

**WARRINGTON**  
Borough Council



# Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) 2015

Child Sexual Exploitation

The JSNA considers a wide range of factors that affect the health and well-being of the people of Warrington.

**Last Reviewed & Updated:**

**12/1/2014**

**Approved by WSCB - April 2015**

# Warrington Joint Strategic Needs Assessment

## Child Sexual Exploitation

### 1.0 Child Sexual Exploitation - Why is this an issue?

- 1.1 Sexual exploitation of children is child abuse and is completely unacceptable; the only effective way to tackle sexual exploitation of children is via effective multi agency and partnership working.
- 1.2 Warrington Safeguarding Children Board has adopted the definition of child sexual exploitation that is set out in statutory guidance:

*“Sexual exploitation is child abuse and children and young people who become involved face huge risks to their physical, emotional and psychological health and well-being.”*

*“Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, attention, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, or others performing on them, sexual acts or activities. Child sexual exploitation grooming 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. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability”* (The Department of Children, Schools and Families and the Home Office, July 2009)

- 1.3 We recognise that sexual exploitation can have serious long term impact on every aspect of the child’s life, health and education. It also damages the lives of families and carers and can lead to family break ups.
- 1.4 Sexual exploitation of children under 18 involves exploitative relationships, violence, coercion and intimidation being characterised, in the main, by the child’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability. However, any child may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their family background or other circumstances. This includes boys as well as girls. Some groups are particularly vulnerable. These include children who have a history of running away or of going missing from home, those with special needs, those in and leaving residential and foster care, migrant children, unaccompanied asylum seeking children, children who have disengaged from education and children who are abusing drugs and alcohol, and those involved in gangs.

1.5 It is our collective multi-agency responsibility to identify those children at risk of exploitation and our joint responsibility to protect them and safeguard them from further risk of harm. It is also our joint responsibility to prevent children becoming victims of this form of abuse and reassure our communities we can perform our duties effectively. It is the police responsibility to focus on the detection, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators.

## **2.0 What is the Pan-Cheshire picture?**

2.1 There is a Pan Cheshire Strategic group responsible for Child Sexual Exploitation, Missing from Home/ Care and Human Trafficking, which has developed a Pan-Cheshire CSE Strategy. There is a robust Missing from Home protocol and a clear Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) policy developed along with our Pan-Cheshire colleagues. A Pan-Cheshire CSE Risk Assessment tool is used by frontline practitioners and has been adopted by all partners of the 4 Local Safeguarding Children Boards.

2.2 The multi-agency strategy for safeguarding children who are abused or at risk of abuse through CSE draws on:

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (Department of Education 2013),
- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (DCSF, 2009),
- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan (Department of Education, 2011)
- “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, (OCC 2012).
- Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (2014, Alexis Jay OBE)
- The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn’t Happen Here Could It? Ofsted Thematic Inspection November 2014

2.3 The purpose of the strategy is to ensure a robust, co-ordinated multi-agency response to CSE across Cheshire under five priorities:

- Priority 1 – Strategic Commitment Across all Agencies
- Priority 2 – Identify - Improve Awareness, Understanding and Recognition
- Priority 3 – Prevent CSE – Communication
- Priority 4 – Protect - Improve Effectiveness of Interventions
- Priority 5 – Disruption - Improve the prosecution of perpetrators

2.4 The Pan Cheshire Strategic Group shares good practice and seeks to ensure as much consistency across Cheshire as is possible. A Communication Strategy Group has been established to develop, coordinate and deliver a rolling 12 month programme of awareness raising across Cheshire engaging with schools, children’s homes, communities, hotels and taxi drivers through licensing, GPs, the late night economy (takeaways, pubs, clubs). Social media using Twitter, Facebook, website, Instagram etc. will be used in order

to inform and educate young people, parents and general public. This has started with a Pan-Cheshire CSE publicity campaign which was launched in January 2014 to raise awareness amongst children and young people, parents and carers and staff. Catch 22 has been working in Warrington to raise awareness amongst businesses in leisure, hospitality and the night time economy.

2.5 The Pan-Cheshire Strategic Group is currently developing advanced training for social workers, police officers and partners in managing and supporting children who have been victims of CSE through investigations and possible court cases.

2.6 Taking a proactive approach focused on early identification and intervention can only be achieved through an integrated approach, with effective joint working and a shared understanding of the problem and this means having a clear picture of the Cheshire footprint as well as the Warrington area.

### **3.0 Warrington's Response to Child Sexual Exploitation**

3.1 Warrington has a clear strategic response to children at risk of sexual exploitation that is monitored by Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB). WSCB has had a dedicated Action Plan for Child Sexual Exploitation since October 2011 and a dedicated CSE sub-group was established in November 2011. This sub group meets on a quarterly basis to review and update the CSE Action Plan and monitor the progress of the operational responses. It is well attended by all relevant partners and reports quarterly to WSCB. All work undertaken in relation to sexual exploitation is reviewed by the sub-group and published national CSE reports are used as self-assessment tools.

3.2 The Conference and Review Unit manages and facilitates a monthly multi-agency Operational Group. The Operational Group provides agencies working with vulnerable children a forum to share information and to discuss possible interventions. A revised Protocol, Terms of Reference and information sharing agreement were approved and implemented by WSCB in February 2014. Warrington has acknowledged the clear links between children who run away and child sexual exploitation.

3.3 Warrington Borough Council (WBC) Licensing Team and Chair of the Operational Group have liaised to ensure quality information and guidance in relation to the impact of CSE is provided to the Taxi Licensing Committee. Both Taxi Licensing Policy and Alcohol Licensing Policies reference child sexual exploitation.

### **3.4 New regulations for taxi drivers, to tighten safeguarding arrangements**

3.5 The Taxi Licensing Policy approved in December 2014 introduced the following additional requirements:

- formal arrangements have been made for the Taxi Licensing Sub-Committee to benefit from information presented by safeguarding officers, where necessary.
  - the driver licensing / renewing process is supported by on-going desktop and external enforcement, to maintain a position of 'fit and proper' status of licensees.
- 3.6 The Chair of the Operational Group sits on the WBC Licensing Action Group which monitors compliance in relation to licensing activity including; premises licensed to sell alcohol, food outlets (e.g. takeaways, restaurants ) and gambling establishments. Information in relation to locations and adults of concern is shared between the 2 groups via the Chair of the Operational Group.
- 3.7 Referrals in relation to 'locations of concern' and 'adults of concern' are accepted into the Group in order to build intelligence. Information in relation to 'hotspots' and adults of concern can be shared with staff working with children in order to target services and target disruption strategies. These 'Risk Alerts' are agreed at the Operational Group and shared with relevant appropriate and professionals.
- 3.8 The Operational Group undertakes regular mapping exercises to identify patterns and themes in relation to children at risk, adults of concern and geographical hotspots. This has resulted in a number of targeted joint Police and social work operations to safeguard children and disrupt/prosecute offenders.
- 3.9 As part of the WSCB strategy to prevent sexual exploitation in Warrington the local authority has commissioned, an independent organisation, Catch 22, to provide a full-time Missing Co-ordinator and a full-time Child Sexual Exploitation Co-ordinator to offer direct work to both victims and children at risk. Both Co-ordinators work closely with Cheshire Police, social workers, care providers, the Operational Group.
- 3.10 The majority of children in care who go missing in Warrington are actually children in care placed in Warrington by other Local Authorities. The service provided by Catch 22 does not discriminate between Warrington children in care and children in care from other Local Authorities. These children are offered the same level of support. Catch 22 are also able to provide services to Warrington children in care who are placed outside the Warrington boundary up to a 30 mile radius of the Cheshire boundary. This covers the majority of our children who are placed out of Borough. For those not within the 30 mile radius, local resources are accessed when needed.
- 3.11 The Chair of the Operational Group has visited all the privately run children's homes in Warrington to ensure they have copies of the Pan Cheshire LSCB Missing Protocol, CSE Protocol and that all their staff have either been trained or have plans to be trained in relation to child sexual exploitation. The Chair of the Operational Group has also delivered bespoke training to a number of the private residential homes, in addition to Warrington's own residential provision.

- 3.12 Twice a year the Conference and Review Unit writes to all other Local Authorities asking if they have any children in care placed within Warrington. In addition, the residential children's home providers in Warrington have agreed to notify the Conference and Review Unit when they receive new children into their homes who are from another Local Authority, this will be formalised with a Memorandum of Understanding in January 2015.
- 3.13 A CSE training plan provides practitioners in a variety of different roles from frontline staff to senior officers and elected members, with a clear understanding of child sexual exploitation and the role they can play in tackling the issue in Warrington.
- 3.14 Work is currently underway with Head Teachers across Warrington to develop a training programme for all secondary schools in Warrington. This follows a successful pilot at the Pupil Referral Unit.

#### **4.0 The Warrington Picture**

##### **4.1 Activity in Relation to Missing Child Sexual Exploitation Trafficking Operational (MCSETO) Group**

- 4.2 In 2013 - 2014 there have been 193 child related items on the agenda for discussion which involved 61 individual children, a 43% increase on last year. Of the 61 children 42 (69%) were in relation to CSE and 19 (31%) were in relation to Missing.
- 4.3 11 (18%) of the children discussed were children in care from other Local Authorities. 37 (61%, a 54% increase) were Warrington children living at home with parents and 13 (21%) were Warrington children in care.
- 4.4 From April 2013 to March 2014 there were **591** missing episodes, an increase of 16%. However, there has been a 26% reduction in the number of individual children these episodes relate to from 231 to **172**.
- 4.5 Activity has clearly shown a pattern of children living at home with parents running away more often than children in care but the majority only run away on a single occasion. Children in Care, whether they are Warrington children or children from other Local Authorities placed in Warrington, tend to run away multiple times before support can reduce this pattern.
- 4.6 Children in Care tend to be influenced by 'pull' factors; running to people, places and/or a lifestyle. Some children in care will use running as a protest or bargaining tool when they are unhappy with their care planning. All these factors should be identified and assessed as part of the return interviews which are completed by the commissioned Service – Catch 22.
- 4.7 All children who go missing and/or have particular vulnerabilities (i.e. Child in Care, mental health issues, high risk) are referred to Catch 22 who undertake the return home interviews and assess the need for direct work to reduce missing behaviour. The Catch 22 worker has provided direct intervention with children and their families to understand the missing behaviour and to support

the family to develop strategies to reduce and stop the missing behaviour. Catch 22 provide a quarterly report to the Missing / CSE / Trafficking sub-group of the WSCB.

- 4.8 Each child is reviewed at subsequent meetings until such time as the risk is reduced and the safeguarding pathway is demonstrating change and protection. Of the 61 children discussed 54 children were removed from the agenda as the element of risk in relation to Missing (19), CSE (35) has been significantly reduced or removed.

## **5.0 Warrington Safeguarding Children Board**

- 5.1 Warrington Safeguarding Children Board (WSCB) provides strong, forward thinking, outcome focused, visible leadership promoting delivery of continuous improvements in the care and protection of our children and young people from sexual exploitation.

- 5.2 Children at risk of going missing from home and child sexual exploitation are a priority group of children for WSCB the Board. The Board takes responsibility for delivering strong effective infrastructures, compliant with national guidance, to keep children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation and missing from home and care safe through the work of the Missing, Child Sexual Exploitation and Trafficking Subgroup. The Board has scrutinised quality of services, considered outcomes from serious case reviews applying lessons learnt locally and monitored the impact of the partners through quarterly reports to the Board.

- 5.3 The Board requests that robust and coherent analysis of all national research, inquiries and reports in relation to CSE including an analysis of Warrington's position are presented to the full Board. This ensures effective scrutiny, full partnership ownership, a considered but quick response to any issues, recommendations or new learning and effective implementation by partners across Warrington of any changes or improvements needed with speed and coherence.

- 5.6 WSCB recognises its greatest asset in protecting children from sexual exploitation is its front line staff. Staff working directly with children need to be able to listen to what children tell them and respond appropriately. They must be able to recognise and identify when children and young people are vulnerable and know what to do to reduce identified risks. This can be rewarding but also difficult, sensitive and stressful work. The Board has taken steps to be assured therefore, not only that staff have the right skills and competencies, but also, that they work in organisations that have structures and supports in place which enhance and enable front line staff to undertake their duties effectively.

- 5.8 The partnership takes full advantage of the wide ranging opportunities it has through membership of the Board in order to make a difference to

children at risk of sexual exploitation, harnessing political support, exploiting professional expertise, using our knowledge of the national and local political, theoretical and legal frameworks and working together to assess and manage risk.

- 5.10 Critical to the success of WSCB partnership working, has been the building of productive relationships which create a climate of openness and transparency, understanding different stakeholders' and partners perspectives but being able to challenge and hold each other to account, requiring commitment to the delivery of strong effective services that keep children safe from sexual exploitation.
- 5.11 In order to be able to evidence improvements the partnership has ensured accountability to individual organisations, to children and young people and their families, critically evidencing impact through audits, scrutiny of performance and responding to challenge.

## **6.0 Future picture and response**

6.1 Whilst Warrington has made significant progress since its CSE Action Plan was developed in October 2011 it is acknowledged that there is more progress to be made. The Action Plan is a realistic reflection of what can be achieved with the available resources and structures. It is acknowledged that current counselling and therapeutic services available to victims of child sexual exploitation is limited and will be assessed to ascertain if they meet the needs of this vulnerable group of children.

6.2 The profile of sexual exploitation has been driven up by national media attention on cases where prosecutions have been successful and awareness of this form of abuse has risen as a result. It is therefore likely that there will be an increase in identification of child sexual exploitation as professionals and communities become more aware and WSCB is constantly reviewing and developing the way in which it responds. WSCB has a clear approach to tackling this particular form of child abuse but also accepts that the Board can learn from others' good practice and from reports such as the Rotherham Inquiry.

## **6.3 Recommendations**

- The need to develop specialised therapeutic intervention for victims of sexual exploitation.
- To increase specialised operational capacity for managing sexual exploitation and missing children within the Families and Well Being Directorate.
- To develop an agreed multi agency process for 'flagging' children at risk and vulnerable to CSE within agency records.
- As part of annual 'check-up' on success of Action Plan for CSE a Questionnaire to be developed for multi-agency frontline staff to check their understanding of CSE processes and Procedures to be developed, distributed and analysed.



- In order to monitor compliance, ensure updates on CSE Action Plan and procedures are shared and to maintain good working relationships the Chair of Operational Group to attend Private Residential Provider Forums.
- A Memorandum of Understanding to be developed and distributed to all Independent Residential Providers in Warrington requesting they inform WBC Conference and Review Unit directly of all new placements
- The updated Local CSE Communications Plan to include awareness raising within the Warrington community via Taxi firms, libraries, community centres, health centres, Sports Centres, shopping centres, entertainment venues.