

research
in practice

Working Effectively to address CSE: An evidence scope

**Produced as part of the Greater Manchester
DfE funded Innovation Project**

Headline Findings

17th Aug 2015

Aims of the evidence scope

- > Review the literature in relation to CSE
- > Identify the key messages and implications for service design, practice, leadership and, where possible, commissioning
- > Identify key principles to inform service developments and ways of working in practice

Scale of the problem

- > Difficult to gain an accurate understanding on the prevalence of child sexual exploitation, since many survivors have historically not come forward, and because definitions and perceptions have changed
- > NWG: in a period of 12 months, 53 specialist services worked with 4,206 reported cases of child sexual exploitation (NWG, 2010)
- > Barnardo's: in 2010 charities dealt with 2,900 victims of CSE
- > Online CSE makes it even harder to quantify
- > Awareness, understanding and scale increasing

What makes it so hard?

- > (In)adequacy of existing child protection procedures and approach to address CSE under scrutiny
- > Requires integrated approach to resourcing, investigation & management, at a national and local policy, practice
- > There is no one gold standard model for service design and delivery
- > Moral rhetoric: sexual liberty does not exacerbate risk per se
- > 'Normal risk' : young people should be both afforded protection and allowed autonomy even if a CSE victim
- > Public outrage? Might be useful...

It's bigger than social work

Busting the myths

- > As well as adults abusing children through CSE there is increasing concern around peer on peer abuse and the risk that young people face within their own social settings, such as school (Firmin, 2013)
- > Both males and females are abused through CSE and similarly, both males and females are perpetrators
- > Young people may be victim and perpetrator
- > CSE can take place online and offline
- > It can be perpetrated by individuals or by groups
- > There is no typical CSE case, CSE takes many different forms

Power, gender and choice

- > A power imbalance is a core feature of CSE
- > Important to recognise the role of power in how agencies do or don't respond
- > Gender inequality both precipitates sexual exploitation and can lead to discriminatory approaches in the very services aiming to address its impact
- > Recognising agency and that young people cannot and do not 'choose' to be abused or exploited

Vulnerability

- > Conceptions of vulnerability are central to the way in which risk is classified
- > The totality of a YP's vulnerability may not always be recognisable from isolated /apparently isolated incidents → may not be managed appropriately. This is pertinent when considering the effectiveness of information-sharing between agencies
- > Particularly relevant to YP missing from home or care, both because being missing increases vulnerability and because running away can be a response to a young person feeling at risk
- > The behaviour can become the focus

Vulnerabilities that increase the risk of CSE

Knows CYP already exploited
Disengagement from education *
Disorganised attachments
FGM; Risk of forced marriage, risk of honour-based violence
Gang involvement/association (gang-associated CSE only)
Homelessness inc living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation
Instability and insecure relationships with families
Learning disabilities
Living in household with a disrupted family life *
Living in a gang neighbourhood
Living in residential care
Low self-esteem or self-confidence
Previous exploitive relationships *
Recent bereavement or loss
Self-harm
Substance misuse (Drug and Alcohol) *
Poor health and well-being *

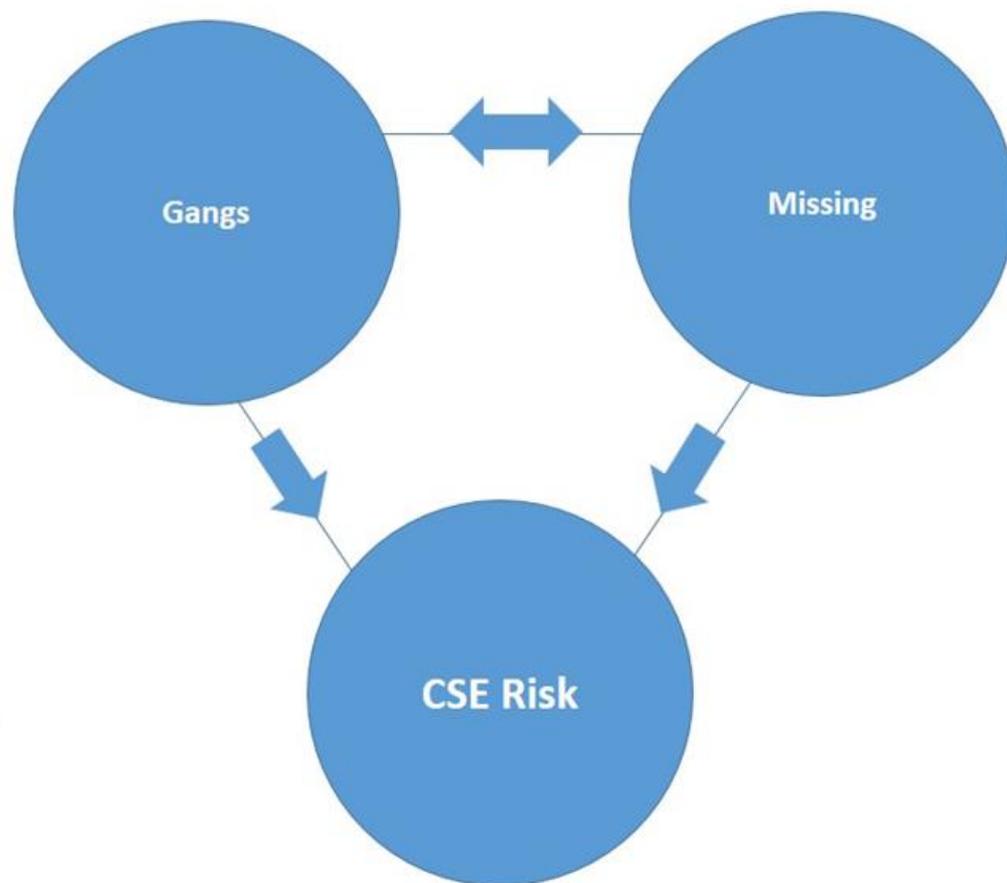
Signs of YP being sexually exploited

Missing from home or care
Physical injuries
Drug or alcohol misuse *
Involvement in offending
Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations
Absent from school
Change in physical appearance
Evidence of sexual bullying
Estranged from their family
Gifts from unknown sources
Recruiting others
Poor mental health.
Self-harm
Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.
Exploitive relationships *

research in practice

- > Missing and Gang involvement : key fundamental indicators to the risk of if not actual CSE. Missing increases risk of gang involvement and relationship between the two factors and CSE needs to be acknowledged
- > Professionals working with this group, regardless of their sector to be trained to understand the safeguarding needs of those affected by gangs

Dangerous Duo Increases Vulnerability to CSE



Models of CSE

- > Inappropriate relationships
- > The 'Boyfriend' model
- > Organised or networked sexual exploitation or trafficking
(Barnardo's, 2011)
- > Peer on peer exploitation
- > Gang-associated
(The College of Policing 2015)
- > Whilst the nature of existing risk may be equally significant there are different routes or processes by which victims are coerced
- > The act of CSE is generally a hidden activity and is more likely to occur in private dwellings than in public venues, although this is not true of peer-on-peer abuse
(Firmin 2013)

Methods *(not an exhaustive list)*

- > Giving presents – especially in the grooming phase
- > Food treats
- > Rewards, e.g. mobile phone top-ups
- > Giving the child or young person attention
- > False promises of love and/or affection
- > Alcohol
- > False promises of opportunities, e.g. modelling, photography
- > Drugs – either supply or paying off drug debt
- > Paying off debt
- > Mental manipulation
- > Blackmail
- > Fear
- > Physical violence

There are different processes that perpetrators use to create or exacerbate the vulnerabilities that lead the young person into an exploitive situation

Disclosure

- > Education to improve recognition
- > Services which facilitate trust
- > Children will not all follow the same trajectory to disclose CSE
- > Community engagement to ensure a network of facilities for timely disclosure
- > Boys less likely to disclose & practitioners can find it harder to detect
- > Professional attitudes less protective towards boys, potentially owing to the fact that boys were more likely to express their trauma externally than girls and risked being assessed as 'violent' or 'aggressive'

Assessment

- > History matters – but so does NOW
- > Articulate vulnerabilities, risks / hazards, needs, protective factors – short term and longer term
- > Holistic and contextual - requires MA perspective
- > Undertaken 'with' never 'on'
- > 'Structured professional judgement' – right tools, skilled staff (indicative not predictive)
- > Analysis and sense-making are crucial
- > Standardised tools should be used in tandem with professional judgement to assess the likelihood of harm. A non-linear approach ensures that complexity is not minimised

Assessment cont....

- › The absence of vulnerability does not preclude young people being targeted
- › Victims of exploitation can come from any background and have no prior vulnerability
- › Assessing need in both the short and long term is important. Always, the focus must be on the individual needs of the young person
- › Good assessment requires analysis and critical thinking – it is not a list or a tick-box exercise
- › The young person's voice must be central to assessment
- › Multi-agency screening tools that move towards a unified conception of risk are useful

Practitioners & Assessment

- > Assessment may draw on intuition and tacit knowledge as well as formal evidence-based approaches to assess risk and meet the needs of YP
- > Intuition can trigger intervention but it must be 'unpacked' and analysed to identify the actual issues
- > Part of effective assessment is supporting practitioners to be critical, analytical, curious and creative thinkers
- > Requires high-quality supervision, not overloading them with cases, and opportunities for development – e.g. peer-to-peer support, co-working, discussion groups, learning circles, etc.

Complexity

- > Taking a linear approach can give a false sense of security, assuming outcomes can be predicted
- > Linear understandings of YP's experiences and need over simplification of assessment & interventions
- > Linear approaches can also lead to a 'blame culture' (Stevens and Cox 2008) searching for causal factors interplay of multiple complex factors are ignored
- > Practitioners must understand different dynamics of the context in which they are working and recognise any factor can impact on previous decisions made
- > Processes for outcomes rather than procedures and tasks
- > *Systemic not systematic*

Interventions & Approaches

- > A welfare orientated approach, which differs from a traditional child protection approach (OCC, 2013)
- > Tensions re working collaboratively with young people especially when they have already been exploited
- > Powerful social & economic arguments for meeting the needs of YP earlier – requires effective commissioning (amongst other things)
- > Specialist services : strong economic case - potential saving of £12 : £1 spent by Barnardo's (Pro Bono Economics, Barnardo's, 2011)
- > Problem profiling and needs assessment

Adapted from - Fargion & Silvia 2012

Child Protection Model	Child Welfare Model	CWM - Practice
Best interests of the child are narrowly focused on protection	Best interests of the child are broadly defined to include the welfare of the family	Supports the 'Think Family Model'
Law-led rather than discretion-based	Discretion-based	Individual needs more likely to be identified and addressed
Assessment based on standardised tools	Assessment based on interaction between family and social workers	Allows professional judgment in conjunction with a standardised tool
Aims at objectivity	Acknowledges different perspectives	Enables realism
Centred on difficulties and problems	Considers difficulties as well as strengths & resources	More holistic
Treats difficulties as signals of risk	Seeks to understand difficulties to find ways to provide support (and early help)	Should enable the reality to be visible rather than occluded by myths
Restricts professionals' discretionary powers	Enhances professional strength	Empowers practitioners
Less readiness to intervene	More readiness to intervene	Upholds rights of CYP to be protected from exploitation & resulting harm
Individual rather than community oriented	Community oriented	Facilitates an integrated approach
Remedial rather than preventive	Preventive rather than remedial (facilitating long term solutions)	Promotes resilience

Barnardo's FCASE project

- › Work with parents and carers alongside young people using a strengths-based approach
- › Equip families with knowledge and information to help them safeguard their children
- › Promote the role of the voluntary sector in building bridges between families and the statutory sector
- › Engage workers with specialist knowledge and relational skills
- › Ensure continuity of workers to help build trust and productive relationships
- › Provide effective training that makes appropriate and accurate referrals more likely

Direct Intervention

- > **RELATIONSHIPS MATTER** (has implications for workforce resilience)
- > Family work: skilled re CSE & in mediation (due to the high level of family conflicts experienced)
- > Working with parents, allowing them to reflect on experiences, not simply dispensing information
- > Voluntary sector ability to 'reach out' to families and engage in a holistic family-based approach
- > Cognitive Behavioural Therapy (CBT) and Dialectical Behaviour Therapy (DBT) - watch this space
- > Specialisms where needed – eg foster care, runaways, gangs

Young people want...

- > **Vigilance:** to have adults notice
 - > **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard; to have that acted upon
 - > **Stability:** to develop a stable relationship of trust
 - > **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation of competence
 - > **Information & engagement:** to be informed & involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
 - > **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome
 - > **Support:** to be provided with support
 - > **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist in putting forward views
- (HM Government 2015a: 11)

Key principles

- > Drawing on the body of evidence within the scope, six key principles are identified as being central to effectively understanding and addressing CSE:
- > Young people must be at the centre
- > CSE is complex; therefore the response cannot be simple or linear
- > No agency can address CSE in isolation; collaboration is essential
- > Knowledge is crucial
- > Communities and families are valuable assets, and may also need support
- > Effective services require resilient practitioners

Young people must be at the centre

- > YP are listened to, respected and included in service design and evaluation; expertise is used to continuously improve services
- > At individual practice level, young people are involved in decisions made about them & are enabled to take ownership of the change process
- > Practitioners do not label or define a C/YP by their behaviour and do not imply or apportion blame to young victims, but recognise that risky behaviour and choices made may be (mal)adaption to previous harm
- > Assessments = needs led, using frameworks & approaches that elicit the particular needs of individual YP, rather than using rigid or linear models. Strengths and resilience factors are also explored within assessment
- > Services are designed with YP in mind and reflect the specific needs, strengths and vulnerabilities of this group
- > Relationships can transform lives; a YP at risk should be an active agent in this therapeutic relationship not a passive recipient of a service

CSE is complex; therefore the response cannot be simple or linear

- › The pathways into CSE, the models of exploitation and methods employed are varied, and often co-exist; strategy and service design must reflect this complexity
- › Assessment tools are evidence-informed without being overly rigid; assessment practice demonstrates an understanding of the multiple dynamic risk factors and how they inter-relate
- › Service design and processes reflect the complexity of CSE, its pathways and impacts and therefore do not prescribe a one-size-fits-all response for young people at risk
- › Commissioning and planning activity recognises that service responses may need to be long term, particularly for those left traumatised by the harm they have experienced, and that referral pathways need to be fluid
- › Practitioners are appropriately trained and supported to understand and work within the complex dynamics of CSE
- › Dual identities are recognised in individual practice and service-level response – e.g. victims of CSE may also be identified as perpetrators, parents may be both a source of conflict and protection

No agency can address CSE in isolation; collaboration is essential

- › Safeguarding is promoted and accepted as being the responsibility of all those who come into contact with children and young people, and professional groups are clear on the unique contribution they make to the to the whole system
- › Strategic initiatives draw on the expertise held by different agencies, and efforts are made to align priorities and resources; multi-agency collaboration is enabled by shared goals, shared language and shared values as well as shared practice tools
- › Universal services understand their role in providing preventative interventions and are equipped and supported to do so
- › Schools and other community-based settings are actively engaged in promoting young people's understanding of healthy relationships and in challenging cultural attitudes that can facilitate exploitation

No agency can address CSE in isolation; collaboration is essential cont..

- › Specialist services are adequately resourced to provide targeted interventions for high-risk young people; they are a source of knowledge and expertise to other services rather than operating separately or in isolation
- › Hierarchies between professional groups are recognised and managed by local leaders in order to ensure that the strengths and contribution of each agency are facilitated
- › Information sharing is critical, both at practitioner and service level; protocols should be reviewed at regular intervals and feedback from practitioners about barriers to information sharing should be used to improve process and strategy

Knowledge is crucial

- > Practitioners & managers across agencies understand contemporary conceptualisations of CSE and are familiar with local and national policy definitions, models and methods
- > CYP have knowledge of CSE, are able to recognise CSE and understand the nature of healthy relationships
- > Communities understand what CSE is and what to do if it is identified
- > Local data is used to 'problem profile' and identify local needs for both universal & specialist services. Commissioning is based on high-quality needs data. Community intelligence is used, where appropriate, to inform local needs analysis

Knowledge is crucial cont..

- › Practitioners & managers across agencies understand indicators and risk factors for CSE and take responsibility for ensuring that YP, families and communities also have this knowledge
- › Information is provided to families, in a way that is accessible and non-judgmental, in order to build their knowledge
- › Practitioners across agencies have access to high-quality learning and development opportunities; knowledge sharing is enabled between agencies; and specialist services support non-specialist services to build their knowledge, skills and confidence

Communities and families are valuable assets, and may also need support

- › The wider community is supported to understand their role in protecting children and young people from harm
- › Communities are engaged in intelligence gathering and 'problem profiling' activity to inform local needs analysis
- › Clear information is available to communities in order that they can recognise CSE and act accordingly, and feedback is sought to ensure this is working effectively
- › The protective role that families can play in addressing CSE is recognised in the way services are constructed as well as at individual case level
- › The potential for previous trauma, including early harm within the family, to have occurred for CSE victims is recognised and explored – but not assumed – by practitioners
- › Families are supported to engage with CSE work for their child and are, wherever possible and appropriate, treated as key players in the team around the child
- › Positive relationships between young people at risk of / experiencing CSE and their families are actively promoted by the professionals working with them, wherever possible and appropriate

Effective services require resilient Practitioners

- › The emotional impact of CSE work on practitioners is recognised by service leaders, and this understanding is reflected in strategy, policy and leadership practice
- › Practitioners across agencies receive high-quality reflective supervision which supports them to develop critical thinking skills, assessment skills and promotes their resilience
- › Attention is paid to the impact of CSE work when allocating cases, structuring services and planning staff recruitment and retention activity
- › Service leaders proactively create a culture where resilience is promoted across the workforce, and are alert to the practice pitfalls, poor judgement and 'blind spots' (which can emerge in part due to diminished practitioner resilience)
- › High-quality learning and development opportunities are provided for those working with young people at risk of / experiencing CSE, which go beyond formal training to include structured peer support; group supervision; involvement in service development; etc.
- › The quality and impact of supervision and of learning and development is evaluated

Investigating historical sexual abuse

- > **Lowell Goddard inquiry:** Independent inquiry investigating how public services managed allegations of child sexual abuse
- > **Operation Hydrant / Fairbank:** Over-arching police investigation into allegations of non-recent abuse of vulnerable children.
 - Central co-ordination of 666 current investigations into abuse in institutions and 261 investigations into sexual abuse by persons of public prominence
 - Work feeds into Lowell Goddard inquiry.
- > **IPCC investigation and Wanless review:** Investigation of allegations of cover-up of abuse allegations by police and Home Office.
 - Wanless Review found no evidence of documents being deliberately lost or destroyed.
 - The IPCC investigation is on-going

IICSA Lowell Goddard inquiry: Overview

- > **Scope** of 'unprecedented depth and breadth':
 - the extent to which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation;
 - the extent to which those failings have been addressed
 - further action needed and steps State and non-State institutions should take to keep children safe
 - evidence from as far back in time as required
 - includes hearing evidence from adults who were abused as children
- > **Timescale:** Public sessions to begin in 2016, 'sincere hope and expectation' to end by 2020.
- > **Conclusions:** Findings of fact against named people but no criminal prosecutions or civil liability.
- > **Budget:** £17.9m for 2015/16 to set up infrastructure and operational costs, including victim support

Lowell Goddard inquiry: investigation process

- › **Workstreams** (simultaneous) : People in prominence; education and religion; criminal justice and law enforcement; LAs and voluntary organisations; national and private service organisations.
- › **Investigations:** 25 (approx) thematic and institution-specific investigations. 5 per workstream.
- › Investigations selected where:
 - credible allegations of sexual abuse in an institutional setting or by a person exploiting an official position
 - institution appears to have facilitated or failed to prevent the abuse
 - institution or person in official capacity failed to respond appropriately to allegations
 - typical of a pattern of abuse occurring in the sector
 - practical ability to investigate
 - no significant risk to current police investigations or prosecutions
 - likely to result in relevant conclusions or recommendations.

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Role of local authorities

Specific investigations:

- > Sexual abuse of Children in Care in Lambeth and Nottinghamshire, the authorities' failings and the appropriateness of responses to allegations.
- > Sexual abuse taking place in children's homes in Rochdale and in homes where children from Rochdale were placed.
- > Investigation into nature, extent and institutional responses to child sexual exploitation by organised networks.

All local authorities may be required to supply documents and evidence. Retention notices have been issued in relation to:

- > individuals or organisations involved in abuse,
- > allegations of abuse, whether or not substantiated
- > institutional failings to respond to abuse
- > material relating to statutory duties, policy and legislation
- > material relating to the determination of honours

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Role of local authorities (ctd)

“I urge you to take a proactive stance towards the Inquiry – to review your files, records and procedures voluntarily and to take the initiative to self-report instances of institutional failure – rather than waiting for us to come and see you.

Above all, review your current safeguarding policies to make sure that they are consistent with best practice, and take whatever steps you can to provide a safer environment for children now.”

Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse, Opening Statement, 9 July 2015

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Listening to victims

- > No findings of fact / legal consequences based solely on victim testimony
- > Everyone who wants to bear witness to abuse will be invited to do so, though not all cases will be forensically investigated
- > Victims and survivors will be supported throughout the process by sexual violence advocates, specialist counselling where required and communication support for those who need it
- > Victims and survivors to be interviewed in private. information will be recorded, anonymised and aggregated to feed into inquiry
- > All allegations of child abuse will be passed to the police. Victims can choose whether to pursue this.
- > Victims can, but do not have to, contribute to public hearings. For those who do not, the summary of their evidence will be used.

Lowell Goddard inquiry: Public hearings

- > Investigations in two parts: first investigation into institution or setting, followed by investigation of wider context and lessons for the sector
- > Institutions will need to provide documentary evidence in advance, answer questions and nominate individual representatives as witnesses
- > Call for evidence to anyone with relevant evidence to give in relation to wider context and lessons to be learned
- > Witnesses can be compelled to provide evidence (not victims)
- > Core participants:
 - can suggest lines of enquiry and give closing statements and final written submissions
 - entitled to appoint lawyers and may be eligible for assistance with legal costs
 - warning letters will be sent if participants are liable to be criticised
- > Protection for whistleblowers from prosecution under Official Secrets Act and unlawful possession of evidence
- > Reports published soon after the end of each investigation

Sector responses

- > There has been little communication between the inquiry and the sector bodies or individual local authorities, apart from the retention letter.
- > To date, there has been little formal public response from sector bodies to the inquiry's formation or terms of reference.

Some questions and concerns for the sector:

- > **Costs:** Searching records, managing responses to investigations and securing legal advice will all have cost implications. The extent of cost and demands on staff time are so far unclear.
- > **Communication:** How will local authorities keep up-to-date with what is happening, their contributions to the enquiry and how they can get involved?
- > **Continuity:** Will previous reviews and investigations run locally in response to abuse allegations be used as evidence?
- > **Capacity:** What is the expectation on LAs in supporting victims (past and present)? Do we expect increased demand for services?
- > **Other questions?**