



OXFORDSHIRE SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN BOARD

Child Sexual Exploitation Procedures

'If you haven't found it – keep looking'



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1. Background

This chapter is based on the document “Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation- Supplementary Guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children” which was issued by the Department for Children, Schools and Families in June 2009. This government guidance was issued under Section 7 of the Local Authority Social Services Act 1970 and Section 16 of the Children Act 2004, i.e. Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs). Local authorities and their Board partners are required to act under its general guidance unless there are exceptional reasons not to.

The guidance provides information about sexual exploitation, the roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies and the procedures practitioners should follow to ensure the safety and well-being of children and young people who it is suspected have been sexually exploited.

The government guidance requires agencies to work together 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.

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (OSCB) expects all professionals to follow this guidance in their work relating to child sexual exploitation.

2. Introduction

The aim of these procedures is to provide guidance for professionals who may encounter children and young people who are being, or are at risk of being sexually exploited. It is important that all professionals understand the impact of sexual exploitation, are able to recognise the indicators of risk, know who to contact for advice and know how to make a referral to the appropriate services. It is also vital that professionals recognise the importance of recording their concerns and passing this to the police/named contact within their organisation. Information about the circumstances and people involved will contribute to police intelligence, and at a later stage may also contribute to the successful prosecution of adults that sexually exploit children and young people. A child is defined in law as a person under the age of 18 years and for the purpose of this document the terms child or young person will be used to describe a person under the age of 18 years as appropriate.

Sexual Exploitation

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



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young men as well as girls and young women. It is a form of sexual abuse and can have a serious impact on every aspect of the lives of children involved and their families.

It is a crime that crosses borders, both internal and international and, as indicated above, can be global in nature. This can involve the trafficking of children and young people for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Cross border cooperation is therefore crucial as it is possible that preventative and disruptive activity in one area may push perpetrators across a border, as well as their young victims.

Whilst it is not known how prevalent it is, sexual exploitation has become 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 deal with it. Childline figures for the year to April 2012 indicate that at least 4% of its 16,000 callers spoke about grooming, organised abuse or sexual exploitation. This is likely to be a significant under reporting of the issue.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner reports emerging findings that "children are being victimised through gang and group associated child sexual exploitation from the age of 10 upwards, and are both female and male (although predominantly female). They come from a full range of ethnic backgrounds represented in England and some are disabled. The abuse is taking place across England in urban, rural and metropolitan areas". "Children are being sexually exploited by groups and gangs". Both children in care and those not in care are being sexually exploited. Children in care and those looked after by Local Authorities are inherently vulnerable and, therefore, require greater vigilance in terms of their protection.

The sexual exploitation of children is described in the government guidance document as ***"involving 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 their performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. It can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; e.g. being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child 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's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability."***

Child sexual exploitation can take many different forms including:

- Exploitation by family members, including being 'sold for sex'
- Sexually exploitative relationships with older adults
- Sexually exploitative relationships with peers
- Sexual exploitation through technology including grooming through social media and the taking and circulation of sexually explicit images of the child



Research undertaken by Barnardos '*Puppet On A String The Urgent Need to Cut Children Free From Child Sexual Exploitation*' has concluded that child sexual exploitation can be classified into three different models:

Abuse Model 1 : Inappropriate relationship/s

Usually involves one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial – or control over a young person. The young person may believe they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with their abuser. This model of 1 on 1 abuse can exist in isolation. It must be remembered that that child sexual exploitation (CSE) does not necessarily involve groups or gangs or perpetrators or victims.

Abuse Model 2 : Boyfriend

The abuser grooms victim by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafes/ fast food outlets or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual sexual relationship develops but later turns abusive. Victims are required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men and threatened with violence if they try to seek help. They may also be required to introduce their friends as new victims.

Abuse Model 3 : Organised exploitation and trafficking

Victims are trafficked through criminal networks – often between towns and cities – and forced or coerced into sex with multiple men. They may also be used to recruit new victims. This serious organised activity can involve the buying and selling of young people.

Locally, awareness is developing that these are not pure models and children may be abused in more than one way for example begin in the 'boyfriend model' which may become a route into 'organised exploitation and trafficking'.

Whatever their experience of child sexual exploitation it is important to be aware that children and young people are not making a free and informed choice to participate in the sexual activity. They often make constrained choices against a background of vulnerability and because of their age, unmet needs or vulnerability they are unable to give informed consent. Young people under the age of 16 cannot legally consent to sexual activity and sexual intercourse with children under the age of 13 is statutory rape.

What marks out exploitation is an imbalance of power within the relationship and how the perpetrators use that power to groom and then abuse their victims and then prevent them from disclosing the abuse and being helped to extract themselves from the abuse. The perpetrator always holds some kind of power over the victim, increasing the dependence of the victim as the exploitative relationship develops.



Often illegal drugs and alcohol are used as part of creating dependence and reducing the child's awareness of the abuse.

Technology can 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. Increasingly this includes the use of social media sites such as Facebook and Twitter. Victims may also be recorded being abused for example on mobile phones and those images shared or used as another means of threatening, humiliating or coercing the child.

Sexual exploitation has strong links with other forms of crime, for example, domestic abuse, online and offline grooming, the distribution of abusive images of children and child trafficking.

The perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and use sophisticated tactics. They are known to target areas where children and young people gather without much adult supervision, e.g. parks or shopping centres or sites on the Internet.

Trafficking

There are two different types of trafficking of children and young people for the purposes of sexual exploitation. Firstly, there is trafficking from abroad into the United Kingdom. The second category is internal trafficking, where children and young people are moved from one place to another in the UK for the purposes of sexual exploitation. This may be from one street to a neighbouring street, from one area of a town or city to another area, or across county borders. It is not the distance that is relevant in the definition of internal trafficking, but the movement of a child or young person for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

3. Key Principles

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has agreed the following key principles to guide the multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation:

- We will focus on the needs and rights of children and young people. Children and young people are entitled to be safeguarded from sexual exploitation.
- All agencies have duties in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and young people and this includes safeguarding them from child sexual exploitation;
- Sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse and includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse, and, in some cases, neglect.



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- All agencies will adopt a child-centred approach. Action should be focused on the child's individual needs and circumstances
- The label 'child prostitution' is unhelpful and inappropriate and should not be used other than to describe a specific charge against an offender.
- Unless it is unsafe to do so we will take account of family circumstances in deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people and involve families in safeguarding plans;
- Children and young people do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation, but do so due to coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation.
- Young people under 16 cannot legally consent to sexual activity and sexual intercourse with children under the age of 13 is statutory rape.
- Sexually exploited children and young people should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders.
- Many sexually exploited young people have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices about sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities they are coerced into. This potential confusion should be handled with care and sensitivity by professionals.
- The primary law enforcement effort must be made against the adults who groom and sexually exploit young people.
- In some cases young people themselves may exploit other young people, and in these cases law enforcement action may also be necessary.
- We will take a proactive approach. This includes a focus on prevention, early identification and intervention as well as disrupting activity and prosecuting perpetrators.
- We will ensure effective joint working between different agencies and professionals underpinned by a strong commitment from managers, a shared understanding of the problem of sexual exploitation, good information sharing and communication and effective coordination by the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board.
- We will have regard for specific factors such as the age, disability, race, ethnicity or cultural backgrounds of both perpetrators and victims and will take these fully into account in our investigations and work with victims.
- We will work with local communities to assist in combating child sexual exploitation

- We will provide multi agency training and development opportunities and will monitor agencies attendance to ensure all professionals have received appropriate training.
- We will consider fully any potential risks to the children and family of an alleged perpetrator and ensure assessments are carried where necessary
- We will have regard to all OSCB guidance and procedures in our work with children at risk of CSE including the 'Guidance for professionals working with sexually active young people under the age of 18 in Oxfordshire'.

4. The Child and the Family

Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. Child sexual exploitation typically starts around the age of 10 -12 years although it has been recorded with children as young as 8 years of age. It can continue throughout the childhood period and young people age 16 and 17 years may also be victims of child sexual exploitation. While the majority of children being sexually exploited are not being 'looked after' by the Local Authority a disproportionate number of them are¹.

Sexual exploitation results in children and young people suffering harm, and causes significant and long term damage to their physical and mental health. Adults working in prostitution are statistically likely to have been victims of child sexual exploitation. It can also have profound and damaging consequences for the child's family. Parents and carers are often traumatised and under severe stress. Siblings can feel alienated and their self-esteem affected. Family members can be exposed to serious threats of abuse, intimidation and assault at the hands of perpetrators.

There are strong links between children being abused through child sexual exploitation and other behaviours such as running away from home or care, bullying, self-harm, teenage pregnancy, truancy and substance misuse. In addition, some children are particularly vulnerable, for example, children with special needs, those who are looked after, those leaving care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, forced marriage and those involved in gangs. In addition children with a history of abuse and those with parents who have mental health problems, disabilities, drugs or alcohol misuse or domestic abuse are also particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

¹ Office of the Children's Commissioner's Submission to the UN Committee Against Torture 2012



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Due to the nature 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. Practitioners should be aware that young people may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily and will need practitioners to work with them so they can recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

Risks

Children and young people involved in any form of sexual exploitation face serious risks to their physical, emotional and psychological health. The environment in which sexual exploitation is located tends to have close links with criminal behaviour, drug and alcohol misuse and violence. Children and young people drawn into this kind of sexual abuse therefore become exposed to these additional risks. There is a high risk of exposure to violent acts such as rape, murder, physical and sexual assaults and coercion into pornography. Their physical health is placed at risk through the increased likelihood of contracting sexually transmitted infections, unwanted pregnancy and terminations, restricted access to food and drink etc. Other risk factors are common to other types of child sexual abuse, and can include physical injuries, exclusion from or non-attendance at school, educational under-achievement, depression, self-harm and attempted and actual suicide.

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. However, parents, carers, teachers, doctors and youth workers are particularly well placed to do so. They should also be able to recognise where children and young people are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and may need targeted measures to prevent such abuse. 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 their welfare.

Practitioners should be aware of the potential signs that a child or young person is being groomed for sexual exploitation. They should also know of local areas and locations which perpetrators tend to target, for instance, school entrances, local parks, residential units, homeless units, playgrounds, transport interchanges and taxi ranks.

Careful consideration should be given to whether relationships which are presented as consensual by children or young people actually are, or whether exploitation is taking place. Professionals should be alert to the ways in which perpetrators can operate, especially where there is a large age-gap between the individuals involved.

The earlier that sexual exploitation, or a risk of sexual exploitation, can be identified, the more likely it is that harm to a child or young person can be minimised or prevented. The indicators below are recognised indicators of sexual exploitation. It should not be read as a definitive list and the indicators should not be taken, in themselves, as proof of involvement or predictive of future involvement. They are intended as a guide, which could be included in a wider assessment of the child or



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young person's needs and circumstances. In effective practice, the facts for each child or young person should be considered separately.

5. Indicators of risk

An allegation, unsubstantiated or otherwise, that a child or young person has established associations with sexual exploitation or sex work should be considered carefully.

One of the key difficulties in identification of sexual exploitation is that many of the indicators are also normal adolescent behaviours. However adults who know the child well may have an instinct that something is wrong. None of the indicators, whether singly or in combination, should be viewed as conclusive proof of involvement in sexual exploitation, but a combination of them may indicate the possibility and should be fully considered.

It is important that all professionals are aware of the potential indicators and are alert to the possibility that these may be early warning signs or indicators that a child is at risk of or being abused through child sexual exploitation.

The indicators include children going missing from home or care, having money, clothes or other items which they cannot reasonably account for, having multiple mobile phones, phone calls from unknown adults, use of alcohol or drugs, sexually transmitted infections etc.

A full list of all the currently known indicators is set out in the 'Child Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool' in the Professionals Handbook. The Handbook is a practical guide for professionals to understand and recognise child sexual exploitation. There is guidance on the role and responsibilities of agencies as well as the named lead professionals. The Handbook explains the role of the Kingfisher Team and includes the Information Sharing Protocol, the Risk Assessment Tool and the Information Recording Tool.

6. Roles and Responsibilities of Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board and Individual Organisations

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board has the key responsibility for ensuring that the relevant organisations co-operate effectively to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. Work to tackle sexual exploitation should follow the same principles as addressing other forms of abuse or neglect.

All agencies have roles and responsibilities in relation to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and this includes protecting them from abuse through child sexual exploitation.



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The Government's Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan 2011 requires that all Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB's) develop a local strategy to ensure there is a co-ordinated multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation and should map the needs in their local areas, monitor the prevalence of child sexual exploitation, plan and commission services, develop policies and procedures, ensure that appropriate training is in place, communicate and raise awareness and monitor and evaluate the work that is being done. Oxfordshire's response to the requirements of the Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan is set out in the Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan.

Each Agency has identified a lead professional with responsibility for tackling child sexual exploitation. Their role includes ensuring staff have access to and undertake appropriate training, that they have access to the Professionals Handbook, that they have access to and use the screening tool and know where to seek advice and support if they are worried that a child may be being abused through child sexual exploitation.

A list of the Lead Professionals is included in the Professionals Handbook and will be reviewed and updated annually.

In Particular OSCB procedures specify:

- How to identify signs of sexual exploitation;
- How professionals can seek help and advice on this issue;
- How professionals should share information within government guidelines;
- Details of Lead Professionals in the key agencies, the routes for referring concerns and how concerns about sexual exploitation relate to thresholds for referral to Children's Social Care;
- How professionals can work together to deliver disruption plans
- How professional can gather and preserve the integrity of evidence about perpetrators of sexual exploitation
- The process and possible responses for supporting children and young people identified at being at risk of sexual exploitation
- How to work with other local authority areas where children who have been sexually exploited are thought to have lived
- How to deal with issues relating to migrant children in situations which make them vulnerable to sexual exploitation



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- How to manage situations of sexual exploitation through the use of technology such as the internet.

Specific details of how these matters are addressed are incorporated within these Procedures and more specifically within the Professionals Handbook.

All organisations that provide services for, or work with children, need to have arrangements in place which fulfil their commitment to safeguard and promote the welfare of children by ensuring that:

- Safeguarding training and refresher training includes an awareness of sexual exploitation, how to identify the warning signs, together with 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 OSCB policies and procedures;
- Information sharing protocols are in place and working well so that relevant information is shared where this is in the best interest of the child.

The specific roles and responsibilities of individual agencies in implementing the government guidance are set out in Chapter 4 of the guidance.

7. Preventing Child Sexual Exploitation

The effects of sexual exploitation are harmful and far reaching and Chapter 5 of the Government Guidance looks at measures that may assist a local prevention strategy.

Prevention means that 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.

Prevention measures will include the development of education and awareness raising programmes for children and young people so that they can make safe and healthy choices about relationships and sexual health, as well as for parents and carers (particularly those responsible for children living away from home) and people whose work places them in a position where they would notice and could report worrying behaviours (e.g. shopkeepers, park attendants and hostel managers) who are not traditionally regarded as part of the safeguarding community. The detail of



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how this will be addressed is contained within the OSCB Strategy for Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and Action Plan.

8. Managing Individual Cases

In all cases where there are potential safeguarding issues, concerns that a child may be at risk of sexual exploitation should be discussed with a manager and/or designated professional for safeguarding within the professional's own organisation and a decision made as to whether there should be a referral to Children's Social Care.

Anyone who has regular contact with children is in a good position to notice indicators including changes in behaviour and physical signs that may indicate involvement in sexual exploitation.

All evidence should be gathered and details recorded in the child's file. This should include details of any periods where the child is missing, returning with cash, phones or gifts, any behavioural or personal presentation issues and the child's account of where they have been and who they have been with.

Details of any adults linked with the child, addresses, car registration numbers etc should also be recorded along with information about other children they are associating with.

It is acceptable for parents and carers, including foster carers and residential child care staff to confiscate a child's mobile phone if they have reason to suspect that it is being used by abusers to contact the child. The police may also request the phone is removed and given to them for evidential analysis.

It is also acceptable and may be necessary for parents and carers, including foster carers and residential child care staff to preserve the child's clothing (including underwear) when they suspect there may be forensic evidence. In such cases the clothing should be handled as little as possible and placed in clean bags before being handed to the police.

They should also know how to monitor online spaces and be prepared to request that the police access reports where they are suspicious that a child is being groomed online.

All professionals have access to the CSE Screening Tool (In the Professionals Handbook) and this should be completed in respect of any child aged 10 years and above where there are concerns that the child may be exposed to CSE.



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The wishes and feelings of the child or young person if appropriate should be obtained and taken into account when deciding how to proceed but practitioners should be aware that perpetrators may have groomed the child's responses and that the child may be denying what is happening.

Where an agency is fearful of losing the engagement of a child or young person by reporting their concern to Children's Social Care, the agency should ensure a manager is fully briefed and the manager must discuss this with Children's Social Care to agree a way forward. To not share information when there are child protection concerns about a child is never acceptable.

Information Sharing

All statutory agencies working within OSCB are required to approve, commit and sign up to the Information Sharing Protocol. This Protocol sets out the key requirements with regards to, information sharing between agencies and secure storage and transfer of sensitive data.

See also Information Sharing Protocol

<http://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/pdf/Information%20Sharing%20Protocol%20OSCB.pdf>.

Referrals

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 a Child in Need under the Children Act 1989 and should be referred to Children's Social Care under the Referrals (including Referral Pathway) Procedure. The assessment team will complete the CSE screening tool if this has not already been completed and will determine whether the case should be referred on to the Kingfisher Team. Children, Education and Families and the Police should consult and share information concerning incidents or suspicions of sexual exploitation within 24 hours. This includes sharing all the evidence gathered and recorded. A decision should be made whether a criminal offence has been committed or may have been committed against a child or young person.

Where a decision to prosecute has been taken, the priority must be to investigate and prosecute those who abuse, coerce or groom children into sexual exploitation. There will often be tensions between the need to conduct the investigation and the need to immediately safeguard children and young people. Where there is such a tension this should be discussed in a strategy meeting where the risks to the children concerned and wider safeguarding risks should be assessed and recorded. Where this is identified as a critical issue the advice of The Deputy Director Children's Social Care should be sought.



Assessment

The start point for all referrals where CSE is suspected should be to complete the CSE Screening Tool if this has not already been completed by the referrer.

(See the Professionals Handbook for the CSE Screening Tool)

The normal assessment process should be followed and if there is reasonable cause to suspect the child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm S47 enquiries should commence.

Specific action during the assessment of a child who has been or is suspected of being sexually exploited should include obtaining relevant information from all professionals in contact with the child and those who have expertise in working with children and young people involved in sexual exploitation.

The child's individual needs and circumstances must be carefully assessed, including issues of ethnicity, gender, culture, disability, religion and sexual orientation.

In view of the range of complex and contentious legal and ethical issues involved in CSE, consideration should always be given as to whether to seek legal advice from the Child Care Legal Team.

Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy Discussion and Section 47 Enquiries

Wherever a child is thought to be suffering significant harm through CSE, the police and social care will work together. Information will be recorded on both Frameworkki (the Children Social Care case management system) and CEDAR (the police information management system).

Once a case has been referred on to the Kingfisher Team they will convene a CSE strategy discussion which should include all agencies with information about the child and family and children's social care (even if the family were not previously known). In cases of CSE this should be a face to face meeting unless exceptional circumstances mean a telephone discussion is sufficient. The manager making such a decision should clearly record the reason why a meeting is not necessary.

The Strategy Discussion should take place as quickly as possible but must be within 5 working days of the referral being made.

If the child is willing to make a complaint the police will ensure that a statement and/or video interview is undertaken as a priority. This should be done quickly to try and secure the child's evidence whilst it is fresh in their minds and before the abusers have the opportunity to pressurise the child further.

If the child is not willing to make a complaint the police should still speak to the child to gather any information the child is willing or able to give.



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Where appropriate the child should have a medical examination which will be coordinated by the health representative in the Kingfisher Team. This should have two key priorities – to ensure that the child is safe and well, is screened for any sexually transmitted infection or any injuries and receives treatment as necessary and to secure any forensic evidence. This may be done prior to the strategy discussion.

It is important that all professionals should be alert to the opportunity to retrieve mobile phones or potential forensic evidence e.g. clothing, underwear etc. Police advice should be sought as to the appropriate items and means of retrieval. The police will also advise and lead in regard to photographic evidence, should this be relevant.

The strategy discussion will be convened and chaired by the Kingfisher Team manager and should:

- Ensure all information is shared from all agencies in contact with the child and family
- Share any intelligence about named or suspected perpetrators (unless the police determine this is not appropriate)
- Assess the information available and determine whether there are gaps which need to be filled
- Determine whether the thresholds for S47 enquiries have been reached and if so plan the enquiry
- Determine whether plans are needed to immediately safeguard the child and if so agree those plans
- Determine whether there is sufficient information for the police to take action in relation to perpetrators and if so plan that action, including the issuing of child abduction warning notices
- Determine what support is needed for the child and family and plan that support
- Determine any other action required
- Determine whether further meetings/discussions are needed and the timescale for that to happen.

The outcome of the strategy meeting must be clear actions, expected outcomes, timescales and clarity about which person/agency is responsible for what. This must be clearly recorded and circulated promptly after the meeting.

NB A Section 47 Enquiry must be undertaken if at any stage:

- There is reasonable evidence that the child is suffering, or is likely to suffer, Significant Harm (including through child sexual exploitation) ; or
- The child is in Police Protection; or
- The child is the subject of an Emergency Protection Order.



Immediate Protection

Where immediate action to safeguard a child is required, it may involve removing the child from their home, current care placement or address of a person who is exploiting them to a safe place. However, those working with children in these circumstances must never underestimate the power of perpetrators to find out where the child is. The child's mobile phone may need to be confiscated to prevent the child informing the abusers where they are.

Initially this may mean the police have to use their powers of Police Protection to remove the child to a safe place. This may be a hospital if the child is injured or unwell. Wherever possible the 'safe place' should not be a police station and certainly not a cell and this requires the prompt cooperation of partner agencies to ensure a more appropriate immediate place of safety is identified for the child.

Where the child needs to be looked after planning should include the use of skilled foster carer placements, residential care and in extreme circumstances secure accommodation. An Emergency Protection Order may be required so legal advice should be sought quickly.

Such children will need placements with carers who have experience of building trusting relationships and skills at containing young people. Carers will need strong support systems which includes out-of-hours support. It may be necessary to place the child some distance away to protect them. Where possible this should be within the Oxfordshire county boundary and where this is not the plan, the reasons should be clearly recorded.

A decision to place a child or young person in secure accommodation should only be considered in extreme circumstances, when they are at risk of significant harm and could not be safeguarded in any other type of placement. Legal advice must be obtained when a secure unit placement is being considered. In cases where the child is under the age of 13, the approval of the Secretary of State must be sought. Where a child is believed to be being abused through child sexual exploitation and/or is frequently absconding from their placement and is believed to be at risk when doing so the use of secure accommodation to ensure the child's safety should be considered. The Deputy Director of Children's Social Care has the authority within Children, Education and Families to authorise secure accommodation. In their absence a scheme of delegation can be followed.

Intervention and Support

Agencies should recognise that there may be strong relationships between the child and the abuser(s) and it may be difficult for the child to break this relationship. The child is likely to have been groomed to a point where they may not perceive themselves as being abused, believing the relationship is consensual and often the child will have been threatened and abused to ensure they do not tell protective adults what is happening to them.



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A strategy should therefore be developed, with the child and family's co-operation wherever possible, to address the child's needs and help him or her to move on from the exploitative situation. It could include specialist therapeutic support, mentoring to assist a return to education or employment, outreach work, help to secure appropriate health services, and assistance to develop a positive network of friends and relatives.

The particular circumstances of the child must be taken into account in developing the multi-agency response and the plan for services should be tailored to meet their specific needs, e.g. whether they are Looked After and/or preparing to leave care, not receiving a suitable education, often missing from home or care, may have been trafficked and/or may be affected by gang activity.

Parents and carers should be fully engaged in this process unless they are implicated in the sexual exploitation.

Experience tells us that the process of removing a child from sexual exploitation is not straight forward and professionals should anticipate some difficulties and set backs. What matters is that these are recognised and responded to and that the sense of 'never giving up' on the child prevails.

The Professionals Child Sexual Exploitation Handbook contains more information about what types of support and intervention will be required.

9. Identifying, Disrupting and Prosecuting Perpetrators

Identifying, disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators is a key part of work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people from sexual exploitation.

Identification of Perpetrators

While the police and criminal justice agencies lead on the identification of perpetrators, the support of all partners in gathering and recording information/evidence is vital. All those involved in working with or caring for a child who is suspected to be at risk of sexual exploitation should continually gather, record and share information, as appropriate, to this end. Parents and carers should be encouraged and supported to do so, ensuring that information is recorded in such a way that it can be used by the Crown Prosecution Service and accepted in Court. More detail about this can be found in the Handbook.

Disruption

Disruption activity is a key aspect of safeguarding children from child sexual exploitation. We aim to disrupt the activities of perpetrators and prevent them from sexually exploiting children.



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The use of disruption techniques (below) will be decided by the Kingfisher Team who will co-ordinate the roles of different professionals and agencies involved, ensuring effective joint working.

We will do this by:

- Joint police and social care street operations, including viable operations to ensure perpetrators know that we are aware of the grooming and exploitation and are taking action
- Issuing Child Abduction Warning Notices (aka harbourers warning) A Child Abduction Warning Notice identifies the child/young person and confirms the suspect has no permission to associate with or to contact or communicate with the child. If the suspect continues to do so, they may be arrested and prosecuted for an offence under Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984 (a child under 16) or Section 49 of the Children and Young Persons Act 1989 (child under 18 under a care order). <http://www.npia.police.uk/en/17488.htm>
- Proactive use of legislation to challenge and confront inappropriate behaviour, including:
 - Anit-Social Behaviour Orders
 - Risk of Sexual Harm Orders
 - Sexual Offences Prevention Order
- Using legislation to enforce/prevent children accessing certain premises, businesses or individuals
- Using housing legislation to close down premises used for the purposes of CSE
- Targeting taxi drivers who knowingly transport vulnerable young for the purposes of CSE (including revocation of individual tax drivers licences)
- Visible policing in areas where CSE is known or suspected to be taking place
- Trigger plans to deal with any street contact with victims or suspects

Prosecution

Our aim is to identify and prosecute offenders to remove them from the ability to continue to offend and to send out strong messages that child sexual exploitation will not be tolerated in Oxfordshire.

We will do this through:

- The identification of suspected perpetrators through information sharing, local intelligence, observation
- Identifying a full range of offences or potential offences and taking action to prosecute
- Working closely with the Crown Prosecution Service to secure convictions
- Good multi agency co-operation
- Providing effective support for victims and witnesses.
- Not being put off by victims unwillingness or fear to talk



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- Joint working through co-located Kingfisher Team.

There are a range of criminal offences that perpetrators may have committed, e.g. under the Sexual Offences Act 2003. Immigration offences may also be relevant, as well as drugs offences, tax evasion or benefit fraud. Annex A of the Government Guidance sets out details of the legislative framework.

Where a young person wants and is able to be part of a prosecution, it is essential that they are supported through this process and after the prosecution has taken place. Many of the issues facing young victims and witnesses are addressed in a CPS 2006 Policy document on prosecuting cases involving children and young people as victims and witnesses. Police officers working in the Kingfisher Team will take the lead in ensuring special measures are in place for children and young people giving evidence.

Child Protection Is Everybody's Business:

All practitioners working with children and young people should ensure they have completed the e learning module on child sexual exploitation, have a copy of the Professionals Toolkit , understand how to use the screening tool and determine with their manager whether they should undertake additional multi agency or specialist training.



Other relevant guidance:

Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 Supplementary Guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation

<https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationDetail/Page1/DCSF-00689-2009>

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan DfE 2011

<http://media.education.gov.uk/assets/files/pdf/c/tackling%20child%20sexual%20exploitation%20action%20plan.pdf>

'Puppet On A String The Urgent Need to Cut Children Free From Child Sexual Exploitation' http://www.barnardos.org.uk/ctf_puppetonastring_report_final

Other linked OSCB documents:

Information Sharing Protocol

<file:///Y:/Early%20Years%20and%20Family%20Support/C&F%20Senior%20Management/OSCB/Conferences/CSE%20Conference%20-%202012/Delegate%20packs/04%20-%20CSE%20procedures.doc>

Joint Protocol concerning children and young people who run away or go missing from home or care

<http://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/pdf/Protocol%20with%20Police%20re%20missing%20children.pdf>

Guidance for professionals working with sexually active under the age of 18 in Oxfordshire

[http://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/pdf/SexuallyActiveU18sGuidance%20Final%20October%202008%20\(2\).pdf](http://oxfordshirescb.proceduresonline.com/pdf/SexuallyActiveU18sGuidance%20Final%20October%202008%20(2).pdf)

Child Sexual Exploitation a Professionals Handbook

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy

Oxfordshire Safeguarding Children Board Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan