

West Lothian Child Protection Committee Child Sexual Exploitation Procedure

1. Introduction

The sexual exploitation of children is child sexual abuse which may involve physical and emotional abuse and neglect. A fuller definition can be found in Appendix 1 but essentially it involves children and young people receiving something – for example, accommodation, drugs, gifts, or affection – as a result of them performing sexual activities, or having others perform sexual activities on them. It can occur without physical contact, when children are groomed to post sexual images of themselves on the internet.

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.

Child sexual exploitation can take many different forms including:

- Exploitation by family members, including being "sold for sex"
- Sexually exploitative relationships with older adults
- Sexually exploitative relationships with peers (including in 'gang' settings)
- Sexual exploitation through technology including grooming through social media and the taking and circulation of sexually explicit images of the child

2. Identification

Early identification of Child Sexual Exploitation is critical to the implementation of effective and timely interventions. All agencies and the wider community should be aware of the key indicators of potential sexual exploitation. (Appendix 2)

All agencies should also be aware of the need to identify risks and pass any concerns to Social Work Services or the Police. It is essential that there is an effective response from services when child sexual exploitation is identified in order to help and protect victims, remove them from the abuse and to deal with perpetrators. Victims need a helpful, swift, understanding and supportive response, coordinated across partners – in particular children's services, health and **law** enforcement, but drawing on voluntary and community sector expertise where available.

Careful consideration should be given to whether relationships which are presented as consensual by children or young people actually are, or whether exploitation is taking place. Professionals should be alert to the ways in which perpetrators can operate, especially where there is a large age-gap between the individuals involved.

Perpetrators need to face an equally swift, robust and coordinated response which stops their abusive behaviour, limits their influence over victims and others, and has a determined focus on bringing them to justice. Action also needs to be taken to try to prevent subsequent re-offending.

Experience from cases has demonstrated that, in many instances, persistence with victims is required before they feel able to reveal the truth about what has happened to them. They will need to feel that they are being believed and not judged. A multi-agency partnership approach enables the most effective interventions and achieves positive outcomes for the victims of child sexual exploitation. The partnership encompasses social care, education, police, specialist youth workers, parents groups and sexual health specialists who can meet the diverse needs of the cohort of young people.

3.0 Procedure

- 3.1 Any concern that a child is at risk of sexual abuse or has suffered sexual abuse should be referred as per the Edinburgh and the Lothians Inter-Agency Child Protection Procedures to one of the core agencies (Social Work, Police, Health)
- 3.2 In some cases Adult Protection processes may be appropriate when dealing with either victims, perpetrators or others involved in the case. In such circumstances, the Adult Protection procedure should be followed. Advice may be sought from relevant staff involved in Adult Protection work.
- 3.3 Where the referrer has concerns that the sexual abuse is as a result of exploitation they should provide as much information as possible to support their assessment. The check list (Appendix 2) can be used for this purpose
- 3.4 Where those responsible for conducting the IRD consider the risk to be specific to one child (or children from the same family unit from one perpetrator the Child Protection procedures should be followed as usual.
- 3.5 Where those responsible for conducting the IRD believe that
 - a) children from more than one family unit (regardless of whether those children are resident in West Lothian or not) are being abused, or are at risk of sexual exploitation;
 - b) one child is being sexually abused by more than one perpetrator;
 - c) a number of perpetrators are suspected to be involved in the sexual abuse of children;

Consideration should be given to arranging an Initial Strategy Meeting.

- 3.6 An Initial Strategy Meeting will be arranged and chaired by Police Scotland (Detective Inspector or above) within 21 days of the IRD.
- 3.7 The following professionals will attend the meeting:

Social Work Group Manager Children & Families Practice Teams
Head of Education Services
Chief Nurse
Consultant Paediatrician for Child Protection
Head of Housing Services

A record of the meeting will be taken by the Child Protection Committee Admin. Assistant

- 3.8 Consideration should be given to inviting any of the following professionals where their involvement is known with either the young person or the alleged perpetrator(s):

Manager of voluntary agency
Social Work Group Manager, Early Intervention
Manager of sexual health service
Senior Solicitor, Licensing Section, West Lothian Council
Manager of out of authority residential school or establishment
Social Work Group Manager Criminal Justice
Psychiatrist
Psychologist

Social Work Group Manager Mental Health
Social Work Managers from other local authorities
Police personnel from other divisions
Health managers from other Health Boards
Lead Officers for Child and/or Adult Protection

4.0 Purpose of Strategy Meeting

- Identify those who are at risk of being sexually exploited by sharing information and assessing risks;
- To address the risks associated with victims, perpetrators and locations by proactive problem solving;
- To work collaboratively to ensure the safety and welfare of children and young people who are being or are at risk of being sexually exploited;
- To take effective action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way;
- To carry out risk assessment;
- To develop a shared picture of intelligence on all threats;
- To grade responses to the risks identified;
- To provide early intervention to reduce the harm posed to children and young people;
- To investigate, prosecute and disrupt perpetrators;
- To adopt a collective watching brief to determine further interventions required;
- Promote positive physical and emotional health and wellbeing;
- Ensure relevant and timely access to appropriate health services.

4.1 Roles and Responsibilities

The Chair will ensure:

- All members are offered equity with regard to opportunities to contribute to the meeting;
- The efficient administration of the meeting;
- The information shared is accurately recorded and disseminated;
- The CPC and COG are advised of the investigation, updated quarterly and at conclusion of enquiry.

Participants in the Strategy Meeting will ensure that they:

- Attend meetings regularly ;
- Contribute to the information sharing which enables the meetings to fulfil their purpose;
- Disseminate appropriate levels of information shared at the meetings to enable further integrated working with other frontline partners;
- Contribute to the actions agreed during the meetings and provide timely reports on progress and outcomes;
- Identify additional resources if required;
- Represent and act as a communication link with their organisation.

4.2 Outcome of Initial Strategy Meeting

- No further action;
- Child Protection Investigation;
- Large scale enquiry.

5.0 Large Scale Enquiry

If a Large Scale Enquiry is initiated the Chair of the Initial Strategy Meeting should:

- Specify the terms of reference for the enquiry/investigation;
- Identify the strategic lead in the investigation;

- Bring together a team of people with the necessary training, expertise and objectivity to manage and conduct the criminal investigation and/or Child Protection Investigation on a day to day basis. NB: Line managers or colleagues of any person implicated in the investigation must not be involved and the involvement of any person from the work place under investigation must be considered with particular care;
- Decide whether there is a need for an independent team to investigate the allegations, particularly where the alleged perpetrators are foster carers, prospective adopters or members of staff employed by a member agency of the Child Protection Committee;
- Decide the terms of reference and accountability for the investigating team, including the parameters and timescales of their enquiries/investigation;
- Ensure that appropriate resources are deployed to the investigation including access to legal and other specialist advice, resources and information;
- Ensure that appropriate resources are available to meet the needs of the children and families or adult survivors, including any specific health issues arising from the abuse;
- Ensure the investigating team are themselves supported with personal counselling if necessary and that issues of staff safety are addressed;
- Ensure that suitable accommodation and administrative support are available for the investigation;
- Liaise as necessary with the Crown Office & Procurator Fiscal Service at an early stage before arranging services for a child in need of counselling or therapeutic help so that the help can be given in a way which is consistent with the conduct of the criminal investigation;
- Identify how young people and their families are to be involved/informed;
- Agree a communications strategy including the handling of political and media issues, and communication as necessary with the Care Inspectorate;
- Ensure that records are kept safely and securely stored and a high level of confidentiality maintained at all times;
- Hold regular strategic meetings and reviews, which must be recorded, to consider progress, including the effectiveness of the joint working, the need for additional resources and next steps.

6.0 Information Sharing

There is nothing in Scottish, UK or European Law that prevents practitioners from sharing personal information, and in some cases sensitive personal information, where they are worried or concerned about a child or young person's wellbeing or safety.

7.0 End of Enquiry

At the conclusion of the enquiry/investigation, the Chair of the Strategy Meetings will evaluate the investigation, identify the lessons learned and prepare an overview report for the Child Protection Committee, highlighting any practices, procedures or policies which may need further attention and require either inter-agency or individual agency action plans.

Appendix 1

What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

The sexual exploitation of children is child sexual abuse which may involve physical and emotional abuse and neglect. Sexual exploitation may include situations where children and young people exchange sex for shelter, protection, accommodation, food, gifts, alcohol and drugs. Often there may be violence or threats of violence towards the child and they may be coerced to become involved in pornography or abusive images.

Sexually exploited children are rarely visible on the streets and are only a small part of the bigger picture of sexual exploitation of children by adults, other children and young people. A growing number of young people are being sexually exploited by adults and older young people "met" via the Internet. This "hi-tech" method of grooming children for abuse has contributed to the invisibility of the sexual exploitation of children.

Sexual exploitation involves both girls and boys under the age of 18. The children involved must be regarded as potential victims of abuse. Increasingly, victims are children under 16 years of age, from all communities and cultures and include a significant proportion of looked after children. Vulnerability and low self esteem are the most common factors amongst children who are at risk of being sexually exploited. Strong links have been identified between sexual exploitation, running away from home, human trafficking and substance misuse.

Children may be drawn into sexual exploitation by a young person of a similar age. Girls, in particular, are often coerced into sexual exploitation by an older man who targets an individual. They may see him as their boyfriend, and become physically and emotionally dependent upon him. This may be reinforced by the use of alcohol and drugs. Over time, access to friends and family becomes restricted and the child becomes alienated from agencies which may be able to identify and interrupt the abuse. This is often referred to as the grooming process.

Sexual exploitation adversely affects the lives of children and impacts on their health, education, self-esteem and causes them to be socially excluded. This group may include children who have been victims of human trafficking.

Child sexual exploitation can occur even if there is no immediate payment or gain, for example, when a child is persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones. 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 (DCSF, 2009). This 'exchange' may also be intangible, in the sense that the young person involved will typically believe that the relationship in which they are involved is a consensual one, and that the abuser(s) are their 'boyfriends'. Consequently, the violence and abuse to which the young person is subjected will be perceived as normal and acceptable. This presents major challenges for those seeking to intervene to end the abuse, in that the young person will be reluctant to accept help and/or to end the relationship (Pearce, 2006; Pearce, 2009). There are also social and cultural tensions in terms of what is understood to represent a 'consensual' relationship amongst teenagers.

Appendix 2

CSE Checklist

The following list is not exhaustive but highlights indicators of risk and vulnerabilities associated with sexual exploitation. Information known about any of these issues should be shared when a referral is made.

Health	Present
Physical injuries such as bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault	Yes / No / Possibly
A sexually transmitted infection, particularly if it is recurring or there are multiple STIs	Yes / No / Possibly
Pregnancy / abortion / miscarriage	Yes / No / Possibly
Sexually risky behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Self-harming	Yes / No / Possibly
Thoughts of or attempted suicide	Yes / No / Possibly
Eating disorder	Yes / No / Possibly
Change in appearance including losing weight, putting on weight,	Yes / No / Possibly
Evidence of misuse of drugs/alcohol, including associated health problems	Yes / No / Possibly
Learning disability	Yes / No / Possibly
Behaviour	
Sexually offending behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Truancy/disengagement with education, or considerable change in performance at school	Yes / No / Possibly
Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or abusive language which is unusual for the child	Yes / No / Possibly
Aggressive or violent, including to pets/animals	Yes / No / Possibly
Becoming angry, hostile if any suspicions or concerns about their activities are expressed	Yes / No / Possibly
Physical aggression towards parents, siblings, pets, teachers or peers	Yes / No / Possibly
Detachment from age-appropriate activities	Yes / No / Possibly
Secretive behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Known to be sexually active	Yes / No / Possibly
Low self-image, low self-esteem	Yes / No / Possibly
Young offender or anti-social behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Sexualised language	Yes / No / Possibly
Hostility in relationship with parents / carers and other family members	Yes / No / Possibly
Getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting or stealing	Yes / No / Possibly
Grooming	
Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults	Yes / No / Possibly
Inappropriate use of the Internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the Internet. Note adults may pose as peers to entrap the child.	Yes / No / Possibly
Mobile phone being answered by unknown adult	Yes / No / Possibly
Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding	Yes / No / Possibly
Having keys to premises other than those they should have	Yes / No / Possibly
Possession of money with no plausible explanation	Yes / No / Possibly
Acquisition of expensive or sexual clothes, mobile phone or other possession without plausible explanation	Yes / No / Possibly
Having new mobile phone, several mobile phones, especially Blackberry or I phone – (because messages cannot be traced).	Yes / No / Possibly
Always have credit on their mobile phones, despite having no access to money or having no credit so phone can only be used for incoming calls.	Yes / No / Possibly
Excessive use of mobile phones including receiving calls late at night	Yes / No / Possibly
Reports that the child / young person has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation	Yes / No / Possibly
Unexplained relationships with older adults	Yes / No / Possibly

Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited, including in school	Yes / No / Possibly
Sexual relationship with a significantly older person	Yes / No / Possibly
Phone call, texts or letters from unknown adults	Yes / No / Possibly
Recruiting others into sexual exploitation	Yes / No / Possibly
Seen at public toilets known for cottaging or adult venues (pubs and clubs)	Yes / No / Possibly
Adults loitering outside the child/young person's usual place of residence or school	Yes / No / Possibly
Leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people)	Yes / No / Possibly
Wearing an unusual amount of clothing (due to hiding more sexualised clothing underneath or hiding their body)	Yes / No / Possibly
Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation	Yes / No / Possibly
Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base	Yes / No / Possibly
Returning after having been missing looking dirty, dishevelled, tired, hungry, thirsty	Yes / No / Possibly
Missing for long periods, with no known home base and/or homeless	Yes / No / Possibly
Possession of excessive numbers of condoms	Yes / No / Possibly
New contacts with people outside of town	Yes / No / Possibly
Looked after children	
Living in residential care	Yes / No / Possibly
Frequently missing from placement	Yes / No / Possibly
Multiple Placement breakdown	Yes / No / Possibly
Going missing with other children	Yes / No / Possibly
Family and Social	
A family member or known associate working in the adult sex trade	Yes / No / Possibly
Unsure about their sexual orientation, or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their family	Yes / No / Possibly
History of physical, sexual and / or emotional abuse; neglect	Yes / No / Possibly
Witness to or involved in domestic violence at home	Yes / No / Possibly
Parental difficulties; drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems, physical or learning difficulty. Being a young carer.	Yes / No / Possibly
Pattern of street homelessness or sofa surfing	Yes / No / Possibly
Living in hostel or B & B accommodation	Yes / No / Possibly
Conflict at home around boundaries, including staying out late.	Yes / No / Possibly
Recent bereavement or loss	Yes / No / Possibly
Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships	Yes / No / Possibly
Lacking friends their own age	Yes / No / Possibly
Living in a gang neighbourhood	Yes / No / Possibly
E-safety	
Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through internet or social networking sites	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that inappropriate images of a young person are being circulated via the internet/phones	Yes / No / Possibly
Exchanging inappropriate images for cash, credits or other items	Yes / No / Possibly
Receiving gifts through the post from someone the young person does not know	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that a young person is being coerced to provide sexually explicit images	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that a young person is being bribed by someone because of their inappropriate online activity	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that a young person is selling sexual services via the Internet	Yes / No / Possibly
Accessing dating agencies via mobile phones (for example - 2 flirt line)	Yes / No / Possibly
Unexplained increased mobile phone / gaming credits	Yes / No / Possibly

Appendix 3

Agenda for Initial Strategy Meeting

1. Introductions and Apologies
2. Terms of reference for the enquiry/investigation;
3. Identification of the strategic lead in the investigation;
4. Consider each child – risks, vulnerabilities, action required
5. Consider each alleged perpetrator – evidence and intelligence of the risks, action/disruption tactics required
6. Consideration of resources/need for specialist resources or advice
7. Liaison with Crown;
8. Identify how young people and their families are to be involved/informed;
9. Communications strategy (consider communication with media, partner agencies, CPC, families etc.);
10. Date of review meeting.

Appendix 4
RESTRICTED ACCESS INFORMATION
 Initial Strategy Meeting Minute & Plan

1. Meeting details

Present	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Apologies	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Date of Meeting		Venue	

2. Terms of reference for the enquiry/investigation:

3. Name of Strategic lead in the investigation

4. Children/Young People

Child 1			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Parent/Care Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Sibling Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Child 2			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Parent/Care Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Sibling Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Child 3			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Parent/Care Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Sibling Name(s)		Home address	
DOB		Current address	

Child 4			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Parent/Care Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Sibling Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Child 5			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Parent/Care Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Sibling Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Identified Risks/Vulnerabilities	Evidence/Intelligence	Action Required	Person/Agency responsible
Child 1			
Child 2			
Child 3			
Child 4			
Child 5			

5. Alleged perpetrators

Perpetrator 1			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Partner's Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Own Child Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Perpetrator 2			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Partner's Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Own Child Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Perpetrator 3			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Partner's Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Own Child Name(s)		Home address	
DOB		Current address	

Perpetrator 4			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Partner's Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Own Child Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Perpetrator 5			
Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Partner's Name		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	
Own Child Name(s)		Home Address	
DOB		Current address	

Identified Risks presented	Evidence/Intelligence	Action Required	Person/Agency responsible
Perpetrator 1			
Perpetrator 2			
Perpetrator 3			
Perpetrator 4			
Perpetrator 5			

6. Resources/need for specialist resources or advice

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7. Liaison with Crown

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8. Involvement of young people and families

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9. Communication strategy

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Chair	
Minute Taker	
Date of Review Meeting	

Appendix 5

Agenda for Review Strategy Meeting

1. Introductions and Apologies;
2. Consider each child (consider whether actions have reduced risks, what further action/support is required);
3. Consider each alleged perpetrator (update evidence and intelligence, consider whether actions have reduced risk or disrupted activity, what further action is required);
4. Consideration of resources/need for specialist resources or advice (consider whether additional resources or advice is required);
5. Liaison with Crown (consider whether this is effective or further action is required);
6. Review how young people and their families are to be involved/informed, consider whether further action is required;
7. Communication strategy (consider whether communication with media, partner agencies, CPC, families etc. has been effective or requires amendment);
8. Date of review meeting.

Appendix 6
RESTRICTED ACCESS INFORMATION
 Review Strategy Meeting Minute & Plan

1. Meeting details

Present	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Apologies	Designation	Agency	Contact Details
Date of Meeting		Venue	

2. Review of actions - Children

Identified Risks/Vulnerabilities	Outcome of actions	Further Evidence/Intelligence	Further Action Required	Person/Agency Responsible
Child 1				
Child 2				
Child 3				
Child 4				
Child 5				

3. Review of actions - Alleged perpetrators

Identified Risks presented	Outcome of actions		Further Action Required	Person/Agency Responsible
Perpetrator 1				

Perpetrator 2				
Perpetrator 3				
Perpetrator 4				
Perpetrator 5				

4. Resources/need for specialist resources or advice

5. Liaison with Crown

6. Involvement of young people and families

7. Communication strategy

Chair	
Minute Taker	
Date of Review Meeting	