



TACKLING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION IN BURY

A STRATEGIC PARTNERSHIP APPROACH

2018 – 2021

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INTRODUCTION

This new strategy for 2018 - 2021 builds on the work completed under the previous Bury Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Strategy. It has been formulated by an inter-agency sub group of the Board and the Bury Phoenix Team, the specialist service providing support for children in the Borough affected by CSE. The strategy sets out the strategic aims of the Local Authority and its partners in tackling CSE and how, through partnership working, an enhanced and effective service to reduce the threats and harm posed to children by CSE will be provided. The implementation of this strategy is overseen by Bury Safeguarding Children Board CSE & Missing Sub Group.

The Local Authority and its partners have a duty to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation in accordance with the policies, procedures and guidance of the BSCB. Under the previous strategy work was undertaken to ensure that the children's workforce in Bury was able to fulfil this duty; the BSCB raised awareness of CSE, trained frontline staff to respond to children who might be at risk, commissioned research by Barnardo's on the local situation and set up the Sexual Exploitation And Missing (SEAM) process that ensured a multi-agency response to children at risk; importantly the Licencing Service were engaged and responded by introducing safeguarding measures within the licencing system.

The SEAM process was replaced in 2014, when the Local Authority and the Police set up the Phoenix Team to ensure a coordinated specialist response to CSE but whilst this team will carry out much of the frontline work with victims, partners in Bury remain committed to broad multi-agency approach that makes tackling CSE everyone's business.

The purpose of the strategy therefore is to ensure a robust, coordinated, multi-agency response to CSE in Bury under three broad headings: Prevention; Protection and; Prosecution; achieved by taking a proactive approach, focused on early identification, intervention and follow up. This approach will require a shared understanding of the problem throughout the workforce, an integrated approach and effective joint working.

A key aim of the strategy is to ensure that the multi-agency response is child centred.

Key Priorities

- 1. Prevention and early intervention should be regarded as a key part of all agencies' approaches to sexual exploitation**
- 2. Identification and engagement with children and young people who are experiencing, or who are at risk of, child sexual exploitation**
- 3. Maintain a strong and sustainable infrastructure which supports an effective identification and response to child sexual exploitation**
- 4. Ensuring that integrated services are provided for children and young people who are experiencing, or who are at risk of child sexual exploitation**
- 5. Supporting the prosecution of offenders and to support the disruption of activity relating to child sexual exploitation**
- 6. Ensuring that integrated services are provided for children and young people who are missing**

This strategy is set out in the context of Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015, the Home Affairs Select Committee report published June 2013, the Children's Commissioner's Guidance 'Sex without consent. I suppose that is rape-how young people understand consent to sex', the January 2014 report from the Department of Health the 'Health Working Group report on child sexual exploitation'.

The strategy included a review of the findings of the Independent Inquiry Report into Child Sexual exploitation in Rotherham, 'Real Voices' the Independent Report by Ann Coffey MP of behalf of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner and the Ofsted Thematic Inspection 'It couldn't happen here, could it?' along with the National Working Group for CSE's summary of recommendations.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse

CSE can take many forms from the seemingly consensual to serious organised crime and child trafficking. Exploitation is determined by an imbalance of power within a relationship. Perpetrators create dependence in their victims as the exploitative relationship develops.

Child Sexual Exploitation should not be regarded as a lifestyle choice. Young people do not choose to be exploited. Perpetrators target vulnerable young people who do not understand that they are being exploited and in many instances perceive the perpetrator to be an acquaintance, friend or partner.

HM Government published a statutory definition of Child Sexual Exploitation on 16 February 2017, which is:-

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

In response to the recommendations of the Coffey Inquiry report this strategy explicitly includes references to boys and young men as Bury recognises that boys and young men can be sexually exploited, Bury will also ensure that appropriate interventions are used in these cases. It is understood that there is a link between children missing from home and the potential for child sexual exploitation and this is recognised within the procedures for managing individual cases within Bury. For that reason BSCB has remained committed to including the response to children missing from home within this strategy and monitoring it through the CSE & Missing Sub Group.

The ways that children and young people are exploited are constantly evolving, having an up to date understanding of the pattern of child sexual exploitation in Bury is vital in order to keep Bury children and young people safe. The categories of sexual exploitation identified in Bury thus far are

- **Inappropriate relationships:** this usually involves one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person; whether this is physical, emotional or financial control. One indicator of an inappropriate relationship may be a significant age gap but peer relationships may also include elements of control – see inappropriate use of technology below.
- **Boyfriend model of exploitation:** in this type of situation, the perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a 'relationship' and then coerces the young person to have sex with friends or associates. This may involve the child receiving something from the abusers (e.g. accommodation, food, gifts, drugs, alcohol and affection)
- **Organised/networked sexual exploitation or trafficking:** young people who are often connected to one another are passed through networks; possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced or pressurised into sexual activity with numerous adults.
- **Exploitation involving recruitment by peers:** where a young person, who themselves may be a victim of child sexual exploitation introduces other children or young people to the abuser/abusers;

- **Inappropriate use of technology:** child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition e.g being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without payment or gain
- **Exploitation linked to poverty and exclusion:** where grooming is not necessarily involved but there is opportunistic abuse of a young person in need of help, for example, the offer of accommodation to a runaway in exchange for sex. The young person tends to view this arrangement, not as exploitation, but rather as a short term survival mechanism.

Exploitation linked to gang activity: Gangs mainly comprise men and boys aged 13-25 years old, who take part in many forms of criminal activity (eg, knife crime or robbery), who can engage in violence against other gangs, and who have identifiable markers, for example a territory, a name, or sometimes clothing. Where child sexual exploitation takes place in a gang environment, female members may perceive the abuse as normal, as well as accepting it as a way of achieving a respected status/title within the gang.

OPERATIONAL DELIVERY:

Key principles

The recommendations of the 'See Me, Hear Me' framework ('If only someone had listened' Office of the Children's Commissioner 2013) have been used to update the principals that underpin the Bury strategy.

- **A child centred approach** which focuses on the child's needs and involves the young person in decision making, whilst recognising that they may not see themselves as being in an exploitative or abusive situation.
- **Support to parents and families** to make their own plans for the protection of their children, as long as this is consistent with the child's safety and welfare.
- **The rights of children and young people should be respected.** The UK Government is a signatory to the Council of Europe Convention on the protection of Children against Sexual Exploitation and Abuse and strategies and actions relating to individuals should be consistent with this convention.
- **A commitment to enduring relationships and support** that promote sustained changes in the lives of children and their families
- **The responsibility for criminal acts is with the perpetrator.** Sexual exploitation of children and young people should not be regarded as a

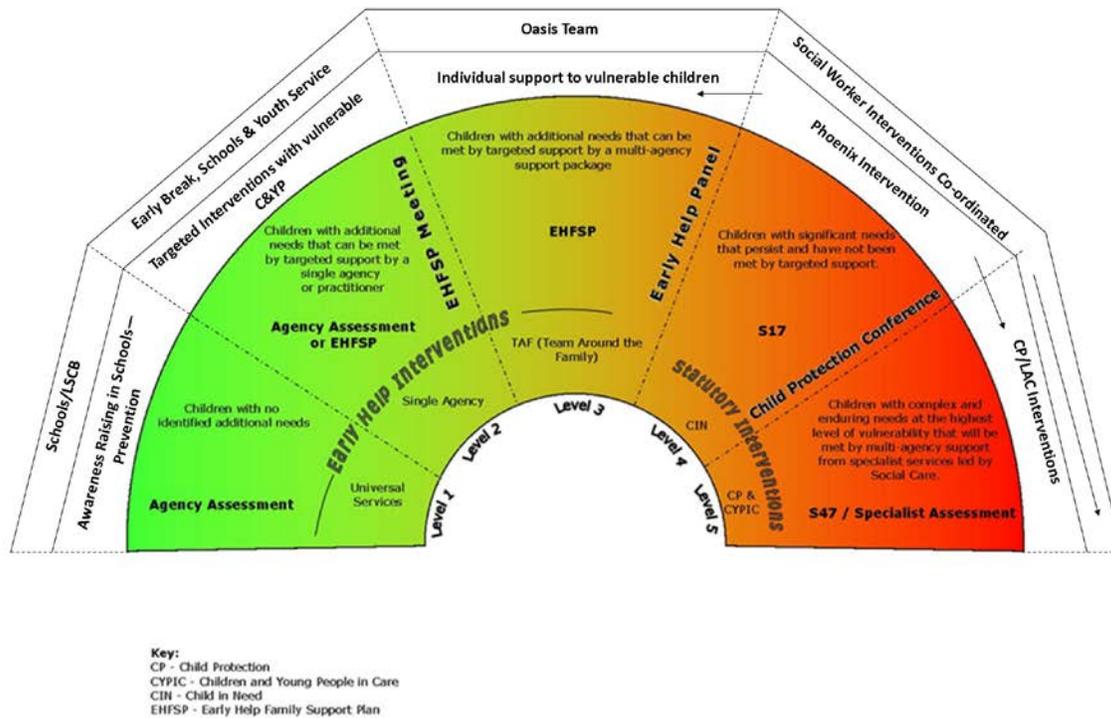
criminal act by the child or young person, but as child sexual abuse, where the responsibility lies with the exploiter.

- **The response to child sexual exploitation is a shared responsibility** for among agencies and organisations, including education providers; health services, including sexual health services; youth services, children's social care; criminal justice agencies; and, voluntary sector services supporting children and families.
- **Support, supervision and training** will be provided to all operational staff to enable them to respond effectively with child sexual exploitation.
- **An integrated approach** is required at an individual and strategic level. Individual plans for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children so that plans are based on a wide ranging assessment of the needs of each child, the parents' capacity to care for them in the context of family and wider community circumstances. Strategic work should be underpinned by committed leadership, shared understanding, and the effective co-ordination of work by the Bury Safeguarding Children Board
- **Prevention and early intervention** should be regarded as a key part of agencies' approaches to sexual exploitation.

Operational delivery model

The aim of the strategy is to have a graded service response to child sexual exploitation proportionate to the level of need; It is envisaged that the response will go from the universal i.e. children, families, and the wider community having information about recognising child sexual exploitation and how to share concerns, through targeted preventative work and support to a high level multi agency response, via the Bury Phoenix Team, that may also involve statutory intervention via Child Protection or Care Proceedings.

The following diagram maps the interventions onto Bury's Levels of Need.



STRATEGIC OUTCOMES & OBJECTIVES

1. Prevention and early intervention should be regarded as a key part of all agencies' approaches to sexual exploitation

Parents, carers and the community understand how to identify CSE risk factors, how to reduce the vulnerabilities of their children and how to get help if they are concerned.

Children and young people understand CSE and their vulnerability is reduced

2. Identification and engagement with children and young people who are experiencing, or who are at risk of, child sexual exploitation

The BSCB will improve early identification and appropriate responses to CSE by raising awareness across the children's workforce.

Workers in Adult and Community Services will be able to identify CSE and respond appropriately

All agencies have an updated strategy for engaging with children who are at risk of CSE or who go missing, including single agency training.

Children and young people are consulted so that CSE is better understood from their point of view and their opinions influence service plans.

A service is provided for parents and/or carers of children and young people at risk of CSE, including greater involvement in the development of interventions.

Children identified as 'at risk' have a full assessment of their needs and referral to relevant services for intervention and support.

3. Maintain a strong and sustainable infrastructure which supports an effective identification and response to child sexual exploitation

The Local Authority strategy and action plan is based on an up to date understanding of the nature and prevalence and of local needs.

The well-established Sexual Exploitation and Missing (SEAM) process will be developed as a bi-monthly inter-agency forum to address the issues of prevalence, prevention, protection and prosecution. It will also act as the operational group for the Phoenix Team.

Data collection and analysis is improved to ensure the provision of timely and proportionate multi-agency interventions that support children and families and reduce risk

There is full participation in the Greater Manchester Phoenix initiative to maximise the benefits of cross border work

Staff working with or in contact with children understand the signs of precursor types of behaviour and develop intervention strategies to prevent escalation. This will include those displaying precursor behaviour in relation to victimisation and offending.

Agencies proactively identify those who introduce victims to the CSE environment and develop interventions to stop this behaviour

Localised preventative plans reflecting local problem profiles are developed.

There is a coordinated approach to gang activity linked to CSE

The work undertaken by the Local Authority and its partners will be scrutinised at an operational and strategic level to ensure it is effective

4. Ensuring that integrated services are provided for children and young people who are experiencing, or who are at risk of child sexual exploitation

The Phoenix referral pathway and operational procedures are embedded in the practice of all partner agencies in Bury

Any child who has been victimised by CSE is able to access the appropriate level of therapeutic intervention.

CSE is routinely considered when agencies and partnerships develop their strategies, business plans and commissioning arrangements.

Bury Phoenix Team Operating Principles, including CSE risk assessment tool to be included in local BSCB safeguarding training.

5. Supporting the prosecution of offenders and to disrupt activity relating to child sexual exploitation

BSCB will ensure that all agencies participate effectively in disruption strategies by:

Phoenix Team working to break the cycle of activity.

Police and partner agencies collect intelligence and develop hot spot map and links between victims and perpetrators.

Police and partner agencies target "Hot- Spots" with high profile visits.

Police issue Abduction Warnings.

Police arrest perpetrators and set bail conditions and ensure offender management together with National Probation Service and Community Rehabilitation Company.

6. Ensuring that integrated services are provided for children and young people who are missing

BSCB will ensure that:

The Greater Manchester Missing procedures are embedded in the practice of all partner agencies in Bury.

Agencies proactively identify those children and young people who repeatedly are missing and develop interventions to stop this behaviour

The needs of children placed by other Local Authorities (COLA) are addressed.

The work undertaken by the Local Authority and its partners will be scrutinised at an operational and strategic level to ensure its effectiveness

GOVERNANCE & QUALITY ASSURANCE

The Chair of the CSE & Missing Sub Group sits on the BSCB Business Group and will report on the progress with the action plan to each meeting. Quarterly statistical information will be provided to BSCB Business Group for scrutiny which will include: quantitative information from Bury Phoenix, e.g. the number of referrals, risk assessments undertaken, age, gender, ethnicity, area of residence, location of incidents, number of Looked After Children including COLA and perpetrator demographics. The report will include some qualitative information regarding partnership arrangements and whether interventions were deemed effective. A separate report will be provided by Children's Social Care in respect of children who are missing from home and care.

A report from the CSE & Missing Sub Group will be included in the BSCB Annual Report, which will be presented to the Health & Wellbeing Board, and sent for scrutiny to the Chief Executive and Leader of Bury Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner.

Signatories



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