

## West Lothian Public Protection Committee Child Sexual Exploitation Procedure

### 1. Introduction

The Scottish Government defines Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as **a form of child sexual abuse in which a person(s), of any age takes advantage of a power imbalance to force or entice a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something received by the child and/or those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. As with other forms of child sexual abuse, the presence of perceived consent does not undermine the abusive nature of the act.**

Like other forms of sexual abuse, CSE:

- Is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse;
- Can involve coerced and/or enticement based methods of compliance;
- Can still be abuse even if it is claimed the child consented or assented – where the age of the child means they cannot legally give consent or the circumstances mean that agreement is not freely given.

The key factor that distinguishes cases of CSE from other forms of sexual abuse is the additional requirement for some form of exchange; the fact that the child and/or someone else receive something in return for the sexual activity:

- Where the gain is on the part of the child, this can take the form of tangible or intangible rewards (for example: money, drugs, alcohol, status, protection or perceived receipt of love or affection). Fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor; in such situations the 'gain' for the child could be prevention of something negative, for example a child who engages in sexual activity in order to avoid harm to other friends or family.
- Where the gain is solely on the part of the perpetrator/facilitator, it must be something more than sexual gratification to fall within the sub-category of CSE. This could be money, other financial advantage (reduced cost drugs/alcohol or discharge of a debt for example), status or power.

In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person 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 or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. Just because a child receives something they need or desire does not mean they are not being abused. Taking advantage of this need or desire – and the limited alternative options the child may have to meet these – and making them think they are in control because the child is getting something in return can be part of the abusive process.

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 (including in 'gang' settings)
- Sexual exploitation through technology including grooming through social media and the taking and circulation of sexually explicit images of the child

### 2. Identification

Early identification of Child Sexual Exploitation is critical to the implementation of effective and timely interventions. All agencies and the wider community should be aware of the key indicators of potential sexual exploitation. (Appendix 5- Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework - SERAF)

All agencies should also be aware of the need to identify risks and pass any concerns to Social Work Services or the Police. It is essential that there is an effective response from services when child sexual exploitation is identified in order to help and protect victims, remove them from the abuse and to deal with perpetrators. Victims need a helpful, swift, understanding and supportive response, coordinated across partners – in particular children’s services, health and law enforcement, but drawing on voluntary and community sector expertise where available.

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.

Perpetrators need to face an equally swift, robust and coordinated response which stops their abusive behaviour, limits their influence over victims and others, and has a determined focus on bringing them to justice. Action also needs to be taken to try to prevent subsequent re-offending.

Experience from cases has demonstrated that, in many instances, persistence with victims is required before they feel able to reveal the truth about what has happened to them. They will need to feel that they are being believed and not judged. A multi-agency partnership approach enables the most effective interventions and achieves positive outcomes for the victims of child sexual exploitation. The partnership encompasses social care, education, police, specialist youth workers, parents’ groups and sexual health specialists who can meet the diverse needs of the cohort of young people.

### **3.0 Procedure**

3.1 Any concern that a child is at risk of sexual abuse or has suffered sexual abuse should be referred to one of the core agencies (Social Work, Police, Health)

3.2 In some cases Adult Protection processes may be appropriate when dealing with either victims, perpetrators or others involved in the case. In such circumstances, the Adult Protection procedure should be followed. Advice may be sought from relevant staff involved in Adult Protection work.

3.3 Where the referrer has concerns that the sexual abuse is as a result of exploitation they should provide as much information as possible to support their assessment. The check list (Appendix 5) should be used for this purpose

3.4 Where those responsible for conducting the IRD consider the child or young person to be sexually exploited or at risk of sexual exploitation then consideration should be given to arranging an Initial Strategy Meeting.

3.5 An Initial Strategy Meeting will be arranged and chaired by Police Scotland (Detective Inspector or above) within 21 days of the IRD.

3.6 The following professionals will attend the meeting:

Social Work Group Manager, Children and Families  
Head teacher or DMS of relevant school, Education Services  
Consultant Paediatrician for Child Protection/NHS Child Protection Advisor  
Manager, Housing Services  
Detective Sergeant, PPU

A record of the meeting will be taken by the Public Protection Committee Admin.

Assistant

- 3.7 Consideration should be given to inviting any of the following professionals where their involvement is known with either the young person or the alleged perpetrator(s):

Manager of voluntary agency  
Manager of sexual health service  
Senior Solicitor, Licensing Section, West Lothian Council  
Manager West Lothian residential establishment  
Manager of out of authority residential school or establishment  
Social Work Group Manager Criminal Justice Services  
Psychiatrist  
Psychologist  
Social Work Group Manager Mental Health  
Social Work Managers from other local authorities  
Police personnel from other divisions  
Health manager  
Lead Officer for Child and/or Adult Protection  
Education Child Protection Officer  
Manager Domestic Abuse and Sexual Assault Team  
Any other manager as appropriate

#### 4.0 Purpose of Strategy Meeting

- Identify those who are at risk of being sexually exploited by sharing information and assessing risks;
- To address the risks associated with victims, perpetrators and locations by proactive problemsolving;
- To work collaboratively to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people who are being or are at risk of being sexually exploited;
- To take effective action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way;
- To carry out risk assessment;
- To develop a shared picture of intelligence on all threats;
- To provide early intervention to reduce the harm posed to children and young people;
- To investigate, prosecute and disrupt perpetrators;
- Promote positive physical and emotional health and wellbeing;
- Ensure relevant and timely access to appropriate health services.

#### 5.0 Roles and Responsibilities

The Chair will ensure:

- All members are offered equity with regard to opportunities to contribute to the meeting;
- The efficient administration of the meeting;
- The information shared is accurately recorded and disseminated;
- That the Chief Social Work Officer and the Chair of the Public Protection Committee is informed via the Lead Officer for Child Protection
- Scrutinise minutes of previous strategy meetings to ensure that previously gathered intelligence is considered.

Participants in the Strategy Meeting will ensure that they:

- Prepare a report for the Strategy Meeting detailing: risks; vulnerabilities; known associates; family background; attendance at school; episodes of missing from home, care or school; health information re STIs, terminations; intelligence (e.g. concerns from other pupils; "hotspots"; what is known of the perpetrator(s); patterns of perpetrator

- behaviour; car number plates; links between victims and perpetrators;)
- Attend meetings as required;
- Contribute to information sharing which enables the meetings to fulfill their purpose;
- Disseminate appropriate levels of information shared at the meetings to enable further integrated working with other frontline partners;
- Contribute to the actions agreed during the meetings and provide timely reports on progress and outcomes;
- Identify additional resources if required;
- Represent and act as a communication link with their organisation.

## **6.0 Outcome of Initial Strategy Meeting**

- No further action;
- Child Protection Investigation/Case Conference(s);
- CSE Investigation.

## **7.0 CSE Enquiry**

If a CSE Enquiry is initiated the Chair of the Initial Strategy Meeting should:

- Consider minutes of any previous strategy meetings to identify any patterns of behavior by perpetrators; "hot spots" in the community; links between victims or perpetrators previously identified
- Specify the terms of reference for the enquiry/investigation;
- Identify the strategic lead in the investigation;
- Agree a communications strategy including the handling of political and media issues, and communication as necessary with the Care Inspectorate;
- Ensure that records are kept safely and securely stored and a high level of confidentiality maintained at all times;
- Hold regular strategic meetings and reviews, which must be recorded, to consider progress, including the effectiveness of the joint working, the need for additional resources and next steps.

## **7.1 The Strategic Lead:**

- Will bring together a team of people with the necessary training, expertise and objectivity to manage and conduct the criminal investigation and/or Child Protection Investigation on a day to day basis. NB: Line managers or colleagues of any person implicated in the investigation must not be involved and the involvement of any person from the work place under investigation must be considered with particular care;
- Decide whether there is a need for an independent team to investigate the allegations, particularly where the alleged perpetrators are foster carers, prospective adopters or members of staff employed by a member agency of the Public Protection Committee;
- Decide the terms of reference and accountability for the investigating team, including the parameters and timescales of their enquiries/investigation;
- Ensure that appropriate resources are deployed to the investigation including access to legal and other specialist advice, resources and information;
- Ensure that appropriate resources are available to meet the needs of the children and families or adult survivors, including any specific health issues arising from the abuse;
- Ensure the investigating team are themselves supported by their agencies and that issues of staff safety are addressed;
- Ensure that suitable accommodation and administrative support are available for the investigation;
- Liaise as necessary with the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service at an early stage before arranging services for a child in need of counseling or therapeutic help so that

the help can be given in a way which is consistent with the conduct of the criminal investigation;

- Identify how young people and their families are to be involved/informed;
- Report back to Review Strategy meetings.

### **8.0 Information Sharing**

There is nothing in Scottish, UK or European Law that prevents practitioners from sharing personal information, and in some cases sensitive personal information, where they are worried or concerned about a child or young person's wellbeing or safety.

### **9.0 End of Enquiry**

At the conclusion of the enquiry/investigation, the Chair of the Strategy Meetings will:

- 9.1 Evaluate the investigation, identify the lessons learned and prepare an overview report for the Public Protection Committee, highlighting any practices, procedures or policies which may need further attention and require either inter-agency or individual agency action plans.
- 9.2 Ensure that the minutes of the meetings are an accurate reflection of discussion and contain any intelligence that may be useful in future CSE enquiries.

## Appendix 1

### **Agenda for Initial Strategy Meeting**

1. Introductions and Apologies
2. Information sharing
3. Consider each child – risks, vulnerabilities, action required
4. Consider each alleged perpetrator
5. Decision – NFA, CP investigation/CPCC or CSE Enquiry;
6. If a CSE Enquiry is agreed- identification of a Strategic Lead plus core group of professionals to advise and support.
7. Date of review meeting.

**RESTRICTED ACCESS INFORMATION**  
**Initial Strategy Meeting Minute**

1. Meeting details

Present	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Apologies	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Date of Meeting		Venue	

2. Background information:

3. Children/Young People (delete/add rows as appropriate)

Child 1			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Parent/Care Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Sibling Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Child 2			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Parent/Care Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Sibling Name(s)		Home address	
DOB		Current address	

4. Discussion

Child's name	Identified risks/vulnerabilities	Evidence/Intelligence	Outcome
1			NFA/CP Investigation/CSE Enquiry
2			NFA/CP Investigation/CSE Enquiry
3			NFA/CP Investigation/CSE Enquiry
4			NFA/CP Investigation/CSE Enquiry
5			NFA/CP Investigation/CSE Enquiry

5. Alleged perpetrators (delete/add rows as appropriate)

Perpetrator 1			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Partner's Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Own Child Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Perpetrator 2			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Partner's Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Own Child Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

6. Discussion

Perpetrator's name	Risks presented	Evidence/Intelligence
1		
2		
3		
4		
5		



7. Summary of Discussion and Decision Making

--

8. Strategic Lead and Core Group (if required)

Name	Designation	Agency	Email

Chair	
Minute Taker	
Date of Review Meeting	

### **Agenda for Review Strategy Meeting**

1. Introductions and Apologies;
2. Update from Strategic Lead
3. Consider each child (consider outcome of enquiry; whether actions have reduced risks, what further action/support is required);
4. Consider each alleged perpetrator (consider outcome of enquiry; consider whether actions have reduced risk or disrupted activity, what further action is required);
5. Consideration of resources/need for specialist resources or advice (consider whether additional resources or advice is required);
6. Liaison with Crown (Has there been any? Is any required?);
7. Review how young people and their families have been/are to be involved or informed, consider whether further action is required;
8. Communication strategy (consider whether a communication strategy is required - with media, partner agencies, PPC, families, Chief Officers etc.);
9. Summary of discussion & decisions: NFA, Further enquiries or actions
10. Date of review meeting.

**RESTRICTED ACCESS INFORMATION**  
**Review Strategy Meeting Minute & Plan**

1. Meeting details

Present	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Apologies	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Date of Meeting		Venue	

2. Strategic Lead Update

3. Review of actions – Children

Name of Child	Further Evidence/Intelligence	Outcome of enquiries	Further action required
			Yes/No
			Yes/No
			Yes/No

4. Review of actions - Alleged perpetrators

Name of Perpetrator	Further Evidence/Intelligence	Outcome of enquiries	Further action required
			Yes/No

			Yes/No
			Yes/No

5. Resources/need for specialist resources or advice

--

6. Liaison with Crown

--

7. Involvement of young people and families

--

8. Communication strategy

--

9. Summary of discussion and decisions made

--

Chair	
Minute Taker	
Date of Review Meeting	