

# Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE): Key Questions for Lead Members for Children's Services

## What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

The sexual exploitation of children and young people may involve young people receiving 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities. 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. Children and young people may also become involved in sexual exploitation through association with other young people who are being exploited, and who may draw them in possibly to deflect attention (known as peer on peer grooming).

## Introduction and Purpose

Evidence indicates that CSE is prevalent across the country, occurring in both rural and urban areas with both perpetrators and victims coming from a range of social and ethnic backgrounds. All LSCBs should assume it is happening in their area, unless there is clear evidence to the contrary<sup>1</sup>.

This document aims to support lead members for children's services to understand what work is underway in their area to tackle CSE, in the format of 'key questions to ask' of officers, the LSCB or other agencies, along with some suggested points to look out for. It is not intended to be exhaustive and local approaches will of course vary, but instead aims to provide prompts to enable discussions about how the issue is being addressed locally.

The questions are based on the 5 elements of an effective response set out in the practice briefing produced by LGA and Barnado's earlier in the year, which can be found here: [www.local.gov.uk/cse](http://www.local.gov.uk/cse)

## Raising awareness

Key questions	Look out for...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Are we aware of the threat and signs of child sexual exploitation in our locality?</li> <li>• Do we have a preventative programme?</li> <li>• Are there resources and expertise for others to draw on?</li> <li>• What is the scale and form of training available for key professionals?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Awareness raising in schools to inform children and young people of the risks</li> <li>• Methods to raise awareness of the signs of CSE with parents and carers and telling them where support can be accessed</li> <li>• Community/public awareness</li> <li>• Multi-agency training programme for professionals across the region, which may take the form of:               <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ External expertise</li> <li>○ Internal knowledge-sharing</li> <li>○ E-learning</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

<sup>1</sup> Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation: supplementary guidance to Working Together to safeguard children

Key questions	Look out for...
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Training provided for frontline workers including for example children's home staff, street wardens, park staff, staff in pubs, clubs and hotels as well as social care, police, health and education</li> </ul>

## Understanding what is happening

Key questions	Look out for...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Have we 'assumed' that child sexual exploitation is occurring?</li> <li>• Is the LSCB recording data on child sexual exploitation?</li> <li>• Is local data reviewed to establish the prevalence and character of abuse?</li> <li>• Who holds the data and what local arrangements are in place?</li> <li>• Are CSE cases identified and data collected to inform the local and national picture?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Data is collated, held centrally and is shared by police, social care, health and other agencies</li> <li>• Regular profiling exercises which include information from the voluntary sector</li> <li>• Identification of local 'hotspots'</li> <li>• Links are made with other LSCBs to compare data and obtain a wider / regional picture of child sexual exploitation and contribute to the national picture</li> <li>• Self assessment tools for LSCBs</li> </ul>

## Developing a strategic response

Key questions	Look out for...
<p><b>Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Do we have a clear strategy that agencies can reference to understand child sexual exploitation and what has been planned to address it?</li> <li>• Is an action plan ready for when a young person is identified as being at risk?</li> <li>• Is the strategy cross-authority or regional?</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Has a risk assessment been conducted?</li> <li>• Is there a clear referral system and can progress be tracked?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Strategy</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Strategy is child-centred with a core purpose of protecting the welfare of children and young people</li> <li>• Strategy makes links to related issues such as domestic violence or going missing</li> <li>• Multi-agency working is recognised as essential</li> <li>• Collation of all agency information to disrupt and prosecute criminal behaviour</li> </ul> <p><b>Risk assessment</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• A list of key risk indicators and vulnerabilities exists</li> <li>• Toolkits and process mapping used</li> </ul>

Key questions	Look out for...
<p><b>Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How frequently are multi-agency meetings held and who attends them?</li> <li>• Is there an LSCB sub-group and/or lead officer/s at strategic and operational levels?</li> <li>• How are other agencies engaged?</li> <li>• Do we have information sharing protocols in place?</li> </ul>	<p><b>Response</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Meetings are frequent and consistently attended</li> <li>• Key agencies include: social care, police, health, education, YOT, probation, housing, youth services and VCS</li> <li>• Actions are assigned with an accountable review process</li> </ul>

## Supporting victims of exploitation

Key questions	Look out for...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• How are services tailored to support those at risk?</li> <li>• Do we carry out direct work with those young people who have been exploited or are at high risk?</li> <li>• Do we provide preventative intervention to stop young people's risks increasing?</li> <li>• Are services co-located?</li> <li>• Is there provision for alternative accommodation and training to foster carers?</li> <li>• Who delivers intensive direct support to young people?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Response is determined by needs and circumstances</li> <li>• Those at risk are helped to recognise and exit the abuse</li> <li>• Local agencies pool budgets to fund provision</li> <li>• Young people and children have their plans monitored and reviewed</li> <li>• Specialist training provided to a number of foster carers who can provide additional support to children and young people at risk</li> <li>• Long term support</li> <li>• Voluntary sector engaged at strategic and operational levels</li> </ul>

## Facilitating policing and prosecutions

Key questions	Look out for...
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• When safeguarding children, how do professionals gather and preserve evidence to support prosecution of perpetrators of child sex exploitation?</li> <li>• Is there a disruption plan and how is it delivered?</li> <li>• What support is there for young people during disclosure and investigation stage? Is there pre-, during and post-trial support?</li> <li>• Who is best placed to conduct return from missing interviews to gain critical information about the missing episode?</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The council participates in disruption tactics, such as issuing child abduction notices to prevent a named adult from associating with a child</li> <li>• Systems are in place and technology is used to track those under suspicion of child sexual exploitation</li> <li>• Use of multi-agency working and risk mapping tools provide police with the assistance and support needed to enable disruption and prosecution</li> <li>• Knowledge and information is shared on high-risk areas and individual cases</li> </ul>