

# Tackling the challenge of Child Sexual Exploitation in London

## City of London

### 1 How do these children come to notice?

- 1.1 No children resident in the City of London have been identified as being at risk of, or experiencing child sexual exploitation (CSE). We have a small population in which there are approximately 900 children. We currently have 13 children in need and child protection cases, and eight children looked after. A recent deep dive review of all open cases identified two young people with increased CSE vulnerability factors.
- 1.2 The low number of children and young people living in the City does not negate the potential risk to either them or to other children and young people visiting the area. Any such risk must be seen in the context of the City having the highest daytime population density of any local authority in the UK, with major transport hubs and a growing night time economy.
- 1.3 Our focus is therefore on ensuring that robust processes and awareness enable the identification of the risk or occurrence of CSE.
- 1.4 The needs of children and young people and the risks to them, including that of CSE, are identified across partners and alerted to the Children and Families service directly. A single point of entry into Children and Families services ensures rapid assessment of risk and need. This entry point is overseen by a single Team Manager and single Service Manager ensuring decision making is robust, timely and consistent.
- 1.5 The structure of the City's Children and Families service, in which early help is co-located with a generic children's social work service, designs out barriers to transfer and obviates the risk of drift or delay in step up or step down across thresholds. The City's revised thresholds document requires immediate referral to social care and/or the police where actual or suspected CSE is identified. Revised practice standards have been adopted to strengthen our approach and reflect lessons from case audits.
- 1.6 The awareness and identification of CSE has been supported by training of partner agencies (and some local businesses) and the participation and membership of our schools, health partners, youth services and the police in the City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) - City of London Sub Committee.
- 1.7 The City has good engagement with its schools – which are predominantly independent. Maintaining this, and ensuring continued awareness, good practice and coverage within the curriculum will present an on-going challenge.
- 1.8 The use of a Common Assessment Framework (CAF) across partner agencies has been supported by training on its completion. The CAF prompts consideration of issues such as health, emotional, social and behavioural development. All CAF forms submitted

are triaged by the duty social worker and through this process any risk indicators of CSE would trigger escalation.

- 1.9 Protocols and service level agreements with our partners in foster care agencies, City schools, the police, youth services and youth offending require the sharing of data on children missing from school or home, engagement in offending, substance misuse issues and other risk indicators.
- 1.10 The City faces a challenge in that a significant number of children and young people attend schools in neighbouring local authorities, and all looked after children are placed out of borough. Their potential exposure to risk could be associated to problem profiles relevant to those respective areas, but unknown to the City. CSE risk factors such as missing from school may not be shared with the City.
- 1.11 Where CSE is reported to the City police it is flagged. Such reports may result from the direct action or response to an incident by police, public reporting, anonymous information, police intelligence and referral from partner agencies. Intelligence of CSE on non-crime reports is flagged and shared with the Public Protection Unit (PPU). The awareness and approach within the City police is supported by a CSE protocol, CSE Fast Track Actions guidance, CSE Warning Signs guidance and a CSE Action Plan.
- 1.12 The City's "Notice the Signs" campaign promotes awareness of safeguarding risks to children and adults. The campaign uses posters and road show events to promote this message to a range of target groups (staff, Members, residents). Although it is not CSE specific it aims to highlight the responsibility of all residents, staff and workers in the City to report concerns where they notice signs of harm, neglect and/or exploitation of children and vulnerable adults.
- 1.13 Our City Gateway youth service has used its condom distribution programme to provide information advice and guidance to young people about sexual health and positive relationships. This activity is recorded on a pan-London database in order to identify risk factors evident through engagement across several settings.
- 1.14 It is unlikely that sexual health services commissioned by the City and Hackney CCG are those that young people in the City access. The extent to which young people in the City use services in Islington and Tower hamlets is not known
- 1.15 The City's Children and Families team has also been working on a programme of awareness raising sessions with the local Bangladeshi community which in February 2015 will focus on CSE.
- 1.16 The establishment of a Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) will enhance data sharing and the use of soft intelligence indicators to identify CSE risk that will ensure those at risk come to notice and provide a specific focus on those identified as most vulnerable.

- 1.17 A girls' school attended by City of London children in a neighbouring borough has been identified as at potential risk for CSE. In response the City Gateway youth service organised a residential trip in May 2014 for City pupils attending the school to help develop confidence and their knowledge of sexual health and positive relationships - therefore mitigating risks of exploitation.
- 1.18 The City has a number of major transport hubs which may provide a point of entry for vulnerable children and young people. Liverpool Street station links directly to Stansted Airport. There is no evident engagement with British Transport Police on the CSE agenda. Many black taxis and mini cabs serve the City without being based here – presenting a challenge and opportunity to work across boundaries and with Transport for London (in their licensing capacity) to raise awareness of CSE.
- 1.19 There are also a large number of hotels in the City that provide for both business visitors and tourists. The City has developed a toolkit to support hotels identify and respond to incidents including CSE.

## **2 What are the arrangements for the management and oversight of these children?**

- 2.1 The commitment and focus of the City is on robust operational practice and strategic oversight to ensure any CSE cases are rapidly identified and managed. This is led through the commitment of Members and the City's Town Clerk (Chief Executive). A lead Member for Safeguarding has been appointed, whose role is supported by the Safeguarding Sub Committee.
- 2.2 At an operational level, any identification of vulnerability and risk factors associated with sexual abuse or CSE are immediately reviewed by the Team Manager or Service manager. A single point of entry to services ensures clear oversight by professionals. Decisions made in relation to a case are placed on file. The City's integrated care system (ICS) requires front line practitioners to identify and record where children and young people are identified as potentially vulnerable.
- 2.3 All statutory cases are led by a qualified Social Worker and supervised by an experienced manager. This allows for challenge/scrutiny and supports appropriate step-up or step-down where risk changes. Supervision, case reviews and audits are regular and ensure continuing quality of case work and support the minimisation of risk to children and young people.
- 2.4 The City has invested in and expanded its early help offer. This has provided the capacity to ensure partners are trained and confident in identification and assessment of need and the process of referral into services. Our commitment to effective partnership is delivered through monthly multi-agency meetings and a "team around the child" approach to co-produced assessment and response planning.

- 2.5 All CIN and CP plans are recorded on the ICS. Plans form part of the Core or CIN Group meetings and therefore attract multi-agency input and scrutiny. Children looked after are subject to regular reviews.
- 2.6 The City's quality assurance (QA) framework has been reviewed and revised and a timetable established to ensure that practice and standards remain at the highest level. All open cases have been audited in the last twelve months.
- 2.7 The revision of social work practice standards has restated the necessity to carry out a return from missing interview and compliance will be monitored through the QA process.
- 2.8 Transparent and open practice is supported by a formal Escalation Policy to ensure that officers can be confident that safeguarding concerns are heard and responded to. This has been presented to Members through the Safeguarding Sub Committee.
- 2.9 The CHSCB supports the City to challenge practice and identify where improvements can be made. This includes the multi-agency audit and review of cases to drive practice improvement.
- 2.10 Criminal investigation and reports are overseen by the Public Protection Unit's Detective Inspector to ensure effective safeguarding practice, referral to other forces where appropriate, and referral to the City's Children and Families team where necessary. Responses are governed by the CSE Protocol and Fast Track Actions policy.
- 2.11 The City has established a MASE group to strengthen risk profiling through the triangulation of formal monitoring and soft intelligence. This group will also support the identification and implementation of actions in response to high risk cases.
- 2.12 Strategic oversight is provided by the CHSCB. CSE remains a key strategic focus on the CHSCB business plan and as such is subject to the statutory objectives of the CHSCB to coordinate work across partners and scrutinise the effectiveness of the arrangements to tackle CSE. Enhanced governance arrangements include regular meetings with the City's Town Clerk, Director (both in role as DCS and Chair of the Children's Executive Board) that ensure CSE is kept on the agenda across key strategic leaders. Challenge, oversight and support are also provided through the City's Children's Executive Board and the Safeguarding Sub Committee. CSE is a standing agenda item for the Safeguarding Sub Committee.
- 2.13 CSE has been introduced as an important issue within the strategies that support the operation of Children's and Families as they have been revised. Each renewed strategy is presented and approved by the Safeguarding Sub Committee to ensure Member awareness and support. This focus is evident in the renewed Thresholds document, and the renewed Corporate Parenting Strategy which commits to:

- provide specific training for staff to identify the risk and/or experience of child sexual exploitation that may be experienced by unaccompanied asylum seeking minors
- ensure our foster carers are able to identify the risks of child sexual exploitation and can support online safety that includes the risks specific to children looked after
- establish a targeted preventative and self-protection programme on child sexual exploitation for looked after children.

2.14 A CSE Strategy and Action plan has been drafted by the CHSCB. The current peer review process provides an opportunity to strengthen it where areas for development are identified. The Strategy will be approved by the CHSCB.

2.15 The CHSCB Annual Report will provide an assessment on the City's progress and response to CSE and be subject to scrutiny through its dissemination. Specifically, this will provide opportunity for CSE to be addressed as part of the strategic plans of the Health & Wellbeing Board and the Safer City partnership.

### **3 What level of protection are they given and how does the LA work with a group who often shun statutory services?**

3.1 We have no current or historic cases.

3.2 Our focus is to build trust among, and empower the children and young people in our communities to engage with the services we offer. A higher than average proportion of young people in the City takes up youth services - exceeding the National Youth Agency benchmark.

3.3 We have a Children in Care Council and a Participation Strategy to strengthen engagement. We also undertake targeted work with specific groups, including young people NEET and our Bangladeshi Community.

3.4 We are also seeking to maximise the benefit of all interactions with children and young people to identify CSE risk. This includes the proposed use of CAMHS assessments of all current and new looked after children, and the age assessments of unaccompanied asylum seeking children.

3.5 The Police's CSE protocol and Child Protection Standard Operating Procedure ensure officers are aware of powers to take children into police protection if deemed at risk of harm.

3.6 Further work needs to be undertaken to ensure there is a clear understanding of the range of disruption options that are available to partners and how they are deployed.

#### **4 What do you know about levels of prosecution?**

- 4.1 At this current time there have been no City based CSE cases or criminal allegations identified. Protocols and procedures exist to ensure information is shared rapidly and appropriately. Small case numbers for any vulnerable group mitigates risk of delayed or inappropriate referrals and information sharing.
- 4.2 The City's police have access to lawyers with specialist CSE knowledge to allow effective liaison with the Crown Prosecution Service throughout life of a CSE investigation to maximise opportunities for prosecution.
- 4.3 Opportunities have been identified through groups within the City and through the Vulnerable Victim Coordinator within PPU to work closely with victims to ensure they are provided with ongoing care and support throughout the criminal justice journey and beyond.
- 4.4 The police have procedures in place to ensure all PPU CSE case files will be reviewed by the Evidence Review Officer for the PPU prior to submission to Criminal Justice Unit or Crown Prosecution Service (CPS) to assess file quality. This will ensure quality and maximise the effectiveness of evidence and prosecutions files submitted to CPS for all CSE cases.
- 4.5 Victims will be supported and offenders managed by utilising ancillary orders such as SOPOs, ROSHOs, bail conditions to maximum effect.

#### **5 What trends in terms of communities and gang links are you identifying?**

- 5.1 There are no gangs known to be based in the City. However, some gangs have been known to enter the City. Through our youth service there is evidence of some awareness of gangs by young people, but no knowledge or suspicion of membership. However, we will continue to monitor this through:
  - data and intelligence from YOS and the police
  - the Safer City Partnership, which includes MARAC and ASB meetings
  - the CHSCB
  - youth services intelligence
  - community awareness raising sessions.
- 5.2 We have identified some specific issues within in our Bangladeshi community. As mentioned above a residential trip of girls from this community sought to tackle low levels of knowledge of sexual health and positive relationships.
- 5.3 We have identified a very 'traditional' approach to arranged married, as well as some evidence of a normalised attitude towards domestic violence among young men in the same community. In response City Gateway is developing a "Man Up" residential, providing a safe environment to challenge some of the attitudes towards these issues.

- 5.4 The City police produced a problem profile in relation to CSE (online and offline). The last was produced in 2013 and the latest profile is due for publishing in December 2014.
- 5.5 The City's day time working population is the largest part of its wider community – dwarfing the residential population. The working population supports a vibrant night time economy and there is clearly an interface with drug misuse and sex working. Our understanding of the risks this community presents in terms of CSE is limited.
- 5.6 Although the presence of gangs and community issues associated with CSE risks are not prevalent in the City, there is a need for a better understanding of the interaction with gangs and communities across borough boundaries. Such understanding could present opportunities for shared intelligence and learning, best practice approaches and joint commissioning.

## **6 How are you sharing these linkages across borough boundaries?**

- 6.1 A number of existing partnerships and structures support cross borough working and practice sharing. The City is part of a shared local safeguarding children board with Hackney. We commission a youth offending service from Tower Hamlets. Our CSE lead in City Gateway is a member of the Tower Hamlets MASE. The City's police and City Gateway are members of the CHSCB Sexual Exploitation Working Group.
- 6.2 These existing arrangements are not comprehensive and risk being limited in their geographic focus. There is an opportunity to strengthen cross borough working with the boroughs above, and to develop linkages in terms of the CSE agenda with other bordering boroughs, especially Islington where a residential population crosses the border.
- 6.3 The City has no local authority maintained secondary education within its boundaries and therefore many young people of secondary age attend schools in neighbouring boroughs. This presents a risk that some schools may fail to notify the City where children are missing from school.
- 6.4 The City participates in a number of Pan London forums where intelligence and learning is shared.
- 6.5 Police intelligence is shared via the Police National Database and force intelligence bureau. The City police will share information with teams in other boroughs on a case specific basis. However, not all CSE contacts are known to the City police across Metropolitan Police Service boroughs and this could risk delay in information sharing.
- 6.6 The City's size and demography reduces the usefulness and learning potential of benchmarking with other boroughs.

## **7 Is awareness and reporting high for partners such as schools, NHS - acute, GP community services?**

- 7.1 Partner awareness is high and supported by participation in a number of multi-agency bodies. Schools, health services, the police, the CCG and Healthwatch are represented on the CHSCB City of London sub group.
- 7.2 The recent Notice the Signs campaign has included promotion of safeguarding issues to staff working within other City teams and departments outside of Children and Families and Adult Social Care. This approach needs to continue, and could be developed to highlight CSE more specifically.
- 7.3 The “Chelsea’s Choice” production was used in 2013 to raise awareness of warning signs of CSE with partner organisations. The City’s primary school has also engaged in the Drug Awareness Resistance Education (DARE) programme, which helps children and young people build skills such as self-confidence, resistance to peer pressure and knowledge of safe lifestyles. While it is not CSE specific, it delivers skills relevant to safeguarding against that risk.
- 7.4 City Gateway’s census of youth safety (2015) will provide an opportunity to measure awareness and identify where resources and activity to raise awareness and map risk should be targeted.
- 7.5 There is limited understanding of whether the risk of CSE, or knowledge of how to respond, among the businesses of the City’s night time economy is sufficient. Licensing powers may present an opportunity to ensure these businesses engage, are aware and have knowledge of how to respond.

## **8 Key areas for development**

### **8.1 Prevention**

- *sustaining the momentum and breadth of awareness raising*
- *developing targeted intervention strategies and approaches for specific groups such as children and young people, UASC, workers, Bangladeshi community and foster agencies*
- *ensure PHSE curriculum and targeted youth support appropriately addresses understanding and risk of CSE*
- *ensure CSE awareness/training and online safety among foster agencies*

### **8.2 Identification**

- *identify CSE specific risk assessment tool that supports consistency of approach and data sharing across teams, boundaries and organisations*
- *ensure opportunities such as CLA CAMHS assessments and UASC age assessments identify CSE signs/risk.*



### 8.3 Practice

- *strengthen cross authority and organisation working and information/intelligence sharing*
- *identify/agree approach to working with schools out of borough attended by city children*
- *partner with other boroughs to ensure specialist and experienced support available to City workers.*

## 9 Themes emerging from the Camden and City of London peer review

### 9.1 Summary of work in Camden and City of London:

Camden	City of London
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Risk assessment tool in place and used to identify children at risk. Further work to be undertaken to refresh the tool and expand its use across all agencies</li> <li>• Risk assessment review now being done to demonstrate impact of interventions, with encouraging early results.</li> <li>• Strong awareness raising work such as the Parent Council events and campaign which has been mentioned as an area of best practice by OCC and Ofsted.</li> <li>• The MASE Analyst is a strength of Camden's- this role analyses the wealth of intelligence available to build the problem profile of Camden and feed this information into the strategic direction regarding CSE.</li> <li>• Camden's MASE Analyst feeds into cross- borough working</li> <li>• MsUnderstood project has enabled cross-borough working- more work to do on this in the coming year.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No children resident in the City of London have been identified as at risk of, or experiencing CSE.</li> <li>• No prosecutions by Police</li> <li>• No known gangs</li> <li>• Despite this, City of London is not complacent:</li> <li>• City of London Action Plan in place</li> <li>• First Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation meeting has taken place</li> <li>• City of London works closely with other boroughs: Youth Services have strong links with Tower Hamlets and sit on their MASE, City of London also sit on Hackney CSE Working Group</li> <li>• City of London Police work closely with hotels and have developed a hotel toolkit to raise awareness and ensure they understand who to refer into if needed.</li> </ul>

## 9.2 Emerging Joint Themes across City of London and Camden

Though the CSE profile of City of London and Camden is quite different, clear joint themes arose during this review. Both Camden and the City of London are considering their approach with regard to the following areas:

**i. Transport Hubs:**

With significant transport hubs in both Camden and City of London, both boroughs are focusing on the risks associated with transport hubs in terms of the arrival of visitors and the potential for them to be used as areas to traffic young people into and out of the borough. Both boroughs are considering their approach

**ii. Night Time Economy:**

Both boroughs benefit from a thriving night time economy but these areas bring with them significant risk for young people both residing in and visiting the borough. Further work is needed to raise awareness with hotel staff, takeaways, nightclubs and taxi firms to ensure the private sector are able to be part of the solution to CSE in London.

**iii. Cross Border Issues:**

As thriving areas for business and tourism, both Camden and City of London recognise there are three different communities they must focus on: residents, visitors and the workforce. Both Camden and City of London plan to focus on awareness raising with local businesses and companies to ensure they understand their role in tackling CSE.

Similarly, many children of school age may live in one borough but go to school in another; this is particularly the case for City of London. As opposed to taking a fixed 'borough' approach to CSE, both City of London and Camden have already started work with neighbouring boroughs to share intelligence. This will be further strengthened by the MsUnderstood project's North London Cluster.

**iv. Training and Awareness Raising Regularly:**

Both Local Authorities agree awareness raising and training need to be ongoing, single isolated events will not sufficiently get CSE messages across.

**v. Translating information and intelligence into action:**

Though both boroughs feel they have made good progress ensuring information and intelligence is shared and collated across partners and boroughs, it is important to ensure this information translates into clear action and improved outcomes for children and young people at risk of CSE. Both Boroughs highlighted the importance of the Police taking a proactive approach and working with the Local Authority to ensure we make full use of all powers to disrupt including those relating to ASB, Licensing and CCTV.

**vi. Looking at risk in a holistic way:**

The work of MsUnderstood has already uncovered the importance of looking at the risk areas and vulnerabilities across adolescence including gangs, youth offending, relationship violence, risks associated to the internet and social media, substance and alcohol misuse, ASB and CSE. Both boroughs recognise that the key to tackling CSE is looking at the vulnerabilities of young people as a whole and developing system wide approach to these vulnerabilities.

**vii. Prosecution and Disruption**

Camden recognises its profile is more related to peer on Peer CSE. In these instances, early intervention and engagement with young people is key and disruption becomes a key factor rather than focusing solely on the prosecution of young people.

**9.3 Areas where Camden and City of London would benefit from a cross-borough or London wide approach:**

Building on the common themes identified by the City of London and Camden and reviewing the strengths and areas for development that arose through self-assessment; both boroughs feel they would benefit further from closer working either with neighbouring boroughs, or across the whole of London to address the following areas:

**i. Common Policies and Procedures:**

Though every borough needs to understand their specific profile and respond to the specific needs of their CSE profile. A commonality of approach would help to ensure consistency and support across borough boundaries. Camden and City of London recommend that consideration is given to the development of a common toolkit and approach to CSE- this could be developed as part of the London Councils Pan London Procedures and cover a common approach to language, risk assessment, identification and audit.

**ii. Data relating to CSE:**

there appears to be a degree of variability across London in the collection and reporting of data relating to prevalence of CSE. Continuing the notion of a common approach, City of London and Camden recommend the development of a common set of data that is monitored and used to shape the strategic direction of London boroughs. This would form part of the performance framework of LSCBs and be used by LSCBs to scrutinise performance of their area in responding to the challenges of CSE and provide benchmarks for comparison across London

- iii. Missing Episodes through the Day:**  
Gathering data on missing episodes through the day is an important element needed to build on the complex profile regarding CSE in every borough. Guidance and a common approach to gathering this data would be beneficial.
- iv. A common awareness raising campaign:**  
Using common language and messages across London would be beneficial both to increase the impact of these campaigns and to make it easier for all who see them to understand key messages around CSE- consideration could be given to ensuring a joint approach with regard to Operation Make Safe.
- v. Best Practice:**  
both City of London and Camden would benefit from further information relating to best practice. This would be particularly helpful regarding primary schools so they understand their role regarding curriculum, PHSE and staff training.
- vi. MASE Analyst:**  
The key purpose of the role is to undertake detailed scoping and intelligence gathering using information collected by partners about individual cases. This information is used to build of the pattern of incidents; the networks which connect victims and potential abusers and the identification of hotspot areas so that services can work together to both identify and prevent abuse. The work of the MASE Analyst has been of vital importance in Camden and we recommend other boroughs develop this role.
- vii. Common event with Independent Schools:**  
Though both City of London and Camden note their work with maintained schools in their boroughs is good and relationships are well developed, independent schools remain an outlier and consequently an area of potential risk. Hence a common event across London or neighbouring boroughs would be a good way to interact with this sector. As already noted, children may live in one borough and attend school in another so a pan London approach to this would be beneficial.