



Subject: Lancashire's approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation Briefing Note

This note sets out the Lancashire approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). It has been prepared to specifically assist the issue of information sharing identified as an item to progress at a previous CSE ministerial roundtable discussion. Further information in any area can be provided as required.

Our work

Lancashire Constabulary has worked closely with many statutory and voluntary agencies over the past seven years to tackle the issue of CSE. Specialist multi-agency partners share relevant information and coordinate the most appropriate response for each case. This joined up approach means that a whole range of support for children, their families and others can be put in place where needed. By effectively sharing information we are able to identify those children who have been victims of crime and provide them with the support necessary (see appendix 1 Lancashire Standard Operating Procedures). By identifying risk factors such as children going repeatedly missing we are also able to intervene in many cases early to prevent a child being abused or exploited. Our commitment is to stop and prevent the exploitation of children in our county. This approach means that we are also better able to identify and disrupt offenders and identify those who pose the greatest risk. We will always seek to bring offenders to justice for these abhorrent crimes, and when we cannot will ensure we seek to disrupt offenders from committing offences through for example the effective use of Sexual Offence Prevention Orders and the use of Section 2 Abduction Notices

Facts

- Across Lancashire there are between 650 and 700 victim referrals for CSE every 6 months – this figure relates both to victims of crime and to those individuals who when risk assessed are demonstrating high risk factors / vulnerability to being exploited.
- Referrals for CSE continue to be predominantly for white females between the ages of 13 and 15 living in their own family home. 98% of referred young people were female and the same percentage were white.
- During the last 6 months we received 312 referrals of offenders and suspects across the county. The majority of offender referrals are white British males, with 12% Asian Pakistani and 3% Asian Indian.
- Grooming through the internet remains the most significant method by which offenders groom victims, along with on street grooming, the 'boyfriend' model and offenders who are in a position of trust.

Multi Agency Teams

There are dedicated teams of officers working with staff from partner agencies in each area of the county. These teams work closely with young people who are being exploited to firstly get them to recognise that they have been/are being exploited and to find ways of helping them to break free from the position they find themselves coerced into.

Education packages have been delivered in many schools across the county, highlighting dangers, warning signs and raising awareness amongst teenagers about sexual exploitation. Similar presentations have been delivered to parents and referrals have come as a direct result of this awareness raising.

We work very closely with community groups recognising that CSE takes place in all our communities and is perpetrated by offenders from all different backgrounds. By raising awareness we will ensure that victims & families are confident to come forward and that local communities will provide intelligence on those that seek to offend.

We are clear that in Lancashire we are able to tackle this problem, target offenders and help those children who have become, or are at risk of becoming, victims because we put the resources into safeguarding those who are vulnerable and bringing to justice those who are responsible.

Partnerships

Strategic Governance for CSE is led by the Childrens Safeguarding Boards in Lancashire, Blackburn with Darwen and Blackpool

A CSE strategic partnership meeting sits quarterly chaired by the Head of Public Protection for the Constabulary. Representation is made up from all police divisions and statutory and non-statutory partners.

A Pan Lancashire CSE Strategy and Protocols are in place along with a CSE action plan to ensure consistency of approach and development of best practice across the county.

About Victims

Social Care Outcome	Frequency
Section 47	120
Section 17	46
Section 20	6
Section 31	3

Pan Lancashire- In 483 referrals it was recorded that a social care outcome was not required; the other 175 warranted further social care enquiries. In 120 referrals the child was judged to be 'at risk' and as such required a Section 47 investigation and in a further 46 cases a Section 17 referral was made for a child 'in need'. 6 referrals (children=5) resulted in a Section 20 provision of accommodation and 3 children became subject of a full care order.

In approximately 12% of all referrals there are details relating to the referred young person having been in contact with Child and Adult Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Going Missing remains the single most significant factor in identifying the risk of CSE, with young runaways exposing themselves to a range of contributory risks to becoming a victim. Repeat missing children account for 16% of all CSE referrals and 40% of all referrals have been missing on more than one occasion.

Approximately 15% of all referrals have been for children in care. CSE victims who are resident in care homes continue to be among the most prolific missing persons and amongst the highest risk cases. In the last 6 month period 62 children were referred for CSE more than once accounting for 26% of all referrals.

Prevent

In September 2012 Lancashire Constabulary coordinated a week of awareness raising on CSE. A series of media and community events were arranged across the county to seek to build confidence in all our communities of the service available for young people and parents.

Awareness raising with children, professionals and parents continues in all divisions; providing an understanding of the grooming process and guidance of how to recognise the early signs of CSE. Specific work around e-safety continues to use CEOP trained ambassadors to cascade their knowledge of internet safety and ensure key messages are provided to young people. In looking to improve future service delivery, the Children's Society in conjunction with Police Protection Units have conducted interviews with 23 CSE victims, to obtain feedback on their experience of contact with CSE teams. On the whole victims acknowledged that CSE teams were acting to keep them safe and found them caring, interested and ready to listen; although several reported that they found non-police staff members easier to communicate with. Victims also identified that improved awareness of CSE and internet safety would help to protect young people and prevent child sexual exploitation.¹

Protect

Work is now ongoing through the development of the MASH (multi agency safeguarding hubs) with all partners to develop processes that are consistent across the county and ensure that all CSE referrals are considered regarding risk and intervention through a multi-agency hub. The MASH model has been piloted in Lancashire since January 2011 and will be rolled out across the County on 1st April. This will significantly develop the timeliness and risk assessment of CSE (as well as other factors) referrals and determine the most appropriate intervention required including statutory protection or early action to reduce risk and vulnerability.

Pursue

The number of suspects/offenders linked to CSE referrals in Lancashire is around 300. CSE suspects/offenders across Lancashire as a whole have continued to be primarily white males; however the ethnic breakdown varies widely between divisions in the West and divisions in the East of the county. Not all persons identified as suspects are ultimately proven to have committed offences and disposals range between criminal charges, the issuing of abduction notices to prevent future grooming or the gathering of intelligence for proactive operations.

Approximately 6% of offenders over a 6 month period are female. The majority of referred female suspects/offenders had either encouraged victims to become involved in CSE or have allowed their premises to be used by young people whilst missing from home.

Online and on street interactions continue to be the two most frequently recorded methods of initial contact, whilst introductions through a third party are also increasingly being recorded. As stated previously, CSE victims are known to associate with each other and, as such, introduce each other and other young people to further potential offenders; with some victims actively 'recruiting' others. Those who go missing, frequent locations known for CSE or reside in care homes with a problem of CSE are particularly at risk. Victim networks continue to be central to the spread of involvement in CSE.

When criminal offence are identified Lancashire Constabulary will always seek to ensure that all perpetrators are brought to justice. The Engage Team since its inception has obtained criminal sentences of perpetrators totalling over 400 years for child sexual exploitation.

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