

Appendix A – Addressing the risk of child sexual exploitation in Barnet

Contents

1. Acronyms	2
2. Executive summary	2
2.1. Key points	2
2.1.1 Activity	2
2.1.2 Response	2
3. Introduction	3
3.1. The national picture	3
3.1.1 Learning from Rotherham	3
3.1.2 Learning from wider areas	4
4. CSE position in Barnet	5
4.1. Management data	5
4.1.1 Referrals	5
4.1.2 Sources of referrals	6
4.1.3 Demographics	6
5. Barnet’s response to CSE	7
5.1. Operational progress	7
5.1.1 CSE coordinator	7
5.1.2 Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel	7
5.1.3 CSE / Missing / Serious Youth Violence Strategic Group	7
5.1.4 Keeping Young People Safe (KYPS) in Burnt Oak and surrounding areas	8
5.1.5 Passenger transport / licensed premises	8
5.1.6 MsUnderstood	8
5.1.7 CSE peer review – Barnet and Ealing	8
5.1.8 Tracking, monitoring and audit	9
5.2. Work going forward	9
5.2.1 CSE strategy / action plan	9
5.2.2 Education	10
5.2.3 Community safety	10
5.2.4 Business community	10

1. Acronyms

ALDCS	Association of London Directors of Children's Services
BSCB	Barnet Safeguarding Children Board
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
KYPS	Keeping Young People Safe (project in Burnt Oak and surrounding areas)
MASE	Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation panel
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MBC	Metropolitan Borough Council
OCC	Office of the Children's Commissioner
PHSE	Personal, Social, Health and Economic education
QA	Quality Assurance

2. Executive summary

2.1. Key points

2.1.1 Activity

- The government have made a number of important publications on 3 March 2015 which includes the government's response to failures to protect children from sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham;
- Awareness of CSE locally is being driven by high profile reviews into the failings of authorities such as Rotherham and Oxfordshire to address the issue of CSE in their areas;
- Referrals to safeguarding services in Barnet relating to CSE appear to be rising in line with a growing awareness of the issue nationally;
- There are many variables and interrelations associated with CSE, but a lack of available national comparator data makes drawing firm conclusions about its relative prevalence in Barnet difficult;

2.1.2 Response

- The Council has invested £250,000 in services to address the issues of CSE and serious youth violence, with a joined up governance structure to ensure effective strategic oversight of the various operational initiatives;
- Peer review has indicated that work to address the risks of CSE is progressing well in Barnet;
- A CSE strategy and multi agency action plan, informed by learning emerging from the national picture and local insight from practice in Barnet and comparable local areas, is in place to take forward further work on the issue;
- The Barnet Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has made CSE its highest priority

3. Introduction

3.1. The national picture

This report gives an overview of some of the emerging learning from recent high profile CSE incidents across the country in order to inform local Members and managers across the public, private, voluntary and community sectors of the potential implications for client facing and interagency work in Barnet.

3.1.1 Learning from Rotherham

The findings of Professor Alexis Jay's Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, commissioned by Rotherham MBC in October 2013 and published on 26th August 2014, have been widely publicised. The report documented sexual exploitation of children on a massive scale – at least 1,400 children over the periods of 1997-2000 and 2009-13 – predominantly by men from the Pakistani Heritage Community. The Council's Cabinet and Director of Children's Services have since resigned.

An inspection of the compliance of Rotherham MBC with the requirements of the Local Government Act 1999 in relation to the Council's exercise of its functions on governance, children and young people, and taxi and private hire licensing, led by Louise Casey CB, concluded that the Council was in denial about the extent of the problem of child sexual exploitation locally and its responsibility for tackling it. Casey said that Rotherham MBC had at times taken more care of its reputation than it had of its most needy¹.

Key learning of relevance to Barnet:

- Need for clear internal and interagency communications about the risks and indicators of CSE;
- Need for more frequent engagement with women and men from minority ethnic communities on the issue of CSE;
- Need for engagement with the business community on CSE;
- Need for recognition of the extent of CSE in local areas and responsibility of Councils to tackle it.

On 3 March 2015, the government published its response to failures to protect children from sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham. Measures announced include:

- The establishment of a new independent taskforce, bringing together specialists in social care, law enforcement and health, which will be deployed in local authorities where child abuse is a concern. Linked to the taskforce, will be a new centre of professional expertise, which will develop better approaches to tackling sexual abuse
- The launch of a £1 million communications campaign, to promote a wider understanding of what people should do when they suspect a child is being abused. This will be accompanied with revised guidance, for professionals, the public, and children
- The creation of a new single point of contact for child abuse related whistleblowing, which will monitor patterns of failure across the country
- Child sexual abuse to be given the status of a national threat in the Strategic Policing Requirement so that this is prioritised by every police force
- An early warning system to intervene earlier, and ensure proper accountability. This includes a new system of multi-agency inspections including Ofsted, Her Majesty's Inspectorate of

¹ *Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council*, February 2015

Constabulary and the Care Quality Commission to scrutinise current regimes and assess how well agencies are working together

Barnet is currently reviewing the government's response to ensure that the priorities identified are embedded into our local strategy and action plan.

3.1.2 Learning from wider areas

The Rotherham reports form part of a rapidly developing national agenda to identify the scale of the CSE problem, and how to tackle it. A key recommendation from the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups² was that work to tackle this issue should start from the assumption that children are being sexually exploited right across the country. Phase 1 of the OCC Inquiry reported that a total of 2,409 children were known to be victims of CSE by gangs and groups. In addition the Inquiry identified 16,500 children and young people as being at risk of CSE. The theme of those with responsibility for protecting children being in denial about the realities of CSE – and therefore not believing what the children were telling them – also featured prominently in the Inquiry's final report.

In 2011, Oxfordshire County Council and Thames Valley Police launched Operation Bullfinch, a joint operation with social workers seconded as part of the Police team investigating historic CSE offences. In March 2012, 18 arrests were made with 9 men charged. Their trials heard 80+ charges of serious sexual abuse, involving 6 female victims who were abused from as young as age 11 between 2004 and 2011. In June 2013, 7 of the men were imprisoned with 5 receiving life sentences. A serious case review into why the abuse was not stopped earlier (officials were told of it as early as 2006) was published on 3rd March 2015.

In November 2014, Ofsted published the results of a thematic inspection to evaluate the effectiveness of eight local authorities' current response to CSE. The authorities inspected were Brent, Bristol, Camden, Kent, Luton, Oldham, Rochdale and Rotherham, so selected because they varied in size and included counties, cities, unitary and metropolitan areas with a mixture of rural and urban features. The report³ sets out the challenge facing agencies with responsibility for keeping children and young people safe:

“Child sexual exploitation takes on many forms. It is not just confined to particular ethnic groups or parts of the country. It is inherently dangerous for any child protection agency to assume that they need not worry about this type of child abuse because the stereotypical offender or victim profile does not match their own local demographics. As others have pointed out, the sexual exploitation of children can take place anywhere.”

Key learning of relevance to Barnet:

- Local arrangements to tackle CSE are often poorly informed by local issues and self-assessment, and do not link up with other local strategic plans;
- The full range of powers to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of CSE are not being utilised. Where powers are used strategically by the Police and local authorities, they are effective. However, low numbers of prosecutions are achieved compared to the number of allegations;

² 'If Only someone had listened' Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups, November 2013

³ *The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it?*, November 2014

- Local authorities are not collecting or sharing with their partners the information they need in order to have an accurate picture of the full extent of CSE in their area.

There is currently no national comparator data for CSE to put local pictures of the issue in context. Barnet's involvement in a peer review with Ealing is discussed later in this paper.

4. CSE position in Barnet

4.1. Management data

The national picture suggests that the problem of CSE cannot be precluded in Barnet. This section of the report looks in more detail at CSE data collected by the Council to give a local perspective on the issue.

4.1.1 Referrals

The Family Services delivery unit has been collecting specific management data on CSE since 1 August 2013.

The table below shows numbers of referrals received by Barnet's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) reporting concerns about CSE:

Period	Referrals
01/08/2013 - 31/03/2014	14
01/04/2014 - 31/01/2015	129

It is difficult to say if these numbers are high or low without access to national comparator data on CSE. The child population in Barnet is c.90,000.

The increase in referrals between 2013/14 and 2014/15 is likely to have been driven by increased awareness of the issue arising from the impact of the Jay report, which received wide media coverage, as well as the Council-led programme to raise awareness of the risk of CSE across the local partnership through e-learning, staff briefings and awareness sessions, assessment and risk management training, specialist training provided by Barnardo's, and surgeries run jointly by a specialist Police Officer and CSE Coordinator for practitioners and managers from all agencies to discuss cases or practice issues.

All children and young people identified as being at risk of, or subject to, CSE in Barnet are flagged by the MASH and referred to social care, where they receive a robust assessment by an allocated social worker to determine risk levels and intervention needs. Bespoke CSE screening, assessment and risk management tools have been developed for this purpose.

4.1.2 Sources of referrals

The table below breaks down the MASH referrals relating to CSE by referring agency:

Period	School / Education	Police	Health	Other	Total
01/08/2013 - 31/03/2014	1	10	2	1	14
01/04/2014 - 31/01/2015	23	55	20	31	129

The increase in referrals received from the Police is reflective of this agency's openness to working with the Council to improve the coordinated response to CSE in Barnet.

Much CSE takes place with the involvement of peers, meaning schools are ideally placed to identify and report issues. Work is planned with schools to ensure that their staff are trained and equipped to recognise the indicators associated with CSE and refer appropriately (see section 4.2).

CSE will always have an impact on the health of victims, so work is planned to address the relatively low numbers of referrals currently being received from health professionals. This will include training for A&E staff, pharmacists, GPs and school nurses to ensure that they are able to recognise the indicators associated with CSE and refer appropriately (see section 4.2). In March, the Family Services Director chaired a joint multi agency safeguarding conference with Public Health on tackling issues related to CSE, domestic violence and female genital mutilation.

4.1.3 Demographics

The table below breaks down the MASH Contacts relating to CSE by the gender of the children / young people reported to be at risk:

Period	Girls	Boys
01/08/2013 - 31/03/2014	10	4
01/04/2014 - 31/01/2015	94	35

A report from Barnardo's⁴ based on evidence from over 9,000 records for CSE in England said that professionals working with sexually exploited boys and young men found that they were more likely to express their anger and trauma externally and be labeled as 'aggressive', 'violent', or an 'offender', whereas girls were more likely to internalise their distress. Therefore, male service users were more likely to be referred by criminal justice agencies and less likely to be referred by social services and education. The report also made the point that very few males or females were referred by health services.

⁴ *Hidden in plain sight: A scoping study into the sexual exploitation of boys and young men in the UK*, August 2014

66% of the records analysed by Barnardo's belonged to girls, which is broadly in line with the gender split of Barnet MASH Contacts above. However, the report points out that there are a number of barriers to disclosure specific to boys and young men, such as discriminatory social attitudes and expectations of 'masculine' behaviour, so the figures may not accurately reflect the realities of CSE locally or nationally.

5. Barnet's response to CSE

5.1. Operational progress

The Council has committed an additional £250,000 in 2015/16 for services to address the issues of CSE and serious youth violence, with a joined up governance structure to ensure effective strategic oversight of the various operational initiatives.

5.1.1 CSE coordinator

Family Services and the BSCB agreed to jointly fund a CSE Coordinator in 2014. This has been a full time post to help to develop Council structures around CSE work, as well as to support and improve practice across all agencies. The CSE Coordinator has been supporting parents and relatives through online resources offering advice and raising awareness of the risks of CSE. Later in this report an outline is given of work to be undertaken in future.

5.1.2 Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel

A MASE panel was established in Barnet in January 2014, based on studying pilots in Camden and Lewisham that had already commenced. The MASE panel tracks, monitors and case reviews individual victims (high or medium risk) and individual perpetrators, as well as groups of perpetrators and locations/hot spots. The panel agrees actions for individual cases. There have been clear successes from MASE activity of children / young people that have been protected and perpetrators that have been disrupted, including one perpetrator currently in custody pending trial. Police activity including a covert operation has been generated from the MASE and a range of powers used, including abduction notices, sexual offences prevention orders and risk of sexual harm orders. Observation of the MASE by senior professionals has strengthened the meeting, and staff involved have observed MASE meetings in other Boroughs (e.g. Camden and Wandsworth) to support further development.

Since the MASE began in Barnet in January 2014, 40 children / young people have been referred for consideration, some of which continue to be worked with and others which will have closed due to CSE risks being resolved.

5.1.3 CSE / Missing / Serious Youth Violence Strategic Group

Family Services and the BSCB recognised CSE as a high priority in 2012/13. A Task and Finish group was set up to coordinate extensive training for professionals on CSE and to establish the MASE panel. Barnet's MASE was initially set up to be both operational and strategic, but a decision was made at the end of 2014 that a dedicated joined up strategic group was needed to cover CSE, missing children and serious youth violence (the OCC recommends joining up work on these issues). The first meeting of the strategic group was held in January 2015, chaired by the Family Services Director, and was well attended by agency colleagues. The key aims of this group are to ensure effective partnership working at a strategic level, and to support and challenge partners to adequately resource and deliver on these cross-cutting issues. The group, reporting to the BSCB, will drive the strategic use of multi agency intelligence to tackle CSE.

5.1.4 Keeping Young People Safe (KYPS) in Burnt Oak and surrounding areas

The KYPS project was initiated in response to data evidencing CSE and serious youth violence in the Burnt Oak and Grahame Park areas. Funding was obtained to provide workers to help young people affected by serious youth violence and young victims of CSE. The project is to continue beyond the one year pilot originally agreed. Family Services have also commissioned a CSE advocacy worker based in the Youth Service to work with individual young people referred from the MASE within the KYPS geographical area. The 9 month contract is being delivered by Safer London until September 2015.

5.1.5 Passenger transport / licensed premises

One of the findings from Rotherham was that perpetrators of CSE were often associated with local businesses such as licensed premises, hotels, taxis, and fast food outlets. Within the terms of reference for Louise Casey's review was the question of whether the Council had taken sufficient steps to ensure that only fit and proper persons were permitted to hold taxi licenses. For this reason, the Safeguarding team is supporting colleagues in the Re delivery unit with oversight of their quality assurance (QA) processes for passenger transport and licensed premises. The long term goal is to develop annual QA reporting mechanisms integrated with local multi agency safeguarding governance arrangements.

5.1.6 MsUnderstood

MsUnderstood is a partnership between the University of Bedfordshire, Imkaan⁵, and the Girls against Gangs project to address young people's experiences of gender inequality. The partnership has been funded to deliver a three year programme of work on peer-on-peer abuse: teenage relationship violence, peer-on-peer exploitation, and serious youth violence.

Barnet is one of the five north London boroughs taking part in an audit of local area responses to peer-on-peer violence and exploitation as part of the programme. Recommendations for tackling the problems from staff working on the programme have been incorporated into a multi agency CSE action plan; for example putting together a programme for schools.

5.1.7 CSE peer review – Barnet and Ealing

The London Safeguarding Children Board and the Association of London Directors of Children's Services (ALDCS) are keen to establish how well London deals with the challenges of CSE, and have conducted a piece of work that will assist authorities in thinking about the issues and to prepare for future inspection by Ofsted, as we know that CSE will feature as an important line of enquiry. All London authorities were paired with another Borough to carry out a review against the guidance that Ofsted will use to carry out CSE thematic inspections. Barnet was paired with Ealing for the purpose of this review. The aim of the work overall is to contribute to policy and practice guidance across London.

The peer review indicated that work on CSE relating to data management, information sharing and problem profiling is being well delivered. The exercise highlighted the comparative strengths of Barnet's response to CSE; for example in having a CSE coordinator, flagging risks at the initial Contact/referral stage, as well as in auditing cases (see section 4.1.7).

⁵ Imkaan is a UK-based, black feminist organisation dedicated to addressing violence against women and girls.

5.1.8 Tracking, monitoring and audit

Children in care are known to be at increased risk of CSE due to their overall increased level of vulnerability. A number of children in care in Barnet have suffered CSE and some have needed to be moved out of the borough in order to protect them. Family Services have screened every child in care for CSE risks, and cases are monitored by the CSE coordinator. Increased monitoring and support for children placed out of borough is also being introduced as children placed far from home are often the most vulnerable and can be isolated. An in depth themed audit of four cases where CSE led to out of borough residential placements was completed in July and action plans produced. Legislation is now in place requiring local authorities making distant placements to consult with children's services in the area of placement, and for the Director of Children's Services of the responsible authority to approve these placements.

There is increased awareness nationally and locally about the vulnerability of missing/absent children and the close links that they can have to CSE. Family Services have established new processes to ensure that all missing children are monitored and are offered an independent return home interview (in line with national guidance). This independent interview is currently offered by Barnardo's and includes the child being screened for CSE and serious youth violence risks to support early identification.

Several single audits of CSE cases have been completed and action plans put in place, and a thematic multi agency CSE audit was completed in January 2015. The CSE coordinator is currently reviewing and risk assessing those children known to the local authority as being at risk of CSE, reporting in February 2015 that practice had improved on the cases she was tracking, with regular and detailed management oversight evident. Evidence of good practice and improvements needed is being fed back in regular meetings with staff to ensure continuous learning and improvement.

5.2. Work going forward

5.2.1 CSE strategy / action plan

The BSCB has made CSE its top priority. The Board's CSE strategy (currently being refreshed) is based on the following principles:

- **Prevention:** Reducing the risks of CSE for children and young people in Barnet by effective education and awareness raising particularly through schools; identifying those children who are particularly vulnerable and undertaking preventative work to build resilience and applying knowledge and intelligence to developing prevention strategies;
- **Identification:** Raising awareness amongst children, young people, parents and teachers to secure early identification, effective reporting and signposting to the right support;
- **Intervention & Support:** Ensuring professionals have access to expert advice, relevant training and can evaluate risks and victims have the right support to build safe trusting relationships and regain control of their lives. Ensuring that therapeutic and support services are available for all victims for as long as they need them;
- **Disruption & Prosecution:** Using intelligence to disrupt patterns of sexual exploitation and taking action to prosecute perpetrators.

Findings from the Ofsted thematic inspections, case audits, peer review with Ealing, as well as lessons learned from the work of the MASE panel, KYPS and MsUnderstood projects are all informing a multi agency action plan to take forward the response to CSE in Barnet in line with these strategic principles.

5.2.2 Education

Central to Barnet's response to CSE is the recognition that schools and colleges have a major role to play in tackling the issues. The Council and partners recognise that changing the attitudes of young people towards relationships and sexual activity is key. Therefore, a strategy and work programme is planned, beginning in PHSE education in primary schools and continuing through to secondary school, to help children towards forming healthy relationships and avoiding abusive or exploitative situations. This work will be driven by education staff with support from the BSCB and CSE coordinator. A working group has met twice to further this strand of the work.

5.2.3 Community safety

In responding to CSE, there is a key link to be made between Family Services and Community Safety with regard to strategies on serious youth violence, violence against women and girls and missing children. Therefore, CSE is reflected in the Council's Community Safety Strategy and strong strategic links established with Community Safety attendance at the CSE/Missing/Serious Youth Violence Strategic Group. Community Safety will also contribute to the problem profiling work of the MASE by providing intelligence and data in line with OCC advice⁶.

5.2.4 Business community

In further recognition of the involvement of local businesses in CSE highlighted by the Rotherham enquiries, Barnet Council will be supporting the local delivery of Operation Makesafe, a Police-led CSE awareness campaign for the business community piloted in Sheffield and now being rolled out nationally.

⁶ *'If Only someone had listened' Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into CSE in Gangs and Groups, November 2013 (Appendix 5: Guidance on CSE problem profiling)*