

Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of abuse. It involves children and young people being forced or manipulated into sexual activity in exchange for something – money, gifts, accommodation, affection etc. The sexual activity and exchange may be seen as consensual but are based on an imbalance of power. In 2011 the Government published the *Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan* which detailed the expectation that all local authorities, through work coordinated by the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) would develop local action plans to assess the scale of CSE and develop appropriate responses. Raising awareness of CSE is a key part of national and local strategies to help prevent children and young people becoming sexually exploited.

Combating Child Sexual Exploitation is a key priority of the Wirral Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) and its multi-agency response is co-ordinated by the WSCB's CSE Strategic Committee. The committee oversees the multi-agency CSE action plan which includes development of policy, procedure, guidance, briefings, training and resources to support professionals to identify children who are victims of, or at risk of being sexually exploited at the earliest opportunity and to ensure young people receive appropriate support.

The Public Health Outcomes Funding has helped the WSCB address two strands of its CSE Action Plan:

- Ensuring professionals have access to high quality multi-agency training;
- Targeting awareness raising resources at vulnerable groups

Project Description

The WSCB was awarded £9,900 from the PHOF. Originally the funding was targeted at three priority areas:

- Commissioning of newspaper media campaign
- Design, production and printing of resource material
- Commissioning of multi-agency training

However, as the project developed the WSCB agreed with Public Health that part of the money would be 'better spent' underwriting part of the cost of commissioning a theatre group to perform a drama production about CSE for Secondary School pupils. The

change in emphasis away from developing a media campaign and resources happened because during the lifetime of the project the profile of CSE rose significantly nationally and the WSCB was able to be part of a wider Merseyside CSE campaign called www.listentomystory.co.uk which included a branded website, significant media campaign including local radio and resources including posters, leaflets and cards for professionals and for children and young people. Prior to the campaign the WSCB had developed significant amounts of CSE resources with no external cost.

1. Multi-agency Training

The WSCB commissioned Catch-22 to deliver 10 full day multi-agency CSE training sessions between April 2014 and March 2015. The total cost of the sessions was £4,400. Catch-22 were chosen as the charity already delivers the missing from home and CSE service on behalf of the local authority.

A specification was agreed with Catch-22 – including recognising signs, symptoms and indicators of CSE, common models of CSE, case studies, referring concerns and the purpose of the Multi-agency CSE meetings (MACSE).

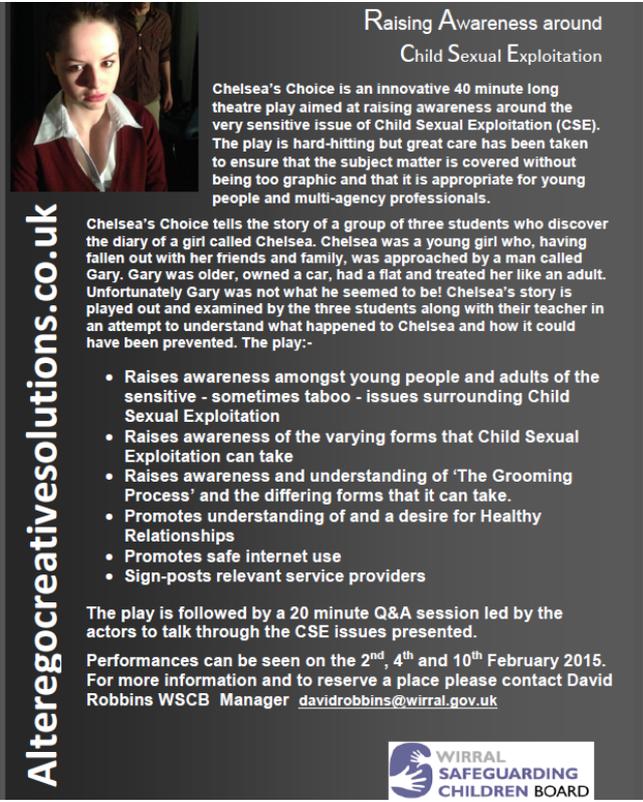
Over 200 children's services professionals attended the training sessions representing agencies including children's social care, targeted services, police, health, probation, youth support, IFIP, voluntary and community groups. Professional's evaluations of the sessions were extremely positive and a measure of the impact of the training can be seen in the increase in the number of referrals made into the MACSE meeting by professionals over the lifetime of the training sessions.



Multi-agency CSE training session delivered by Catch-22

1. Drama Production – Chelsea’s Choice

Public Health kindly let the WSCB use the remaining £5,500 (of the total cost of £8,000) to underwrite a significant part of the cost of commissioning Alter Ego productions to deliver 19 performances of Chelsea’s Choice (4 for multi-agency staff and 15 for secondary schools). A detailed breakdown of the performances is shown in Appendix One. The one hour drama production tells the story of a school girl who was sexually exploited by an older man. The presentation is hard hitting and there were versions for school pupils and for multi-agency professionals. The multi-agency advertising poster is shown below:



**Raising Awareness around
Child Sexual Exploitation**

Chelsea’s Choice is an innovative 40 minute long theatre play aimed at raising awareness around the very sensitive issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The play is hard-hitting but great care has been taken to ensure that the subject matter is covered without being too graphic and that it is appropriate for young people and multi-agency professionals.

Chelsea’s Choice tells the story of a group of three students who discover the diary of a girl called Chelsea. Chelsea was a young girl who, having fallen out with her friends and family, was approached by a man called Gary. Gary was older, owned a car, had a flat and treated her like an adult. Unfortunately Gary was not what he seemed to be! Chelsea’s story is played out and examined by the three students along with their teacher in an attempt to understand what happened to Chelsea and how it could have been prevented. The play:-

- Raises awareness amongst young people and adults of the sensitive - sometimes taboo - issues surrounding Child Sexual Exploitation
- Raises awareness of the varying forms that Child Sexual Exploitation can take
- Raises awareness and understanding of ‘The Grooming Process’ and the differing forms that it can take.
- Promotes understanding of and a desire for Healthy Relationships
- Promotes safe internet use
- Sign-posts relevant service providers

The play is followed by a 20 minute Q&A session led by the actors to talk through the CSE issues presented.

Performances can be seen on the 2nd, 4th and 10th February 2015. For more information and to reserve a place please contact David Robbins WSCB Manager davidrobbins@wirral.gov.uk

Alteregocreativesolutions.co.uk

**WIRRAL
SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN BOARD**

Four multi-agency sessions were seen by 480 professionals from over 40 different organisations including elected members. The WSCB is currently undertaking a large scale evaluation of Chelsea’s Choice but feedback received so far suggests the performances were well received and have had a positive impact. Similarly with the safeguarding training the number of CSE referrals made into the MACSE has increased following Chelsea’s Choice and referrals are received from a wider range of agencies than before. Fifteen sessions were reserved for Secondary Schools. Analysis of the MACSE data by the WSCB revealed that 14-15 year olds – especially girls - are the age group most at risk of sexual exploitation. As a result the WSCB asked secondary

schools to show the performance to pupils in Year 9. The performance was seen by 2,200 pupils in 15 different schools. Catch-22 staff supported the sessions for schools and were available to support young people and staff if their performance raised any issues for them.

Catch-22 have reported that a number of disclosures were made by young people following the performances about themselves and other young people. All of the disclosures were followed up by Catch-22 staff and appropriate referrals were made into children's social care and the MACSE meetings.

What Went Well?

Both the multi-agency training and the performances of Chelsea's Choice were well attended and well received by professionals and young people. Chelsea's Choice in particular represented excellent value for money as the cost per pupil who saw it was less than £4.

What Didn't Go Well?

Following the agreed change to the spending of part of the £9,900 the WSCB would report that nothing didn't go well and we are very pleased by the number of colleagues and young people who have benefitted from the presentation and training we were able to commission.

Did PHOF Funding Make a Difference?

The PHOF undoubtedly made a big difference to the WSCB's ability to support professionals and young people. Without the funding opportunities for attendance at full day multi-agency CSE training would not have been available and as a result of the funding we are confident that over 200 professionals from a variety of agencies have a detailed understanding of CSE and can become 'champions' in their own organisations. Similarly, the WSCB is assured that over 2,200 pupils (and staff) in over half of our Secondary schools are aware of the risks of sexual exploitation and know where to go for help, advice and support.

The increase in the number of referrals into children's social care and MACSE and the increase in the range of agencies referring over the course of the CSE project is evidence of its overall effectiveness in raising awareness of CSE and knowing professionals and young people know what to do if they have concerns.