

Camden multi-agency guidance on child sexual exploitation (CSE) - 2015



Camden Safeguarding
Children Board

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1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of guidance

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse and it can have a serious and lasting negative impact on the lives of young people. The full scope of the problem is often unknown and it can be difficult for professionals to recognise when a young person may be involved in CSE.

The Camden Safeguarding Children Board has written this guidance to provide information about CSE that will help professionals to identify young people affected by CSE and explains what action will be taken by agencies to prevent CSE and help the young people involved.

The guidance should be read by all professionals who work directly with young people aged under 18 and who are thought to be vulnerable to CSE, being targeted or groomed or already involved in such exploitation.

Professionals may come into contact with young people aged between 18-25 and who are victims of CSE. Although this guidance does not cover over 18 year olds, professionals can refer vulnerable young adults to the Children, Schools and Families Under 25s service and the Camden Community Safety Partnership for help and support.

1.2 Definition of CSE

The full definition of CSE as used in statutory child protection guidance can be found in Appendix 1, but the following describes the main elements of the abuse:

- A child or young person under the age of 18 is forced or enticed into a sexual relationship or sexual acts without giving full and proper consent because they take part either under duress, whilst under the influence of drugs or alcohol, or because they are exchanging sexual favours for money, accommodation, drugs or alcohol or gifts.
- The relationship between the child or young person and their abuser is based on a power imbalance where the abuser uses their money, age, position or influence to obtain compliance and control over the child or young person.
- The key element is whether the child or young person is giving informed consent, is making their own decision or is exercising any kind of choice in their relationship.

1.3 The legal context

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 sets out the law regarding the age of consent for sexual activity and the extent to which any consent given may be void due to duress or coercion or due to the person's age. The main points of the Act are as follows:

- Children under 13 cannot give informed consent to any form of sexual activity in any circumstances and any sexual activity with a child under 13 will be an offence.
- Young people aged between 13 and 15 cannot consent to sexual activity but it is unlikely that any action will be taken in cases involving teenagers of a similar age who mutually agree to sex. The question will be whether consent was obtained through coercion and in the context of an exploitative relationship, particularly where the sexual partner is at least 5 years older.
- Young people aged 16 and 17 can consent to sexual activity but this may be rebutted by any evidence of duress or of an exploitative relationship or any power imbalance including abuse of a position of trust.
- It is an offence for an adult to "groom" a child under 16, defined as contacting the child at least twice and arranging to meet them with the intention of carrying out a sexual offence, even if no such offence has taken place.
- It is an offence for any adult to be involved in the sexual exploitation of any child under the age of 18, including through prostitution or the production of pornographic materials.

2 Information about CSE

2.1 Models of exploitation

Sexual exploitation may take one of the following forms, but the model of exploitation may change over time, for example an inappropriate relationship may be the starting point of organised exploitation, and young people may move between the various models of exploitation.

- ***Inappropriate relationships***: In this model, the young person enters a relationship with an older partner who exerts a great deal of influence and control over them due to an imbalance of power. The young person is likely to believe they are in a serious adult relationship and not recognise its exploitative nature.

- **Peer exploitation:** This involves exploitation of a young person by another young person with whom they have a relationship and who subsequently coerces them into sexual activity with their friends. This is the model that gang related exploitation follows.
- **Organised exploitation:** This involves networks of perpetrators grooming young people for coercion into sexual activity with different men and perhaps using the victims to recruit others.

2.2 Profile of victims

There is no particular type of victim, and the young people involved can come from a variety of backgrounds. More girls than boys are involved, but this may be due to boys being less likely to be identified as victims. The age of victims can range from 10 to 19 years but the peak age is 15, and research shows victims are becoming younger, with exploitation likely to continue into adulthood as exit becomes harder.

Some circumstances may make young people more susceptible to sexual exploitation as their situation gives perpetrators more opportunities to groom them, for example:

- looked after children, especially those in residential care living at a distance from their home authority;
- young people who run away frequently, especially those running away from care;
- young people with difficult family relationships;
- young people who are out of education;
- young people involved in gang activity;
- homeless young people living in unsafe accommodation.

2.3 Pathways into sexual exploitation

Young people may become involved in sexual exploitation because:

- they have been targeted due to a high level of risk taking behaviour such as running away; these behaviours can make them more vulnerable and can be the prerequisite for grooming;
- it is a way of obtaining money or accommodation as an alternative to homelessness and poverty because they have no other means available to them;

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- they have been recruited by friends who are already being sexually exploited; victims may speak of attending “parties” where they are offered alcohol and drugs in order to disinhibit them so that they can be more easily controlled and abused.

Victims can find it difficult to break free of CSE because:

- they fail to recognise the relationship as exploitative;
- they fear no-one will believe them;
- they distrust adults or statutory agencies;
- they are fearful of reprisals from perpetrators who may use threats and violence to retain control;
- their movements are being controlled by their exploiters.

2.4 Information on grooming and abuse

Sexual exploitation may include a wide range of sexual activities and covers the use of young people to make pornographic images. Young people may be coerced into sexual activity with one perpetrator but gradually be exploited by a number of perpetrators.

The perpetrators are mainly male and may be individuals or networked groups working together in an organised manner to target, groom or exploit young people. Some may already be known to police or have convictions for sexual offences against children.

The grooming process involves:

- targeting young people who are thought to be vulnerable in public locations where they gather without adult supervision, such as shopping centres, sports centres, parks, bus and train stations and cafes; some young people are targeted on-line via social networking sites;
- establishing a relationship with the young person, often through the “boyfriend” model, during which the young person may be given gifts;
- creating a dependency, possibly through drug or alcohol use or restriction of movements, so that the young person becomes more isolated from family and friends;
- taking control, so that the abuse can be furthered via a network of perpetrators in a variety of private locations such as flats, cars, hotels or business premises.

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Sexual exploitation may also be linked to street gangs, where the victims and perpetrators are known to each other and probably live in the same neighbourhood, with siblings of gang members often targeted. In the gangs context, sexual violence and exploitation is a method of exerting power and control and may be used:

- as an initiation rite;
- in an exploitative relationship where the victim seeks protection or status within the gang;
- to “set up” a rival gang member;
- as a form of punishment of gang members;
- as a form of revenge against rival gang members.

2.5 Links with trafficking

Some children who are involved in CSE may have been trafficked into the UK specifically for the purpose of sexual exploitation, and where this is suspected, it should be actively investigated.

There is also evidence to suggest that victims of CSE may be “trafficked” within the UK, being moved between towns and cities by perpetrators in order to further the exploitation, disorientate the victim or avoid contact with the authorities. Where a young person who is identified as a victim of CSE in Camden comes from another local authority area, it will be important that professionals contact the home authority and share relevant information.

2.5 Links with running away/missing

Research underlines that there is a strong correlation between running away and missing episodes and CSE as this can increase a young person’s risk of being targeted and groomed or where sexual exploitation is the only way for the young person to survive on the streets.

The young person’s relationship with a perpetrator whom they believe to be a “boyfriend” can act as a “pull factor” in their running away. Equally, a violent or abusive home environment may act as a “push factor” for running away, with perpetrators seeming to offer a refuge.

Repeated episodes of running away that involve staying out all night can be indicative of CSE, especially if the young person is being picked up and dropped off from their place of residence by unknown adults.

Professionals should be aware of the Camden Safeguarding Children Board guidance on child trafficking and the missing children protocol which are available at: www.cscb.org

3 Camden's strategy on child sexual exploitation

Camden has developed a multi-agency CSE strategy that aims to:

- **Prevent** sexual exploitation by providing young people with information that raises their awareness of the issue and helps them to keep themselves safe, make safe choices about their sexual behaviour and build resilience against exploitation.
- **Identify and refer** those young people who need help and support because they are vulnerable to exploitation or being targeted, groomed or involved in sexual exploitation.
- **Support** victims of sexual exploitation so that they are able to exit from the abuse and get help to address any issues that make them vulnerable to exploitation to ensure they do not become exploited in the future.
- **Disrupt** the patterns of exploitation and make Camden a safe environment for young people by interrupting the activities of perpetrators and inhibiting the targeting and grooming process.
- **Prosecute** perpetrators where possible using information and intelligence gathered by partner agencies.

The strategy is available at: [Preventing child sexual exploitation - resources - Camden Council](#)

4 Roles and responsibilities

4.1 Camden Safeguarding Children Board

The Board is responsible for coordinating an effective multi-agency response to CSE in the borough and will be the forum for developing and monitoring Camden's CSE strategy. The Board will ensure that all relevant information about CSE activity in the borough is available to agencies and that there is a framework of policy and staff training to support integrated working. The Board will also co-ordinate a programme of prevention and a campaign to raise awareness of the issue.

The Board's CSE strategic group and the Quality Assurance sub-group will have key responsibility for ensuring that the CSE strategy is being implemented and measuring its effectiveness. A member of the CSE strategy group will also be a member of the Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation group (MASE) in order to ensure good communication between these key groups.

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The CSE strategic group will provide the Safeguarding Board with an annual report on the implementation and effectiveness of the CSE strategy and will keep the Board informed of the extent of CSE activity in the borough.

4.2 Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation group (MASE)

The MASE group is responsible for ensuring a tactical response to CSE in the borough, focusing on the prevention, intervention, diversion and disruption element of the CSE strategy in order to reduce the impact and risk of CSE across the community. The group's remit is to share and analyse information from partner agencies in order to identify trends and emerging issues and agree coordinated actions by partner agencies to tackle these issues and trends.

Members of the group include representatives from:

- FSSW
- Camden Police
- Camden Community Safety
- Young People's Housing Pathway
- Integrated Youth Support Services and Youth Offending
- The Children's Society
- Health
- Education
- Housing.

4.3 Camden Police

The police are the main law-enforcement agency and will be responsible for:

- carrying out criminal investigations and prosecuting individual perpetrators;
- supporting FSSW in joint child protection and CSE investigations, including attendance at CSE child protection strategy meetings;
- carrying out policing activities designed to disrupt CSE activities;
- referring any young person coming to their attention to the MASH where it is believed they are at risk due to CSE;
- sharing key information with the MASH for all CSE referrals;
- ensuring representation on the MASE.

Camden Police will work to the ACPO "Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan" and will ensure that there is a designated senior leadership team responsible for all aspects of intervention and disruption of CSE in Camden. To further enhance the response, the leadership team will maintain close contact with the Missing Person's Unit.

4.4 Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) team

The MASH team is the intake team for all cases where there are safeguarding concerns about a child and will be the first point of contact for all referrals and queries relating to CSE. The team will also be responsible for the identification of CSE as a presenting issue for any other type of referral received.

Referrals to the MASH team must be by way of an e-CAF referral following the completion of a CSE risk assessment, which must be sent with the referral. The risk assessment tool is available:

- to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) via One Point of Access
- to the Family Service via the relevant Framework i workflow
- to all other agencies via the e-CAF system.

The MASH will carry out an initial assessment of risk for all CSE referrals and refer on cases to appropriate services according to the level of risk presented. The team will be the central point of contact for professionals, providing information on CSE and advising on completing the CSE risk assessment and making referrals, and will scrutinise all CSE risk assessments coming from the Family Service, YOS and the e-CAF system.

The MASE analyst based in the MASH team provides analytical, statistical and intelligence information on CSE activity in the borough and reports on this information to the MASE group. This is to enable the group to collate all the information to build a picture of CSE activity in the borough and support the strategic response to CSE by the group. The MASH will also refer individual cases to the group where there is a high level of risk requiring multi-agency intervention and will have representation on the MASE group.

4.5 Family Services and Social Work (FSSW)

FSSW is responsible for providing statutory social work services in Camden and is the lead agency for providing a response to CSE. FSSW social workers will work with young people at level 2 and 3 of the CSE risk assessment matrix who have been assessed as being a child in need or at risk of significant harm. Those young people who are at risk of harm will be dealt with under child protection procedures.

FSSW is the responsible agency for coordinating the work of the MASE group and will convene and co-chair the monthly meetings.

4.6 Early help services

Early help services in Camden will work with cases with a CSE RAG rating of Green where the young person is vulnerable to but not at risk of CSE. The work will focus on preventative work to young people from CSE.

Early help must refer to the MASH all cases where CSE has been identified and the CSE RAG rating is Red, Amber or Green, for a decision to be made on whether the social worker service need to become involved or whether Early Help services can undertake preventative work. Early help services will also be involved in providing step-down provision for young people exiting CSE and who have been dealt with under child protection procedures.

4.7 The Children's Society

The Children's Society provides an intervention service for young people who are vulnerable to and who are being sexually exploited.

Workers provide young people with one to one intensive support to help them recognise exploitative sexual relationships, develop strategies to stay safe and reduce the level of risk taking behaviour, and to increase their knowledge of positive relationships and sexual health strategies.

A representative of the Children's Society is a member of the MASE group and will provide some intelligence on CSE in the borough as long as this does not compromise the trust of young people with whom the Society works.

4.8 Schools

Schools are responsible for:

- delivering the preventative agenda within the curriculum by providing information to young people about sexual exploitation that raises their awareness of the issue;
- identifying young people who are vulnerable to or at risk of sexual exploitation and who need services and interventions to keep them safe by carrying out a CSE risk assessment and making appropriate e-CAF referrals to MASH for help;
- providing individual support to young people around sexual exploitation, for example through mentoring;

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- passing on any information about CSE issues affecting the school, for example concerns about adults hanging around the school, via the designated Police Community Support Officer.

CSE responses in schools should be coordinated by the designated child protection teacher, who should be the first point of contact within the school for any concerns held about a pupil in relation to CSE.

4.9 Health services

Health services have an important role in delivering the preventative agenda by providing young people with advice on safe sex and healthy relationships in a variety of health settings. A health representative will be a member of the MASE group.

Health professionals, especially those working in sexual health clinics, are most likely to be the first professional to become aware of a young person who is being sexually exploited. The young person may request contraceptives or present with sexually transmitted infections or be pregnant. The young person may also provide information about their sexual activity or their partner that is concerning.

Health settings in Camden will be responsible for the identification and referral of CSE cases and should ensure that:

- all staff are aware of the indicators of CSE and know who to approach within the organisation for advice on making a referral;
- the named nurse or child protection advisor is fully trained with a good awareness of the issues relating to CSE and who will be the first point of contact for staff who have concerns about a young person.

4.10 Housing

Housing estate officers are likely to hold information about locations and addresses in Camden that are associated with CSE, either for targeting or grooming young people or where exploitation takes place. Where housing staff have concerns about an address or location, this information will be shared with the MASH manager and passed on to the MASE group.

Housing key workers offering support to young people in Camden's Young Person's Housing Pathway may work directly with young people who are at risk of or involved in CSE. Any concerns must be discussed with the young person's allocated social worker and information about perpetrators shared with the MASE group via the social worker.

4.11 Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership has a statutory duty to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough and therefore has a key role in coordinating partner agencies' responses to CSE via its membership of the MASE group.

The Partnership has a number of initiatives to help tackle CSE:

- The Partnership co-ordinates various risk panels such as the Multi-Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), the Youth Disorder Panel and the Integrated Offender Management Panel that can provide information to the MASE about victims and perpetrators of CSE and help with the implementation of interventions and disruption strategies.
- Community warden patrols may identify CSE activity in the borough such as hot spots where young people are targeted by perpetrators or evidence of grooming or exploitation. This information can be fed back to the MASE group via the Community Safety Partnership who are represented on the group.
- The Young Person's Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advisor is able to identify young people at risk of CSE and can share information on locations and addresses linked with CSE. The advisor can also carry out risk assessments and develop and implement safety plans with young people aged 16-25 where there is an overlap between CSE and domestic and sexual violence issues.

4.12 Integrated Youth Support Services (IYSS)

Youth workers, Connexions personal advisors and YOS workers based in IYSS working with young people aged between 13 and 19 will be responsible for:

- providing information and advice to young people on CSE;
- identifying individual young people they work with where there are concerns about CSE via the CSE risk assessment tool available in One Point of Access and referring cases on to the MASH team appropriately;
- providing services to support individual young people who are vulnerable or at risk from CSE;
- providing information and intelligence on CSE to the MASE group via the IYSS representative.

Workers based in the Youth Offending team will also be able to identify and work to support young people who are victims of CSE in the gangs context and can provide information and intelligence to the MASE group on gang-related CSE cases.

IYSS workers must refer to the MASH all cases where CSE has been identified and the CSE RAG rating is Red, Amber or Green, for a decision to be made on whether the social worker service need to become involved or whether IYSS can undertake preventative work.

4.13 Young people's advocate

Camden has a designated advocate working with young people who have been identified as being at risk of CSE, particularly in respect of risk arising from gang involvement. The advocate also provides advice and information to workers who work directly with young people involved in CSE and delivers training to a wide range of agencies who may come into contact with young people involved in CSE. The role also involves delivering an in-school programme of education to raise staff and pupils.

5 Managing individual cases

5.1 Identification

All professionals need to be aware of the indicators of CSE so that they can recognise when a young person they work with is vulnerable to, at risk of or involved in CSE. Professionals may have concerns about a young person they work with for a variety of reasons, for example, a young person's relationship with a much older partner.

Camden has developed a CSE risk assessment tool which is accessed as follows:

- to the Youth Offending Service (YOS) via One Point of Access
- to the Family Service via the relevant Framework i workflow
- to all other agencies via the e-CAF system.

The assessment contains a series of indicators of CSE; professionals select the indicators that are relevant to the young person and show their level of involvement in CSE. This allows professionals to make a judgment on the level of risk to the young person through CSE.

The risk assessment should only be completed where there is a strong suspicion that the young person is either being groomed for or already involved in CSE.

5.2 Levels of risk and intervention

Appendix 2 sets out the model of intervention for CSE describing the extent of the young person's involvement and the corresponding level of intervention required to keep them safe.

- ***CSE RAG rating Green:***

These are young people who are vulnerable to CSE because of their circumstances, for example being out of school provision, being looked after in a residential home or frequently running away. These circumstances make it easier for grooming to take place. The purpose of interventions is to help the young person address the issues that make them vulnerable and build resilience to exploitation.

- ***CSE RAG rating Amber:***

These are young people who are being targeted or groomed for CSE. They will be in contact with perpetrators or those who are recruiting for the perpetrators or may have begun a relationship with an older partner.

They could be receiving gifts or attending parties with perpetrators and may be in contact with perpetrators via mobile phones. They may be being given drugs and alcohol by perpetrators to disinhibit and disorientate them which will make them more vulnerable.

This group will require targeted intervention and services in order to build resilience, address their needs and disrupt the grooming process or reduce the level of dependence on perpetrators. It is important that robust action is taken at this level as this is the main opportunity that agencies will have to protect the young person and divert them away from CSE.

- ***CSE RAG rating Red:***

These are young people who are very likely being sexually exploited and have become deeply enmeshed in the exploitation so that it is difficult for them to exit. Intervention at this level will be aimed at helping the young person exit the exploitation and make a recovery and may also involve criminal investigation and action by the police against the perpetrator.

This group may be difficult to engage as their movements may be restricted and they may fear involvement by statutory agencies due to possible reprisals by perpetrators. It may be easier for this group to engage with voluntary sector organisations instead.

5.3 Making a referral

Whenever a professional is considering making a CSE referral on behalf of the young person, they should discuss this with the designated officer in their agency first to decide if a referral would be an appropriate response.

If professionals need further advice on the relevance of indicators or whether to make a referral about a young person, social workers in the MASH team can provide guidance on a “no names” basis.

All CSE referrals should be made using an e-CAF referral and should include all information the referrer has relating to the young person, their associates and possible perpetrators and any information on possible locations. The CSE risk assessment should also be passed to the MASH as part of the referral.

All CSE referrals should be passed to the MASH team in the first instance. This is to ensure that all information about the young person, their associates and possible perpetrators can be shared within the MASH leading to a full picture of the level of involvement in CSE and risks to the young person being obtained in a timely manner.

5.4 Getting consent for a referral

The young person should be informed that a referral is being considered and their views on this sought. However, it is likely that the young person will be resistant to a referral being made and may not give consent. Professionals will need to persevere and it may take time for the young person to agree to a referral for help being made.

Parents should also be made aware of concerns unless the young person strongly objects to this; however, **parents must be involved** if the young person:

- is under 13 years age;
- is aged between 13 and 15 but is thought not to be competent to make an informed decision about referral;
- is 16 or 17 years but is thought to lack the mental capacity to make an informed decision about referral.

Where the young person is assessed as being at level 2 or 3 and may be at risk of significant harm, a referral can be made to FSSW without consent being given, although consent should be sought. Professionals can seek advice on this from the MASH social worker.

A referral must be made with or without consent if the young person is under 13 years and the police must also be notified as it is likely that a criminal offence may have taken place.

Further details on consent can be found in section 9.

5.5 Action on referrals

On receipt of a referral, the MASH administrator will check to see if the young person is already known to FSSW and if this is the case, will pass the CSE referral and the referring agency's risk assessment on to the allocated social worker.

Where the young person is not known to FSSW, the case will be passed to the MASH manager who will allocate an initial MASH RAG rating based on the perceived level of risk. ***Please note that the MASH RAG ratings are separate to the CSE RAG ratings described in section 5.2.***

Level 2 and 3 cases where there is a risk of significant harm (and with RAG ratings of Amber or Red) will be subject to MASH information sharing processes and any relevant information gathered from agencies will be passed on to FSSW.

Once information has been gathered, the MASH manager will refer cases on to the appropriate resource:

- **MASH Green RAG rating** will be referred on to the appropriate early help provision for a targeted service designed to provide support for the young person and divert them from CSE. The key worker in the early help service will be the young person's lead professional and will carry out a Common Assessment Framework assessment to identify the young person's needs. The young person's professional network will develop the young person's diversion plan that will help them develop their resilience and reduce the risk of them becoming involved in CSE
- **MASH Amber RAG rating** where the young person is at the early stages of involvement and there is no risk of significant harm but is considered to be in need will be referred to FSSW for a social work service. The allocated social worker will be the young person's lead professional and will carry out a child and family assessment and develop a child in need plan in partnership with the young person's professional network.
- **MASH Amber and Red RAG rating** where there is a risk of significant harm will be referred to FSSW and dealt with under child protection procedures.

6 CSE child protection procedures

6.1 CSE child protection strategy meeting

All cases referred to the FSSW Assessment team will be dealt with under child protection procedures in the first instance and a CSE child protection strategy meeting will be convened.

The purpose of the meeting is to discuss concerns, identify the level of risk to the young person and agree what action needs to be taken to reduce risk and keep the young person safe.

The actions and interventions that can be taken will depend on the level of risk to the young person which is indicated by the CSE RAG rating:

- **CSE RAG rating Green:** Depending on the level of concerns and the level of vulnerability identified at the CSE child protection strategy meeting, these young people may be either children in need or in need of a preventative service from Early Help.
- **CSE RAG rating Amber:** If, following the strategy meeting, the young person is not considered at risk of significant harm the case will be worked as a child in need case. If there are concerns that the young person is at risk of significant harm, a child protection investigation will take place and an initial child protection case conference will be convened.
- **CSE RAG rating Red:** These cases will be dealt with under child protection procedures with a child protection investigation being held leading to an initial child protection case conference.

6.2 CSE plans

All young people for whom there are concerns about CSE will have a specific CSE plan. Where the young person has a child protection plan due to concerns about significant harm, the category of harm and abuse will be child sexual exploitation.

If there are no concerns about significant harm but the young person is vulnerable to CSE and is assessed as a child in need or becomes looked after, the CSE plan will be part of child in need plan or care plan.

Although the young person's child protection plan or child in need/care plan will address their general needs, the CSE plan will focus on the risk of CSE and will set out the actions to:

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- reduce risk and keep the young person safe
- address vulnerabilities and improve resilience to CSE
- divert the young person from CSE or help them exit
- provide therapeutic and other support to the young person and their family.

CSE plans will be reviewed on a six-monthly basis at the same time that the young person's child in need, child protection or care plan is reviewed. However, if there are escalating concerns about CSE the review will be brought forward.

6.3 Young people known to FSSW

Social workers should always be aware of young people with whom they work who may be vulnerable to or at risk of involvement in CSE, especially looked after young people who are placed at a distance from Camden and care leavers moving on to independence.

A CSE risk assessment should be carried out where there are concerns about CSE; where the risk assessment indicates that the young person is at risk due to CSE, the social worker should consult with their manager and seek advice from a Child Protection Office to decide on whether or not to convene a CSE child protection strategy meeting.

6.3 Children placed in Camden by other authorities

Professionals may find that sometimes a young person they work with who presents as being vulnerable to or at risk of CSE is looked after by another authority but placed in Camden. These cases need to be referred to the young person's allocated social worker in the home local authority as they still retain overall responsibility for the young person's welfare and safety.

However, professionals need to notify the MASH team of concerns and any referrals made to the home authority so that the information can be passed on to the MASE analyst and included in reports to the MASE group.

In the event of an emergency where the young person needs immediate intervention to ensure their safety, this will be carried out by Camden and a referral should be made to the MASH team or the Emergency Duty team out of hours in these cases.

7 Working with young people

The following are the key principles that professionals should follow when working with young people affected by CSE.

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- It is essential that professionals remain aware that CSE is a form of child abuse. Although young people may believe that they are actively choosing this lifestyle and exploring their sexuality, the reality is that they are not exercising their free will and are being exploited by potentially dangerous adults. A young person who may be at risk of CSE should not be ignored by agencies simply because they are 16 years or above.
- Services and interventions should address the young person's needs and the issues that make them vulnerable to CSE. Interventions should be proportional, reflecting the level of concern for the young person whilst balancing this against the young person's right to privacy.
- Given the personal nature of CSE, professionals might find it difficult to engage young people and it may take time to build trust and develop a relationship whereby the young person feels safe to talk. Young people should be fully consulted on services to be provided and allowed to decide which member of the professional network they feel most comfortable talking to about their experiences.
- Professionals should always persevere in working with a young person even where engagement is difficult and should be aware of any barriers to engagement. Young people may be too frightened to seek help or may have a sense of loyalty to a perpetrator if they believe they are in a serious relationship with them.
- Young people who are vulnerable to CSE should get help and support as early as possible and preventing involvement in CSE should be the key basis of working with all young people. Research shows that early referral and intervention is key to ensuring a successful strategy as there are more opportunities to divert the young person and disrupt the grooming process. Professionals are strongly urged not to take a "wait and see" approach or wait for more evidence, but to make a timely referral based on whatever information is known at the time concerns arise.
- Professionals should ensure that parents and families are fully involved in planning any responses to CSE and the provision of services. Often, parents are aware that their child is involved in CSE but feel helpless to do anything about it. The situation can be traumatising for family life as the victim becomes more isolated from their family. Some families may even be threatened by perpetrators and many would welcome help and support from agencies in tackling the problem.

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- It is important that families are involved in helping to protect the young person and may be a source of vital information regarding perpetrators. Families can be a source of support and a protective factor in helping the young person recover from CSE and this should be harnessed by professionals accordingly.
- It would be unhelpful for professionals to in any way blame parents for their child's involvement in CSE. It is rare that a parent is in any way involved or complicit in the exploitation. For this reason, FSSW encourages parents to work in partnership and attend meetings as it recognised that often, parents will take a key role in ensuring the young person is kept safe.

9 Supporting action against perpetrators

Historically, it has been difficult to successfully prosecute CSE cases, particularly with regard to supporting victims to co-operate with investigations and give evidence in court. This can make it difficult for the police and prosecutors to gather the evidence to secure a conviction.

The police have the main responsibility for taking action against perpetrators and using disruption strategies to stop targeting and grooming, but all professionals have a role in supporting this.

- Professionals should be aware of any CSE activity such as targeting that may be taking place in locations near to them, for example schools may become aware of concerns about a local café or takeaway. All concerns should be reported to the MASH team or the MASE group.
- Professionals also need to be aware of young people they work with who may be perpetrators and who are involved in sexual bullying and exploitation of peers, including sexual exploitation that is linked to gang activity. For further details, please refer to Camden's "Children who harm other children" protocol available at: [:: Camden Safeguarding Children Board \(CSCB\): Welcome ::](#)
- Any concerns involving a possible crime against a young person should be reported to the police CAIT and FSSW immediately so that a joint investigation can be launched. Social workers dealing with CSE cases should ensure that the police are involved from the beginning and strategy meetings should plan investigations and evidence gathering, including best evidence interviews.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

- Professionals should encourage young people and their parents or carers to help identify perpetrators and keep any evidence that may support a criminal conviction. Parents and carers can help gather evidence by the following:
 - Use contract mobiles rather than pay as you go so that an itemised statement can be obtained;
 - Register Oyster cards so that journeys can be monitored;
 - Log the registration of any vehicles picking up or dropping young people off;
 - Get details of possible perpetrators from contacts on mobile phones;
 - Note any goods that are unaccounted for;
 - Check bins for receipts that may give banking details of perpetrators;
 - Check the young person's social networking sites;
 - Record details of the young person's friends and visitors.
- It is vital that any young person who is providing evidence either during interviews or as a witness in criminal proceedings is fully supported by the professional network.
- The MASE analyst and the MASE group is responsible for gathering and analysing any information about perpetrators available and ensuring this is passed on to the police and acted on accordingly.
- Multi-agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) should be used as a forum for managing any risks posed by serious sex offenders who may be perpetrators of CSE in the borough.

10 Confidentiality and information sharing

Information about a young person's sexual activity is highly personal and confidential and would only be disclosed to professionals in confidence. Such information could not be shared with third parties without the young person's consent, so normally professionals would need to seek consent before making a CSE referral to the MASH.

The law regarding young people and consent is:

- Young people aged 16 and 17 are able to give consent to disclosure of information about themselves unless they are thought to lack the capacity to make decisions under the Mental Capacity Act 2005 in which case parents should be approached for consent.
- Young people aged 12-15 can give consent to disclosure if it is thought they have an understanding of what information will be shared and why (known as Gillick competence). If they are not considered competent to give consent, their parents should be approached for consent.

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- A child under the age of 12 cannot give consent in any circumstances and their parents must be approached for consent.
- If consent is withheld, a referral can still be made to the MASH team if the young person is thought to be at risk of significant harm or it is otherwise in the public interest to refer the matter, for example if other young people are at risk. Where a CSE risk assessment shows that the young person is at risk of significant harm (level 2 or 3) a referral **must** be made to the MASH even if consent is not given.

11 Training and supervision

All professionals working with young people must be aware of the indicators of CSE and be able to identify young people who are at risk from CSE. Professionals must have completed CSCB safeguarding training to group 3 level as well as specialist CSE training provided by the Children's Society.

All staff working in the children's workforce in Camden should receive training on the use of the e-CAF system so that they are able to carry out Common Assessment Framework assessments and make appropriate referrals.

It is also essential that professionals receive high quality supervision that enables them to reflect on their practice and ensures that they are aware of their duties towards the young people they work with. All agencies must have a designated officer for CSE to whom staff may refer if they have concerns about a young person they work with.

12 Dealing with professional differences

This guidance aims to encourage a multi-agency response to CSE so that well-informed and timely decisions can be made on intervening in a child's life in order to safeguard and promote their welfare. In the event that there is a disagreement between agencies, this will be discussed at a local level by the relevant managers of the agencies involved in the first instance and a resolution sought within a reasonable timescale.

If this is not possible, the matter should be referred to senior managers in the partner agencies to discuss and find a resolution. If the dispute involves child protection concerns, advice will be sought from the Child Protection Co-ordinator based in FSSW. If disagreements need to be escalated further, this should be via the senior representatives on the Camden Safeguarding Children Board. Any disagreements or disputes should be clearly recorded on the service case records.

Appendix 1: Definitions of child sexual exploitation

Child sexual abuse is defined in Working together as:

“...forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g.: rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities such as involving children in looking at or in the production of sexual online images, watching sexual activity or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.”

Government guidance expands on this definition to explore the exploitative nature of the abuse:

“Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 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 performing and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition, for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. 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 availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.”

Appendix 2: Matrix of risk, indicators and responses to CSE

Level	Description	Indicators	Intervention/Response	Agencies
CSE RAG rating Green	Young people who are vulnerable to CSE.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Truancing or excluded from school • Occasionally missing from home or placement • Difficult or distrustful relationships with parents and other adults • Lack of parental supervision or living in hostel accommodation • Seen in CSE “hotspot” areas • Early gang involvement • Experimental use of substances 	Early intervention and preventative services to divert the young person from CSE, address the issues that make them vulnerable to CSE and build their resilience.	Integrated Youth services School mentors Sexual health and relationships outreach workers Barnardos Miss U workers FWD
CSE RAG rating Amber	Young people who are being targeted or groomed for CSE	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Unexplained gifts , money or new mobile phone • Seen in CSE “hotspot” areas • Older boyfriend • Associates with young people thought to be involved in CSE • Speaks of attending parties with possible adult perpetrators • Established gang involvement • Regular use of substances • Frequently missing from home or placement • Sexual risk taking behaviour • Evidence of on-line grooming • Weakening links with family and friends • Involved in sexual activity in 	Targeted support, including referral for a Child in Need service from FSSW and a CSE plan designed to disrupt the grooming process and prevent the young person from becoming further involved in CSE. Information sharing with the Community warden patrols in “hotspot” areas to disrupt targeting and grooming.	FSSW Police The Children’s Society YOS FWD Young People’s advocate Young Person’s Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advisor Camden Safety Net

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		<p>exchange for money/drugs/alcohol/accommodation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Secretive when using mobile phone or internet • Increase in level of personal grooming and appearance, new clothes etc 		
CSE RAG rating Red	Young people who are or are strongly suspected of being sexually exploited.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presence of STIs or pregnancy • Movements restricted or controlled through mobile phone • Seen in CSE “hotspot” areas • Known or suspected to associate with known CSE perpetrators • Problem use of substances • Serious emotional or behavioural issues, poor mental health and self-harming • Missing for long periods of time, possibly trafficked • Estrangement from family and friends • Used to recruit others into CSE • Decrease in level of personal grooming and appearance 	Statutory intervention under child protection or CSE procedures to protect the young person from harm and provide support to enable them to exit from the exploitation. Criminal investigation and prosecution of perpetrators.	<p>FSSW Police CAIT The Children’s Society FWD MALT/CAMHS Safer London Foundation Camden Safety Net Solace</p>

Appendix 3: MASE group membership

Name	Agency/Designation
Michelle O'Regan*	Head of FSSW Service & co-Chair of MASE
DI Adam Ghaboos	Detective Inspector and co-Chair of MASE
Rema Patel	Serious Youth Violence Co-ordinator, Youth Offending Service
Rachel Nicholas*	Safety Interventions Manager, Community Safety Partnership
DS Jo Northfield	Lead on Missing and CSE, Police
Nicole Cameron	Service Manager, MASH, EDT, Assessments and Hospital team - FSSW
DC Melanie McLeod	CSE team – Police representative
DC Neil Sutherland	CSE team – Police representative
David Hancock*	MASE Partnership Analyst
Tina Bailey	Child Protection Officer, FSSW
Elaine Dunning	Acting Service Manager, Community Family Services
Ed Magee	Acting Service Manager, WISE – Education
Keri Deasy	Stratgy and Commissioning Manager, FSSW
Jane Thoroughood	Named Nurse, Camden CCG
Claire McDonald	Senior Young Person Advocate, Safer London Foundation
Sarah Willbridge	Manager, The Children's Society
Dermott Mullan	Acting head of Tenancy Services, Housing and Adult Social Care
Gill Morris	School Improvement Manager, health and Wellbeing
Miranda McWhan	Nurse Manager, Brook London and South East – Sexual health rep
Christel Linden	Operational Manager, South Team, Adults Services

*Membership of the Camden Safeguarding Children Board CSE strategic group.

Appendix 4: CSE Process for Early Help and Partner Agencies



