

Why is it important?

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is child abuse. It can have a damaging and long lasting impact on children, as well as their families. Victims of sexual exploitation are often reluctant to report their abuse or do not recognise that they are being abused.

Across County Durham Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB), partner agencies such as the police, children's services and the NHS have been working together since 2008 to tackle Child Sexual Exploitation.

This work is coordinated through the LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, across the following three strands of work (Prevent, Protect and Pursue):

- To **prevent** CSE, making it more difficult to exploit children and young people
- To **protect** children and young people from CSE by identifying and safeguarding those at risk
- To **pursue** perpetrators of CSE by identifying, disrupting and where possible prosecuting offenders

Child Sexual Exploitation has been identified as a national priority and an issue facing all local authorities and statutory organisations. Locally, tackling Child Sexual Exploitation is a priority of the LSCB and Durham Constabulary. It is also part of the Safe Durham Partnership Plan and the Police, Crime and Victims Plan (Durham Police, Crime and Victims Commissioner).

Durham data – the local picture and how we compare

The County Durham LSCB carried out an analysis of Child Sexual Exploitation in the county - the most recent profile covers the period September 2015 to March 2016 to coincide with the launch of the ERASE (Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation) Team.

The analysis found that:

- Online Child Sexual Exploitation continues as the most common model of sexual exploitation. Facebook was the most common social media (40%) followed by Oovoo, Skype, Snapchat, Instagram, KIK and Omegle.
- Most victims are female (80%), with the most common age being 14yrs old. Victims of online CSE are younger than contact CSE.
- Inappropriate relationships is one of the more common models seen - late teens / early 20's targeting 13-14 year olds. 30% of the victims in this model were boys and young men.
- There are strong links between sexual exploitation and those young people who are reported missing from home. (Drivers are mental health, alcohol or drugs issues, family conflict or relationship issues).
- 30% of CSE reports that the perpetrator has either groomed the young person to meet offline face to face, or attempts to meet offline had been made.
- 97% of offenders identified are males, identified as lone offenders with ethnicity recorded as White European.
- Control, coercion and manipulation is a key skill of the offender.
- 10% of CSE reports indicate cross border links.
- 20% of offenders have used multiple CSE models and have displayed a range of methods to carry out their sexual offending.
- Community intelligence being gathered or submitted could be improved.

Groups most at risk

Underlying Vulnerability Factors

Professionals and the public should be aware that children and young people do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative and abusive situation and should recognise that disclosure of this form of abuse by a child or young person is exceptionally rare.

The sexual exploitation of children and young people includes a combination of:

- **Pull factors:** children exchanging sex for alcohol, drugs, attention, accommodation, food or other gifts
- **Push factors:** children escaping from situations where their needs are neglected and there is exposure to unsafe individuals
- **Control:** coercion, violence and threats of violence by those exploiting the child

Children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation or who are being sexually exploited may display highly complex and challenging behaviours. Anyone who has regular contact with children and young people is in a good position to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs of exploitation. Any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background, however some children or young people are particularly vulnerable because of the following factors:

- History of running away / missing from home
- Family history of abuse and neglect
- Low self-esteem
- Domestic abuse
- Parental drug / alcohol misuse
- Parental mental health problems
- Family breakdown / disrupted family life or a significant event in the child's life
- Problematic parenting – deficit in parenting capacity

It is unlikely that concerns about the possible sexual exploitation of a child or young person are as a result of a single one-off incident. Concerns often build up as a result of deteriorating behaviour. It is important that professionals are mindful of the possibility of Child Sexual Exploitation, as concerns may arise during the Single Assessment process.

Community Assets and Services

Strategic governance is through the LSCB, provided by the Missing and Exploited (MEG) sub-group while operationally, support for children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation is effectively managed through a multi-agency unit called ERASE.

The multi-agency ERASE (Educate and Raise Awareness of Sexual Exploitation) Team was launched in August 2015. The team focuses on early identification of young people at risk and suspected offenders, to prevent further missing / absent episodes and to further improve our response to Child Sexual Exploitation.

A local Child Sexual Exploitation website has been launched as a source for help and information for children, parents and the wider community - this can be found at www.eraseabuse.org A number of ERASE young person conferences have been held across County Durham along with targeted marketing campaigns locally supporting the national campaign.

In 2014 Durham was successful in a bid to the Government's Children's Social Care Innovation Fund for a therapeutic support programme for children who have been sexually exploited. This offers targeted support to help young people deal with trauma and to make the transition from the secure setting into more independent living.

Widening our CSE training and awareness to those services not traditionally associated with safeguarding. This has led to a mandatory safeguarding condition of licence for all taxi drivers. Over 1,800 taxi drivers have been trained to identify and report CSE concerns.

Building on this a series of Exploitation, Grooming and Radicalisation briefing sessions are planned to target wider responsible authority services as well as schools, out of school activity leaders, community leaders and other external services such as Hotels, Take Away outlets and the off-licence trade.

Specialist training such as Intervene to Protect a Child (IPC) has been delivered to over 2,000 staff across a wide range of agencies. IPC is a proactive training tactic which has had significant success in the United States. The training is delivered by Dr Joe Sullivan, an internationally renowned leading expert who has assisted UK and European police forces. Following this, partners have continued to work with Dr Sullivan and further training will cover: Understanding Sex Offenders; Young People Experiencing or Exhibiting Sexual Behaviour, Working with Partners and Families, Evaluating Risk in Online Behaviour.

The development of stronger relationships with communities through local Area Action Partnerships (AAP), raising awareness of CSE and how to report concerns or intelligence of CSE has seen all 14 AAPs feature ERASE in their newsletter communications reaching over 15,000 contacts. CSE briefings have also been delivered to communities and services such as Out of School Activity Leaders / Housing Providers Safeguarding Leads / Rotary Club / Local Businesses / Road Safety Team / School Assemblies (Secondary Schools) / Private Children's Homes.

The LSCB are supporting the Child Advocacy Centre pilot, funded by the Police Innovation Fund, which is aimed at children who are victims of sexual abuse and which is intended to improve the victim's journey from report to court and beyond. At the centre of the pilot will be a new 'team around the child' to provide a seamless therapeutic service.

New national guidance issued in February 2017 includes the revised statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation. You can find out more information from the government website: www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-sexual-exploitation-definition-and-guide-for-practitioners

Child Sexual Exploitation information for Professionals, Parents and Children and Young People can be found on the LSCB website www.durham-lscb.org.uk

How does this topic link to our strategies and plans?

Further information can be found in the following strategies and plans:

- [Durham LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2016-19](#)
- [Durham LSCB Annual Report 2015/16](#)
- [Safe Durham Partnership Plan 2016-19](#)
- [County Durham Joint Health and Wellbeing Strategy 2016-2019](#)
- [Children, Young People and Families Plan 2016-19](#)
- [Sustainable Community Strategy 2014-2030](#)
- [Police, Crime and Victims Plan 2016-21](#)

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Data sources: [County Durham LSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2016-19](#)