



city & hackney
safeguarding
children board

Child Sexual Exploitation

Strategy 2015-16

February 2015

"Working Together to make children safer"

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1. Introduction

1.1 This document outlines The City and Hackney Safeguarding Children Board (CHSCB) strategy for preventing, identifying and tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE). It has been developed with regards to the existing and developing problem profiles across both areas, and has drawn on evidence about effective practice from national and local research, policy and guidance, including the Metropolitan Police “*Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol 2014*”

1.2 The strategy should be read in the context of the significant work already undertaken by partner agencies across the City and Hackney in developing the local operational response to child sexual exploitation. This work has helped improve the understanding of the types of exploitation impacting across both areas and has included:

- A working group of the CHSCB being in existence since June 2011 co-ordinating and overseeing strategic development of services and responses to this issue.
- A multi-agency operational group developed in January 2013 to monitor individual cases in Hackney, which provided the basis for the launch of the local MASE meetings in March 2014 (Multi-Agency Sexual Exploitation).
- A high risk case discussion forum established in January 2014 to consider the needs and profiles of some of the most vulnerable young people in Hackney.
- A specific campaign launched with Hoteliers by the City of London Police to improve awareness and identification.
- The CHSCB delivering multi-agency training on CSE to practitioners from the City and Hackney.
- Co-ordinating a range of targeted support services from early intervention to prevention and utilising a broad range of voluntary sector providers operating across the City and Hackney.

1.3 Building upon recent successes, this strategy presents a roadmap for the future towards which all local professionals can work. It focuses on the following priorities:

- **Knowing our problem, knowing our response**
- **Strong leadership**
- **Prevention and early intervention**
- **Protection and support**
- **Disruption and prosecution**

2. Purpose of the strategy

- 2.1 The CSE strategy and its accompanying action plans have been produced to take stock of the current approaches to tackling CSE across the City and Hackney; outline the type of approach that agencies envisage taking to address CSE in the future; and illustrate the steps that will be taken to realise our strategic vision.
- 2.2 The overarching aim is to promote a culture whereby nobody tolerates or ignores CSE; and where both professionals and communities across the City and Hackney understand what is required to identify, prevent and protect children and young people from CSE and they do this successfully.

3. Vision for City and Hackney

- All children and young people understand what constitutes sexual exploitation, recognise when they or others are at risk of this form of abuse and are confident to seek support.
- All children and young people are supported to develop healthy friendships and relationships.
- Children and young people who are particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation are identified and supported by their families/carers, professionals, and their community to build resilience against exploitation.
- Children and young people who are being sexually exploited are identified, safeguarded, and supported for as long as they need.
- Professionals, local businesses, families, carers, and local people can identify the signs of exploitation, know what to do with that information, and are aware of CHSCB agencies' responses to abuse.
- Those who seek to exploit children are identified, disrupted and convicted.
- Robust offender management post-conviction and/or effective intervention strategies reduce the risk presented by identified abusers.

4 Principles

- Sexually exploited children should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders.
- For children being abused or at risk of being abused, they need to be **seen, heard and helped**.
- **Seen**; in the context of their lives at home, friendship circles, health, education and public spaces (including social media). Whether you are a parent / carer, a friend, a

member of the public or a professional – everybody needs to be alert to the signs of CSE and know how to respond.

- **Heard**; to effectively protect children and young people, professionals need to take time to hear what children are saying and put themselves in the child or young person's shoes and think about what their life might truly be like.
- **Helped**; by remaining professionally curious and by implementing effective and imaginative solutions that help children and young people.

5. What is child sexual exploitation?

- 5.1 **Sexual exploitation is child abuse**, with those children and young people who become involved facing significant risks to their physical, emotional and psychological health and wellbeing.
- 5.2 Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person (or third person/s) 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.
- 5.3 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.
- 5.4 Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social, economic or emotional vulnerability.
- 5.5 A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see himself or herself as a victim of exploitation. Perpetrators of CSE can be from within or from outside a child or young person's family.
- 5.6 CSE also needs to be placed firmly in the context of abusive relationships and specifically; the impact that domestic violence can have on how a child or young person views relationships. For a child or young person growing up in such an environment, the impact of their experiences can create limited and limiting expectations with regards to what constitutes a healthy relationship; thus increasing their susceptibility to exploitation in the future.

6 The local profiles of child sexual exploitation

- 6.1 This strategy aims to be responsive to local need and this section outlines what is currently known about Child Sexual Exploitation in the City and Hackney. The information included in this section is intended to set the broad context for the current strategy. This information should be treated with some caution as it is likely that profiles will change over time as our knowledge increases. It is important that all practitioners, managers and leaders remain alert to different possibilities and that we continue to build our knowledge and understanding of the profile of CSE within our localities.
- 6.2 There is currently no identified single profile or type of CSE activity in either the City or Hackney. **In Hackney**, 135 young people have been identified as having been at risk of or vulnerable to CSE at some point since January 2013. There have been some investigations involving more than one exploitative adult and a number of young women identified as potential victims. There is evidence of gang involvement in relation to some young people at risk of CSE in Hackney, although in most instances where this is the case, this is not the only form of exploitation. The CSE profile for Hackney indicates that the most common type of exploitation involves young women being exploited by male peers or those slightly older than them.
- 6.3 **In the City of London**, no resident children have yet been identified as being at risk of CSE, although a review of all open cases within Children's Services recently identified two young people with increased vulnerability factors. Despite the low numbers of children and young people living in the City, this does not negate the potential risk to either them or to other children and young people visiting the area, particularly when seen in the context of the City having the highest daytime population density of any local authority, with hundreds of thousands of workers, residents, students and visitors packed into just over a square mile of space.
- 6.4 Children and young people resident in both the City and Hackney also go to school and/or spend time in neighbouring local authorities. At any given time, a number of looked after children will also be living in other areas. Their potential exposure to risk and exploitation can be associated to the local CSE profiles relevant in those respective areas, thus reflecting the importance of cross-border information sharing and co-operation between authorities.

7 Strategic Priorities

- 7.1 The CHSCB understands the need to place this CSE strategy in the context of other plans that influence the safety and wellbeing of children and young people. As such, it is essential that CSE forms part of ongoing dialogue and scrutiny at key strategic forums; ensuring everyone is playing their part in dealing with this issue. It will also involve ongoing dialogue with relevant groups representing local communities across both areas.
- 7.2 The following strategic priorities, informed by local issues and self-assessment, provide the focus for further developing our local arrangements and responses to CSE. Individual action plans covering the City and Hackney have been developed against these areas.

Priority 1: Knowing our problem, knowing our response

The focus of this strategic priority is to ensure that all professionals in the City and Hackney, along with parents/carers, local businesses, and young people, know the local problem of, and the local response, to CSE.

Supporting this priority, Hackney's CSE operational group has already built a local profile of children and young people at risk of and/or experiencing sexual exploitation. Whilst the City is yet to identify local cases of child sexual exploitation, a local profile dataset has been developed and is maintained by the City of London Police.

Both the City and Hackney oversee their respective problem profiles through MASE meetings and there is confidence that the way in which agencies respond to this profile is known and understood by the CHSCB CSE working group and specialist services.

Training on the nature of child sexual exploitation has been delivered to multi-agency staff across the City and Hackney and some businesses in the City area, particularly hotels, have received awareness raising briefings on child sexual exploitation.

Recently, the police have launched *Operation Makesafe*, a targeted awareness raising campaign for the local business community across a number of London Boroughs and both the City and Hackney will be engaging with this in the near future. Through a focus on this priority, it is intended that by 2016, the City and Hackney will be places where:

1. Professionals who come into contact with children and young people have relevant and proportionate knowledge of the local child sexual exploitation profile.

2. Analytical support is provided by children's social care and the Police to utilise local intelligence and continuously update the local problem profiles across the City and Hackney
3. The City and Hackney have built upon their local problem profiles – with a specific focus for Hackney on identifying more boys and young men who are vulnerable to abuse, and children who have not had previous contact with targeted services.
4. Professionals, parents/carers, young people, local businesses, in addition to residents of the City and Hackney, can identify sexual exploitation, know who to contact, and know what will be done in response. This is supported through robust awareness raising and regular training provided by the CHSCB, to partner agencies and communities
5. The local profile of sexual exploitation is understood by professionals within the broader profile of vulnerable adolescents within the City and Hackney

Priority 2: Strong leadership

The focus of this strategic priority is a recognition of the need for ongoing strong leadership to successfully tackle CSE. This leadership is required from all levels, but particularly from those at the top. Political leaders, Chief Executives and senior leaders in all organisations, together with leaders in the local community, have a responsibility to set the culture within which CSE is not tolerated. Continuing to promote a culture that encourages professional curiosity, challenge and appropriate escalation of concerns is fundamental. Strong leadership ensures this approach is hardwired into the professional and community response to CSE.

Supporting this priority, CSE remains a key strategic focus on the CHSCB business plan and as such is subject to the statutory objectives of the CHSCB; coordinating what is done by partners and scrutinising the effectiveness of the arrangements to tackle CSE. Enhanced governance arrangements that include regular meetings with the respective Chief Executives of the City and Hackney and chairs of partnership Boards also ensure CSE is kept firmly on the agenda across key strategic leaders. Through a continued focus on this priority, it is intended that by 2016, the City and Hackney will be places where:

1. The safety and wellbeing of children and young people affected by CSE continues to be a priority across all relevant organisations and community settings and this is evidenced in respective strategic planning.

2. The culture of organisations set by senior leaders wins the trust of young people, they are confident that their concerns are taken seriously and help is provided when needed.

Priority 3: Prevention and early intervention

The focus of this priority is to ensure that professionals and residents in the City and Hackney live and work in an environment that promotes healthy relationships and friendships, gender equality, and safeguarding, preventing the sexual exploitation of children as a result, and building the resilience of those who are more vulnerable than others to abuse.

In support of this priority, Hackney already knows the content of PSHE delivery across all of its secondary schools, pupil referral units, and special schools, and has provided schools with financial support to deliver this to students. Through Young Hackney, CHYPS Plus (health services for young people), and City Gateway, both City and Hackney agencies work with hundreds of young people who could potentially be vulnerable to child sexual exploitation. Some schools in Hackney currently have access to schools-based early intervention group work with boys and girls at risk of sexual exploitation through voluntary sector provision. Hackney also has access to support for younger siblings of gang members (aged under-11) to provide them with mentoring and resilience building support to prevent sexual exploitation. Awareness-raising activities have been delivered to students across schools in both the City and Hackney. Through continued focus on this priority area it is intended that by 2016 City and Hackney will have made significant progress towards being places where:

1. Schools deliver high quality PSHE and where they strive to take a whole-school approach to gender equality, safeguarding, and preventing sexual exploitation
2. Professionals adopt a consistent attitude towards consent, gender identity, healthy relationships and sexuality, and model this in every aspect of their practice
3. Professionals engaged in providing universal and targeted services to young people, through organisations such as Young Hackney, CHYPS Plus, and City Gateway, identify harmful attitudes associated with perpetrating or instigating abusive behaviours, and are able to empower young people to build positive and healthy attitudes towards relationships and friendships, gender identity, and sexuality
4. Professionals in Young Hackney, CHYPS Plus, and City Gateway, are able to identify and address vulnerabilities associated with child sexual exploitation therefore building young people's resilience to exploitation

5. Engaging the broader community has created public confidence in the actions of agencies whilst encouraging communities to be vocal about CSE, the unacceptability of this abuse and for communities to understand and participate in being part of the solution.
6. Children and young people who are particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation (i.e. looked after children, missing children) are identified early and supported by their families/carers, professionals, and their community to prevent and build resilience against exploitation.

Priority 4: Protection and Support

This priority focuses on ensuring professionals in children’s social care and the police lead a needs-led, local, response to child sexual exploitation, ensuring that case management involves both support and investigation, and invests in and utilises the resources available within local voluntary specialist services.

Supporting this strategic priority, professionals in Hackney are identifying cases of child sexual exploitation, referring them to the MASE meetings and holding multi-agency planning meetings to agree a process of support for each child identified. The response to child sexual exploitation in the City and Hackney is led and managed by children’s social care, with additional support for exploited children being delivered by voluntary sector providers.

Children’s social care professionals in Hackney hold cases within their unit model, providing space for group reflection and supervision. Reflection and supervision arrangements are also defined for children’s social care professionals in the City. A range of placement options including out of area placements, foster care, residential placements and, where necessary, secure placements to safeguard sexually exploited children are available and utilised by the City and Hackney as appropriate. A gap in the disruption and policing of perpetrators has been identified in terms of support and as a result, this features as a strategic priority on its own. By 2016 City and Hackney will protect and support children and young people from CSE through:

1. Delivering enduring support to children and young people who have been sexually exploited, ensuring that what is offered is appropriate for each individual child or young person based on their gender, age, ethnicity, disability, and the nature of the exploitation that they have experienced.

2. Improved identification of children and young people who are being sexually exploited but are not known beyond universal services before the exploitation is identified.
3. Making best use of voluntary sector capacity through outreach to young people not engaged with the City and Hackney statutory and targeted support services, in addition to providing time-intensive support and sustainable relationships to young people that mainstream services are unable to offer.
4. Ensuring that appropriate placements and support are available for children and young people who need to be moved in order to respond to their experience of sexual exploitation.
5. Commissioning a specialist CSE service for victims identified in the City area.
6. Developing expertise within the City's children's social care team through joint learning exercises with colleagues in Hackney.

Priority 5: Disruption and Prosecution

The focus of this priority is on ensuring a clear focus on the use of a range of disruption techniques to build the trust and confidence of victims. Through the implementation of such strategies, public confidence will increase; with individuals and communities empowered to report the signs of CSE – knowing that robust and effective action will follow. It also focuses on the targeting and pursuit of offenders that brings them to justice and interventions with young people to reduce and manage any sexual risks that they may pose to others.

Supporting this priority, the police continue to demonstrate their commitment through on-going engagement with the partnership as part of the MASE meetings and child protection processes initiated on individual cases. Hackney Borough police have already increased their capacity to specifically focus on CSE and are engaged in taking a proactive approach to identifying cases of exploitation, disruption and safeguarding. By 2016, improved disruption and prosecution of offenders will be achieved through;

1. Robust policing responses to perpetrators: agreeing and monitoring investigation plans to run alongside support plans developed in response to a child sexual exploitation referral.
2. All agencies effectively sharing information and routinely utilising intelligence-led disruption in relation to any local businesses, individuals or groups associated with sexual exploitation in the local problem profile.

3. Agencies flexibly applying the full range of disruption tactics available through both criminal and civil routes to protect children and young people from CSE, including powers available in relation to licensing, health and safety, fraud, housing provision and other related legislation.
4. Ensuring that there are plans of intervention and support in place to address the behaviours of young people who are assessed as presenting a sexual risk to others.
5. Robust offender management strategies post-conviction and/or effective intervention strategies that reduce the risk presented by identified abusers.