



# Learning Together: Manager's Briefing

## How do we know we are working together well to safeguard children & young people?

### Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

One of the recommendations made by the Children's Commissioner in the November 2013 report: [If Only Someone had Listened](#), Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs & Groups was for: "LSCBs to 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, (If Only Someone had Listened) and [Working Together to Safeguard Children, March 2013](#)

More recently, in response to Professor Alexis Jay's [Independent Inquiry for Rotherham](#), the Ofsted Chief Inspector commissioned a thematic inspection of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) to build a clearer picture of how well local authorities and partners are working to prevent CSE in their area, to offer protection to its victims, and to pursue and prosecute its abusers. In the Ofsted report, ['The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it?'](#) the inspectors found that that local arrangements to tackle sexual exploitation are often underdeveloped and partnership action between local authorities, police, health services and others is often disjointed, with poor information sharing leading to an overall lack of understanding of child sexual exploitation in some areas.

Against this background the Brighton & Hove LSCB Monitoring & Evaluation Subcommittee agreed to test whether there is a robust inter agency response to CSE in Brighton & Hove that keeps children and young people safe. The lead officer for the audit was Lee Horner, Sussex Police Safeguarding and Investigation Unit with support from the LSCB Quality Assurance Manager, Tina James.

**Methodology** Six cases were selected for the audit from a cohort young people known to Operation Kite. Operation Kite was launched in May 2014 and is a Sussex Police initiative around the reporting and identification of children and young people who are at risk of CSE across East and West Sussex and Brighton & Hove. The audit tool included a number of standards which followed the journey of the child from Response through to Protection.

The audit team comprised of representatives from the following;

The WISE Project	BHCC Children's Social Work	Sussex Police
Brighton & Sussex University Hospitals	Ru-Ok (Young People's Substance Misuse Service)	The Youth Service
The Safeguarding & Review Service, BHCC	Behaviour & Attendance, BHCC	The Youth Offending Service
Sussex Community Trust: School Nursing, CASH (Contraception & Sexual Health) & LAC (Looked After Children) Health		

As with previous multi agency quality assurance activity, the audit consisted of two parts:

**Part A** required members of the audit team to individually audit their records and **Part B**: auditors were invited to a ½ day event to share their audit findings and to evaluate the overall effectiveness of the work

This short briefing is aimed at managers and designated leads who work with children and families in Brighton & Hove. It presents the key findings and recommendations from a recent Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) multi agency audit. A full report is also available which includes both the learning for multi agency working and the strengths and areas for improvement for each of the agencies involved in the cases audited. If you would like a copy of this report please contact us at [LSCB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@Brighton-hove.gov.uk)

## Overall Strengths



Information sharing across agencies is timely and of a good standard. Good practice is noted in one case where detailed information was shared immediately by the Police with Children's Social work and this led to appropriate action being taken to safeguard the young person. In another case, the CASH service liaised with the teenage pregnancy worker and the social worker to share new concerns about young person's lack of awareness of risky behaviour



Risks are appropriately assessed, recorded and acted upon following the concerns raised under Operation Kite.



There is evidence of effective joint working between the agencies involved in the six cases



The voice of the young person is evident in all cases and there are examples where the young person's involvement in decision making is actively promoted.



Interventions in response to recent concerns are timely and as a result of Operation Kite & the dedicated social worker, interventions are beginning to be effective. Good practice is acknowledged in one case where interventions have been both timely and effective. This is evident in the action taken by the Behaviour & Attendance service in response to a young person's non attendance at school. A joint meeting was held with the school and a tutoring package and a place at the Connected Hub was agreed. Since then the young person has engaged well and her behaviour is good. Furthermore, although the young person did not wish to engage with WISE, a sufficient plan of CSE support was put in place via educational provision with WISE providing CSE training for staff and resources which the young person has responded well to.

## Recommendations

The audit highlighted a number of recommendations for the Vulnerable Children's Monitoring Group & the CSE Steering Group to consider as follows:



A more robust response to the needs of boys and young men impacted by CSE is required. This includes improving our understanding about the risk factors affecting boys & young men including the different routes into exploitation.



Be more proactive at identifying vulnerable young people at risk of CSE through the regular review of Children in Need and Children on CP Plans.



Strengthen the risk management process for children and young people at risk of and/or impacted by CSE. It is proposed that one of the remits of the CSE/Missing Team will be to co-ordinate multi agency plans, ensure that they are clearly recorded and then ensure that they are progressing well with risks being reduced.



Adapt our support services for young people so that they are assertive, flexible, and accessible. For example, a one stop integrated service for adolescents that utilises outreach to actively seek out vulnerable young people, builds their trust and engages them in services which complement the statutory services they may already be receiving.



Related to the point above, there needs to be a clearer pathway and better, more timely availability of CAMHS (Child & Adolescent Mental Health) for children and young people who are impacted by CSE through for e.g. assertive outreach and/or a mechanism for self referral to make it easier to access help and support.



Recognise the expertise held by the Third Sector in this area and utilise the professional consultation and independence from statutory services.



Recognise the support vulnerable young people need through the key transition points e.g. when young people move from Children's Services to Adult Services. Often the age limits and eligibility criteria vary from one service to another which make it difficult for young people to navigate.



The risks and reality of CSE need to be even more explicitly highlighted with staff so that intervention is early and effective – engagement with school appears to be a significant proactive factor in children and young people's lives and ensures that there are positive interactions with adults.

**What Next?** The full report was presented to the LSCB Monitoring & Evaluation Sub Committee on the 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015 and the recommendations will be taken forward by the Strategic CSE Group.

**Local Support** If you suspect CSE is happening locally, call [Sussex Police](#) on **101** and quote Operation Kite. If you are worried about a child call the MASH on **01273 290400**. For advice on supporting young people who are victims of CSE locally contact [The Wise Project](#) on 01273 222 583

## Useful Links

[Barnardo's](#) have been working to end CSE for many years and have undertaken a lot of research as well as launching a parliamentary [inquiry](#) with MP for Rotherham Sarah Chapman that was completed in spring 2014. They are the largest provider of child sexual exploitation support services in the UK, and last year worked with 1,940 victims through 29 specialist services. In April 2014 Barnardo's launched an app [Wud U?](#) that teaches young people about CSE and making safe choices through interactive stories. It also helps parents & professionals understand how young people may be coerced into exploitative situations by their abusers and can be downloaded for free from the Microsoft App Store, the Apple Store or Google play.

[PACE](#) (Parent's Against Child Sexual Exploitation), have been working for over 17 years to support families who are affected by CSE and promote the role that parents should have working in partnership with professionals to safeguard their children. They have recently launched a free online course [Keep Them Safe](#), for parents to raise awareness of the dangers of CSE, teach them how to spot the signs, and how to get help & support.

[National Working Group](#) is a charity and network of practitioners, researchers & policy makers organisation covering voluntary & statutory services and private companies working with children & young people. They offer support, advice and influence the development of national & local policy informed by practice. The NWG Network organises regular forums, events & surgeries for its network including forums for practitioners and specialist seminars. They have also developed 'Our Voice' Young People's Participation to enable their voices to be heard.

## Further Reading

[Pan Sussex Child Protection & Safeguarding Procedures](#)

[Department of Health, 'Health Working Group Report on Child Sexual Exploitation' 2014](#)

[Department for Education: What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited: guidance for frontline practitioners, 2012](#)

**Training:** The LSCB Runs two training courses in partnership with The Wise Project, a half day introduction Preventing & Disrupting the Sexual Exploitation of Children & Young People which raises awareness of CSE, and a full day CSE:Working with Young People at Risk follow on course to develop skills to improve practice. More details available [www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk/prof\\_training](http://www.brightonandhovelscb.org.uk/prof_training)

## Feedback

As staff and frontline managers you will know about the quality and impact of your own services, and those of the partner agencies you work with. The LSCB Quality Assurance Framework highlights that it is important to the LSCB to have a constant feedback loop from the frontline to keep senior management and those with governance responsibilities 'reality-based'; not just in terms of what is or is not working, but to assist with ideas for improvement so that changes can be made systematically.

We would like to hear your thoughts, feedback and comments on findings presented to you in this briefing and any feedback on the style of the briefing itself, please do contact us at [LSCB@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk](mailto:LSCB@Brighton-Hove.gov.uk) to ensure your voice is heard.