, including the protective and risk factors in their life. The following diagram (see below) can be used to enable all professionals to be aware of the types of indicators of harm likely to be present when a child or young person is being, or is likely to be, sexually exploited. Identifying the presence of these risk factors can help professionals decide what level and types of interventions may be appropriate.

The needs of children and young people who are being or are likely to be sexually exploited will change over time. Service responses need to be flexible to respond to these changes. Early intervention is essential to prevent escalation of harm. While most interventions with those young people whose needs are in Level 1 will be preventative work in schools, through youth services and children's services providers, emergency crisis intervention might be required. Interventions with young people who have been identified as having in their lives risk factors in Levels 2 and 3 should be coordinated by the lead professional. Assertive and therapeutic outreach is likely to be required by specialist trained sexual exploitation workers when a young person has been identified as having risk factors in Level 2 and it is recommended as being necessary for those categorised as having Level 3 risk factors present.

An exit from sexual exploitation is possible from any of the stages. Experience has shown that young people can be supported away from sexual exploitation where LSCBs have an active protocol, a group of professionals have allocated responsibility for monitoring young people's progress and a dedicated service is provided within the area.

The diagram below is intended to assist professionals decide what types of intervention and supportive action will be required for children and young people at any given time. These decisions will follow an assessment of the needs of the young person and, in particular, the impact of the sexual exploitation they are experiencing on their welfare. The types of evidence based interventions offered should be appropriate to the child's needs, taking full account of the identified risk factors of sexual exploitation. These decisions about services provision should also address relevant information relating to the young person's personal and family history including:

- Social exclusion (exclusion/truancy from school, from health services)
- Poverty and deprivation
- Prior experience of sexual, physical and/or emotional abuse
- Prevalence of informal economies

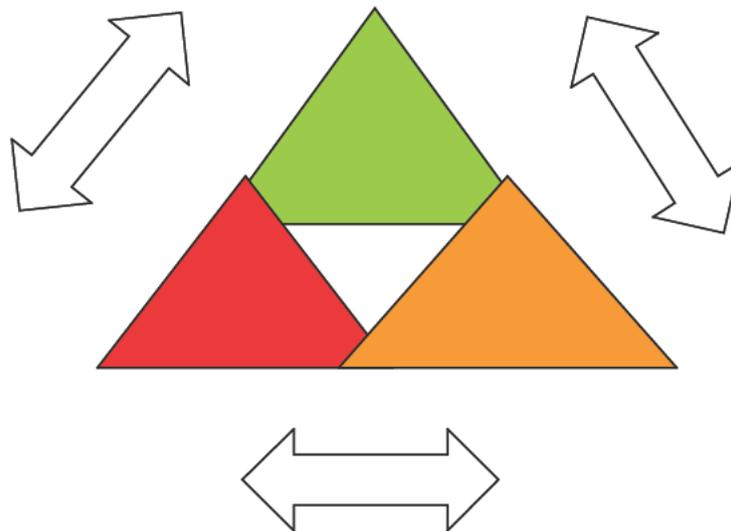
- Familial and community offending patterns
- Prevalence of undiagnosed mental health problems

## Sexual Exploitation Intervention Diagram

(Adapted from the SERA Model developed by The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People, 2008 from Pearce et al 2002)

### Description of young person with identified risk factors in Level 1

Smaller number of risk factors identified or movement from Levels 2 or 3. For example: sexualised risk taking behaviour, beginning to truant from school, occasionally going missing, going to known places of concern, getting into cars, showing signs of gifts or access to resources, early signs of problem alcohol and drug use.



### Description of young person with identified risk factors in Level 3

Multiple risk factors. For example: entrenched in one or more abusive relationships, contact with known perpetrators, going missing and running away from home, problem alcohol and drug use, experience of violence, intimidation and fear.

### Description of young person with identified risk factors in Level 2

Fewer risk factors or signals (or reduction from Level 3). For example: regularly going missing, 'swapping sex' and talking about swapping, truanting regularly from school, going to know places of concern 'Hot Spots', involved with other vulnerable peers, experiencing violence, intimidation and fear, developing problem alcohol and drug use.

The diagram above illustrates the types and levels of risk factors which may be identified during an assessment. It also shows how young people can fluctuate between the different levels within the diagram. Their movement from one level to the next is not necessarily progressive: i.e. a young person deemed to be in Level 1 – the lowest level – may suddenly reveal circumstances and behaviours that might place them within the highest level – 3. However, it is important to recognise that even where the most worrying types of risk factors i.e. Level 3, have been identified, specialist services working with children and young people are able to engage and support them.

Level 1: Where the green triangle overlaps with Level 2, children and young people may have similar needs and risk factors to those in Level 2 and be moving into that level. Conversely the arrow indicates they can also be in transition from Level 2 to 1.

Level 2: Where the amber triangle overlaps with Level 3, children and young people may have similar needs and risk factors to those characteristic of Level 3 and be moving into Level 3. Conversely the arrow indicates some young people can also be in transition from Level 3 to 2.

Level 3: Where the red triangle overlaps with Level 2, the young people may move back from Level 3 to 2. Within the diagram, the overlap between the triangles representing Levels 3 and 1 indicates that in a limited number of cases radical intervention may result in young people moving immediately and successfully to Level 1.

# Annex D:

## Resources and other information

### International agreements

United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (1989) and its Optional Protocol on the sale of children, child prostitution and child pornography (2000).

Council of Europe Convention on Action against Trafficking in Human Beings (2005).

Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse (2007).

### Further reading

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CROP (2004). *Advice to parents who are concerned that their child is in an exploitative relationship.*

CROP (2007). *Stop! She's my daughter. Mothers of abuse victims share their stories of grooming and child sexual exploitation in the UK.*

CROP (2008). *A Guide to Parent Support Work. A worker's guide to supporting parents affected by the sexual exploitation of their children.*

Crown Prosecution Service/Department of Health/Home Office (2005). *Provision of therapy for child witnesses prior to a criminal trial: practice guidance.* CPS

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- Melrose M (ed.) with Barrett D (2004). *Anchors in floating lives: Interventions with young people sexually abused through prostitution*. Russell House Publishing
- Pearce J J (2007). *Sex, risk and resilience in adolescence* in Coleman, J and Hagell, A, *Adolescence, Risk and Resilience: against the odds*, John Wiley: 63-69.
- Pearce J J (2006). *Who needs to be involved in safeguarding sexually exploited young people?* Child Abuse Review, Volume 15, no. 5, 326-340.
- Skidmore, P and Lillywhite R (2006). *Boys are not sexually abused? A challenge to practitioners*. Child Abuse Review, Volume 15, no. 5, 351-361
- Swann, S and Balding V (2002). *Safeguarding Children Involved in Prostitution: Guidance Review*. Department of Health.
- Ward, J and Patel N (2006). *Broadening the Discussion on 'Sexual Exploitation': Ethnicity, Sexual Exploitation and Young People*. Child Abuse Review: Volume 15, no. 5, 341-350.

## Resources

- Barnardo's. *Nae Danger, Bwise2 sexual exploitation, Protecting Self and Keeping Safe, Respecting Self – Consensual Relationships, No Son of Mine!* Barnardo's ([www.barnardos.org.uk](http://www.barnardos.org.uk)).
- Family Planning Association. *Is this Love?* ([www.fpa.org.uk](http://www.fpa.org.uk)).
- Get Connected*, free, confidential helpline and web based support for young people ([www.getconnected.org.uk](http://www.getconnected.org.uk)).
- London Safeguarding Children Board (2006). *Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation*. London Safeguarding Children Board.

Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service. *Friend or Foe – Who can you trust?* Sheffield Sexual Exploitation Service

The Children’s Society. *My Life 4 Schools*, ([www.mylife4schools.org.uk](http://www.mylife4schools.org.uk)).

## Useful contacts

### The Child Exploitation and Online Protection (CEOP) Centre

The CEOP Centre is the UK’s dedicated law enforcement- led response to tackling the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, with a particular emphasis on the threat posed by the use of technology. It is part of the UK policing community and applies the full powers of the law in tracking and bringing to account child sex offenders either within the UK or overseas. CEOP is divided into three main areas of work: Intelligence, including offender management; Operations, which includes covert investigations, victim identification, financial investigation and operational support; and Harm Reduction. CEOP is also part of the Virtual Global Taskforce, an international collaboration of law enforcement agencies committed to tackling sexual exploitation of children and young people. In addition, CEOP has a child trafficking desk, which works in support of UKHTC, police forces and international organisations to provide child focused perspectives in tackling trafficking.

CEOP produces a yearly strategic overview which provides an analysis of the threat from the use of technology in the sexual abuse of children and young people in the UK, as well as examining the threat posed by child sexual offenders who use both traditional and technology based techniques to access and abuse. This can be found on its website [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk). In addition, CEOP will be producing an annual threat assessment on the problem of child trafficking in support of UKHTC and the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA)

As part of its harm reduction work, CEOP looks to engage and empower children, young people and parents through its *Thinkuknow*<sup>36</sup> education and public awareness programme, work with the online and mobile industry to advise on “Safer by Design” strategies and utilise specialist units, such as its Behavioural Analysis Unit (BAU), to better understand how to combat the sexual abuse and exploitation of children in both the on and offline worlds. CEOP provides a range of courses<sup>37</sup> and conferences aimed at up-skilling local professionals who detect and investigate sexually motivated crimes against children, as well as those who manage offenders or care for victims.

The general public, particularly children and young people, are encouraged to report suspicions or incidents of inappropriate sexual contact such as grooming through CEOP’s “Report Abuse” mechanism within the online environments that they occupy, such as instant messaging, chat and social networking sites. CEOP also handles referrals from across national and international law enforcement, coordinating operational activity both on and offline, through collaborations such as the Virtual Global Taskforce (VGT) to disrupt and dismantle networks of child sex offenders.

Where CEOP identifies a case of suspected or alleged sexual abuse or exploitation it will contact local services in the area where a suspect or victim lives. Local services should contact CEOP when

<sup>36</sup> [www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

<sup>37</sup> [www.ceop.gov.uk/training](http://www.ceop.gov.uk/training)

they identify sexual exploitation which crosses local or international boundaries. In all cases of suspected or alleged sexual abuse, the involvement of technology should be considered in an strategy.

CEOP may be contacted on [www.ceop.gov.uk](http://www.ceop.gov.uk), or 0870 000 3344, or [enquiries@ceop.gov.uk](mailto:enquiries@ceop.gov.uk).

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre  
33 Vauxhall Bridge Road  
London  
SW1V 2WG

### **The United Kingdom Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC)**

The UKHTC is a multi-agency centre that provides a central point for the development of expertise and operational coordination in relation to human trafficking, working together with other agencies in the UK and abroad.

It plays a key role in coordinating work across stakeholders and, with its partners, delivers a diverse set of programmes, including targeted campaigns to prevent and reduce trafficking.

In addition, the Centre conducts research, develops training packages for UK law enforcement partners, cascades good practice and works to deliver an improved knowledge and understanding of the way criminal enterprises associated with trafficking operate.

The Centre will continuously develop police and law enforcement expertise and provide operational coordination in the UK in relation to trafficking complementing and working in conjunction with the Serious Organised Crime Agency (SOCA).

The Centre promotes the development of a victim-centred human rights based approach to trafficking. Working with non-governmental organisations and other partners, it works to improve the standard of victim care and protection and raise understanding of the complexities that attach to dealing with victim welfare in trafficking cases in both the criminal justice and wider protection environment.

The following advice is available from UKHTC:

Coordination, promoting and facilitating international victim support, assisting with tactical/operational advice:	Tel. 0114 252 3564
Child Trafficking advice:	Tel. 0114 252 3564
Legal Advice:	Tel. 0114 252 3892
Victim Care co-ordinator:	Tel. 0114 252 3803
Intelligence/Analysis:	Tel. 0114 252 3891

### **NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line (CTAIL)**

The NSPCC's Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line has been set up to support all practitioners and professionals working or volunteering with children to identify and protect victims of trafficking. The Child Trafficking Advice and Information Line is a free service that can be reached on 0800 107 7057. Lines are open 9.30-4.30 on weekdays.

The line has been set up with funding from the Home Office and Comic Relief. It works in partnership with CEOP and End Child Prostitution, Child Pornography and the Trafficking of Children for Sexual Purposes (ECPAT UK). As well as giving advice and information the line will also refer callers to other agencies, including sources of direct support for trafficked children, and provide training to professionals and community organisations working with children.

### **Coalition for the Removal of Pimping (CROP)**

CROP is a national charity offering specialist support to parents and carers whose children are subjected to sexual exploitation by pimps and traffickers.

To contact CROP call 0113 240 3040, or email [info@cropuk.org.uk](mailto:info@cropuk.org.uk).

CROP  
34 York Road  
Leeds  
LS9 8TA

Further information is available at [www.cropuk.org.uk](http://www.cropuk.org.uk).

COSEY (Carers of Sexually Exploited Youths) is a parent-led support group in Blackburn. For further details call CROP on 0113 240 3040.

### **National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People**

The National Working Group (NWG) is a support group for individuals and service providers working with children and young people who are at risk of, or who experience, sexual exploitation. The NWG's main aim is to improve services for sexually exploited and trafficked young people. They share knowledge and expertise, up date each other on ongoing practice issues, and provide a coordinated voice of voluntary/statutory projects within local and central government consultation exercises.

The National Working Group's membership covers voluntary and statutory services including health, education and social services. The National Working Group organizes regular meetings and training events for its members including the Boys' and Young Men's Forum. Meetings take place in various venues across the country. Details of how to become a member or join the mailing list are available at: [www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk](http://www.nationalworkinggroup.co.uk).

# Annex E:

## Case studies

### Paul's story

Barnardo's Bristol BASE service works with Bristol Children and Young People's Service, Avon and Somerset Police, United Bristol Healthcare Trust, Connexions West of England and other voluntary agencies, including Off The Record and Bristol Drugs Project.

Paul (14) was referred by his special school, after concerns about his non-attendance. He lived with his mother and siblings but spent long periods away from home, travelling all over the city and staying out overnight. His mother was usually unsure where he was. When home his outbursts of anger could make life fraught and unpredictable.

Paul grew up in poverty, with many moves of home and school, an absent father and attention deficit hyperactivity disorder, all of which made life more challenging and fragmented. Paul's social worker was concerned about the time he was spending with a family known to Children and Young People's Services who presented a serious risk to Paul's safety. Paul was at risk of sexual exploitation and getting involved in crime, with the YOT recently becoming involved. His life became increasingly chaotic, out of control and unsafe.

The BASE worker built a relationship with Paul, developing trust and familiarity with his mother and family. The worker met Paul in his own environment and was relaxed and friendly, but consistent and assertive in his approach which helped facilitate their relationship.

By getting to know Paul, it was possible for the BASE worker to gain an understanding of the actual level of risk of harm he was putting himself at and consequently target key areas in order to promote his safety. The quality of the relationship enabled the BASE worker to guide, direct and support Paul.

Important shared activities, such as decorating, fishing and pool, provided time to talk and share understandings and aspirations. Being prepared to go and look for Paul when missing and make early morning calls to get him home and into school also added to the credibility and effectiveness of the service and reiterated the message that Paul was valued. Paul was then encouraged and supported in returning to school after a long absence.

Over time, Paul's school attendance markedly improved and he started a relationship with a local girl. Paul now spends more time in the area around his home and he has stopped running away to risky places. Paul still sees his BASE worker but only on an occasional basis, as he has now made real changes in how he spends his time and where he goes which means he is much safer than when he was first referred to BASE.

Source: Barnardo's

### Megan's family

Megan (15) lived in a happy, stable, home. Despite this, in a few short months she fell prey to sexual exploiters. In October 2007, Megan's parents observed changes in Megan after she associated with a girl (16) known to have been groomed by abusers.

By December Megan was:

- truanting
- being aggressive
- stealing things from the family home
- losing her possessions
- going off with men in cars
- being secretive
- changing her appearance
- disrupting classes at school
- receiving calls and threats from unknown men
- going missing, returning home late drunk and/or drugged

She was bruised and bitten on her body and would lie about her whereabouts, switching the phone off when her parents rang. Police even questioned her about an incident involving a missing child. Megan said that she had been with a group of men in their cars drinking alcohol and that the men had dropped her off and driven off with the missing girl.

Megan's parents also reported Megan missing over 20 times, telling police about grooming, drugs, sexual activity with older men, places, girls involved, car registration and mobile phone numbers. Social workers also visited the family home.

Megan continued to get drinks, drugs and mobile top-ups from her abusers. She was excluded from school for taking drugs. Her parents struggled to interest her in education and taking exams. During short spells when she did not associate with the men, she showed interest in going to college.

The abusers took control of her life again and her family were threatened by them. Megan's family spent sleepless nights looking for her, trying to understand what was happening, struggling to keep up with work and keeping a healthy and secure home life for the other children. Megan would come home briefly. She did not have a meal at home in weeks. Her sister Millie (20) found it extremely difficult to cope. Her brother Matt (14) could not sleep, staying up all night waiting for her, his school work was affected and he suffered taunting at school.

Her family lives in fear of hearing that Megan has been raped or found dead. They feel early intervention when Megan began to associate with the perpetrators could have been effective.

The parent support worker from CROP offers continuing support to:

- keep records of all incidents and intelligence, engaging and sharing information and intelligence with agencies who have safeguarding responsibilities including the UKHTC;
- encourage the parents to report Megan missing and keep agencies informed;
- advocate on behalf of the parents for a multi-agency meeting to set recommendations to safeguard Megan from sexual exploitation;
- facilitate peer support for the parents;
- keep the parents informed of agency responses.

Source: CROP

### J's story

J is 14 and until recently a brilliant student and dancer. She lives with her parents and her younger sister and older brother in a quiet suburb.

Over the summer J started to behave strangely, appearing to be drunk and out of control and was out at all times of the night. Her parents received letters from J's schools about her attendance and behaviour. When they confronted J they were shocked at the language and abuse that J hurled at them.

J eventually visited her doctor as she was worried about missing periods and an infection. She told the nurse what had happened. J felt that the nurse was understanding and helped her to see how badly she was treated by her 'boyfriend' and his friends. J went to the police and felt that she could talk to the police officer who was extremely kind. J attended a strategy meeting which was also attended by a social worker and many others.

J revealed that she had met B, 27, a brother of her class mate, and went around with him and his friends. Initially they had persuaded her to miss classes, go to amusement arcades, spending money, playing, eating and drinking. Then they asked her to a party. She did not want to go but B threatened to tell her mother what J did on the day that she missed classes.

J became desperate for the roll ups that B made especially for her. Normal cigarettes did not make her feel the way they did. B cared for her and she was happy to give him blow jobs in his car to show she cared for him too. One night she got drunk and went into the men's toilet with B. He raped her while his friends filmed the incident on their mobile phones.

In a later incident she went looking for B but instead was approached by an older man who said he was B's friend. The older man asked her if she would like to spend the night at his flat. J was horrified and asked him to leave her alone, but he insisted she look at some pictures on his mobile. J was shocked and shaken to see the pictures of that night's ordeal on his mobile. He told her that if she would not do what he wanted, he would put the picture on the Internet.

J went with B to different towns. One evening he took her to a flat where she passed out after a drink. She woke to lots of men having sex with her. B said that it was her fault and that she had invited it. The next time that they were at his flat, B begged her to do him a favour, saying that she owed it to him. She had sex with his 'friends', but in disgust. She felt that B was her 'boyfriend' and she needed him, but at the same time she hated him for what he had put her through.

B knew all about her family, the car her mother drove and the route that her sister took to school. J worried that her mother was asking too many questions and was frightened that her mistakes would cost her family all their happiness. She was contemplating B's advice to leave home and go into care when she went to see her doctor.

Source: CROP

### April's story

Manchester Children's Services made a referral to the Children's Society 'Safe in the City' project, following concerns that 'an older boyfriend' was exploiting April, a 14 year old.

Some of the presenting issues were:

- she was regularly running away from physical abuse by her mother,
- she was having a relationship with a 28 year old male,
- she had had two previous terminations,
- she was not accessing education for long periods of time due to her family being accommodated in homeless families' accommodation, (which caused her to move around regularly far away from school).

She engaged well doing therapeutic work on safe relationships. Her sexual health needs were met by open discussions and support to attend a sexual health clinic.

A Children's Society project worker (CSPW) joined the multi-agency Protect Team specialising in child sexual exploitation. Police took the primary role in the criminal investigation of the perpetrator, and the CSPW supported and advocated for April. She had been excluded from school after an assault she committed following a racist attack. The CSPW acted on her behalf to ensure that her education needs were met. As a result, she was placed in another educational establishment.

The police issued a warning under the Child Abduction Act 1984 against the 28 year old 'boyfriend' and the CSPW helped April to:

- understand the police's concerns and why they have to do what they do,
- the illegality of the relationship and
- the choices that she had as a 15 year old and how these changed when she became 16.

April was asked about the Protect Team's involvement in her life. She reflected that:

- the statutory CSE process felt very invasive,
- she could understand why the police had to get involved,
- CSPW involvement had been very positive and:
  - *'had helped her out when she was in need,'*
  - *'made her laugh when she was down,'*
  - *'helped her to see things in a different perspective,'*
  - *'more young people who have suffered like me and worse and don't get support should get support' from the Protect Team,*
  - gave her helpful advice and reassurance on the legal issues.

As a result of the focused work on safe relationships and her understanding of the abusive and illegal nature of the relationship, April stopped seeing her 'boyfriend.'

April has settled in education and is doing well, has good attendance and GCSE predictions and is receiving a lot of support. The CSPW assisted April with housing applications, and wrote references for her to move into safe accommodation.

Source: The Children's Society

### **Online sexual exploitation – child planning to meet up with her abuser**

Report via CEOP's Report Abuse Button:

'I first met the person in a chat room but then gave him my MSN address and we started chatting on there. I am telling you this is because I have arranged to meet up with him, because I was too scared to say no. He has been talking to me and has told me that he wants to have sex with me even though he knows I am 13. He is much older. He has my phone number and he says he knows where I live even though I haven't given him my address. I have planned to meet up with him but I am still scared and I daren't tell my parents as they will be angry. I need a quick reply because we are planning to meet up tomorrow but I don't want to and I'm scared he will find out where I live. He was online earlier but isn't now.'

An email response was immediately sent out from the NSPCC Child Protection Advisor to the child, to reassure her and to seek information about the person she was going to meet. She was advised not to go to meet the person and to try to talk to her mother or father. After an exchange of e mails between the Child Protection Advisor and the child, the child disclosed that she had sent pictures of herself to him. She was reassured that she had done nothing wrong and she eventually agreed to talk to her mother about what had happened.

The following morning the information was passed from the NSPCC Child Protection Advisor to the local police force who visited the child at home. She was interviewed using the Home Office National Guidance for Achieving Best Evidence from vulnerable and intimidated witnesses. Her computer and mobile telephone were given to the police for examination.

To assist the local police and utilising expertise, CEOP continued to work on identifying the suspect and locating him. The information was passed to the investigating force and the suspect was arrested.

Source: CEOP

### **Online sexual exploitation – inciting a child to perform a sexual act**

A child age 13 reported to CEOP, via the Report Abuse Button, that while working late at night on her computer/Internet, she had been approached by a male, who asked for pictures. She complied. He then asked her to go on webcam and perform a sexual act – she did as he asked but complained of it hurting. Over the following nights he reappeared online harassing her and telling her that she must she do it again. He told her that he had kept pictures of what she had been doing and that he would post them on the Internet and show them to her friends and family if she did not continue to do as he said. The child did not say if her parents were aware or for how long this had been going on. She was clearly the victim of a crime.

The NSPCC Child Protection Advisor at CEOP telephoned the girl’s mother. She was unaware of what had been happening but said that her daughter had been very disturbed lately and had attempted suicide. CEOP advised the local police service about the investigation of the crime and victim impact. They also worked with Children’s Services, offering advice to social work staff about the crime and impact upon the child and family. In agreement with CPS assistance was given in identifying therapeutic services for the child.

Source: CEOP

### **Online sexual exploitation – inciting a child to watch a sexual act.**

A boy aged 13 was confused about his sexuality and went into a chat room for young gay teens. He read the postings and decided to ask a few questions. He was rapidly befriended by a number of adult males who offered to chat on a one-to-one basis. Over the following weeks they sent him pictures, some of boys posing and others sexually aroused. He was encouraged to look at the pictures and to try out some of the poses himself. He was encouraged to go on webcam so that they could watch him and see how he responded and they could demonstrate what he should be doing sexually.

They captured the pictures and began to threaten him, telling him that he must do as they asked otherwise they would post the pictures on the Internet. They finally coerced him into meeting up.

The boy’s mother discovered the situation and struggled to know what to do next. She telephoned CEOP’s general enquiries number and spoke to the NSPCC Child Protection Advisor who reassured her and explained what needed to be done to safeguard her son and protect him from further harm. During the call information was collated that would help the local police and Children’s Services to assess need. CEOP staff continued to work with the local police to progress the investigation and engage Children’s Services in supporting the family.

Source: CEOP

**Online sexual exploitation – typical child victim of sexually abusive images**

Photo and video images of a child being sexually abused were submitted from a police force to CEOP. The images had been seized as part of a wider police investigation and identified as new images which could point to possible ongoing/live abuse. Using a range of forensic policing techniques, extensive work was undertaken by the Victim Identification Team over a number of months in an attempt to identify and locate the child.

The child was finally identified and located in the UK. The information was passed to local police and Children's Services and CEOP law enforcement and NSPCC Child Protection staff advised about the child and how best to progress the investigation – bearing in mind what they knew of the child's experiences from the images seen.

Source: CEOP

### Peter's story

Peter (14) was referred to a NSPCC child sexual exploitation (CSE) service following police concerns that he might be selling sex. His foster carer was also concerned about him staying out late, going missing and having unexplained clothes and gifts.

When the worker first engaged with Peter he denied that he was at risk or involved in sexual exploitation. However, over time he began to share information which the worker used to develop strategies with Peter to enable him to keep himself safe. It also informed discussions with agencies about action needed to safeguard him.

Peter had a network of 'friends' around the city. He disclosed to his worker that he was meeting older men in bars and clubs and at one venue in particular.

The worker made a child protection referral to the local authority where the venue was situated and a meeting was convened between social services, police and the specialist worker. Steps were taken to prevent young people entering the venue. However, Peter continued to gain entry to other venues where he continued to put himself at risk.

Recognising that it was impossible to target all venues that vulnerable young people may frequent, the worker explored means of ensuring that they were effectively safeguarded. One solution that emerged was working with Metropolitan Police LGBT (Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and Transgender) Liaison officers to educate venue managers and staff about CSE and the risk indicators that they needed to be aware of.

This reduced Peter's ability to gain entry to these adult venues, safeguarding him from the various risks they posed for him. It also proved useful for locating Peter when he had absconded, as he would often try to gain entry to clubs. The door staff would recognise him and alert the police who returned him to his placement.

When Peter went missing his specialist worker kept in touch with him by phone, where possible. He negotiated with Peter about contacting at least one member of the professional network daily, to ensure that he was alive and that his level of safety was assessed. The worker used these opportunities to engage Peter in discussion about his choices and safety and also encouraged him to return to his placement.

When Peter was in his placement the specialist worker worked closely with his carers to ensure that they understood the indicators and risks of CSE and the triggers for his absconding. They would gather information from Peter on his return and sought to put appropriate safeguards in place.

These positive outcomes could not have been achieved without a positive, open and transparent relationship with the worker who gave Peter clear messages about his safety. The proactive involvement of members of the professional network also helped to keep Peter safe.

Source: NSPCC

### Shabna's story

Shabna (15) is of Bangladeshi origin. The local NSPCC project was contacted by a worker from an adult homeless person's agency after she had been dropped off by older Asian men and left there. She was hungry, exhausted, with grubby clothes, and appeared to be coming down from the effects of drugs. She was given care and attention, and referred to the LA children's services team and local children's refuge. Shabna did not give her home contact details.

Shabna said that when she returned home, she was physically assaulted by her parents. Working with Shabna, it was clear that her situation was worsening as she was going missing for longer periods in the company of older adult males, using drugs often given to her without her knowledge and she and other girls were being taken to different locations.

The NSPCC project worker supported Shabna to make her safer and less vulnerable, and encouraged her to attend group sessions. Shabna did not keep her appointments as she was influenced by her exploiters to truant, run away and also to recruit other young women through school friends. Through determination and patience and using mobile phones to communicate she has since engaged quite well with the project worker. It has taken a lot of work with Shabna to enable and empower her to feel comfortable to talk openly to workers about past experiences and sensitive issues.

Shabna told her project worker that she was going on holiday to Bangladesh to see her grandmother who was seriously ill. However, other workers at the project said that they had heard rumours that the family had bought clothing and jewellery for her wedding in Bangladesh. Shabna then said that her holiday had been brought forward to the following week.

Shabna discussed forced marriage with her worker but did not feel that this was planned for her. She could not explain why the dates of the holiday had been changed or the purchase of clothing and jewellery.

Shabna's worker believed she was being taken out of the country for a forced marriage. An urgent strategy meeting was arranged with Children's Services, the Forced Marriage Unit (FMU) and the police. All agreed that Shabna was going to be forced into marriage, particularly given the fact that a one-way ticket had been bought for her to go to Bangladesh, her grandmother was not ill, her father had booked a ticket to go with her despite saying it was impossible to find tickets and her mother had warned her not to travel with her father on her own.

The FMU and the police recommended taking out an Emergency Protection Order and Prohibitive Steps Order to prevent travel and her removal from the UK, her passport was seized and Shabna was found a temporary foster placement. The family admitted that they had not planned to bring Shabna back but are now accepting that she has a right to remain in the UK and in education. Shabna continues to receive support from the NSPCC team.

Source: NSPCC

### **Meeting the therapeutic needs of sexually exploited young women**

Young people need an alternative to traditional therapeutic treatments as their lifestyle and attitudes to boundaries leads them to be reluctant to engage with more traditional services such as one-to-one therapy.

Children's Services offered services to young women who were being targeted for sexual exploitation. The young women displayed risk indicators, would not engage, and did not see themselves as sexually exploited so the NSPCC were asked if they could offer help.

NSPCC offered a longer-term group work based therapy with more flexible rules, such as in relation to swearing and smoking. Sessions also included having a meal to allow the young women to build relationships and discuss issues in an informal way. Group work was less intense than a one-to-one relationship and allowed young people to engage positively with each other.

Constant communication and support were needed through texting, sending cards and providing transport to support group work attendance.

The long-term nature of the group gave members time to go through processes. It took a long time for relationships to be established and for the young women to see themselves as part of the group.

Staff agreed a higher level of confidentiality, recognising that if they reported every disclosure, women would not engage with their social workers. The young women had already been referred by a multi-agency team to the group and their risk taking behaviour was already known.

Service providers recognised the need to support staff. Involvement in this work was challenging. These young women needed to dominate in relationships to feel safe, and the issues that they brought to the group were challenging. Staff needed time out to reflect and to plan strategies. Strong co-working relationships were essential for mutual support. Staff used supervision and other methods to think about and agree strategies for when and how to challenge group members.

An assertive outreach approach was used. Workers made frequent contact with young people to establish a relationship and assist engagement. Cases were kept open even if the young person did not attend, as workers tried a variety of approaches to engage them. The engagement process, the relationships and boundaries aspect of the work were critical and these were and are the keys to therapeutic change. A safe relationship with clear boundaries and a sense of care/nurture is therapeutic or healing for young people.

Source: NSPCC