



## Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board

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**A review of the response to child sexual exploitation in Rotherham**

**Stephen Ashley**

**Independent Chair, Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board**

**December 2013**

## **Contents**

<b>Page 3</b>	<b>Opening Statement</b>
<b>Page 5</b>	<b>1. Introduction</b>
<b>Page 6</b>	<b>2. Background and Scope of Review</b>
<b>Page 9</b>	<b>3. The Partnership Response to Child Sexual Exploitation, including case example</b>
<b>Page 31</b>	<b>4. CSE Training</b>
<b>Page 32</b>	<b>5. Compliance with National Guidance and Standards</b>
<b>Page 34</b>	<b>6. Recommendations</b>
<b>Page 35</b>	<b>7. Conclusion</b>
<b>Page 38</b>	<b>8. Appendices</b>

## Opening Statement

I became the independent chair of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2013. I was acutely aware at the time of my appointment that all of the agencies engaged in safeguarding children in Rotherham had been under intense scrutiny around their management of child sexual exploitation.

Leaders of the key agencies were keen to reassure me that a huge amount of work and progress had been made over the last year and whatever the problems of the past, children were now in less danger and perpetrators were at a much higher risk of being detected and prosecuted.

In some regards the facts spoke for themselves. Rotherham had formed an Improvement Group, a multi-agency CSE Team and had a clear CSE action plan and strategy in place. There have been a number of prosecutions for sexual exploitation offences and there are more to come. However, it is my job as an independent chair to test the rhetoric. In other words, I am not prepared to just take people's word for it that they are protecting our children to the standard we all expect. This review is designed to reassure me as the independent chair of the LSCB, and the public, that Rotherham is moving forward and protecting vulnerable children from sexual exploitation and that our leaders are delivering improvement not just talking about it.

It is testament to the willingness to improve and an attitude of openness and self inspection, that on suggesting I would undertake a diagnostic review to determine exactly what was in place to manage CSE, all of the leaders in the key agencies were keen for that work to be undertaken. Furthermore, they have fully supported the process and provided unhindered access to personnel and information. When reading this report credit should be given for the open and honest stance that has been taken and indeed the risk in doing so at a time when the Borough continues to be under national scrutiny.

This review was not established to determine what might have happened prior to September 2013, other reviews currently being scoped and undertaken will do that. This report is designed to provide both partners and the public with a clear and unambiguous current situation report on where Rotherham is in terms of its response to CSE. It aims to describe what the current response is, determine its effectiveness and make suggestions as to what more could be done to further improve those responses.

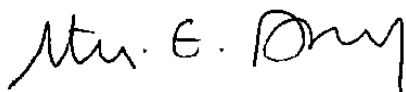
It is perhaps understandable that frontline staff are now suffering from a degree of 'inspection fatigue' with what is perceived as a constant stream of individuals and organisations engaging in review activity that does little to raise morale or reassure staff that they are valued and making a difference. All of the staff I spoke to were passionate about their jobs, understanding of a need for continuous improvement and willing to take new ideas forward. I am confident that their attitude and fortitude will ensure we are able to better safeguard children. A senior representative from Barnardo's said to me "with the passion and determination they have in Rotherham, if it isn't right here it won't be right anywhere".

This review follows reviews by Barnardo's and by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary that were undertaken just prior to this piece of work. Where appropriate I have referred to those reports, which together with this report, provide a triangulated view of what the current situation looks like.

Of course all reviews differ in style and in the approach they take. This work is a review and not an inspection. The distinction is perhaps a moot point but my view is that an inspection should take a structured approach, be task focussed, avoid personal opinion and stick to a more regimented style. In other words, an inspection will lay down the expected standards and test whether they have been met. It is the job of Government Inspectorates (HMIC, Ofsted etc.) to undertake this work; it is expensive and resource intensive and will be conducted periodically by the Inspectorates in accordance with their work schedules. In this review we have looked at what is being done, spoken to those engaged in the work and sought to ensure we are satisfied it is being undertaken effectively and efficiently. Where we have seen areas for improvement we have said so. Whilst there has been every effort to ensure that the report is factually accurate, it does contain more 'opinion' than might be expected from a formal inspection process.

I would like to thank all of those who have been involved in this review for their openness and honesty and real enthusiasm to engage in a process that may lead to further improvement.

I believe this report gives a balanced and accurate picture of how child sexual exploitation is being tackled in Rotherham. It deals with one part of the whole safeguarding programme of work. In considering our response to child sexual exploitation, it is important to remember that neglect, and physical and emotional abuse of our children requires the same level of scrutiny and application of effort.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mr. E. Ashley'.

**Stephen Ashley**

**Independent Chair, Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board**

10<sup>th</sup> December 2013

## 1. Introduction

This review has taken place in Rotherham at a time of considerable change both for the Local Authority and the key partners that form the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB). The level and nature of change currently taking place across agencies is unheard of in modern times. Whilst much of this change is driven by current fiscal restrictions, the structural changes involved in most partner organisations are aimed at improving the quality of services whilst also delivering these unprecedented financial savings.

Change in Rotherham is not only driven by current financial restrictions. Over the last 18 months Rotherham has become the focus of public and media concern over the way in which Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the Borough has been identified and dealt with. This attention has rightly focussed on how children in the Borough have been protected from these crimes and abuse, but within the tight fiscal controls that have been set, partners need to ensure that all aspects of safeguarding children and adults are dealt with appropriately. It is reasonable to say that whilst one of the current high priorities is CSE, child neglect, and physical and emotional abuse often brought about by parental alcohol and drug abuse in a setting of domestic abuse needs to receive just as much attention. This does not provide the agencies tasked with dealing with safeguarding children from CSE with an excuse, but it is worth being clear that dealing with and improving the response to CSE must be seen proportionately and in the context of the full picture of safeguarding children.

This report focuses on the response to CSE but acknowledges the reality that professionals, both on a single and multi-agency basis are; responding to a myriad of issues, within tight controls, and having to balance competing priorities and demands. Ultimately, the public have the right to expect agencies to reduce the risk to our vulnerable children to the absolute minimum.

It is fair to say that Rotherham, Derby and Rochdale amongst others were some of the first, but not the only, areas in the country where CSE was seen as an issue and had a high profile. More to the point, both the media and public perception has been that Rotherham has failed to protect children involved in CSE or identified offenders and brought them to justice. Indeed Rotherham has continued to be at the centre of national attention in this area of safeguarding children.

Perception however is not always reality. It is now clear that CSE, in whatever form it takes, and there are a number of ways it can be expressed, is pervasive across the length and breadth of the country. Hardly a week passes without another horrendous case nationally being exposed to the public. Nor do these crimes restrict themselves to one geographical area, social class, ethnic group or model of abuse.

It is now clear that in the past, Rotherham could, and should have done more to protect children from CSE; and the Local Authority has announced its own enquiry into its historical response to CSE. However, from 2010, there has been a significant amount of transformational work undertaken to improve agency responses to this form of child abuse.

For example, in November 2013 there were 23 on going investigations being conducted by South Yorkshire Police in partnership with Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council (RMBC) and other organisations, and 20 abduction notices issued between 1<sup>st</sup> April and 30<sup>th</sup>

August 2013. In addition, partners to the RLSCB have worked together to put in place new governance structures and processes to improve their response and management of CSE in the Borough.

The reality of what Rotherham has faced and the way it has dealt with those problems has been, and continues to be, thoroughly scrutinised. Understandably, the public, politicians and the media want reassurance that the Borough is managed in a way that protects children from the terrible and life changing harm caused by CSE. In some areas of the country there is a mistaken belief that their children and young people are immune from this type of child abuse and associated crimes. Rotherham is all too aware of them and has set about correcting the position and providing effective safeguarding in this area. This report evaluates the partnership response to CSE and assesses the effectiveness of that work to date and determines what more needs to be done, most importantly to protect children, but also to reassure the public that agencies are working together to deal with this scourge in our society.

## **2. Background and Scope of Review**

### **2.1 Context**

This review was conducted in Rotherham at a time when CSE is high on the agenda of the public, politicians and politicians. Rotherham has been at the forefront of this attention for a decade but more specifically since September 2012.

Nationally, there has been a huge amount of work, a list of which is contained at Appendix E.

Locally, a number of reviews have already been conducted into the response of partner agencies to CSE and others are currently being scoped. For the sake of completeness, the reviews that are currently underway, or that have been completed in Rotherham, in 2013, or directly connected to it, are listed below;

#### ***Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC)***

A local assessment has been undertaken in relation to the Home Affairs Select Committee report findings and further areas for development incorporated into the local CSE Strategy and Action Plan.

#### ***South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner***

Commissioner Wright has asked requested the following:

- A review by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) into the process and structures currently in place in South Yorkshire Police to investigate allegations of Child Sexual Exploitation. The inspection work has taken place and a report published in November 2013.

- The Chief Constable of South Yorkshire Police to set up an additional team of detectives and other specialists to investigate allegations of historic child abuse in South Yorkshire.
- The Chief Crown Prosecutor to conduct a review of all those historic CSE cases across South Yorkshire in which the Crown Prosecution Service was involved and considered criminal charges.

### ***South Yorkshire Police (& RMBC Children and Young People's Services)***

Currently engaged in a joint investigation named 'Operation Clover'. It is led by South Yorkshire Police and is into specific historical child abuse allegations / cases in Rotherham dating back to 1994.

### ***Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council***

An independent inquiry is to be commissioned by RMBC into historic Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham. The Leader of the council made a formal statement to Cabinet regarding this on 4th September 2013 and a detailed report on who will lead the inquiry, proposed terms of reference and governance and reporting arrangements was presented to Cabinet on 18th September. It is anticipated that this enquiry will commence in late 2013.

### ***Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council Children and Young People's Services***

An independent review commissioned from Barnardo's on Child Sexual Exploitation and Children Missing from Home services in Rotherham, which examines the current multi-agency model of working and effectiveness. The work is complete and publication is expected in December 2013.

The terms of reference of this review and the methodology used is dealt with in the following sections but the context in which the review has taken place is important.

The number and scope of the various reviews recently completed or being undertaken leaves the door open to confusion around exactly what the position is in Rotherham regarding CSE. It is likely that there will be contradictory views around developments, progress and outcomes, and there is a clear danger that any contradiction will be seized upon as evidence of either a 'cover up' or just poor evaluation work.

This review sits amongst a number of other reviews, each with their specific focus, and there is a risk that it will no doubt be judged in an environment that is currently looking to cast blame and produce further alarming stories, and of mismanagement and confusion amongst agencies.

It has been made clear that this review has not used the resources or taken the time that the national inspection teams would do, and as such it has to be accepted that it will not be regarded as an inspection report. However, the review team have been on the ground, have spoken to professionals at all levels and have formed a view, taking cognisance of work that is or has been conducted.

In the circumstances of the prevailing environment this reports seeks to provide an honest and transparent view that should be considered alongside other pieces of work bearing in mind both the local and national context of CSE

## 2.2 Terms of Reference

The terms of reference for this review were formulated following discussions between; Lead Council Member Councillor Paul Lakin, Chief Executive Martin Kimber, Strategic Director of Children's Services Joyce Thacker and the Chair of the RLSCB, Stephen Ashley.

The Terms of Reference are set out below;

1. To conduct a review of the way in which the member agencies of the Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board (RLSCB) work together to identify, manage and deal with Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) issues;
2. To review current action plans put in place by member agencies in relation to CSE, and assess the effectiveness and current status of those plans;
3. To assess the status of current services in relation to CSE in Rotherham, when benchmarked against the published national standards;
4. To assess the contribution of member agencies to the Rotherham LSCB;
5. To assess the effectiveness of the Rotherham LSCB;
6. To set out proposals for future governance and accountability of CSE issues by the Rotherham LSCB;
7. To review the progress made against recommendations contained in any inspection or review reports concerning CSE conducted in Rotherham from July 2010 (since Operational Central Lessons Learned Review)

The final section of this report will seek to provide reassurance that the terms of reference have been complied with.

## 2.3 Methodology

The Review Team have conducted their work over a period of 10 weeks from mid-September until the end of November 2013.

The Review Panel consisted of:

- The RLSCB Independent Chair
- RLSCB Business Manager
- Representative from the CSE National Working Group
- Representatives from Barnardo's
- A social work lecturer from the University of Bradford
- A representative from NHS England – South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw
- Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Services

This review is not designed to be a formal inspection, consequently the team did not follow a formal inspection process as used by Ofsted or other national inspectorates. The Team



based the inspection on the terms of reference and sought to gather evidence in the following ways;

- Interviews
- Document requests
- Document review
- Fieldwork site visit
- Case audits and analysis

### 3. The Partnership Response to Child Sexual Exploitation

#### 3.1 The Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board

Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs) were established by the [Children Act 2004](#) which gives a statutory responsibility to each locality to have this mechanism in place. LSCBs are now the key system in every locality of the country for organisations to come together to agree on how they will cooperate with one another to safeguard and promote the welfare of children. The purpose of this partnership working is to hold each other to account and to ensure safeguarding children remains high on the agenda across their region.

Rotherham’s LSCB has been set up to comply with this statutory requirement. To understand all of the obligations of the Board and its statutory functions the Working Together website provides an excellent level of information and can be found at the following link; <http://www.workingtogetheronline.co.uk/index.html>

In Rotherham the Board is well established and has the following membership;

<b>Role and Organisation</b>	<b>Status</b>
Independent Chair of Rotherham Local Safeguarding Children Board	Chair
Service Manager, CAF/CASS	Member
Head of Safeguarding, Rotherham CCG	Member
Director of Safeguarding Children and Families, Children and Young People’s Services, Rotherham Council	Member
Yorkshire Ambulance Service	Receives papers
Detective Chief Inspector, South Yorkshire Police ,South Yorkshire Police	Member
GP, NHS Rotherham	Member
Lay Member to RLSCB	Member

Deputy Nurse Director, RDASH	Member
Director - Schools and Lifelong Learning, Rotherham Council	Member
Head Teacher of Sitwell Infant School	Member
Chief Superintendent, District Commander – Rotherham South Yorkshire Police	Member
Director of Public Health, Neighbourhood & Adult Services, Rotherham Council	Member
Strategic Director, Children and Young People’s Services, Rotherham Council	Member
Safeguarding Quality Assurance Officer, RLSCB & CYPS, Rotherham Council	Advisor
Director – Learners First (Executive Headteacher, Hilltop and Kelford Special Schools)	Member
YOS Manager, IYSS, Schools & Lifelong Learning, Rotherham Council	Member
Councillor – Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Families Services	Participating Observer
Manager of Public Protection Unit, South Yorkshire Police	Member
Business Manager, Rotherham LSCB	Advisor
Lay Member to RLSCB	Lay Member
Service Solicitor, Legal Services, Rotherham Council	Advisor
Head of Rotherham Delivery Unit, National Probation Service	Member
Designated Doctor, Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust	Advisor
Director of Health and Wellbeing, Neighbourhoods and Adult Services, Rotherham Council	Member
Executive Lead for Safeguarding at the Clinical Commissioning Group, Rotherham	Member
Rotherham’s Women’s Refuge	Member
Group Manager, South Yorkshire Fire and Rescue Service	Member
Head of Corporate Communications and Marketing, Resources, Rotherham Council	Advisor
Chief Nurse, Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust	Member

Patient Experience Manager, Nursing Directorate, NHS England (South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw)	Member
Service Manager – Strategy, Standards & Early Help Children and Young People’s Services, Rotherham Council	Advisor
Community Engagement Cohesion Manager, Neighbourhood & Adult’s Services, Rotherham Council	Advisor

Member agencies contribute sufficient funding on an annual basis to enable the LSCB to conduct its business and fulfil its statutory functions.

One of the statutory functions of the RLSCB is to produce an annual report and a business plan. The current plan is fit for purpose but is not particularly child friendly or dynamic in its style. Further work needs to be conducted to ensure that next year’s plan is a more useful and reader friendly document. This should be considered as part of recommendation three in section 6.

This year’s annual report and the 2013-2016 Business Plan can be found at;

[http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/safeguarding/downloads/4/about\\_the\\_board](http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/safeguarding/downloads/4/about_the_board)

The RLSCB has CSE as one of its key strategic priorities in the 2013-16 Business Plan:

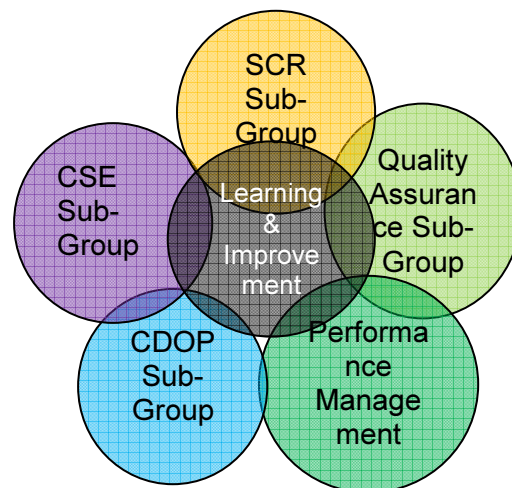
*“Ensure that the multi-agency Child Sexual Exploitation Service is responsive to the needs of and delivers positive outcomes for young people involved in or vulnerable to CSE, through the implementation of the CSE Strategy and Action Plan.”*

RSCB has an on-line multi-agency procedure for responding to CSE which can be found at: [http://rotherhamscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_ca\\_sex\\_exp.html](http://rotherhamscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_ca_sex_exp.html)

The procedure has appropriate reference to and integration with Children Missing and Running Away and Children Missing Education but given the plethora of recent national research and guidance relating to CSE; and local service developments, it would be of benefit to both review and refresh the procedure which should be considered as part of recommendation three in section 6.

The functions of the RLSCB are primarily undertaken through the work and oversight of the six Sub Groups which are represented below to indicate their interrelationship.

## RLSCB Sub Groups



A review of the sub group structure and terms of reference was recently undertaken and the current structure implemented. Further work is currently underway to review the performance sub group in order to produce a set of performance data that is relevant and produced in a timely way enabling the Board to hold members to account regarding their performance.

### 3.2 Individual Members

Whilst the Board is responsible for overseeing the working of the joint agencies, individual members are also carrying out work directly in relation to CSE activity. Whilst much of this work is brought together under the auspices of the RLSCB much of the work of agencies is specific to them.

The review Team conducted interviews with strategic Leads in each of the main agencies and some of the work they are conducting is contained below. This section has concentrated on the four lead agencies namely the Local Authority, Police, Health Economy and Education. The Review Team make no excuse for using this section to highlight some of the good work being conducted by these four agencies.

#### *Local Authority*

The Local Authority is the lead agency in child safeguarding. It has taken the brunt of criticism about the way in which CSE was previously managed. It has driven forward new structures and ways of working and has commissioned a number of reports into the way in which CSE has been managed previously. For example, the introduction of the Early help Assessment Team and Early Help Support Panel by the Local Authority have assisted it and its partners to provide a more responsive approach to children and young people requiring help and support at an earlier stage.

## *Police*

The Police have also developed new strategies and taken a more pro-active role in investigation and bringing offenders to justice. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary recently completed an inspection into South Yorkshire Police's response to CSE. The Force is, as a consequence, further refining their structures to deal with CSE related criminality.

South Yorkshire Police has a problem profile for CSE and has invested in specialist intelligence analysts. In November 2013 the Rotherham police team were involved in four major live investigations and were developing a number of other lines of enquiry.

The South Yorkshire Police and Crime Commissioner has asked for a number of reports including a review of the engagement of the Crown Prosecution Service.

## *Health Economy*

All of the services related to the health economy are going through monumental change and it is currently difficult to understand the linkages between commissioning and delivery.

The Review Team were impressed that the Rotherham NHS Foundation Trust had already conducted a detailed diagnostic into CSE. This document provides real detail into what services are available and what further work is required.

The Review Team was particularly impressed with the work conducted by School Nurses. This really is the front line and is critical in identifying children at risk of being sexually exploited and intervening at the earliest possible stage.

A specialist CSE Nurse Practitioner has also been employed to work as part of the multi-agency team. This role aims to support the health needs of children and working in partnership to disrupt and prosecute alleged abusers.

The Trust together with the Director for Public Health are also ensuring that front line professionals, including clinical staff, receive the levels of training they need, to identify and deal with the victims or potential victims of CSE.

## *Education*

The Rotherham CSE Strategy has an objective of the delivery of a universal education programme to children and young people in Rotherham as part of the preventative approach. This is being delivered, with the support of the CSE Team, through the year 8 PHSE curriculum. All but one of the secondary schools in Rotherham is participating in this programme. A recent profile of children and young people involved with the CSE team, which included their age, gender and school attended, confirmed that all Rotherham secondary schools should engage in the CSE agenda and also identified that further specific work should be developed and targeted at year 6 pupils.

Additionally, training and awareness on CSE has been delivered to the Schools Safeguarding Forum for safeguarding children leads (primary and secondary) and school governors have been offered and provided with introductory training and awareness raising.

Further education and training providers have also had access to specific training events or the multi-agency CSE learning and development sessions.

To provide an indication of the importance of schools as a partner in tackling CSE and a reflection that current training and awareness is making a difference, 23% of all CSE referrals to the CSE team were from schools.

One of the risk factors associated with CSE is when school age children are not registered and on roll and therefore do not attend school. The Children Missing Education Officer and the Education Welfare service identify such children, often those who are moving in and out of the borough to ensure that families are supported to enrol their children at a school and where there are relevant concerns information is shared with the CSE team and referrals made appropriately.

### 3.3 Strategic Direction and Governance

#### *Strategic Direction*

The strategy and actions to deal with CSE in Rotherham is set out in the *Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy Delivery Plan 2013-16*<sup>1</sup>. A one page summary document is contained at Appendix B. The strategy has three priorities; **Prevent**, **Protect** and **Pursue**. The priorities are supported by seven strategic actions. The strategic actions are further supported by an action plan that in September 2013 had 27 on-going actions. This plan is examined in more detail in section 3.5.

Whilst the strategic plan will need to develop over time it is clearly structured with specific priorities and is based on national best practice. The test of the strategic plan is how it translates into action on the ground and the way in which it steers the protection of children and young people. Whilst there is further discussion in this section around governance and performance monitoring, the strategic plan does provide the foundation for the effective governance and management of CSE.

There are clear links with children missing (from home and education), those who run away and sexual health services. It is less clear how the work around CSE is linking in with the wider picture of safeguarding children in Rotherham. CSE forms only one of the key strands in the continuum of safeguarding children and whilst it is a critical area of work it should not be seen as a 'stand alone' issue.

CSE is often the outcome for children who became vulnerable for a variety of other reasons. Emotional abuse, physical abuse and neglect leave children at a higher risk of suffering harm from CSE and so there needs to be clarity about the way in which the CSE strategy fits with the overall strategy for safeguarding children and young people in the Borough.

At this time it is understandable and right, that a focused and dedicated CSE strategy has been adopted. This strategy appears to be isolated from other key safeguarding issues and vulnerable groups such as Looked After Children. More consideration needs to be given to

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<sup>1</sup> Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2013-16.

how the CSE strategy will become integrated or 'main streamed' into the overall safeguarding children and young people approach.

One clear example is the CSE Team and the future role that a multi-agency team might take. Whilst in the short to medium term the current approach is likely to be the most effective in responding to and dealing with CSE, from both a protective and preventative perspective, consideration in the longer term might be given to integrating that team into the mainstream of Children's Services. A future strategic direction may be to form a Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub, or similar approach, that is being developed in many areas nationally.

This example highlights the need for the Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership with the support of the RLSCB to develop a longer term strategic plan, integrating services, to ensure that the management of CSE forms part of the overall safeguarding children strategy.

### *Strategic structure and Governance*

In terms of the statutory oversight of the multi-agency work around CSE the RLSCB takes that role. The role of the RLSCB is discussed in more detail in section five (below).

In fact the pressure that has been placed on both the Council and the other statutory agencies is such, that governance structures have grown organically and whilst there is a clearly laid out CSE strategy document, the strategic governance structures need some further clarification.

The strategic governance structures are contained in two documents presented to the RLSCB on 13<sup>th</sup> September 2013. Both documents are contained in Appendix C.

These are complex charts that do not clearly explain the governance around CSE and in fact only serve to confuse the picture. The governance process is not understood by staff members.

It is acknowledged that profiling multi-agency governance structures is a difficult and often thankless task, but it is essential that it be completed to ensure that everyone understands what the lines of accountability are, who has responsibility for the various strands of the CSE strategy and where key decisions can and are made.

Interviews with senior managers showed a surprising lack of understanding of the governance structure. Managers were also unclear about the roles and responsibilities of the different bodies functioning within the current system.

It is acknowledged that new NHS commissioning services and structures and the relatively new appointment of a Police and Crime Commissioner have changed the nature of strategic governance landscape. However, there needs to be considerably more clarity provided about the way in which the safeguarding children process is governed and the lines of responsibility and accountability.

For example, there is a Children's Improvement Panel and a Children and Young People's Strategic Partnership. Membership of these two groups is broadly similar (as it is to the RLSCB). They currently deal with both similar and different issues, creating both a duality and differentiation at the same time. There appeared to be no real understanding, even at a senior level, how Health and Well Being Boards fitted into this structure and the Community Safety Partnership does not seem to feature in relation to safeguarding children. It would be useful to understand the roles and responsibilities of these groups and establish the part they play in delivery of strategic objectives. This should be considered as part of the work contained in recommendation two in section 6.

### 3.4 The RLSCB CSE Strategy 2013–16 and Action Plan

#### *Structure*

The strategy is clearly laid out based on national best practice with the three strategic priorities of;

- **Prevent**
- **Protect**
- **Pursue**

The three priorities are supported by seven strategic actions;

1. To improve the clarity of governance and strengthen leadership arrangements to ensure an effective multi-agency response to CSE.
2. To deliver an effective co-ordinated training, community and schools awareness programme through a multi-agency "Learning, Development and Awareness Strategy".
3. To develop a Multi-agency Media/Communication strategy to ensure consistent and accurate messages are shared with all, in support of public awareness and improved confidence in delivery.
4. To ensure single and multi-agency processes and procedures are effective, efficient and fit for purpose to support the protection of children and young people from the risks and impact of CSE.
5. To ensure there is effective protection, support and guidance for victims and potential victims of Child Sexual Exploitation.
6. To proactively identify and disrupt places of CSE activity.
7. To ensure perpetrators are brought to justice.

There is a comprehensive action plan that is designed to deliver strategic actions and thus the priorities. The action plan is owned by the CSE sub group of the RLSCB, the role of which is further discussed in section 3.5.

The strategic priorities and actions are clear, understandable and relevant.



## *Delivery*

In order to deliver the strategy the action plan needs to be clear and realistic and in terms of the actions contained within it they must be specific, measurable, attainable, realistic and timely (SMART).

As at November 2013 there were 27 'actions' and 90 'milestones'. The plan is comprehensive and there are leads for each 'milestone' with a target date and the CSE Sub group record progress made.

The actions contained within the plan are in place not only to deliver the strategic actions but also to ensure the recommendations of the Home Affairs Select Committee are met. To some extent this has resulted in a plan that has the hallmarks of being too complex and requires more delivery focussed outcomes. The CSE Group should concentrate on developing the plan into a more workable document with a realistic chance of achieving the priorities set.

The Review Team were concerned that many of the actions and milestones contained within the plan were not specific enough. For instance, phrases such as 'all front line staff' are used but without any apparent definition of what that might mean. Responses to the actions have a tendency to be general in nature with no indication as to where the detailed information might be found.

The action plan is potentially an excellent tool for delivery, and there is clear evidence of the direction of travel and progress made. At the present time the Review Team were not convinced that it is simple and clear enough to be understood by front line staff and there needs to be more clarity around progress updates.

The role the Silver Group plays in delivery of the plan is unclear and, given the membership of the group, it would seem appropriate that detailed progress reports are provided in that forum, enabling the CSE sub group to concentrate on the key areas for delivery.

There is a danger that the plan becomes a bureaucratic tool that is disconnected from the reality for those responsible for delivering the strategic actions. In other words, the sub group needs to ensure the action plan doesn't just exist for its own sake and that it serves a practical purpose.

The CSE sub group should review the CSE action plan and ensure it is a practical and useful tool for delivery of strategic actions and its 'actions and milestones' follow SMART principles. This forms part of recommendation one in section 6.

## *Governance*

The plan is owned by the CSE sub group and reports directly to the RLSCB. There was little evidence of challenge at Board level and the Independent Chair needs to ensure that the Board are given the opportunity to raise areas of concern at the quarterly board meetings. The RLSCB Chair must provide the opportunity for improved governance and stronger

challenge of the CSE action plan at RLSCB meetings and this forms part of recommendation two contained in section 6.

Progress on the action plan is also reported to RMBC Cabinet on a six monthly basis. The report presented to Cabinet in November can be found at;

<http://moderngov.rotherham.gov.uk/ieDocHome.aspx?Categories>

This report was very comprehensive. It is a public document that contains sufficient detail to explain how progress is being made in the area of CSE in Rotherham.

### **3.5 The Child Sexual Exploitation Sub-Group**

#### ***Background***

The CSE Sub Group is part of and responsible to the RLSCB. It is chaired by a senior police officer from the Rotherham District Police Command Team. The Sub Group was developed from the CSE Gold Group which was originally a police led group. The CSE Sub Group developed quickly into a multi-agency group and came under the auspices of RLSCB governance in July 2013.

The group has a broad membership that includes;

#### **Children and Young People Services:**

- Strategic Director for Children and Young People
- Director of Safeguarding Children and Families
- Integrated Youth and Support Services Manager
- Child Sexual Exploitation Team Leader
- Performance Officer
- LSCB Business Manager

#### **Health Economy:**

- Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group
- NHS England (South Yorkshire and Bassetlaw)
- Rotherham Foundation Trust
- Director of Public Health (Neighbourhood and Adult Services)
- RDASH

#### **Police:**

- Divisional Commander
- Rotherham head of the Public Protection Unit
- DCI Crime Manager Rotherham
- Chair of Silver Group (if not any of the above)
- Media Representative

### **Voluntary and Community Sector representatives**

- Victim Support
- Safe@Last
- Lay members

### **CSE National Working Group representative**

### **Serious Organised Crime Agency representative**

### **South Yorkshire Probation Trust representative**

The CSE Sub-group is supported by a 'Silver' group, which is the operational arm for that Group. The 'Silver' Group has members from:

### **Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council**

- Service Manager, Borough-wide services
- Child Sexual Exploitation Team Leader
- Integrated Youth and Support Services Manager
- Youth Offending Manager
- Operations Manager Residential Care
- Performance Officer
- Licensing Officer

### **Health Economy:**

- Rotherham Clinical Commissioning Group
- Rotherham Foundation Trust
- RDASH

### **Police:**

- Head of the Rotherham Public Protection Unit

### **Voluntary and Community Sector representative (Victim Support)**

- Safe@Last representative
- Victim Support

### **South Yorkshire Probation Trust**

The two Groups are responsible for the delivery of the RLSCB CSE action plan.

The Groups meet on a monthly basis and report in to the RLSCB quarterly.

### ***Sub Group effectiveness***

The current CSE Sub Group developed out of police Gold and Silver command and control structures and is a standard response in policing to a critical incident. Not surprisingly this structure quickly became a multi-agency group and as such moved out of police command and control structures and under the governance of the RLSCB.

The Review Team were impressed with the pace of work maintained by the Sub Group and the wide range of activity it was driving forward. It was difficult to be persuaded that the Sub Group were a strategic group given that it actively sought to manage through the numerous actions contained within the CSE action plan.

The Sub Group has a clear objective, which is to deliver the 7 strategic objectives contained within the plan. The Group are focussed and driven, but the sheer weight of work and the necessity to deliver outcomes in tight time scales, raises some issues. The Review Team were of the view that the current membership of the Sub Group should be reviewed with a view to reducing the Group to a more manageable size. It seems that the Group has grown and can often have up to 20 plus persons present. In combination this makes management of the meeting difficult and to ensure that the meetings run within time limits, the Chair has to push through the agenda. This means that there is not sufficient time to debate some items.

There needs to be consideration, not only of the membership, but the role of the meeting and further clarity about the roles of the Sub Group and the 'Silver' Group. Given its history it should be of no surprise that the Sub Group has the feel of being engaged in expediency, rather than a mainstay of the safeguarding process.

A review of the role, membership and future direction of the CSE Sub Group and Silver Group needs to be undertaken and this forms part of recommendation one contained in section 6.

There is also some confusion as to how the Group fits with the other Sub Groups of the RLSCB and other strategic partnerships within the Borough. For example this group meets monthly but the performance sub group meet quarterly and the Chair of the CSE Sub Group felt these two groups should be more closely aligned.

Whilst there is some confusion as to how this group fits into RLSCB structures there has been no consideration how its work may overlap with other multi-agency forums working in the Borough.

## **3.6 The Child Sexual Exploitation Team**

### ***Background***

The Child Sexual Exploitation Team was established in October 2012 as a response to recognition by leaders in Rotherham that CSE was a serious and identifiable problem in the Borough that required a more focussed multi-agency approach.

The team in effect replaced some of the work that had been conducted by Risky

Business, which was an RMBC team established in 1997 to support young people at risk of CSE. At that time Risky Business was an innovative approach to a problem that had received little national attention or recognition.

Risky Business was based on a youth work model and it was recognised that, whilst successful in some regards, to be more effective it needed to move to a multi-disciplinary model, able to undertake joint investigative work in addition to the preventative agenda. The new CSE Team was established to engage a range of partners and provide a service to young people that would concentrate on tackling the problem, based on the strategic priorities of Prevent, Protect and Pursue.

This review makes no further comment about the effectiveness of Risky Business and its work from its inception to 2011, which will no doubt form part of the Inquiry commissioned by RMBC.

The establishment of the CSE team took place in an environment where finance was not the key driver, but time was at a premium. In fact, it is clear that when the team was established, all of the partner agencies in Rotherham were under intense pressure from national organisations, the Government, the media and the public to respond to an identified problem.

There was a need to respond, and respond quickly, in order to restore confidence and ensure that real practical efforts were being made to cover the gaps in service provision that had been identified by both inspectorates and media investigations.

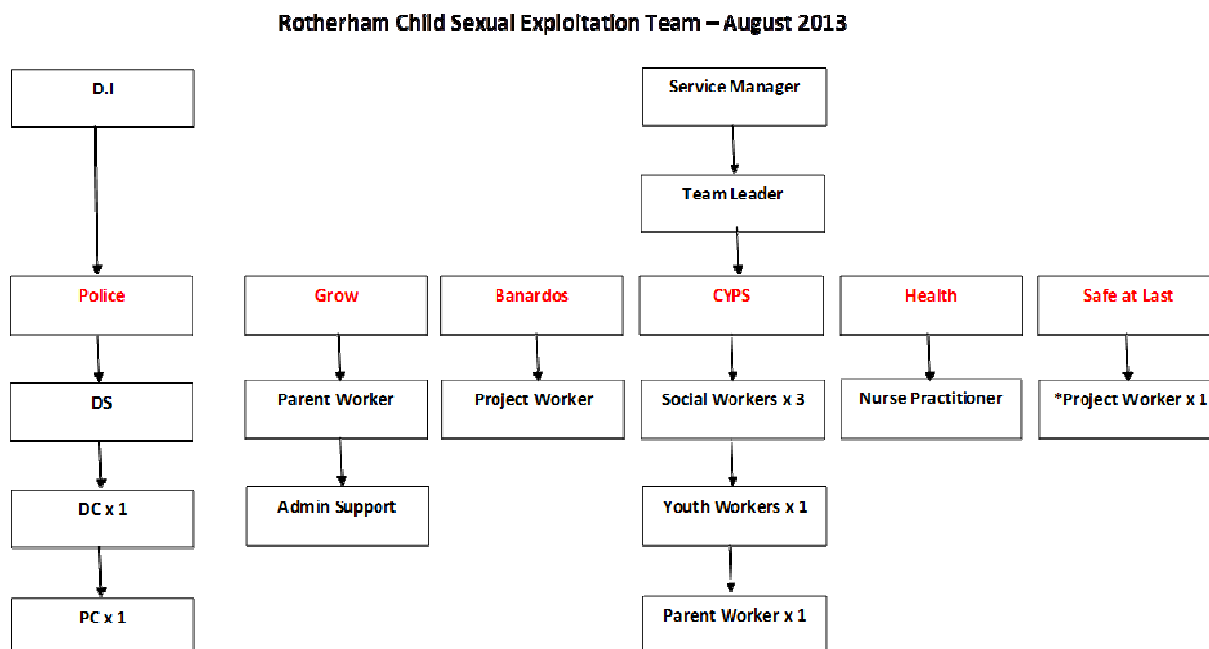
As a result the team was established following the submission of a proposal to RMBC in October 2012. The document presented to the Council does not contain a full business plan and does not provide a timeline or a project managed approach that might have been expected, given the financial investment and importance of the issue. This is understandable. At the time of its establishment it was clear that the imperative was to take action and not to engage in lengthy bureaucratic processes that would slow the process of establishing the team down. The paper submitted to the council was designed to address a clear and present need and to put 'boots on the ground' to address a previously under resourced and identified gap in service provision.

All of the partner agencies engaged in the formation of the CSE team appear to have done so with enthusiasm, speed and minimal bureaucratic barriers.

The team is located at Maltby police station. This location receives considerable criticism in both the Barnardo's and HMIC reports. Whilst the initial imperative may have been to find a large enough premises to contain the multi-agency team and deal with some police security issues, the isolated location added to the fact that it is in a police station, make this site unsuitable. Consideration should be given to finding a better location as soon as possible. This forms part of recommendation one contained in section 6.

## Structure

The structure of the team is shown below;



## Role

The remit of the team currently includes the provision of services directly to children and young people, specialist advice and support to other professionals working directly with children and young people (for example Looked After Children). It provides training and awareness raising to relevant sections of the children's workforce and other relevant stakeholders.

In terms of its direct 'case' work responsibilities with young people and their families, the CSE Team receives referrals directly from the Contact and Referral Team (CART) and intelligence is also received directly from other sources, including the police and the multi-agency CSE silver group. The circumstances, needs of and risks to young people referred to the team vary greatly and range across the continuum of need; some requiring early help and support, some cases which are more complex and those who are at risk of harm, requiring protection.

One challenge for the team is to manage its priorities within existing resources, whilst attempting to fulfil what is expected of it. The CSE team has continued to develop over the past 12 months, increasing in resources and the multi-disciplinary approach. However, the team should not be seen as the single point of service delivery for all CSE related provision and should be part of an integrated response to CSE in terms of universal, targeted and other specialist services.

There is a need to review the longer term operational plan for the team, including its remit and the service specification, ensuring that there are clear agreed criteria and pathways, for example with the Integrated Youth Support Service (IYSS), in order that young people and their families receive the right level of service at the right time. This will ensure that the service response and outcomes delivered by the CSE Team is firmly in the context of a wider continuum of provision and is sustainable both in the short and longer term.

The Review Team conducted interviews with senior managers in the IYSS who supported the view that there could be better integration and support between IYSS and the CSE Team.

The CSE Team should develop these relationships with the Integrated Youth Support Service and have specific service pathways in place to support these arrangements which forms part of recommendation one contained in section 6.

The Review Team were also concerned that the role of the CSE team is not fully understood by all stakeholders at all levels. There is clearly an expectation that the team are able to deal with all issues relating to CSE. The Review Team was concerned that the CSE team may find itself swamped with the expectations placed upon it both in the short and longer term.

The dangers of this lack of clarity around role are twofold; firstly, that without the implementation of recommendation 9 the number of referrals would become untenable given the capacity of the team and the need to work intensively with some children and young people over a long period. Secondly, that the expectation that this team were the totality of the response to CSE in Rotherham would be likely to raise the expectation around their capabilities to an unrealistic level and in the longer term serve to de-skill the mainstream workforce. Should it fail in any regard, Rotherham would again find itself under severe criticism.

Whilst this review does not dwell on or examine the past role of Risky Business there cannot be another failure of a team, who having been set up to deal with CSE, fail under the weight of expectation placed upon it.

The role of the CSE Team including its remit and responsibilities need to be reviewed, defined and communicated to all stakeholders and this forms part of recommendation one at section 6.

### ***Governance, Management and Accountability***

In any multi-agency, integrated team there will be difficulties in terms of management and governance. Often senior managers are reluctant to forego control over their resources and reach agreement with others on this issue. Staff are often used to their own culture of working, legal and procedural frameworks and supervision and accountability structures with resultant barriers to changing to new structures and processes.

This is the case with the current team. The structure chart above shows where the challenges of management exist. The team currently exists in separate co-located units,

with no single manager overseeing the team and ensuring that the overall work of the team is coherent and joined up.

The Review Team interviewed key staff and managers in the CSE team and were impressed with the passion and commitment that was clearly evident. In effect the social work team manager and the detective sergeant jointly manage the team. Both of these roles are permanent and exclusive to the team. These individuals are line managed by managers who have other significant key responsibilities, one of them based remotely from the PPU where the team is based. The police element of the team is managed by a detective inspector who has responsibility for the Police Public Protection Unit and the team manager is managed by the CYPS Service Manager for Borough Wide Services, which includes the Contact and Referral Team, Duty Social Work Teams and the children's social care Out of Hours Team.

The Review Team were concerned with the level of expectation placed on the two key managers in the CSE Team. Whilst dealing with day-to-day supervision issues they are also called upon to provide performance reports, progress papers, delivering some aspects of training and engaging with stakeholders across the board. Whilst their individual experience and commitment is not in question, the level of expectation is too high and they are engaging in strategic activity rather than the front line delivery of the identified in the CSE delivery plan and as part of day to day family support and child protection activity.

It was also noted that the two local authority social workers based in the team are on temporary contracts until mid-2014. In terms of continuity for the team and not least some of the young people and families, urgent considerations should be given to the permanence of these positions.

The appointment of a dedicated senior manager to run the CSE team and take responsibility for strategic management, partnership development, performance management, financial management, communication and marketing strategies would prove hugely beneficial. Whilst this would involve a considerable investment, it would prove to be the next big step forward in the management of CSE issues in the Borough. It would enable staff across agencies and the public, media and politicians to have a clearly identified individual who was responsible and accountable for the delivery of the CSE strategy 2013-16.

Consideration should be given to the appointment or secondment of a senior manager, put in place to manage the CSE Team in its entirety and to take the Lead role in CSE management in the Borough. This forms part of recommendation one in section 6

### ***Performance and Activity Data***

In September 2013 the CSE team had 88 cases they were actively engaged with. A profile analysis of the children and young people in those cases is contained at Appendix D.

To September 2013 the team reported the following work;

- 51 Contacts relating to 27 children
- 26 Referrals relating to 26 children



- 11 Initial Assessments completed by CSE team \*
- 4 Core Assessments completed by CSE team \*
- 9 Schools engaged since April, over 872 pupils involved
- 89 Cases open to social care, 3 of which are boys
- 31 Cases open to parenting
- 38 Joint investigations
- 38 Police referrals into PPU
- 10 Abduction notices served
- 3 Attrition visits
- 10 Ward Members trained
- 24 Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators trained
- Training planned for the 8 Ward Members identified still to train
- Training planned for Parish Councillors
- Training planned for School Governors
- 21 Staff undertaken LSCB multi-agency training

The team clearly has engagement across numerous aspects of CSE and is involved in a wide array of initiatives.

There was no evidence of a structured tasking and coordinating process within the Team and this may result in a fragmented approach to work, with the Team accepting more and more referrals and responsibility until they become over capacity to respond to the priorities.

The CSE Team should adopt a formal tasking and coordinating process and this forms part of recommendation one contained at 6.

The Review Team was of the view that the first signs of the Team being subsumed by the level of work were apparent. The Team Manager and her Line Manager had agreed a Social Worker from the CSE Team would be located in the CART each day to assist in filtering CSE referrals. This was to ensure that only those referrals meeting agreed criteria would be passed through to the CSE Team.

The positioning of a CSE dedicated Social Worker within the CART to filter referrals is evidence of a lack of a methodical and process driven approach to allocation of work to the CSE Team from the 'front door'. Locating a CSE Team worker in the CART does not solve the problem and is not a good use of this resource, whilst it was an understandable 'quick fix', a more efficient and permanent solution needs to be found.

There needs to be more clarity around the role of the CSE Team. In interviews with Children's Social Care staff there was clearly confusion as to the exact role the CSE Team were taking. The CART receives an average of 800 contacts per month (only 10 of which become CSE referrals) and staff have high individual workloads. As a consequence, it is not surprising that, without absolute clarity, there may be a tendency to re-allocate referrals to the CSE Team, whether they meet the agreed threshold or not, and whether there should be pathways developed for those cases lower down the continuum of need.

It seems logical that social workers and supervisors within the CART should have received sufficient training to determine whether a referral merits a CSE Team response based on agreed thresholds and criteria. There should be a clearly laid out protocol between the CART and the CSE Team and an understanding within the CART of the role that the CSE Team plays in responding to CSE. There should be no reason to re-locate a member of the CSE Team into the CART.

Process mapping needs to be undertaken and CSE pathways developed so that there are clear workflows between the various teams within Children's Social Care, the Early Help Assessment Team and other services in a position to respond to lower level CSE referrals. This forms part of recommendation one in section 6.

Whilst the above highlights some areas where further development is required, it is also important to recognise the successes of the CSE Team not only in terms of arrests and prosecutions but from the perspective of children and young people. The following case example, based on a girl involved with the CSE Team, serves to indicate the complex nature of CSE in the context of wider family and environmental factors, and the commitment of those working with her and the family to bring about positive changes.

*Case Example (the name and some details have been changed for confidentiality)*

Gemma is a 13 year girl who was referred to the Sexual Exploitation Team by her school following concerns where she was overheard telling a friend that she was pregnant. The concerns included the relevance of her age as well as the family background and circumstances that increased her vulnerability. Gemma has experienced previous family breakdown and she presently lives with other family members. This is not the first family breakdown and she has previously lived with relatives and has also been Looked After by the Local Authority.

Gemma is a very vulnerable young woman who can present quite challenging and, at times, conflicting behaviours; sometimes shouting, smoking and swearing, and at other times playing with dolls and toys and presenting as a much younger child. She does not have any consistent and mutually supportive friendships and she has experienced a significant amount of change in her life. When at primary school she found out that the man she believed to be her father was, in fact, not. She also says that she does not have positive memories about some of her mother's partners as she witnessed domestic violence as a younger child.

Effective partnership working, information sharing, engaging with the child and a robust team around the child approach have been key factors within this case in effectively supporting Gemma and the family. Regular meetings with and involvement of the adults and Gemma in this process have ensured their continued involvement and that their voices are being heard and taken into account. It is clear through the work that Gemma is now undertaking with the social worker that there is a developing level of trust which means that she feels secure enough to begin to explore some very sensitive issues in terms of her experiences and her emotions. The social worker has established this meaningful relationship through being child centred, persistent and consistent by ensuring there was a focus on issues that mattered to Gemma and assisting her to look at how she can achieve

her short and long term goals. The multi-agency core assessment in this case provided a clear analysis of risk as well as identifying the impact on Gemma and the family. The resultant care plan also identified what support was needed to be put in place to ensure that the risks were reduced in terms of CSE, as well as trying to support the family to be reunited.

At the point of referral it appeared that Gemma was potentially vulnerable to CSE but through effective information sharing and building up a meaningful relationship with Gemma it became clear that she was at a higher level of risk than might have been anticipated. The objectives of the direct work between the social worker and Gemma has been focused on increasing her awareness of healthy relationships and staying safe as well as helping her understand the expectations she has around the emotional availability of her mother, who has rejected her. There is evidence that this intervention has had a positive impact on Gemma's self-esteem and confidence and this is enabling her to better deal with and respond differently to the issues in her life.

The approach and intervention on this case mirrors research findings which indicate that for young people in difficult and complex circumstances there are no 'one-off quick fixes' and it is the continued commitment of all agencies involved with one or two key individuals building positive relationships over time with the child and family members that can deliver effective support.

### **Provision of Services**

#### **Post Abuse support**

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse that can have significant long-term effects when it is not recognised and effectively responded to when victims are children. The impact of abuse and the experience of trauma on children are well documented within research but what is also very clear is the importance of having a range of available and accessible services for intervening and responding when children have been abused, from counselling to more specialist services.

Child sexual exploitation is not a diagnosis or mental illness but it is generally agreed that these cases are significantly complex with children tending to present with other impacting risk factors. E.g. education exclusion, offending behaviours, poor parental relationships including limited supervision and personal mental health problems. Therefore universal and specialist health services, education services, youth offending services and voluntary and community based services all play an important role in meeting the needs of young people identified by agencies across the multi-agency partnership as being at risk of, involved in or abused as a result of sexual exploitation.

Within the Barnardo's report "*Meeting the needs of sexually exploited children in London*" Practitioners highlighted the difficulty of engaging young people in therapeutic work and stressed the importance of accessible and flexible services:

*'Young people do not go to counselling enthusiastically so if you happen to work with a young person who wants to speak to someone, you need to strike while the iron's hot.'*

It is evident that children who have experienced child sexual exploitation can and do present with a number of common diagnosable psychiatric disorders most obviously P.T.S.D. (post-traumatic stress disorder) but they can also suffer with depression, anxiety based disorders as well as emerging personality and conduct disorders. As was highlighted within “*Tackling child sexual exploitation action plan: progress report – July 2012*”, getting help to deal with what has happened and looking to the future, the report recognised that victims of child sexual exploitation, and their families, are likely to need substantial support in picking up their lives once the exploitation has ended. Such support, from both statutory agencies and voluntary organisations, may be needed over a long period of time. Specialist services can assist agencies in tailoring advice and guidance to a young person’s needs as well as delivering direct interventions where appropriate.

When identifying the therapeutic needs of children who have suffered abuse and experienced trauma that might lead to criminal proceedings, we should also be mindful of the guidance provided by the CPS “*Provision of Therapy for Child Witnesses Prior to a Criminal Trial 2001*”. This practice guidance for pre-trial therapy is primarily for the assistance of child care professionals and lawyers involved in making decisions about the provision of therapeutic help for child witnesses prior to a criminal trial. The guidance makes it clear that the best interests of the child are paramount when deciding whether, and in what form, therapeutic help is given. The decision making process should enable children, who need therapy, to receive it at an appropriate time as well as support them to give their best evidence in criminal proceedings.

The picture within Rotherham is not clear with regard to the needs, availability, flexibility and accessibility of therapeutic services for children who have been or are at risk of sexual exploitation.

A needs assessment and mapping exercise should be undertaken in relation to the provision of post sexual abuse support utilising existing commissioning frameworks which forms part of recommendation three at section 6.

### ***Children Missing & Running Away***

The core response for children missing and running away is provided by the Police, SAFE@LAST voluntary sector organisation and Children’s Social Care Services. The police have a dedicated missing from home officer who meets directly with project workers from SAFE@LAST and members of the CSE multidisciplinary Team to share information and review all episodes of children who go missing to build up a picture of risk taking behaviours, potential vulnerabilities and possible signs of Child Sexual Exploitation. SAFE@LAST workers conduct timely return home interviews and this contributes to the overall assessment of risk in relation to CSE. Cases which are indicative of CSE are referred to the CSE Team for further assessment and intervention and all cases of children missing are referred to children’s social care services under the Children Missing from Home and Running Away Protocol which clearly identifies that this issue is one of the indicators for CSE. SAFE@LAST continue to provide their specialist support and advice directly to young people, their parents and carers including Looked After Children living in residential homes

SAFE@LAST also deliver a prevention and education programme in Rotherham, and aims to deliver a range of work on the dangers and risks of running away to Children and Young people across Rotherham. Safety scenarios are delivered to all year 6 children at the South Yorkshire Police Project, Crucial Crew as well as assemblies and workshops in Rotherham Primary and Secondary Schools, holiday projects and activities in Children's Homes and Youth Clubs. The work aims to educate and inform children and young people about keeping safe and the risks and dangers of running away. SAFE@LAST has now delivered the prevention work in Rotherham for 5 years with all the secondary schools working with their Runaways Education Officer. Many schools have included this prevention work into their core curriculum within PSHE lessons. The work is used to promote the SAFE@LAST freephone 24 hour helpline, text service and web chat facility to children and young people so they can access support before, during and after going missing or running away.

Between 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and 31<sup>st</sup> October 2013 SAFE@LAST delivered their preventative programme to approximately 7771 children and young people in Rotherham.

	Number of Young People
Year 5 and under	7
Year 5 at Crucial Crew	11
Yr 6	10
Year 6 at Crucial Crew	2843
Yr 7 to yr 11	4807
Post GCSE	82

In relation to Looked After Children who have a history of going missing and running away, the Local Authority develops implements a range of strategies in line with children's care plans and local protocols. For example, efforts are made to negotiate with young people in terms of 'coming in' times, together with asking young people to trust residential care workers and pass on the addresses of places they intend to visit. Where possible key work teams have visited properties and spoken to their occupants to determine whether they are safe places to them to be. If there are risks the young person will be engaged in discussions about why permission is not granted to visit particular people or households. In addition, regular contact is made with the young person through the evening to check they are safe and establish what time they intend to return. In previous research, young people have often stated that the main reason they decide to stay out/run away is lack of contact with carers/family during the evening: they feel unwanted and that people do not care where they are or what they are doing. Other strategies include using available transport to collect young people if they have missed their bus and providing engaging and rewarding activities as an alternative to going out and being in vulnerable situations.

Whilst the multi-agency service response for Looked After Children who go missing but are placed in within the borough is reassuring, it seems justified for the LSCB to seek assurance that children placed out of area receive a similar high standard of service if they go missing. The local authority, as corporate parent for Looked After Children should provide the RSCB with assurance that Looked After Children and Young People placed out of area who go missing receive timely return home interviews which contribute to risk assessments and safety plans. This forms part of recommendations two and three at section 6.

## ***GU Medicine and Contraception and Sexual Health Services (CaSH)***

Health professionals delivering contraception and sexual health services have the appropriate awareness, assessment tools, support and collaboration with other agencies to support the CSE agenda. GU Medicine utilises a holistic assessment for girls under the age of 16 yrs which specifically identifies CSE vulnerabilities and risk factors. Support, advice and liaison with other agencies (such as children's social care services and the police) is provided where appropriate by the safeguarding children nurses and CaSH services have a similar questionnaire and mechanisms to identify and refer concerns relating to CSE to the appropriate agencies.

Currently there are pathways being developed in relation to young people for Pharmacists to utilise in conjunction with the emergency hormonal contraception service provision and this is also a welcome step.

## ***Licensing and Hospitality Sector***

The work of the CSE Team also involves collaborative working with the Council's Licensing Authority. Working effectively with licensing and enforcement officers, these services are able to identify areas and individuals of concern and share information, providing evidence that can help to protect children, lead to licenses being revoked and potentially lead to convictions or disruption activity from the police.

Recently the local hotel sector has been engaged in awareness raising and training in relation to CSE and Trafficking and this will continue into 2014 with the regional launch of the national "Say Something if you See Something Campaign".

## ***Performance and Quality Assurance***

In terms of the way in which performance is managed there were some gaps in that process.

From July 2013 a quarterly report is submitted to the Council Cabinet and a copy of the November 2013 report can be found here: <http://modgovapp/mgChooseDocPack.aspx?ID=12428> This is a comprehensive report on activity undertaken and provides a considerable detail, explaining progress and performance against the agreed CSE strategy.

Whilst there is a transparent reporting of CSE activity at a strategic level, there was no evidence, at the tactical level, of anything other than a reporting of the 'numbers'. This is not a performance management process but a performance reporting process. In addition to a stronger tasking and coordinating function within the team, performance management should be conducted through the CSE and Performance Sub Groups of the RLSCB and senior managers of those agencies involved held to account at the RLSCB Board meeting.

A more formal and SMART performance management system needs to be established under the governance of the Local Safeguarding Children Board and this forms part of recommendation two in section 6.

A victim profile was undertaken of the 88 cases (children and young people) open to the CSE Team in September 2013 – refer Appendix D. The profile only included the cohort of children and young people actively and directly involved with the CSE Team and does not include those who are receiving indirect support because they are the responsibility of other social work teams or services (e.g. Looked After Children and those known to the Voluntary Sector).

Regular use of Victim / Service User profiling should be utilised to further understand the needs across the borough and the multi-agency service response that is required and this forms part of recommendations two and three in section 6.

### **Risk Assessment**

A subsequent audit of the cases allocated the CSE team revealed that the agreed completed risk assessment was not on the child's file in approximately 80% of cases, although some of these are in a backlog waiting to be scanned onto the system. It was reported that the Risk Assessment tool was not fit for purpose but there is no evidence that a suitable replacement has been or is being developed. Although a CSE risk assessment tool does not replace CAF, Initial or Core Assessments when assessing children's needs and risk, it can assist in identifying specific risks and protective factors in relation to CSE.

An agreed risk assessment tool which is fit for purpose should be developed and implemented as soon as possible. This forms part of recommendation three at section 6.

A programme of multi-agency auditing should be introduced in order to evaluate the effectiveness of service provision and outcomes for children and young people at risk of CSE. This forms part of recommendation t

## **4. CSE Training**

Training and staff awareness raising in relation to CSE has been delivered widely on both a single and multiagency basis. However there are some gaps in terms of identifying those for whom the training is a must/mandated and have not attended and those aspects of the wider workforce who may come into contact with children and families (e.g. where lower level awareness raising through targeted communications work or E-learning has not taken place). It is positive to note that work has commenced with the hotel sector in Rotherham and that this is part of a wider South Yorkshire initiative for the hospitality, leisure and retail sectors.

A longer term training and awareness strategy is required in order to keep the workforce skilled and knowledgeable year on year.

A summary of training as described in November 2013 is found below. This does not include the various mandatory training or training in which CSE forms an element of other professional training.

<b>Numbers attending training and/or awareness raising Events</b>	<b>2012/13</b>	<b>2013/14</b>
Police Supervising Officers trained in CSE	110	-
Ward Members trained in CSE	45	15
Senior Managers trained in CSE	19	-
Staff undertaken multi-agency training on CSE	171	48
Multi-agency staff trained on the lessons learned from the Child 'S' Serious Case Review	175	17
Ward Members attended 'one off' Local Government Yorkshire and the Humber conference	36	Not applicable 'one off event'
Neighbourhood Watch Co-ordinators trained	-	24
Parish Councillors trained	-	11
Number of under 18 college students engaged in CSE awareness raising	-	40
Number of secondary schools engaged in CSE awareness raising with pupils	13	15
Number of pupils involved in CSE awareness raising (through the above schools)	911	887

## 5. Compliance with National Guidance and Standards

Over the last two years there has been an unprecedented number of reports, inspections and reviews into how various agencies deal with CSE. This has resulted in a number of action plans and recommendations being produced.

In some cases these plans and recommendations contradict each other and often they are completed reactively to an event and are driven by public or political concern.

In addition, Ofsted has moved from developing a multi-agency inspection framework to a single agency inspection that began in November 2013. Ofsted have also begun to undertake inspections of LSCBs.

HMIC has similarly changed its inspection protocols being statutorily obliged to consider taking PCC commissions in addition to their published programme of work.

Child safeguarding now has its highest ever status and every tragic case brings new recommendations and criticisms of service which rightly require a response.

During this review we have established that the Rotherham CSE strategy and action plan is based around national best practice including the ACPO Child Sexual Exploitation action plan and the DfE Tackling Child Exploitation Action Plan.



In addition the RLSCB action plan incorporates those recommendations contained in the Home Affairs Select Committee report.

In this fast moving area the Review Team decided that there was little point in examining every single recommendation and testing how well Rotherham is responding. For instance, the Review Team established that there were 45 recommendations in the DfE action plan alone. In November 2013 at the time the report was being written the Children's Commissioner for England published a report into CSE in Gangs and Groups that contained a further 13 recommendations. Additionally, in the month the report was being prepared, there were two highly significant serious case reviews with accompanying recommendations. This was followed most recently, and at the time of writing, by a further report from the Office of the Children's Commissioner and the University of Bedfordshire.

As we describe in section 3.3 of this report Rotherham currently has a Children and Young People's Improvement Panel. This group was established to ensure that recommendations from a previous Ofsted inspection report were put in place to assist move the Borough out of government intervention status. This group has remained in place to ensure that plans remain in place and the Local Authority is 'fit for inspection'. It seems that the RLSCB should consider whether this Board may prove to be the most effective vehicle for monitoring the various national inspection and reviews to ensure Rotherham is able to keep abreast of national best practice.

## 6. Recommendations

### Recommendation One

**The role and structure of the Child Sexual Exploitation Team and the CSE delivery plan should be reviewed as part of an ongoing process for future strategic development. In particular, consideration should be given to the structure, location and long term aims and objectives of the team, to ensure clarity of purpose and adequate and appropriate resourcing.**

### Recommendation Two

**The performance management and governance structures around CSE management requires greater clarity. A mapping exercise of current structures, together with a more proactive and intrusive performance management regime, should be considered by all agencies and in particular the LSCB.**

### Recommendation Three

**Future plans should be communicated to both victims and professionals so that there is no doubt about the seriousness with which CSE is taken. Professionals should be provided with the tools to ensure they are able to support victims in an appropriate and timely manner.**

## 7. Conclusion

This review was carried out between mid-September and the end of November 2013. It was conducted under agreed terms of reference described in section 2.2.

There are only three recommendations in this report but they are formed from a wide range of issues which are signposted throughout. In broad terms, this review was a diagnostic covering all aspects of the way in which child sexual exploitation (CSE) is managed in the Metropolitan Borough of Rotherham. It describes the tools and resources that are currently available to the relevant agencies and the effectiveness of their use.

As I stated at the beginning of this report it is not an inspection and should be considered alongside those other reports and inspections that have been published in 2013. There are now a range of reports to view and the information contained in all of them, considered collectively, gives a comprehensive picture of the effectiveness of the multi-agency working in this area at the end of 2013.

I believe the findings from this review to be positive, but it does highlight those areas that need further development work. That should hardly be a surprise; this is a dynamic and fast changing area of business for all of the organisations, set in a time where they have to consider their own priorities according to available resources. I do not underestimate the difficulties faced by organisations, and given these current restrictions I believe the progress made in Rotherham up to 2013 is remarkable.

In positive terms the level of passion, drive and determination shown at a senior level across all of the agencies is palpable. At the front line staff are committed and enthusiastic, which is particularly impressive given the morale sapping inspection and review programmes taking place.

There is a clear strategy to tackle CSE with an associated action plan based on national best practice. There has been a significant financial commitment to a multi-agency CSE team, which is staffed with committed and hardworking staff, and it is undertaking much good work and is making a difference.

There is clear evidence that CSE is a high priority and that is reflected in its status at senior strategic meetings and at Cabinet level within the Council.

In terms of areas for improvement the following areas need attention;

- The CSE team needs to be provided with a dedicated senior manager. This would ensure better cohesion between Children's Social Care Services, the Police and the CSE team. It would also provide the Borough with a senior person who could deal with all CSE issues and drive through, not only the action plan, but also those recommendations that have been agreed from this and other reports. A 'dedicated' senior manager for CSE may only need to be a short-term appointment but would provide a focus to this work.

- The CSE team terms of reference need to be reviewed and referral thresholds and the response across the continuum of need re-considered. Put simply, there needs to be greater clarity on the role and remit of the CSE team. This should not detract from the hard work already undertaken, but without the required clarity of purpose there is a danger the team will be subsumed in a mountain of referrals and case work and will lose focus.
- There would be some obvious advantages to moving the CSE team to a more suitable location. I accept this would require a massive commitment, particularly from the Police and Local Authority, which may be unrealistic at this time, but should nevertheless be given due consideration.
- The CSE team needs to develop closer links with the Integrated Youth and Support Service to ensure that they continue to develop a 'Prevent' approach to their work and they should undertake a 'needs' assessment and mapping exercise of available support.
- Whilst the CSE strategy is clear the associated action plan, whilst comprehensive, lacks some clarity and should be reviewed to ensure that actions and milestones are congruent with SMART criteria.
- The CSE sub group is a practical and effective group. However, it would benefit from a review of membership and terms of reference to ensure it remains strategic in its approach and directs the 'Silver' group to meet the action plan milestones.
- The LSCB is well supported but needs to improve its level of challenge and, in particular, develop a more intrusive and challenging performance management framework.
- The various multi-agency partnership forums need to be reviewed to ensure they all serve a valuable purpose and fit together to improve outcomes at the front end. Each multi-agency forum appears to have been set up in response to a specific problem (for instance the Improvement Panel set up in response to an Ofsted Inspection report) and in some ways they seem to have grown organically. Whilst these groups were all well managed there is confusion, at times, as to their specific purpose and function; and in relation to one another. In other words, there is a need to have unambiguous terms of reference that dovetail to each other, with clear goals and measurable outcomes. This will avoid these groups developing into bureaucratic 'talking shops'.

The report contains some detail but I believe the areas described in this section would be relatively easy to put in place and would have the maximum effect.

There will be many who read this report and view it, and particularly as further cause to lament the work of agencies in Rotherham. I would be disappointed if that were the case. The recommendations are about 'tidying up' structures and processes that are already in place. In many ways it is about fine-tuning what has been developed, along with some

general housekeeping. I believe, based on my previous inspection experience across England and Wales, that Rotherham now finds itself in a better position to tackle CSE than most other Local Authorities and their partners.

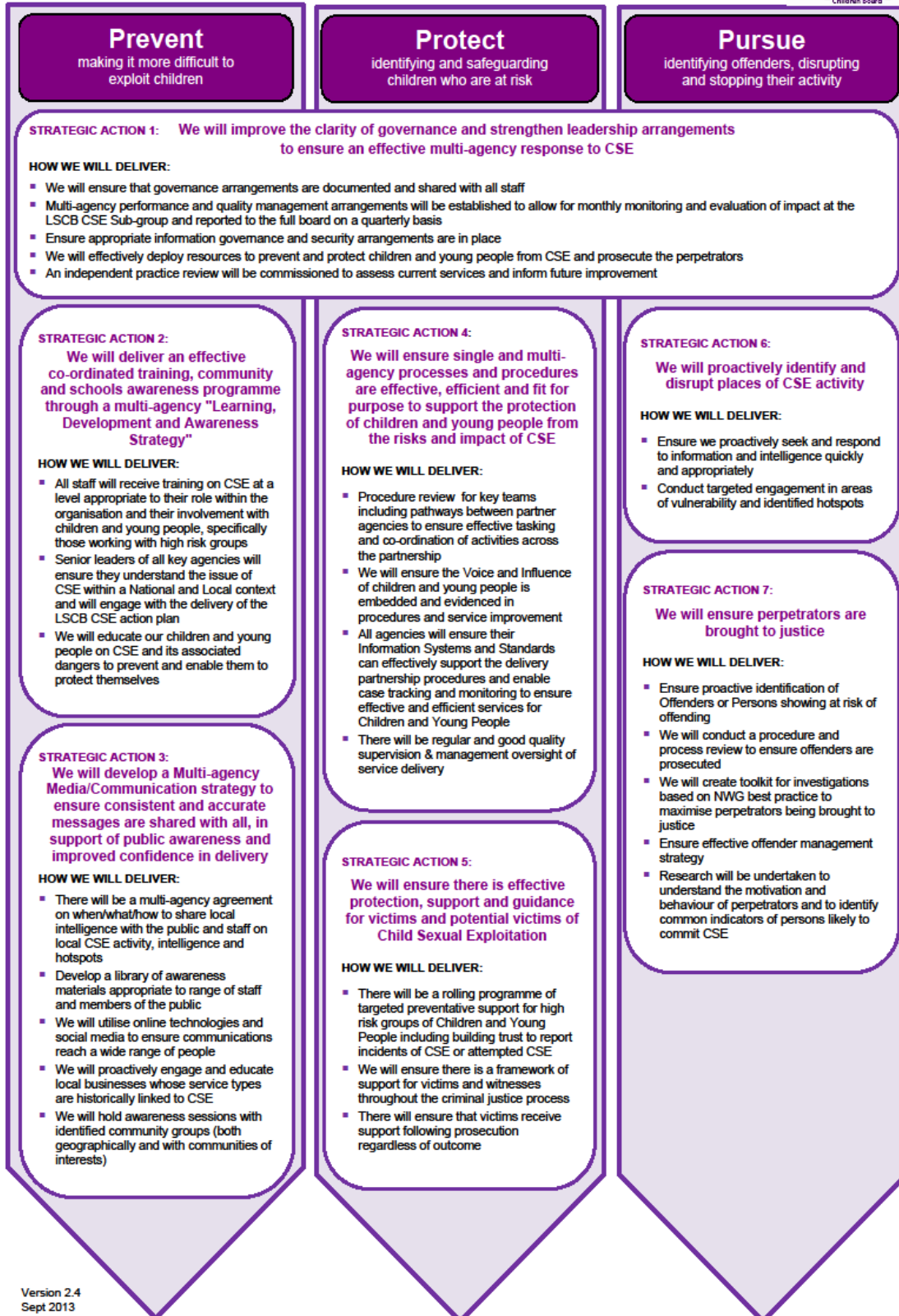
I appreciate much has been said and written about this issue and how it is managed in Rotherham. Whilst there is further work still to be done, Rotherham has 'got its act together' in relation to CSE. I am satisfied, as the LSCB Independent Chair, that the progress to date is good and there is a determination and passion at all levels to seek continuous improvement in this area. Senior leaders and managers across the board have developed a strategic approach that is driving through progress and reducing the risk of our children being subjected to sexual exploitation. That drive is reflected in positive outcomes on the front line.

**Stephen Ashley**  
**10<sup>th</sup> December 2013**

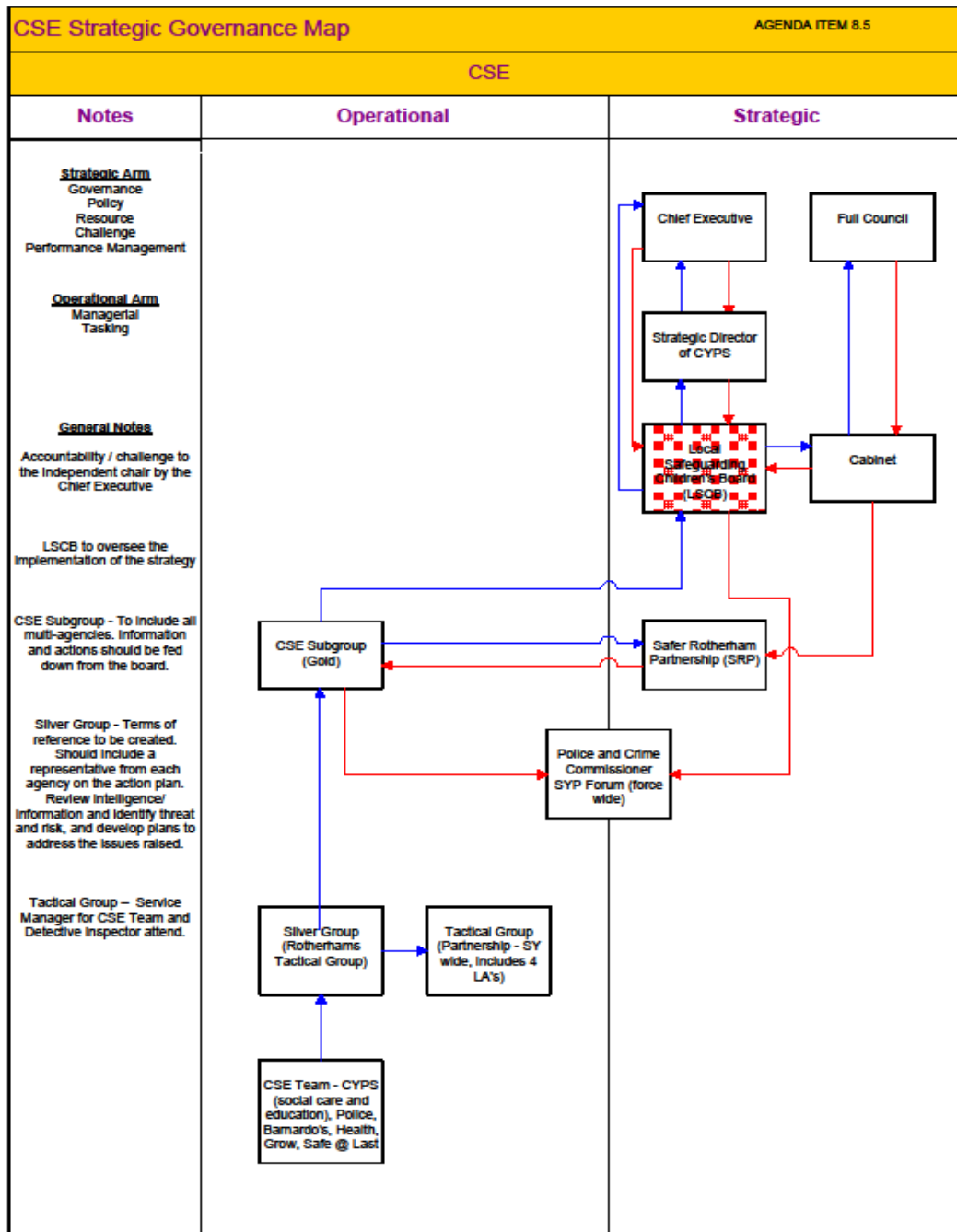
# 8. Appendices

## Appendix A - CSE Strategy 2013 - 2016

### Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2013-16 - Delivery Action Plan

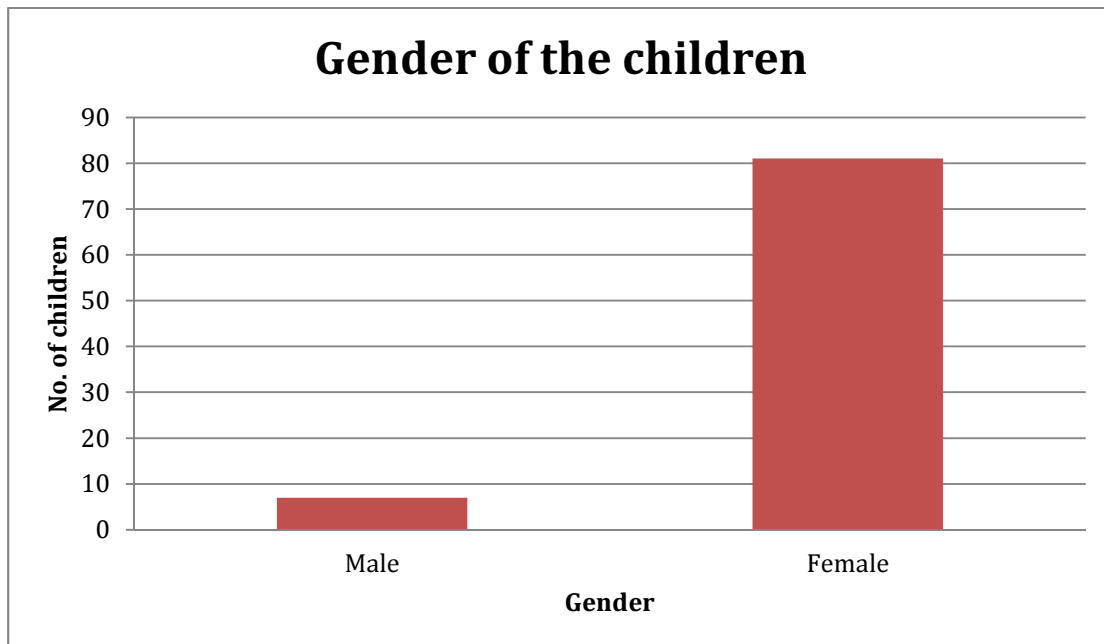
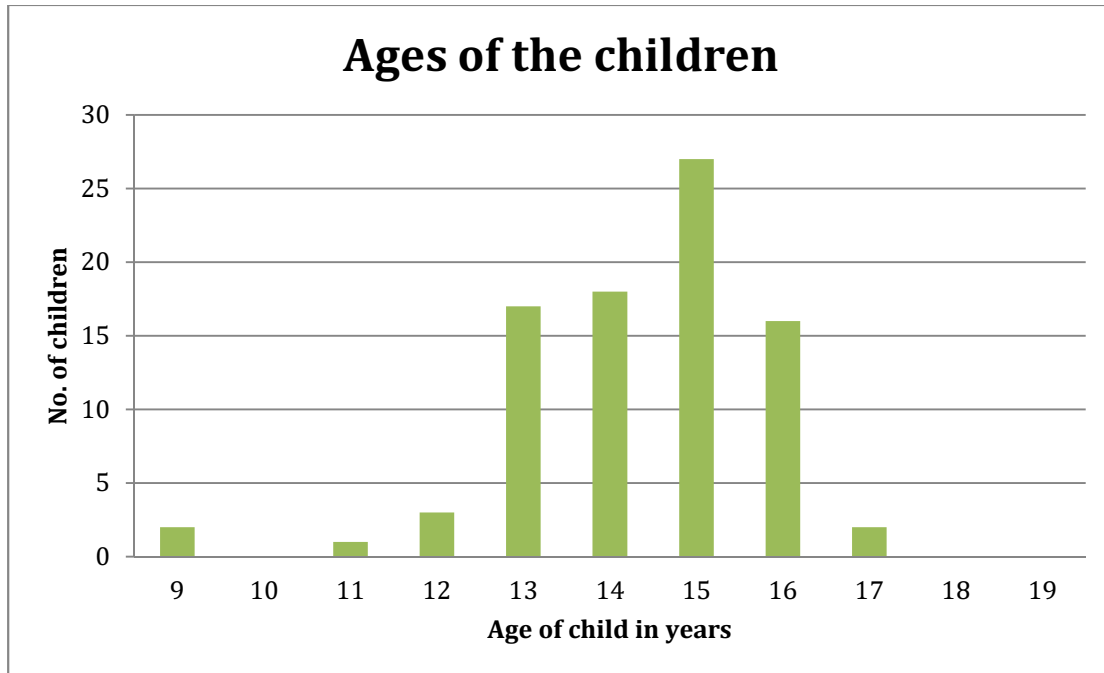


## Appendix B - CSE Strategic Governance



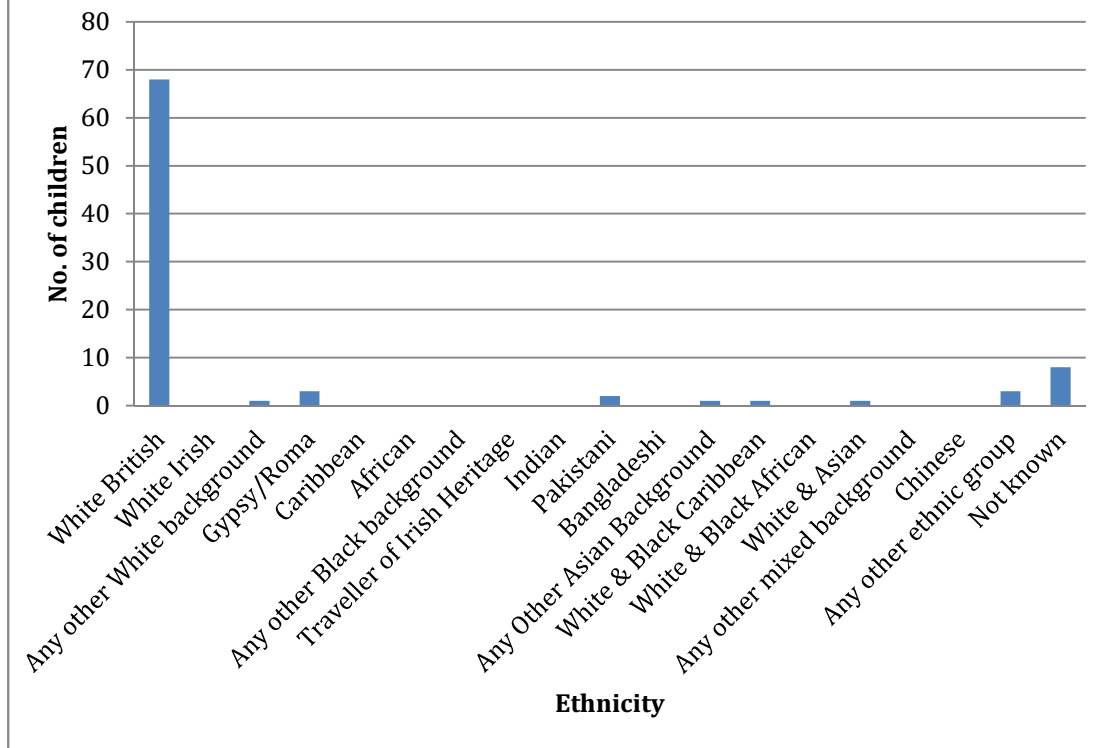
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**Appendix C – Profile of Children and Young People receiving services from the CSE Team as at September 2013**





## Ethnicity of the children



## Appendix D – National Research and Action Plans

Published Date	Title
1998	Whose Daughter Next? Children abused through prostitution: Barnardo's
2009	Whose Child Now?: Barnardo's
2011	Puppet On A String - the urgent need to cut children free from sexual exploitation: Barnardo's
June 2011	Letting Children be Children - Report of an Independent Review of the Commercialisation and Sexualisation of Childhood: Bailey, DfE
June 2011	CSE and Youth Offending: UCL Jill Dando Institute of Security and Crime Science
June 2011	Out of Mind Out of Sight. Breaking Down the Barriers to Understanding Child sexual Exploitation: CEOP
October 2011	What's Going On to safeguard children and young people from sexual exploitation? How local partnerships respond to child sexual exploitation: University of Bedfordshire
November 2011	Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation. Action Plan: DfE
July 2012	The emerging findings of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, with a special focus on children in care: Office of the Children's Commissioner
2012	University of Bedfordshire 'Self-Assessment tool' to assess progress in protecting children from sexual exploitation: University of Bedfordshire
2012	'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation. Helping Local Authorities to Develop Effective Responses': Barnardo's and the Local Government Association.
July 2012	Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan. Progress Report: DfE
October 2012	Association of Chief Police Officers: Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan
November 2012	"I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world" The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation In Gangs and Groups Interim report
March 2013	"If you Shine a Light you will probably find it" Report of a Grass Roots Survey of Health Professionals with Regard to their Experiences in Dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation: Kirtley, National Working Group
June 2013	Home Affairs Select Committee (HASC) 'Child Sexual Exploitation and the response to localised grooming'
September 2013	THE GOVERNMENT RESPONSE TO THE SECOND REPORT FROM THE HOME AFFAIRS COMMITTEE SESSION 2013-14 HC 68 Child sexual exploitation and the response to localised grooming
September 2013	Unheard Voices. The Sexual Exploitation of Asian Girls and Young Women Muslim: Women's Network UK
November 2013	"It's wrong.....but you get used to it" A qualitative study of gang associated sexual violence towards, and exploitation of, young people in England: Office of Children's Commissioner and University of Bedfordshire