Child Exploitation Assessment

November 2018

Authors:

Business Intelligence, Northamptonshire County Council

Force Intelligence Bureau, Northamptonshire Police

CONENTS

What this assessment aims to cover

The aim of this report is to provide an update on the previous partnership assessment on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in Northamptonshire which was completed in August 2016. It will provide a picture of CSE in Northamptonshire in 2017-18 and an overview where appropriate, of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) and the links to gangs in the county, covering;

- Who is at risk
- Current service provision available in Northamptonshire
- Good practice and examples of what has worked well elsewhere to address issues
- Existing training and resources available to support professionals
- The level of need within Northamptonshire

The report has been commissioned by Northamptonshire County Council and has been prepared in partnership with Northamptonshire Police for presentation to Northamptonshire Safeguarding Childrens Board (NSCB) and will be publicly available within the JSNA library upon completion.

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)

Local authorities have overarching responsibility for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of all children and young people in their area. *Working together to safeguard children* (March 2015) guidance sets these responsibilities out in detail. This guidance provides a glossary of definitions relating to child protection, for which the definition of CSE was updated in February 2017 as:

> *"Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology."[1]*

Online Child Sexual Exploitation

The NSPCC defines Online CSE as a means of "persuading" or "forcing" young people to engage in sexual activity online. This exploitation can take different forms, including:

- Online grooming

---

[1] HM Government: Working together to safeguard children

- Being encouraged to take part in sexual conversations and activities streamed via webcam
- The exchange of pornographic images of children, often across trans-national networks
- Cyber-bullying, including sexting

The internet provides many opportunities for young people. More than 90% of teenagers now have access to the internet at home. With the widespread use of mobile phones and tablet devices, it is increasingly difficult for parents to monitor their child's online activities. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) estimates that, in 2012, 24% of 8-11 year olds and 55% of 12-15 year olds used the internet unsupervised. When used appropriately, computers and mobile devices can be a vital resource for learning, and a way to maintain and expand social networks. However, there are also significant dangers associated with internet use. Interacting with online communities can leave children and young people vulnerable to exploitation.

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)

There is currently no legal definition of CCE in the UK, prosecution of such offences have been made under existing laws such as human trafficking and the Modern Slavery Act 2015.

The Children's Society report '*Criminal exploitation and County Lines: A toolkit for working with Children and young people*' includes a number of definitions of CCE and County Lines. This report uses the Knowsley Safeguarding Children Board's definition of CCE, which is:

> *"Criminal Exploitation involves 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 them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal nature. Child criminal exploitation often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. 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".*

This criminal exploitation by a more powerful adult or older adolescent can be for a range of purposes, including the selling of drugs, firearms or sex on behalf of the recruiting adult. This form of exploitation is often done in connection to gangs or criminal organisations.

Online Grooming

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) defines online grooming as "developing the trust of a young person or his or her family in order to engage in illegal sexual conduct." CEOP includes within this definition:

- Causing a child to watch a sexual act, e.g. sending sexually themed adult content or images and videos featuring child sexual abuse to a young person
- Inciting a child to perform a sexual act, e.g. by threatening to show sexual images of a child to their peers and parents (e.g. self-produced material or even a pseudo-image of the child
- Suspicious online contact with a child, e.g. asking a young user sexual questions
- Asking a child to meet in person; befriending a child and gaining their trust etc.
- Other grooming such as using schools or hobby sites such as the Scouts or Girl Guides to gather information about their location and future events where the child may be present or presenting as a minor to deceive a child online etc.

CEOP notes that it is difficult to accurately report data related to child abuse; any estimates reflect national and international trends.   This is partly due to difficulties in accurately monitoring regional data, and a reflection of the fact that the majority of activities falling under the definition of Online CSE are likely to be unreported. However, even conservative estimates suggest a widespread problem.
- Barnardo's found that 60% of young people aged 13-18 have been asked to create and share a sexually explicit image of themselves, and that as much as 88% of that self-created content is shared elsewhere on the internet after being uploaded
- CEOP estimates that 20% of child abuse images online were self-generated
- Whilst any child can be groomed online, the most vulnerable group is Caucasian girls aged 11-14. Children depicted in online pornography are commonly even younger, with 80% of the children in online pornographic images less than 10 years old.

The Northamptonshire Young People's Health and Wellbeing survey 2017-18 invited response from all secondary schools in the county, there were 1,929 responses in total, some headline information relating to internet safety from the survey showed that;
- 9% said that they have sent sexual pictures of themselves to someone they know, 3% said they have sent them to someone they don't know
- 12% of pupils said that they have given personal information to someone online who they don't know in real life and 5% said they had met someone in real life who they first met online
- 2% have reported something that happened to them online to CEOP.

WHO IS AT RISK?

Safe & Sound note that there are many ways we can spot the signs that a young person may be being sexually exploited, but even when young people present numerous indicators, it does not always mean they are being exploited. There are a number of signs that could suggest that a child is being, or is at risk of being, sexually exploited. These include:

- Frequently going missing from home or school
- Going out late at night and not returning until morning
- Being picked up in cars by unknown adults
- A significantly older boyfriend, girlfriend or friend
- Unexplained money, possessions, mobile phone credit or a new mobile phone
- Changes in behaviour, for example becoming secretive or aggressive or self-harming
- Increased use of mobile phone and/or internet activity
- Involvement in criminal activity
- Regularly going out and drinking alcohol and/or taking drugs

Warning Signs

Despite the increased profile of CSE and improvements in how agencies work together, CSE cases are still under-reported.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner conducted a two-year inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups. Their 2013 report, *If only someone had listened*, highlights that sexually exploited children are not always identified even when they show signs of being victims. Numerous warning signs were identified in the Office of the Children's Commissioner 2012 interim report, *I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world*, which can indicate that a young person is being forced or manipulated into sexual activity and is a victim of sexual exploitation.

Practitioners need to be aware of these warning signs and recognise that a victim does not have to exhibit all of the warning signs to be a victim of sexual exploitation. Concerns should be heightened if the number of warning signs increase. All agencies should be using the warning signs to work proactively with other partners across the county. This will help to profile local risk and identify children who are exhibiting the warning signs, indicating that they are already being sexually exploited. Appropriate assessment [2]and action can then take place.

There are a mixture of natural and additional vulnerabilities that a young person may present with; these include:

---

[2] Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board: CSE Toolkit

Natural Vulnerabilities	Additional Vulnerabilities
Taking risks	Feeling isolated
Experimenting with alcohol, drugs and sexuality	Looked after children
Rebelling against parents/ carers	Being bullied
Saying out later	Unstable family/ friend networks
Meeting new people	Previously experienced abuse
Ignoring good advice	Going missing
Rejecting authority	Homelessness/ sofa-surfing
Being vulnerable to flattery	Existing dependency
Being secretive	Learning disabilities
Peer pressure	Difficult life experiences
	Bereavement

Self-harm

There are many reasons that young people may Self-harm and the number who self-harm is increasing both locally and nationally. Northamptonshire has a significantly worse rate of young people (10-24yrs) who are admitted to hospital as a result of self-herm. The reasons why a victim of CSE or CCE may self-harm could be:

- A way to express difficult or hidden feelings. It's common for victims to feel numb or empty as a result of sexual assault
- A temporary sense of feeling again, as well as a way to express anger, sadness, grief or emotional pain.
- A way of communicating to others that support is needed
- A distraction from emotional pain
- Self-punishment for what they believe they deserve
- Proof that they are not invisible
- A feeling of control: It's not uncommon to feel that self-harm is the only way to have a sense of control over life, feelings, body, especially if other things in life are out of control

Impacts of Social Media

The average young person spends around 15 hours a week online; watching videos, messaging and sharing images. Despite being more 'connected' than ever, there are times in everyone's life when loneliness can take hold. Feeling lonely, isolated and experiencing low self-esteem were the most common reasons young people called ChildLine in 2016.

A study from the Royal Society for Public Health examined the positive and negative effects of social media on young people's health and found that whilst some forms of social media increased feelings of anxiety and loneliness other platforms gave people a sense of belonging and help them feel more confident. Unfortunately, some people online

specifically look to target young people who are reaching out for support and appear lonely. They use this often as a 'way in' and take advantage in difficult times to encourage them to do things they normally wouldn't.

Within the 'Threat and Risk Assessment' undertaken by Northamptonshire Police, included as appendix 1 of this report, there is detail on the presence of social media in recent CSE cases within the county. In addition there is a summary of Breck's story, a short film about a 14-year-old boy who was murdered by a man he met online, included in the training and awareness section.

Population group at risk

There are increased risks of both CSE and CCE in different population groups, these can be due to age or a particular characteristic. Below are the key 'at risk' groups. This doesn't mean that because a child falls into one of these groups that they will be a victim, just that there is an increased risk within that group.

Population Group	Risks (All CEOP 2011 unless otherwise stated)
Age	**14 and 15 year olds are most likely to be noticed by authorities.** Some victims of sexual exploitation are as young as 9 or 10 years old, however young people most commonly came to the attention of statutory and non-statutory authorities aged 14 or 15.
Children in Care	There are a number of risk factors related to being in care which can make children more vulnerable to abuse and neglect (NSPCC, 2017)
Ethnicity	**The majority of victims were white** 61% of victims are white, 3% were Asian and 1% are black. Ethnicity was unknown in 33% of cases. Children from minority ethnic backgrounds are likely to be under-represented in statistics because of barriers to reporting and accessing services.
Disability	No specific CSE or CCE data is available at this level, however, children with disabilities are over three times more likely to be abused or neglected than non-disabled children (Jones et all, 2012).
Gender	**The majority of victims were girls** However in 31% of cases, gender was not recorded. It is likely that male victims are under-represented due to difficulties in identifying sexual exploitation in boys and young men, this may include stigma of reporting.
Missing	**Children who go missing are at greater risk of sexual exploitation.** Information about whether children went missing was incomplete, but 842 children were reported as missing on at least one occasion. We don't know whether these children were sexually exploited before, during or after they went missing.

Elective Home Educated Children	The ADCS Elective Home Education Survey 2018 estimates that 57,873 children and young people are home schooled across England. This cohort is more 'hidden' from professional services, such as social care and Police.
Offenders	A 2011 University College London study of 552 victims of child sexual exploitation in Derby found that: • Nearly 4 out of 10 young people had a history of criminal behaviours • Male victims (55%) were significantly more likely to have offended than female victims (36%).
History of abuse	Children who have been abused or neglected in the past are more likely to experience further abuse than children who haven't (Finkelhor, Omrod and Turner, 2007). This is known as re-victimisation.
Parents, family and home	Problems with mental health, drugs or alcohol, domestic violence or learning disabilities can make it harder for parents to meet their child's needs. Children living with parents who have one or more of these issues may be more at risk of abuse and neglect (NPSCC, 2017)
Other	In addition to the above further risks could include: • Recent bereavement of loss • Low self-esteem or self-confidence • Links to gang through relatives, peers or intimate relationships • Lacking friends from the same age group.

Barriers to Engagement

There are many factors that could influence how a young person engages with interventions and approaches services for support. A few to consider include[3]:

- Young person fearful of repercussions towards themselves, friends or family if seen to be engaging with professionals

- Young person may still be being controlled by exploiters and have no ability or power to exit

- Even if the police are involved, the young person may still not feel safe or protected from repercussions

- Young person may have distrust in services such as Police and social care

- Young person may be fearful of getting in trouble with the Police or be in breach of Court Order

- Children who have experienced previous abuse, fractured attachments and trauma, hold a deep mistrust of adults and services. Young person may be made to feel they are in 'debt' to perpetrators and/or reliant on the 'exchange' i.e. money/substances- this is often referred to as 'debt bondage'

- Young person withdrawn from support network due to grooming process and unable to access services

- A young person's cultural bias related to race, gender, ethnicity, class, culture, education

- Young person may have experienced multiple professionals talking about concerns with them which again could lead a young person feeling frustrated/unable to engage

- Young person feeling embarrassed/ashamed of their experiences

Organisations failure to identify risk

There are a number of ways an organisation may fail to identify child exploitation, or for those identified to be failed by the system. Examples of this include:[4]

- Child criminal exploitation not being recognised and responded to as a safeguarding concern

- Professionals viewing criminal exploitation as a 'lifestyle choice' which can make a young person feel blamed for their exploitation or reinforce a young person's feeling of ownership of an untrue identity of autonomous drug dealer.

- Services not being consistent or persistent in their approach and closing the case due to 'non engagement'.

---

[3] The Children Society - Child Exploitation and Criminal Lines (Dec 2017)
[4] As above.

There are a range of services available to young people, families and professionals across the county to support those either at risk of or who are a victim of child exploitation. Some of these services are provided nationally without local funding, others are either provided directly by, or commissioned by local authority, Police or Health agencies across Northamptonshire.

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Childrens Board (NSCB) is a statutory multi-agency body with an independent chair and senior representatives from all principal agencies in the county. The NSCB takes an active role to understand and challenge organisations on their response to CSE and CCE. The NSCB does this through both the formal board meetings and through the work of the Child Exploitation sub-group, which has extended its remit in the past 12 months to include the impact of gangs and criminal exploitation on children and young people across Northamptonshire.

Child Exploitation and Online Protection command (CEOP) is a law enforcement agency that exists to help keep children and young people safe from sexual abuse and grooming online. The provide help and advice and a report can be made directly to CEOP by a young person if something happened online that has made them feel unsafe, scared or worried.

The Missing Persons Unit is the UK national and international point of contact for all missing persons. They are the only UK agency focused exclusively on missing people and serve all UK Police forces as well as overseas Police agencies. Working as a hub for the exchange of information and provision of expertise on the subject of missing persons, they provide a comprehensive service for all missing person investigations, supporting law enforcement and other agencies. The Missing Persons Unit also maintain a central national database of missing persons and unidentified cases.

There are a number of **national charities** that support children and young people, such as Barnardo's, NSPCC or ChildLine each providing support in different ways. In addition they also provide valuable research and evidence of what works well for local authorities, Police, Health and schools to make use off. In addition to this there are specific services available to be commissioned to support local provision, such as NSPCC's Protect and Respect.

The RISE Team (Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation) is a dedicated multi-agency team who work with young people considered at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation. It comprises professionals from Police, Safeguarding and Children's Services, and Health, co-located at Police Force Headquarters. In addition to support those at risk of CSE, the RISE Team also work on Missing cases, and complete return interviews with young people to assess the risk they

have been exposed to during their missing period. The RISE team receives in the region of 20 formal referrals per month, which are completed using the CSE risk assessment. These are heard at a weekly referrals meeting by members of staff from all agencies in a bid to present as full a picture as possible. Where a young person is accepted into RISE, an engagement worker is allocated and an individual risk management plan commenced. Associated criminal investigations are normally owned by RISE Police officers.

Northamptonshire Police This section describes the work of six of the teams that are most closely linked to and working with CSE. All work with partners to a greater or lesser extent.

POLIT (Police Online Investigation Team) is a team of 15 dedicated Police officers with the team's primary function is to safeguard children by detecting online abuse and prosecuting offenders for the possession and distribution of indecent images of children (IIOC).

All members of the **Force Intelligence Bureau (FIB)** are responsible for reviewing intelligence relating to child sexual exploitation and abuse. Within the last 12 months, there has been an increase in the volume of intelligence relating to young people being at risk of exploitation by criminal groups such as county lines and gangs. When FIB receive intelligence that a person is at risk of CSE or a suspected perpetrator of CSE, it looks to develop that intelligence so that it can be actionable. Tactics are employed which are both overt and covert. All potential activity by the team is discussed with the RISE Team to ensure a multi-agency approach is adopted. The threat, harm and risk are discussed during this consultation period within the appropriate meetings. Safeguarding the victim is the priority and any proactive intelligence development follows safeguarding actions.

MOSOVO (Management of Sexual Offenders and Violence Offenders) team is responsible for the supervision and management of all registered sex offenders resident within the community. Some of these offenders will have been convicted of CSE related offences. The MOSOVO team has an extremely close working relationship with the National Probation Service. They work hand in hand through the MAPPA process to effectively manage the ongoing risk posed by registered sex offenders and ensure victims and potential victims are protected.

The Proactive Teams often work works alongside safeguarding teams such as the RISE multi-agency team. The teams provide support to the both MOSOVO and POLIT when required assist in visits, arrests, execution of warrants and searches. Increasingly, the proactive teams have become involved in developing intelligence and proactivity concerning the exploitation of young people by criminal organisations.

The Digital Forensic Unit work closely with the POLIT team . They provide specialist forensic examination skills to examine seized devices such as computers and Smart devices, from suspects of CSE to look for

evidence of their offending. They provide expert witness testimony in terms of digital forensic reports to the Courts to support the prosecution of offenders.

Northamptonshire County Council employ an Online Safety Officer who works with schools and professionals across the county. Sessions around online safety, including online grooming, are delivered directly to pupils between the ages of 11 to 16. Workshops are carried out with younger age groups in which the topic of strangers on the internet is highlighted through stories. Online safety sessions are carried out also with teachers and parents in secondary and primary schools. Again in all sessions with parents and professionals, online grooming and CSE are mentioned during the workshops.

Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is the access point into statutory services. The team is a multi-professional group who work together to make decisions in relation to safeguarding. The team comprises of a range of agencies from across Northamptonshire including professionals from the Police, Health, Social Care, Youth Offending, Drug & Alcohol support services, and Education along with other virtual partners. The MASH team are able to identify risks and needs of children at the earliest referral point and respond with the most effective cross-agency actions. The aim of the MASH is to make the right decisions for the right families at the right time.

Children's Social Care – Safeguarding and Children's Services work with parents, carers and young people in a partnership based on respect, equality and fairness, offering advice and support before a situation reaches crisis point. It also works in partnership with, and may refer to, other services and community groups, including Education, Health, housing, benefits agencies and the Police. The NCC teams covered include: Safeguarding and Care Planning (S&CP), Looked After Children (LAC), Early Help and Prevention (EHP), Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), Leaving Care, Permanency, Fostering and Adoptions. As part of the assessment for Children's Social Care support, levels of need or risk are identified and appropriate support is evaluated using the 'Northamptonshire Thresholds and Pathways' document. As part of this, additional toolkits have been developed to support referrers in better understanding the risks and, where appropriate, what support could be gained. One such toolkit is the Tackling CSE Toolkit, which has been put together to provide advice for parents and young people, professionals and frontline workers on their responsibilities in relation to identifying CSE and what action should be taken if this is identified.

EVIDENCE OF WHAT WORKS

Overall, the findings from research and evaluation suggest that there are a range of factors that increase the likelihood of interventions having impact. These include:

- A school's readiness and commitment to introduce interventions (Stanley et al 2015)
- An integrated 'whole school' approach that involves active parent engagement and effective local multi-agency working (Beckett et al 2013; Rawden 2015; Humphreys et al 2008)
- A programme based on a needs assessment and tailored to the specific audience and context (Humphreys et al 2008)
- Duration of the intervention; ideally sustained over months (REaDAPt 2012; Topping and Barron 2009)
- Regular sessions with repeat sessions to sustain impact (Barter and Berridge 2011)
- Content that challenges attitudes around gender and relationships that underpin harmful behaviour (Barter and Berridge 2011)
- Striking a balance between delivering a well designed and tested programme and flexibility to context and audience (Beckett et al 2013; Hale et al 2011)
- Credibility, acceptability and delivery style of the trainers (Beckett et al 2013)
- Young people's participation (Firmin and Shuker 2016; Stanley et al 2015)
- Choice of methods/activities; catering for different learning styles (Fox et al 2012)

National Working Group (NWG)

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board has a gold level membership to the NWG that provides access for all professionals across the partnership to a range of products and resources, including:

- access to special interest forums, which offer an opportunity for practitioners to discuss and debate issues relating to the sensitive nature of CSE, to network, share good practice, discuss challenges and seek solutions
- extensive resource section that holds in excess of 1,200 CSE and Human Trafficking related resources including policies and protocols
- examples of effective practice
- access to the NWG Toolkit

How can Public Health support change?

A 2017 research report from Public Health England summarises the emerging evidence from the UK on the issue of child sexual exploitation. It provides practice examples to support local Public Health leaders to establish a public

health framework for prevention and intervention. Public Health England (PHE) state that an effective response to CSE is one that:

- Is collaborative and multi-agency, with clear roles and responsibilities and clear lines of communication and accountability within this
- Takes learning from the national context but is locally informed and based on an up-to-date understanding of the local profile
- Is contextual, both in terms of locating CSE within a wider context of risk and harm and moving beyond a case by case response
- Straddles both the preventative and responsive agendas, and
- Focuses on both victims and perpetrators

Accompanying this report was a [literature search](#), carried out in June 2015 by PHE Knowledge and Library Services to identify the latest research about effective interventions to prevent child sexual abuse and child sexual exploitation. This brings together the many supporting evidence pieces covering the following elements:

- Increasing resilience
- Treating earlier trauma
- Pre-offending and preventing reoffending
- Professional support
- Policy development and service delivery
- Religion and ethnic background

Commissioners should consider Public Health research and evidence library when seeking to provide prevention and/ or support services for victims across the county.

Cross agency work to raise awareness of Adverse Child Experience, and develop services that are responsive to children and young people at a universal level, that creates awareness of risk, promotes use of services where young people can speak with confidence and disclose in a safe environment their experience and be supported are in place and being strengthened, for example, through the 0-19 universal health services, PHSE programmes, mental health and emotional resilience services, sexual health and drug and alcohol services; services that are responsive to recognising risk, and support young people. Public health annually complete school based surveys that records awareness levels among children of exploitation and service availability.

The partnership across Northamptonshire has delivered a number of awareness raising exercises and training since the previous assessment was undertaken in 2016. These have been targeted to a variety of audiences including, professionals, school staff, young people and parents.

Training – CSE

The NSCB provide e-learning training for the partnership on 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Abuse by Sexual Exploitation'. As well as covering the relevant legislation and guidance that applies to vulnerable groups and how these policies can be applied in practice, the course covers risk assessments, key vulnerability factors and the roles of various agencies such as the Police and social care, so professionals know what their responsibilities are. The training material also includes scenarios to help professionals think about what they would do in real world situations. The NSCB deliver face to face training sessions on CSE which run quarterly.

Training for Parents/Carers

Pace, in partnership with Virtual College, provide an interactive online information package for parents on the signs of child sexual exploitation. This free tool is designed to equip parents with the information and knowledge to safeguard children from this abuse. This is promoted through the NSCB, but it is unclear on how well promoted this is to parents and/ or via schools.

Night Time Economy – CSE resources

In June 2017 the NSCB produced a series of booklets aimed at Hotels, Taxis and licensed premises, all available on the NSCB website. These booklets were launched as part of the ongoing 'Say Something if you See Something' campaign. Those who work in these fields have been given bespoke training materials about CSE so they are aware of the indicators that could mean a child is at risk of being exploited. The materials provide guidance about the signs to look out for and actions which must be taken if staff see anything which may indicate a child is at risk, along with a 'safeguarding checklist' of procedures to adhere to in order to fulfil safeguarding requirements in their area of business.

Awareness Campaign – CSE risk to children involved in gangs

A campaign to raise awareness of the risk of sexual exploitation to children involved in gangs was launched in March 2018, to coincide with National CSE Awareness Day. The campaign aims to raise public awareness of the early signs of gang involvement among children, and the threat of violence and sexual exploitation which gang association can pose. Gangs typically recruit and exploit children and vulnerable young people to courier drugs and cash and once

involved they are also at risk of sexual exploitation, girls being especially at risk - though that does not mean boys aren't vulnerable too.

Breck's Last Game

Breck's Last Game is a short film about a 14-year-old boy who was murdered by a man he met online. It tells the true story of Surrey teenager Breck Bednar who was killed by Essex computer engineer Lewis Daynes in 2014. Daynes ran an online server where Breck, and several of his friends, played games online. It was through this forum that Daynes groomed Breck over 13 months – telling him a series of lies, turning him against family and friends, and eventually luring him to his flat on the promise of handing over a fake business. Through the use of avatars, the film captures the events leading up to Breck's death and also features the real 999 call made to police by Daynes.

The project is the work of an innovative collaboration between four Police forces – Northamptonshire, Leicestershire Essex and Surrey – and has been made with the active support of Breck's mother Lorin LaFave, who appears in the film as herself. The film was launched in September and is being rolled-out in schools across Northamptonshire, where it will be shown primarily to key stage 3 and 4 pupils. There have been requests from some primary schools for their year 6 children, to which this has been adapted for their needs. The trailer is available on the Northamptonshire Police website.

POLICE AND SOCIAL CARE ASSESSMENTS

There are two documents supporting this assessment looking at data from both Northamptonshire Police and Northamptonshire County Council to identify what risks are evident within the county and if there are particular patterns of increased risk in any area or cohort for commissioners to consider when making decisions on service provision in future years.

Below is a summary of the key findings from each of the two detailed assessments, the full reports and findings can be found within the JSNA library.

Northamptonshire Police - Child Sexual Exploitation and Abuse Threat and Risk Assessment

The below outlines the **Key findings** from the report;

- The highest number of Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) crimes and U18 missing episodes, linked to CSE occurred in the North East area of Northampton, Kettering and East Northants.

- Snapchat is the predominantly used social media platform for offences committed online. Previous requests for information from the company to aid investigations have been unsuccessful.

- The use of pressure and persistence for Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) committed online and online to offline offences is one of the main recorded exploitation methods used by suspects/offenders.

- A large proportion (68%) of online committed CSE offences are reported within 7 days of the last offence taking place. A dip sample revealed reasons for this early reporting ranging from the victim self-reporting to the school, the indecent images being distributed around the victim's school, to a parental figure checking the child's phone at night.

- There is a higher proportion online committed crimes with 'No suspect identified' compared to the offline and online to offline CSE offences. This highlights that the vast scale of social media avenues open to offenders are a way of initiating and facilitating CSAE, posing a huge challenge for police when investigating these type of offences.

- Offline committed CSE offences had the highest proportion of non-recent reports (40%), with the average number of years prior to reporting being 22 years. Of the 12 victims who were identified over a decade after the offence took place, 7 were not self-reported and instead were identified through a police investigation/operation or through a known associate reporting the crime to the police.

- Over 38% of both offline and online to offline committed CSE occurred at the suspect's home address.

- Only 18% of reported CSE victims were male. All the male victims (2) of offline committed CSE offences were non recent, indicating an intelligence gap around male victims reporting CSEA around the time of when the exploitation is taking place.

- The average age of victimisation for online to offline CSE is 13 years old. The age groups of U12 and 15-16 had less of a victim cohort. This may be due to 12 -14 year olds having less restrictions in freedom of movement compared to the U12's, while at the same time, arguably being more naive than 15-16 year olds.

- Only 0.4% of intelligence related to sexual offences against children, with 0.2% of that relating to CSE, highlighting an intelligence gap. This is in part due to the difficulty in the public spotting the signs of CSE and the offender manipulating the victim, resulting in them being unaware that they are being exploited.

- None of the U18 members/associates of gangs within the county have active CSE flags. The process of using CSE flags needs to be reviewed.

Northamptonshire County Council – Social Care Assessment

The below outlines the **Key findings** from the report;

- Accurately estimating the extent of Child Exploitation is difficult because of the hidden nature of the issue. There is limited nationally comparable data to able to asses if there is a greater need in Northamptonshire.

- The Children in Need (CIN) return provides us with some comparable data on factors identified at the end of assessment, this shows that Northamptonshire has **7.33% of assessments with CSE as a factor and 2.31% of assessments with gangs as a factor**. Both are significantly greater than all comparator groups (2017-18).

- During 2017-18, social care assessments were completed on **448 young people who were identified as at risk** of CSE (332) or Gang involvement (83) or both CSE and Gang (33)

- Overall, nearly 60% (258) of those identified were female.

- Looking at CSE and Gangs factors individually, this shows **65% of young people identified as at risk of CSE were female** and **70% of those at risk of Gang involvement were male**. While this matches the national picture, the lower proportion for each group could be due to under reporting of victims

- The **largest age group is those aged 12-15 years old**, who account for 42% of this identified as at risk. Those aged 16-20 or 5-11 each make up 23% of the identified population.

- The ethnicity of **84% of those at risk of exploitation was recorded as 'Any White Background'**, this is below the 87.5% proportion of dependent children in Northamptonshire from 'Any White Background (Census 2011).

- The profile across Northamptonshire (Age, Gender and Ethnicity) is broadly similar across each borough/ district.

- The more **urban areas show a higher proportion** in comparison to rural districts or boroughs.

- While those resident in Northampton account for 37% of those identified as at risk, this is in proportion with the distribution of Northamptonshire population. However, the 18% (81) from **Wellingborough is at a higher level than the area's population distribution.**

- Socially Unacceptable Behaviour was noted in 47% of the 448 assessments, this was the followed by 'Mental Health for the child' (41%), 'Missing' (40%), 'Drug Use - child' (40%) and 'Emotional abuse' (40%). **Many of these factors are also recognised nationally as known indicators of increased risk of exploitation**.

- During the academic year 2017/18, 1,206 children and young people have been **electively home educated** (EHE) at some point during the academic year (953 at years end). The number has doubled from the 2014/15 figure of 595 at some point in the year (521 at years end). Over the 6 years preceding the start of the EHE period, **35.3% of the cohort had been known to social care**, either as a Children in Care, having a Child Protection Plan or as an initial contact. The information also shows a drop in social care contacts relating to these children post their move to EHE.

RISE Team (Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation)

The 2017-18 caseload provides the following summary:

- A total of **178 individuals** where known to RISE during 2017-18.
- Of the 178 individuals, 75% had just one referral.
- 71 referrals were **declined** during the year, the most frequently given reason can be defined as '**did not meet RISE threshold' (93%)**.
- The majority of individuals were **female (90%)** and from a **White (72%)** background and aged **between 14 and 16 years old (72%).**
- 165 of the young people known to RISE during 2017-18 were in education during the year, the majority of individuals attended a secondary school (89.3%).

RECOMMENDATIONS

General recommendations arising from the assessment;

- That training is relevant to local need and is sufficient to ensure that all professionals in the county area aware of the warning signs and risks posed by CSE and also review materials to include and expand on the inclusion of CCE and associated warning signs and risks within.
- Commissioners across the partnership are made aware of the Public Health England research library to inform effective prevention activity across the county.

Recommendations arising from the Police assessment (appendix 1)

Prevent

- Ensure appropriate education is delivered to children and young people via multiagency working on the dangers of going to unknown addresses with strangers or people they do not know well, particularly people they have met online.
- Increase officer training in identifying child sexual exploitation indicators and potential victim vulnerabilities.
- Conduct a12 month review of CIRV after launch date, to assess outcome, impact and best practice in supporting female gang members who have been victims of CSE.
- Development of CSE training to relevant officers and staff, to raise awareness of peer on peer CSE.

Intelligence

- Conduct a review on CSE suspects with indirect links to gangs/OCGs/drug lines and establish whether they should be reclassified as members.
- Ensure consistent recording of offence locations to enable accurate mapping of offences and identification of vulnerable areas targeted by offenders/suspects. If locations do not become apparent until interview, officers must go back into the occurrence and update it.
- Increase identification of child sexual exploitation in males to allow for improvements in multiagency support and encourage early reporting of this crime type in young males.
- Social services to ensure they shared data about individuals who have been placed in a care home.
- Dip sampling of sexual offences of under 18's to ensure appropriate use of existing CSE flags.

Enforcement

- Continue to record independent return interviews on NICHE and embed this process in order to improve our knowledge of where children are going, what they are doing during the missing episode, who they are with and what harm/risks they have been subject to while missing. This is particularly important for identifying

potential CSE offenders and locations as more detail is often captured in these interviews than interviews conducted by the police.

- Review examination process criteria for mobile phone handsets and computer/laptops seized at warrants and during the course of investigations.
- Continue to engage with national media and parliament regarding the necessity of information sharing with popular social media platforms to aid investigations that sit below Grade 1 offences (murder).

Reassurance

- With partner agency involvement, engage with schools and the community to advise parents of children and young adults of the threat that social media applications pose and the parental controls available to them.

Recommendations arising from the Social Care assessment (appendix 2)

- To ensure that turnover levels within organisations are considered when planning training sessions both within individual organisations and through NSCB training programme.
- A partnership review of the CSE Toolkit, in particular the scoring mechanism currently in place.
- Review, through the Child Exploitation working group, of the training and awareness programme for professionals, schools and parents across the county.
- Evidence to support a detailed understanding of the extent of gangs and child criminal exploitation is limited due to the level of data held, particularly within Social Care data. If the NSCB wishes to understand the extent of the issue within the county a change to how we record information beyond the initial assessment would be required in both Social Care and RISE databases.

REFERENCES

HM Government: Working together to safeguard children

The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP): https://www.ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2013) If only someone had listened

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2012) I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world,

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board: CSE Toolkit

CEOP Thematic Assessment 2011 - The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) published a thematic assessment in 2011 analysing 2,083 victims of child sexual exploitation.

Sage & Sound: Spotting the signs of CSE, https://safeandsoundgroup.org.uk/what-is-cse/spotting-the-signs-of-cse/

Public Health England - Child sexual exploitation: prevention and intervention 2017

Bovarnick, Scott (2016), 'Child Sexual Exploitation Prevention Education ': A rapid evidence assessment

University College London (UCL) study of 552 victims of child sexual exploitation in Derby
http://www.communitycare.co.uk/2011/06/16/40-of-sexually-exploited-children-are-young-offenders/

Barnardo's (2012) Cutting them free: How is the UK progressing in protecting its children from sexual exploitation Barnardo's , p.5 quoting Jago, S et al (2011) What's going on to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation? How local partnerships respond to child sexual exploitation University of Bedfordshire, Bedford

Schools Health Education Unit (SHEU). Northamptonshire Young People's Health and Wellbeing Survey. 2017-18 [Unpublished]

Barnardo's (2014) - Health impacts of child sexual exploitation

Northamptonshire County Council: Self-harm Hospital Admissions 2012-17