



Camden Safeguarding
Children Board

Camden multi-agency guidance on child sexual exploitation (CSE) 2018

Contents

	Page:
1. Introduction	2
2. Information about CSE	3
3. Camden's response: agency roles	6
4. Identifying victims of CSE	11
5. Procedures for CSE cases	13
6. Children placed in Camden by other Local authorities	13
7. Working with young people and families	16
8. Supporting action against perpetrators	17
9. Confidentiality and information sharing	20
10. Training and supervision	20
11. Dealing with professional differences	21
Appendix 1: Matrix of risk and indicators	22
Appendix 2: MASE group membership	25
Appendix 3: CSE processes workflow	26

1 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and scope of guidance

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse that 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 at risk of CSE.

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 what action agencies need to take to prevent CSE and help safeguard the young people involved.

The guidance should be read by all professionals who work directly with young people aged under 18 where the young person is considered vulnerable to CSE or where there are concerns that the young person is being groomed for CSE or being exploited.

1.2 Definition of CSE

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) the financial advantage of 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. (*Department for Education*)

1.3 The law and issues around consent

The Sexual Offences Act 2003 sets out the law around consent to sexual activity:

- Children under 13 cannot give informed consent to any form of sexual activity in any circumstances.
- 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.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

- 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.

The key element in CSE is whether the child or young person is giving informed consent to sexual activity, is making their own decision or is exercising any kind of choice in their relationship or whether their choice has been constrained by their circumstances or the nature of the relationship with the perpetrator.

1.4 Young people who are 18 and over

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 Adult Social Care Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) for an adult safeguarding response.

If the young person is a care leaver who is receiving leaving care services or is disabled and receives a service from the Children and Young Person's Disability Transitions Service, their personal advisor or Transitions social worker should be advised of any concerns.

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***: The young person has an older partner who exerts a great deal of influence and control over them. The young person is likely to believe they are in a serious adult relationship and not recognise its exploitative nature.
- ***Peer exploitation***: The 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***: Networks of perpetrators grooming young people for coercion into sexual activity with different men and perhaps using the victims to recruit others.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

Sexual exploitation may include a wide range of sexual activities including 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.

Exploitation may take place in a variety of locations such as private flats, cars, hotels or business premises. 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.

2.2 Grooming and routes into CSE

Young people may become involved in sexual exploitation because:

- they have been targeted by perpetrators; a high level of risk taking behaviour such as running away can make them more vulnerable to grooming;
- they are homeless and destitute and it is the only way of obtaining money or accommodation;
- they have been recruited by friends who are already being sexually exploited.

Perpetrators target young people in public locations where they gather without adult supervision, such as shopping centres, sports centres, parks, bus and train stations and cafes.

The perpetrator may establish a “boyfriend” relationship with the young person and during this time give them gifts or money, eventually 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 until the perpetrator takes control of their life.

2.3 Online exploitation

Some young people are targeted on-line via social network and gaming sites with a view to either abusing them on-line or to arrange to meet so abuse can take place offline. This brings new challenges:

- Parents and professionals are often not always aware of how the rapidly evolving technology is being used for exploitation or which sites and forums are involved.
- The grooming process can take place faster and more easily on line than in the real world.
- The internet provides some anonymity and secrecy to perpetrators.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

- Perpetrators and victims can behave differently online than in the real world due to a lowering of inhibitions as the consequences and potential harm arising from the behavior are more remote.
- Images can be distributed quickly and without the victim's knowledge; this extends the capacity for continuing exploitation and makes it difficult to contain the harm.
- Exploitation can cross international boundaries making it difficult for law enforcement agencies to deal effectively with perpetrators.

2.4 Links with gangs

Sexual exploitation may 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 modern slavery and trafficking

The **Modern Slavery Act 2015** makes it a criminal offence to hold a person in slavery or servitude or to require them to carry out forced or compulsory labour. This includes sexual exploitation and CSE victims will therefore be victims of a crime and likely to be at risk of harm. Young people from overseas may have been trafficked into the UK specifically for the purpose of sexual exploitation and CSE victims may be trafficked within the UK in order to further their exploitation and avoid contact with the authorities.

Where a young person is identified as a victim of modern slavery or trafficking, it is important that they are referred to the National Crime Agency's Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking Unit (MSHTU) under the National Referral Mechanism (NRM). This will be carried out by Children's Safeguarding and Social Work as first respondent under NRM procedures.

For more information please refer to the CSCB modern slavery and trafficking guidance available at: https://cscb-new.co.uk/?page_id=7271

2.6 Links with running away/missing

There is a strong correlation between running away/going missing and CSE as the young person has a greater risk of being targeted and groomed. Further, young people who run away may find that sexual exploitation is the only way 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 may 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: https://cscb-new.co.uk/?page_id=8243

3 Camden's response: agency roles

Camden has developed a **multi-agency CSE strategy** and the key aims are to:

- prevent CSE
- identify and refer on victims of CSE
- support victims to exit the exploitation
- disrupt patterns of grooming and exploitation in the borough
- prosecute perpetrators.

The full strategy is available at the link below and the following agencies will work together to implement this strategy.

<https://cscb-new.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/03/Preventing-CSE-strategy-2017.pdf>

3.1 Camden Safeguarding Children Board

The Board will:

- coordinate the multi-agency response to CSE in the borough and be the forum for developing and monitoring Camden's CSE strategy;
- ensure that all relevant information about CSE activity in the borough is available to agencies;
- provide a framework of policy and staff training to support joint working;
- co-ordinate the programme of prevention and a campaign to raise

Multi-agency CSE guidance
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 and the CSE strategic group will report to the Board annually on progress. 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.

3.2 Multi-agency Sexual Exploitation group (MASE)

The MASE group is responsible for ensuring a strategic response to CSE in the borough, focusing on the prevention, intervention, diversion and disruption elements of the CSE strategy in order to reduce the impact and risk of CSE across the community. Members of the group are shown at appendix 1 and the work of the MASE will be co-ordinated by CSSW.

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.

3.3 Camden Police

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

- carrying out criminal investigations and prosecuting individual perpetrators;
- supporting CSSW 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 ensure that there is a designated senior leadership team responsible for all aspects of intervention and disruption of CSE in Camden and will maintain close contacts with the Missing Person's Unit.

3.4 Multi-agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

The MASH team is part of the Children and Families Contact Service which is the first point of entry for all referrals and requests for children's social care services. The MASH deals with cases where there are safeguarding concerns about a child and all referrals regarding CSE will be passed directly to the MASH team in the first instance. The team will also be responsible for identifying CSE as a presenting issue for any other type of referral received.

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 group's strategic response. The MASH will also refer individual cases to the group where there is a high level of risk requiring multi-agency intervention.

3.5 Children's Safeguarding and Social Work (CSSW)

CSSW is responsible for providing statutory social work services in Camden and is the lead agency for providing a response to CSE. CSSW 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.

3.6 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 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.

3.7 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.

3.8 Schools

Schools are responsible for:

- providing information to young people about sexual exploitation that raises their awareness of the issue within the curriculum;
- identifying young people who are vulnerable to or at risk of sexual exploitation by carrying out a CSE risk assessment and making appropriate e-CAF referrals to MASH for help;

Multi-agency CSE guidance

- providing individual support to young people around sexual exploitation, for example through mentoring;
- 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 safeguarding lead, who should be the first point of contact within the school for any concerns held about a pupil in relation to CSE.

3.9 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.

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.

3.10 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.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

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.

3.11 Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership has a statutory duty to reduce crime and anti-social behaviour in the borough and has a key role in implementing the CSE strategy

- 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.

3.12 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 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.

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

3.13 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.

4 Identifying victims of CSE

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.

4.1 Profile of victims

There is no typical CSE victim, but the following should be noted:

- CSE is most prevalent between the ages of 12 and 15 although nationally an increased number of 8-11 year olds are being referred.
- There is also a high prevalence of 16 and 17 year olds involved but this group may be overlooked as professionals may assume they have consented to sexual activity. Professionals also need to be aware of consent issues where the young person is homeless or has no financial support available.
- The longer exploitation goes on the more likely it is to continue into adulthood as exit becomes harder.
- Identified victims are mainly girls and a third are boys, but this may be due to boys being less likely to disclose or for their exploitation to be overlooked.
- Some circumstances may make young people more vulnerable 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.

However although these circumstances may make a young person more vulnerable, young people from a variety of backgrounds can become involved in CSE and the absence of any vulnerabilities should not lead to CSE being ruled out if there are other indications of CSE.

4.2 Indicators and impact of CSE

The “Matrix of risk, indicators and responses to CSE” shown at appendix 2 gives a list of indicators of CSE based on the level of the young person’s involvement and corresponding with the consequent risks. These indicators have been included in the CSE risk assessment tool.

The impact of CSE can be long-lasting, with immediate risks such as sexually transmitted infections and unwanted pregnancy and longer-term health issues including emotional trauma, stress and depression, misuse of substances, self-harm and suicidal thoughts. CSE can also impact on the young person’s future life chances as it is associated with offending behaviour, disruption of education, poor outcomes and isolation from family and friends.

4.3 Young people known to CSSW

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. Where there are concerns, social workers should follow the procedures set out in the divisional CSE procedures for social workers.

4.4 Difficulties in identifying CSE

Recognising that a young person is at risk from CSE can be difficult for a variety of reasons and disclosure can be difficult:

Victims may not readily disclose or engage with services because:

- they do not recognise the exploitative nature of the relationship;
- they are distrustful of adults or statutory agencies and think that no-one will believe them;
- they are fearful of reprisals from perpetrators against them or their family
- their movements are being controlled by their exploiters.

Professionals may not recognise CSE because:

- they believe the young person has consented to sex (particularly for 16 and 17 year olds);
- they believe the young person has made a “lifestyle choice”
- in the absence of a disclosure or other indicators, the young person’s behaviour is attributed to other factors or seen as normal teenage behaviour.

5 Procedures for CSE cases

5.1 Assessing risk

Where professionals have concerns that a young person they work with may be vulnerable to or at risk of CSE they should carry out a CSE risk assessment which must be sent with any CSE referral. The risk assessment tool is available:

- to the IYSS via One Point of Access
- to the Early Help teams via the relevant MOSAIC workflow
- to all other agencies via the e-CAF system.

The risk assessment tool available via the e-CAF system contains a series of indicators of CSE; professionals should select the indicators that are relevant to the young person and from this make a professional judgement as to the young person's potential level of involvement in CSE and the corresponding risk.

For staff in the IYSS and Early Help, the risk assessment tool has a scoring system with each indicator given a score based on the level of risk. Each selected indicator will be added to provide an overall scoring that indicates the extent to which young people may be involved in CSE and the corresponding level of risk.

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.

The levels of risk are described at Appendix 2 and are as follows:

- **Low level risk** (CSE RAG rating Green); young people who are vulnerable to CSE because of their circumstances which makes it easier for grooming to take place and who need services that will build their resilience to grooming.
- **Medium level risk** (CSE RAG rating Amber): 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. This group will require targeted intervention and support in order to build resilience and disrupt the grooming process. 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.
- **High level risk** (CSE RAG rating Red): young people who are probably being sexually exploited and require intervention to help them exit the exploitation and make a recovery. This may involve a 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

Multi-agency CSE guidance
group to engage with voluntary sector organisations instead.

5.2 Making a referral

A MASH referral should be made whenever a CSE risk assessment indicates a CSE RAG rating of Green, Amber or Red.

When 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.

Early Help services must refer to the MASH all cases where CSE has been identified in an early help case for a decision to be made on whether the CSSW needs to become involved or whether the case can remain with Early Help services to undertake preventative work.

5.3 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.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

Where the young person is assessed as being at a high level of risk and may be suffering significant harm, a referral can be made 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.

5.3 Action on referrals

On receipt of a referral, the MASH screening officer will check to see if the young person is already known to CSSW 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 CSSW, the case will be passed to the MASH manager who will deal with the referral under MASH procedures. MASH partner agencies will share relevant information in order to build a full picture on the level of risk and this information will inform the MASH manager's decision on the MASH RAG rating; (please note this is separate from the CSE RAG rating). The MASH manager will then refer cases on to the appropriate resource:

- Cases with a **MASH Green RAG rating** (low level risk) will be referred on to the First Stop Early Help team to identify an appropriate early help service with the aim of working with the young person to build their resilience and divert them from CSE.
- Cases with a **MASH Amber and Red RAG rating** where there young person is thought to be at risk of CSE will be referred to CSSW.

5.4 Intervention by CSSW

All CSE cases referred to CSSW will be dealt with under child protection procedures in the first instance. A **CSE child protection strategy meeting** will be convened 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.

- Cases with a **CSE RAG rating Green** will be referred to the Early Help service for a preventative service.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

- Cases with a **CSE RAG rating Amber** where there is no risk of significant harm the case will be dealt with as Ca child in need case.
- Cases with a **CSE RAG rating Red** will be dealt with under child protection procedures with a child protection investigation being held leading to an initial child protection case conference.
- All young people for whom there are concerns about CSE will have a specific CSE plan which will be part of their child in need, child protection or care plan (where they are looked after).
- 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.
- The CSE plan will focus on the risk of CSE and will set out the actions to:
 - 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.
- Where there is evidence of modern slavery and trafficking, CSSW make a referral to the UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) as first respondent under National Referral Mechanism procedures.

6 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 Children and Families Contact Service 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.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

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 and their families

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

- It is essential that professionals remain aware that CSE is a form of child abuse and work in a non-judgmental way with young people. 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 aged 16 or 17 years who may be at risk of CSE should not be ignored by agencies simply because of their age, especially as these young people may be more vulnerable to exploitation due to homelessness and destitution.
- 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.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

- 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.
- 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, CSSW 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.

8 Supporting action against perpetrators

It can be 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.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

- 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 CSSW 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.

- 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.

9 Confidentiality and information sharing

Information about a young person's sexual activity is highly personal and confidential and should only be disclosed to professionals in confidence and with the young person's consent. Professionals should seek consent before making a CSE referral to the MASH and sharing any information with third parties.

- 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.
- 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 a referral **must** be made to the MASH even if consent is not given.

It is essential in CSE cases that agencies share information so that intelligence on other victims, perpetrators and locations can be gathered and used to disrupt patterns of CSE in the borough. Young people should be aware that information will be shared with the MASE analyst and the MASE group for this purpose.

10 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 make appropriate e-CAF referrals.

Multi-agency CSE guidance

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.

11 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 professionals or agencies have any disagreements in connection with this policy, this will be resolved under the CSCB escalation policy available at: https://cscb-new.co.uk/?page_id=8453

Appendix 1: 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

Multi-agency CSE guidance

		<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.	FSSW Police CAIT The Children’s Society FWD MALT/CAMHS Safer London Foundation Camden Safety Net Solace

Appendix 2: MASE group membership

Name	Agency/Designation
Michelle O'Regan*	Head of Service, CSSW, LBC (Co Chair)
DI Joanne Lloyd	DI, MASH, MARAC, Misper, CSE, Mental Health Team, MPS (Co Chair)
DC Clive Vinnicombe	DC, CN Police, MPS
Bryony Smith*	Missing and CSE Coordinator and Analyst, LBC
Lucy Southern	Youth Violence/Disorder and Gangs Team Manager, IYSS, LBC
Keri Deasy	Strategy and Commissioning Manager, LBC
Derek Dyer	Team Manager, CSSW, LBC
Stephanie Toghil	Housing Interventions Manager, Housing and Adult Social Care, LBC
Hayley Mullen	Advanced Practitioner, Youth Offending Service, LBC
Elaine Dunning	Family Service Manager, Families in Focus, LBC
Deborah Edwards	Independent Domestic and Sexual Violence Advisor, Camden Safety Net
Cara Holmes	Service Manager, The Children's Society
Rabena Faried	Team Manager, Safer London Foundation
Chioma Onyekwuluje	Service Manager, Contraceptive and Sexual Health, CaSH
Adam Seomore	Named Nurse, Camden CCG
Gill Morris	Senior Health and Wellbeing and Cross Phase Advisor, Education, LBC
DC Lisa Briggs	DC, Central SET, MPS
Dawn Strachen	Community Presence Officer, Community Safety, LBC

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

Appendix 3: CSE Process for Early Help and Partner Agencies

