

**Office of the Children's Commissioner**

**"If it's not better, it's not the end"**

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**Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in  
Gangs and Groups: One year on**

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# About the Office of the Children's Commissioner

The Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) is a national public sector organisation led by the Children's Commissioner for England, Dr Maggie Atkinson. We promote and protect children's rights in accordance with the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and, as appropriate, other human rights legislation and conventions.

We do this by listening to what children and young people say about things that affect them and encouraging adults making decisions to take their views and interests into account.

We publish evidence, including that which we collect directly from children and young people, bringing matters that affect their rights to the attention of Parliament, the media, children and young people themselves, and society at large. We also provide advice on children's rights to policy-makers, practitioners and others.

The post of Children's Commissioner for England was established by the Children Act 2004. The Act makes us responsible for working on behalf of all children in England and in particular, those whose voices are least likely to be heard. It says we must speak for wider groups of children on the issues that are not-devolved to regional Governments. These include immigration, for the whole of the UK, and youth justice, for England and Wales.

The Children and Families Act 2014 changed the Children's Commissioner's remit and role. It provided the legal mandate for the Commissioner and those who work in support of her remit at the Office of the Children's Commissioner to promote and protect children's rights. In particular, we are expected to focus on the rights of children within the new section 8A of the Children Act 2004, or other groups of children whom we consider are at particular risk of having their rights infringed. This includes those who are in or leaving care or living away from home, and those receiving social care services. The Bill also allows us to provide advice and assistance to and to represent these children.

## **Our vision**

A society where children and young people's rights are realised, where their views shape decisions made about their lives and they respect the rights of others.

## **Our mission**

We will promote and protect the rights of children in England. We will do this by involving children and young people in our work and ensuring their voices are heard. We will use our statutory powers to undertake inquiries, and our position to engage, advise and influence those making decisions that affect

children and young people.

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**Anyone who has concerns about a child or wants advice can contact the NSPCC for free 24 hours a day, by calling 0808 800 5000, emailing [help@nspcc.org.uk](mailto:help@nspcc.org.uk), texting 88858 or using an online reporting form. They can choose to remain anonymous if they wish.**

## Introduction from the Deputy Children's Commissioner

It has been one year since the Office of the Children's Commissioner (OCC) published the final report of our ground-breaking Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups.

Using our unique statutory powers, we gathered a huge body of evidence and published six influential reports covering children in care; the prevalence and nature of child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups; the impact on children of viewing adult pornography; young people's understanding of consent; sexual exploitation in gang-involved neighbourhoods; and the final report which set out a framework for tackling this crime and supporting victims.

This report sets out the progress that has been made in tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE) in England since the Inquiry.

There is encouraging evidence that many of the Inquiry recommendations are being taken seriously. We are pleased to see that there are areas and agencies across the country where progress is being made. The strong leadership from the Home Office is also welcome.

At the same time, much remains to be done. There are still too many places where those who have responsibility for the protection of children are failing to face up to the realities of CSE. In other areas, while strategic leaders are committed and determined, the messages have not filtered to the frontline so good intentions are not yet leading to better practice.

In addition, the Government's promised revision of the definition of sexual exploitation and a myth busting guide on information sharing have not been delivered. Limited understanding of sexual exploitation and failure to share information means children are still slipping through the net. Despite calls from young people and experts, the Department for Education (DfE) has failed to make relationships and sex education compulsory in all schools.

A young woman who was a victim of sexual exploitation and was struggling to deal with the trauma of her ordeal told us, *'Everything gets better in the end, and if it's not better, it's not the end'*. Every agency, from government through to those delivering services directly to children and young people, must work resolutely to protect children from sexual exploitation. Progress is encouraging – but 'the end' remains a long way off.



**Sue Berelowitz**  
**Deputy Children's Commissioner for England**  
**Visiting Professor, Bedfordshire University**

# Executive summary

## About the Inquiry

- The OCC's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (CSEGG) was the most comprehensive assessment of the scale and nature of this form of child abuse ever undertaken in England. Recommendations were made throughout the Inquiry and the OCC **maintains that all of these must be implemented in full to address failings in policy and practice** identified by the Inquiry.

## Purpose of this report

- For this follow-up report data has been provided by police forces, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs), Health and Wellbeing Boards and voluntary sector organisations to enable the OCC to assess the extent to which our recommendations have been implemented. Relevant government departments were also asked to provide evidence.
- Many agencies have taken steps towards the full implementation of the recommendations and we are confident that measures to protect children from sexual exploitation are much more robust as a result. However, **there remain a number of recommendations which have not been implemented at all or where progress is unsatisfactory meaning children and young people remain at risk.**
- The OCC welcomes the progress of many agencies to effectively tackle CSE. However, there remains a considerable amount of work to be done before anybody can be confident that children are being effectively kept safe from sexual exploitation and those who are already victims are being supported in their recovery. National and local government agencies with a responsibility for safeguarding children from CSE must guard against complacency. All recommendations must be implemented in full to afford the greatest possible level of protection for children.

## Key findings and areas of concern

- **The OCC is concerned that too many children at risk of becoming victims, or who are already victims, are still not being identified.** In response to the questionnaire issued for gathering data for this report, 70 LSCBs (48% of the 148 LSCBs in England) identified 2,092 known victims of CSE in 2013. There are still many parts of England where the identification of victims remains very low, despite the evidence we published that there are children in every part of England who are at risk or who are victims. Comparing the number of identified CSE victims in similar local authorities reveals a considerable disparity – this is more likely to reflect the under-identification of victims than the actual incidence of CSE.

- It is encouraging that in many parts of England, police forces and LSCBs have put in place strategies for responding to CSE – 92% of LSCBs have now produced a CSE strategy and 79% of police forces have produced a strategic analysis or problem profile. There has also been a considerable improvement in the level of compliance with the statutory guidance on safeguarding children from sexual exploitation, with over half of LSCBs now meeting 13 of 15 key requirements set out in [Working Together 2009](#). However, our evidence is that **progress at a strategic level has not yet filtered down to frontline practice**. LSCBs, police forces and voluntary sector organisations have all stated that strong CSE strategies do not necessarily lead to effective frontline practice. Many strategies are also relatively new – delivery mechanisms may take some time to become embedded.
- We identified that joined-up working and information sharing are vital for protecting children from sexual exploitation. No single agency possesses a complete picture of the intelligence regarding a particular child or young person. In the absence of clear, comprehensive information sharing protocols and processes, agencies may not share the risks faced by a particular child or young person and they may be sexually exploited as a result. Of 38 police forces in England, 31 have a full information sharing protocol in place with children’s services and 81% of LSCBs report that an information sharing agreement is in place in their area. However, over half of police forces report that they have experienced barriers to multi-agency information sharing. **It is a concern that information sharing remains a problem, despite the establishment of information sharing protocols.**
- The OCC identified that Relationships and Sex Education is an important means of equipping young people with the knowledge to recognise abuse, understand the issues around sexual consent and healthy relationships, and mitigate the impact of pornography on attitudes and behaviour. Schools have a vital role to play in delivering this educational content to all children in England. **We recommended that Relationships and Sex Education be taught as part of a robust PSHE programme in all schools. We remain concerned that Government has not yet made PSHE a statutory subject in the national curriculum.**
- **In too many areas, children are not being involved in the design and development of local measures to protect them from CSE.** This is contrary to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC), which states that children have a right to express their views on matters which affect them. Of those LSCBs with a CSE strategy, only 31% have involved children and young people in its design, and the participation of children has been described ‘tokenistic’ by voluntary sector agencies. There is much to be gained from involving children and young people in the design and evaluation of local responses – particularly victims and survivors of CSE. This should occur in all areas.

# 1. The OCC's Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups

The OCC's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in gangs and groups (CSEGG) was launched in October 2011 as a result of growing concern that thousands of children in England were victims of CSE perpetrated by gangs and groups and were not being identified and protected or supported in their recovery.

The Inquiry was the most comprehensive assessment of the scale and nature of this form of child abuse in England. It set out for the first time and in considerable detail, the scale and nature of CSE in gangs and groups and identified the essential components of a response for safeguarding children and young people. Nearly 1,000 children and young people participated in the Inquiry and contributed to our findings.

The six Inquiry reports uncovered evidence of appalling rape and sexual assault and demonstrated that many children were simply invisible to those whose job it was to protect them and were slipping through what should be an effective safety net.

We were determined to challenge the system on this. We made 37 recommendations for preventing children from becoming victims of sexual exploitation and protecting those who already are. We also developed a new way of working so that child victims and those at risk could no longer be ignored.<sup>1</sup>

## Summary of key findings from the Inquiry

- The [interim report](#) found that 2,409 children were confirmed as victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups during the 14-month period from August 2010 to October 2011.
- 16,500 children from across England were identified as being at high risk of child sexual exploitation during the period April 2010 to March 2011. This figure is based on children who displayed three or more signs of behaviour indicating they were at risk of child sexual exploitation
- [Thirteen different models of CSE linked to groups and gangs were identified](#) including organised crime groups and networks, school-based CSE and inter-gang CSE.

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<sup>1</sup> [See Me, Hear Me Framework](#)

- [The accelerated report](#) identified the scale and nature of the sexual exploitation of children in care, making a series of recommendations for tightening legislation, regulations and guidance to better protect children in residential care.
- [Middlesex University's Rapid Evidence Assessment](#) on the impact on young people of viewing adult pornographic materials found that pornography affects children and young people's notions and expectations of sex and sexuality. Exposure to pornography pressures young women to conform to particular body images, creates unrealistic expectations of sex and reinforces a belief in stereotypical gender roles
- [London Metropolitan University undertook research into young people's understanding of sexual consent](#) finding that young people often interpret consent as a simple 'yes' or 'no' issue, with little appreciation of the contextual factors which impede the ability to give or withhold consent. Young people generally understand what is meant by *giving* consent to sex, but have a very limited sense of what *getting* consent might involve. They did not understand that sex without consent constitutes rape and victims were blamed for their abuse and rape by both girls and boys. Boys who have sex with a number of girls were seen as 'legends' or 'heroes' whereas girls were called 'slags', 'skets' or other derogatory terms.
- Research undertaken by the [University of Bedfordshire examined the nature of CSE linked to gangs](#). Harrowing evidence was described in which sexual violence, including multiple perpetrator rape, was regarded as 'normal' and inevitable. Girls reported growing up in a climate of fear and intimidation leading to submission and compliance with whatever sexual acts were demanded of them.
- Some alarming gaps in practice for identifying and protecting victims of CSE were identified in the [final report of the Inquiry](#). Examples of good practice were also highlighted. The essential foundations of effective practice were explained in detail, enabling organisations with a role in the safeguarding and protection of children from CSE to audit their performance. A series of recommendations were made to agencies working at a national and local level, encapsulating the key elements of good practice.

## 2. Significant developments since the CSEGG Inquiry

Since the conclusion of the Inquiry a number of reports and events have echoed our findings and reinforced our recommendations.

- ['Unheard Voices'](#) The Muslim Women's Network report on CSE in the Muslim community (2013)
- [Parliamentary inquiry into the effectiveness of legislation for tackling child sexual exploitation and trafficking within the UK](#) Barnardo's report of Sarah Champion MP's inquiry (April 2014)
- [Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997–2013](#) Alexis Jay OBE (August 2014)
- ['Real Voices'](#) Ann Coffey MP's report on CSE in Greater Manchester (October 2014)
- ['It couldn't happen here, could it?'](#) Ofsted thematic review of local authorities' current response to CSE (November 2014)
- [Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council](#) Louise Casey (February 2015)

### Rotherham

In August 2014 Professor Alexis Jay OBE made a conservative estimate that at least 1,400 children had been sexually exploited in Rotherham over the period spanning 1997 to 2013. This level of CSE is broadly consistent with the level identified by our Inquiry.

Following the publication of Professor Jay's report, the scale of CSE and the historic failings of those responsible for the protection of children were subject to considerable scrutiny. Public awareness of this form of child sexual abuse increased considerably and many people found the shortcomings evident in the child protection system to be profoundly distressing.

The Secretary of State appointed Louise Casey CB under section 10 of the Local Government Act 1999 to carry out an inspection of the compliance of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council with the requirements of Part 1 of that Act in relation to the Council's exercise of its functions on governance, children and young people, and taxi and private hire licensing. Her report found that Rotherham Metropolitan Council failed in its duties to protect vulnerable children and young people from harm.

Events in Rotherham have reminded the child protection community of their responsibilities to children vulnerable to CSE, giving a renewed impetus to national and local leadership positions across the country to ensure that the mistakes of the past are not repeated.

### **National inquiry into historic child sex abuse**

The Home Secretary announced an inquiry into child sexual abuse in institutions in July 2014. This will be a statutory inquiry established under the 2005 Inquiries Act and Justice Lowell Goddard has been appointed as Chair. Broadly, this inquiry will consider the extent to which State and non-State institutions have failed in their duty of care to protect children from sexual abuse and exploitation.

### **Why are these important?**

The public want to know the true scale of child abuse and they expect children to be better protected. Indeed, in accordance with Article 34 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, children have a right to protection from sexual exploitation.

The OCC maintains that all of our recommendations must be implemented in full to address the failings in policy and practice identified by the Inquiry.

### **Influence on research and policy**

The findings and recommendations of the OCC's Inquiry have been cited frequently by parliamentarians, including government ministers.

The Inquiry reports have been cited in debates on relationships and children's wellbeing and the police response to domestic violence; oral questions and answers on violence against women and children; and in regard to various relevant Bills before Parliament and the Lords, including the Sex and Relationships Education Bill, the Criminal Justice and Courts Bill, and the Children and Families Bill.

### 3. Purpose of this report and methodology

One year has passed since the Inquiry's conclusion – sufficient time to have implemented the recommendations in full or to have demonstrated significant progress towards doing so.

Consequently, and in light of the renewed expectation and impetus on protecting children from CSE, we are publishing this report to examine the extent to which the agencies responsible (government agencies and departments, police forces, local authority children's services, Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)) have implemented the recommendations.

This analysis is based on self-assessment questionnaires completed by 100% of police forces, 100% of LSCBs and 36% of Health and Wellbeing Boards. Eight voluntary sector organisations also completed a questionnaire, representing 26 services in 21 local authorities. Where recommendations were targeted at national agencies and government departments, the agency concerned provided a written commentary on its progress in implementing the recommendations.

The completed questionnaires have enabled the OCC to assess the implementation of our recommendations and also provide data on current work to tackle CSE.

It should be noted that LSCB data covers local authority children's services as well as the specific functions and duties for which LSCBs are directly responsible and accountable. It is also important to understand the different roles and responsibilities of local authority children's services departments and LSCBs. Local authority children's services are responsible for all operational child protection services. LSCBs have no operational responsibilities. They are multi-agency partnerships established under the Children Act 2004. Every local authority is required to set up an LSCB which must include representatives from: the local authority children's services; the police; health services and other named local agencies. The LSCB is responsible for coordinating the activities of partners for the safeguarding and protection of children and for monitoring the performance and effectiveness of the local authority and other Board partners.

The LSCB data illustrates the effectiveness of multi-agency arrangements, including the performance of local authorities. All LSCB data submitted for this report includes the local authority performance data.

**Figure 1: Methodology**

	<b>Method</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Responses/ Activity</b>
<b>1</b>	LSCB Dataset Request	Survey of every LSCB in England, covering strategic planning, compliance with guidance, data sharing and awareness/training provision	100% LSCB responded  (Total – 145 <sup>2</sup> )
<b>2</b>	Police force Dataset Request	Survey of every police force in England, covering strategic planning, data collection and information sharing	100% police forces responded  (Total – 39)
<b>3</b>	Health and Wellbeing Boards Dataset Request	Survey of every Health and Wellbeing Board in England, covering strategic planning and awareness of OCC recommendations	36% Health and Wellbeing Boards responded  (Total – 55)
<b>4</b>	Voluntary Sector Questionnaires and Focus Group	Questionnaire to Voluntary Sector Organisations on extent to which CSEGG final report recommendations are being fulfilled by statutory agencies          Focus group with experts	Eight voluntary sector organisations also completed a questionnaire, representing 26 services in 21 local authorities          1 focus group with 3 experts (participation, CSE and trafficking) from one organisation covering approximately 80% of LSCB areas
<b>5</b>	Recommendation Follow-Up Request	Request to Department for Education and Home Office asking to what extent they have fulfilled the CSEGG report recommendations	Response received from DfE and Home Office

The OCC [identified nine essential foundations of effective practice](#) for safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation. These foundations were based on the evidence collected throughout the Inquiry and are included in Figure 2.

<sup>2</sup> One submission covered three local authorities and a second submission covered one other local authority area – figures are based on a total of 145 submissions.

**Figure 2: Essential foundations for good practice**



This report assesses the progress made by agencies to implement the OCC's recommendations against each of these foundations. Figure 3 provides a summary of what has been done so far.

**Figure 3: Summary of implementation of recommendations**

Agency	Total # of recommendations	Status		
Government	20	10	-	10
Police	4	-	3	1
LSCBs	8	-	7	1
Other	3	1	1	1

A green status is awarded where a recommendation has been fully implemented. Where a recommendation is aimed at a collective of individual agencies (e.g. LSCBs), 100% of agencies must deliver the recommendation

for a green status to be awarded. Where fewer than half the individual agencies have delivered the recommendation a red status has been awarded.

Many agencies have taken steps to implement the recommendations and we are confident that measures to protect children are more robust as a result. However, there remain a number which have not been implemented at all or where progress is unsatisfactory. Where agencies have not delivered on the recommendations there is a very real concern that children are slipping through the net.

See Appendix 1 for the full list of recommendations graded red/amber/green according to performance.

## Spotting the warning signs

The rate at which child victims are being identified varies substantially between areas. Although some variation in the rate of CSE is to be expected, the evidence from our Inquiry was that there are children in every part of England who are being exploited. There are still too many areas in England where the identification of victims of CSE is particularly low. This points to a failure to identify children who are being abused, rather than an absence of CSE in the area.

Data gathered for this report shows that:

- Of 148 LSCBs, 79 (54%) identified a total of 5669 children *at risk of CSE* in 2013. The others did not provide any figures for children at risk of CSE.
- Of 148 LSCBs, 70 (48%) provided data identifying 2092 *known victims* of CSE in 2013. The others did not provide any figures for victims of CSE.

There may be some overlap between individuals counted as being *at risk* and *known* victims, as two LSCBs have stated that they do not make this distinction in their data.

**Figure 4: Number of children identified as being at risk of or victims of CSE in 2013**

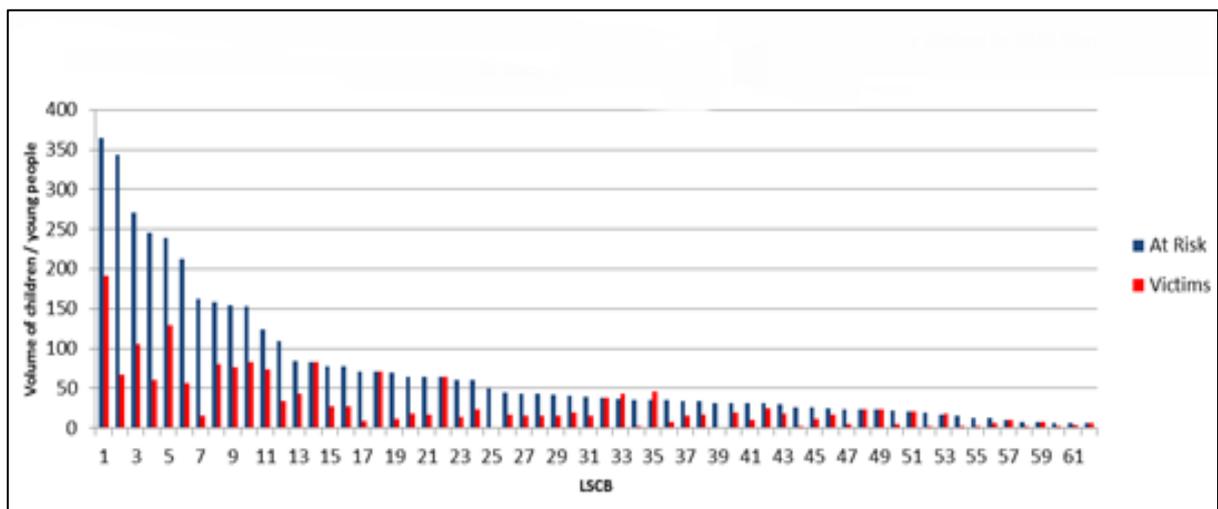


Figure 5 illustrates the number of CSE victims identified for every 10,000 children and young people in a group of nine local authorities considered to be 'statistical neighbours'. These local authorities are similar in a number of socioeconomic and demographic indicators, according to the DfE [local area interactive tool](#), and the figures have been calculated using [census data](#) and the number of identified victims identified in each LSCB self-assessment.

Despite the profile and nature of the local authorities being very similar, the levels of identification of CSE vary significantly, from 66.54 victims to only 1 victim per 10,000 children and young people. Given the socioeconomic and demographic similarities between all local authorities in this group there is no reason to believe that the rates should vary to this extent.

**Figure 5: CSE victims identified for every 10,000 children and young people in a group of nine local authorities**



Our Inquiry found [13 different models of sexual exploitation](#) (see Appendix 2). From the data provided it is clear that, even in the best performing areas, little work is being done on recognising and supporting children who are victims of some types of abuse, particularly exploitation by their peers. Most submissions from the voluntary sector highlighted that they were unaware of any work being undertaken by statutory agencies to identify peer on peer or gang-related sexual exploitation and under-identification of victims remains a concern, particularly where these are physically or learning disabled and/or are from Black, Asian or other ethnic minorities.

There are some encouraging developments. We welcome the fact that the Home Office has provided £1.2 million funding for 13 young people’s advocates to enable direct support to young women who have been victims or are at risk of sexual violence by gangs. In addition the Metropolitan Police Service has developed a ‘problem profile’ to enable local agencies to identify which girls and young women are most vulnerable to gang-related sexual exploitation.

The research conducted for the OCC by the University of Bedfordshire into [sexual exploitation linked to gang involved neighbourhoods](#) described an environment in which rape and sexual violence was endemic, including multiple perpetrator rape. The young women talked about being treated as ‘not human’, about living in fear, about the fact that there was no choice but to

be compliant and about the relentless and inescapable nature of sexual abuse and rape.

Sexual exploitation by children and young people against other children and young people is not confined to gang involved neighbourhoods – it is a serious issue to be addressed on a national level.

### **Good practice case study: MsUnderstood**

The MsUnderstood partnership is a project between the University of Bedfordshire, Imkaan and the Girls against Gangs Project which aims to improve local and national responses to young people's experiences of gender inequality. It is led by Carlene Firmin MBE, who was the Principal Policy Adviser on the Inquiry.

Informed by some of the key messages from the CSEGG inquiry, it has been commissioned by the Home Office to deliver national training workshops on peer-on-peer exploitation and young people's gang-association. It is working with 11 local authorities to develop their response to peer-on-peer abuse, including peer child sexual exploitation.

A number of awareness raising activities have taken place to engage the public with an impact on young people living in gang affected neighbourhoods. This includes use of four films produced by young people from gang affected neighbourhoods. Findings from the CSEGG research are also embedded and will inform recommendations from an ongoing Big

The Inquiry gathered extensive evidence on the signs children show when they are at risk of becoming a victim of sexual exploitation or are already a victim. These signs were compiled into two lists<sup>3</sup> which were sent to every Director of Children's Services, Chief Constable and LSCB chair in England for distribution to their frontline managers and staff (Appendix 3). They were also distributed widely to other organisations working with children and young people including schools and voluntary sector organisations. Leaders were urged to ensure their staff familiarise themselves with the signs in both lists so that children at risk or who are already victims are identified quickly. Dissemination has been as follows:

- 82% of LSCBs report that they have complied already
- 11% plan to do so
- 66% of police forces have sent them to all staff who come into contact with children and young people
- 29% of police forces have 'partially' disseminated the lists.

***There has been a deliberate effort to utilise the OCC's list of warning signs and vulnerabilities as a central and consistent tenet of the awareness raising work in [police force] relating to CSE.***

Police force

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<sup>3</sup> Warning signs that children show when they are at risk of becoming a victim and the warning signs that they show when they are already a victim.

### **Effective practice: Using the warning signs and risk indicators**

The Metropolitan Police Service has developed the following mnemonic to assist all officers to remember the risk and warning signs of CSE. This is available to every frontline officer and contained in the [Pan London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol](#).

**Sexual health and behaviour** – evidence of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and termination; inappropriate sexualised behaviour

**Absent from school or repeatedly running away** – evidence of truancy or periods of being missing from home or care

**Familial abuse and/or problems at home** – familial sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, risk of forced marriage or honour-based violence; domestic violence; substance misuse; parental mental health concerns; parental criminality; experience of homelessness; living in a care home or temporary accommodation

**Emotional and physical condition** – thoughts of or attempted, suicide or self-harming; low self-esteem or self-confidence; problems relating to sexual orientation; learning difficulties; poor mental health; unexplained injuries or changes in physical appearance identify

**Gangs, older age groups and involvement in crime** – involvement in crime; direct involvement with gang members or living in a gang-afflicted community; involvement with older individuals or lacking friends from the same age group; contact with other individuals who are sexually exploited

**Use of technology and sexual bullying** – evidence of ‘sexting’, sexualised communication on-line or problematic use of the internet and social networking sites

**Alcohol and drug misuse** – problematic substance use

**Receipt of unexplained gifts or money** – unexplained finances, including phone credit, clothes and money

**Distrust of authority figures** – resistance to communicating with parents, carers, teachers, social services, health, police and others

### **Effective practice: Gang-related CSE**

In response to the recommendations of the OCC Inquiry and a [report by the Centre for Mental Health](#) the Metropolitan Police Service are working with the Mayor’s Office for Police and Crime (MOPAC), the Home Office and the Safer London Foundation to produce a problem profile for gang associated females. It will enable police and partners to identify victims and ensure that they receive the appropriate help and support. They are currently collating multi-agency data in Southwark to create a problem profile template for use in other parts of London. The Trident Command has also provided training to staff to identify gang associated girls during operations. This has included enhanced use of the police intelligence database to highlight potential vulnerable girls and signpost partner support.

## Everyone on alert

Those who are employed to protect children must be able to identify those at risk or who are already victims and know what to do to protect or rescue them. Children must be listened to, attended to, believed and taken seriously.

LSCBs are responsible for coordinating training on child protection within their area. In the last year, LSCBs have undertaken targeted awareness-raising with young people (73%), professionals (97%), and parents and carers (66%).

Training has generally covered the identification of young people at risk of or being sexually exploited; safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation; and reporting concerns (97%). It has less commonly covered prevention (90%) and how to gather evidence on prevalence and risk (81%).

Approximately three quarters of police forces have commissioned or provided training on CSE. In all cases, training involved identification of young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation and in 89% of cases, training involved how to gather evidence of CSE.

***“The uptake of training can be varied and certain professions would benefit from further training, e.g. Crown Prosecution Service, barristers, teachers, health, etc.”***

Voluntary sector agency

For children to be effectively protected perpetrators must be identified as well as victims. 95% of police forces have scanning processes in place to identify both victims and perpetrators of CSE based on data held in police systems and scanning is undertaken on a daily basis by two thirds of them.

This is an improvement on the situation evidenced during the Inquiry when only 79% of police forces had a scanning process in place but it is a concern that in at least a third of forces, the scanning does not include information collected from partner agencies and therefore provides an incomplete picture.

***“There still remains a belief that group-based CSE is perpetrated only by Asian men. Different areas focus on different things and tend to focus on what they think is happening rather than exploring what could be happening”***

Voluntary sector agency

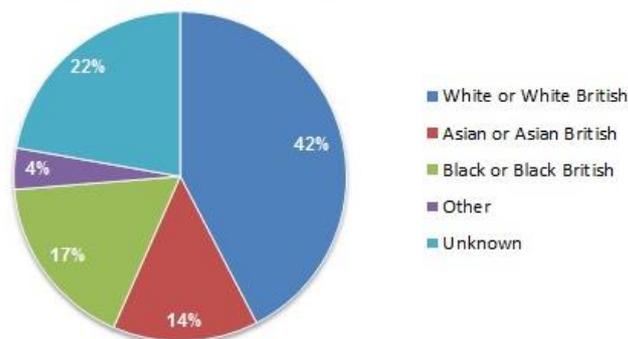
## Ethnicity of perpetrators

Police forces have given the OCC data on perpetrators of CSE collected over the period April 2013 to March 2014, including on the ethnicity of perpetrators. There are a significant proportion of perpetrators for whom ethnicity is either unknown or unrecorded. **35% of forces did not provide any data and the ethnicity of many perpetrators within those which did provide data is often not recorded.** The dataset on which this commentary is based is therefore partial.

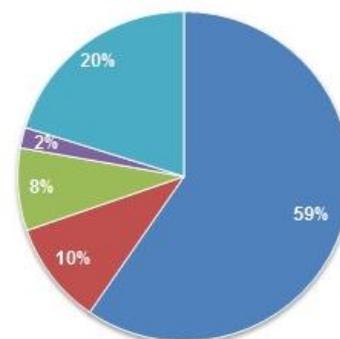
Where the police have recorded more than one perpetrator this is taken to represent group or gang-based CSE. However, it is possible that some perpetrators are recorded more than once due to involvement in more than one incident or that some offences may have been of the 'lone perpetrator' type though two suspects have been recorded against them.

19 police forces reported **1,231 perpetrators of group and gang-based CSE**. 42% of these were White or White British, 14% are Asian or Asian British, 17% are Black or Black British and 22% are of unrecorded ethnicity. The remaining 4% fall into other categories.

**Gang and group based CSE**



**All forms of CSE**



When **perpetrators of all models of CSE** are included in the analysis the picture is slightly different. In total, **25 police forces reported 3,968 perpetrators**. 59% were White or White British, 10% are Asian or Asian British, 8% are Black or Black British, 2% are of another category and 20% are of unrecorded ethnicity.

White or White British is the ethnicity of perpetrators of CSE (including group- and gang-based CSE) most frequently recorded by the police. The next largest ethnic groups are Black or Black British (17% gang and group, 8% all forms of CSE) and Asian or Asian British (14% gang and group, 10% all forms of CSE).

## Focus on the child

In the examples of good practice identified during our Inquiry the most notable feature for professionals and agencies was their total commitment to the child, who remained their primary consideration and focus at all times.

***I have developed my practice within a new service paying particular attention to building enduring relationships and support.***

Voluntary sector agency

The components of good practice were brought together in the See Me Hear Me Framework, a rights-based approach which places the child at the centre of responses to CSE and ensures that all agencies maintain a relentless focus on the child.

The OCC worked closely with young people who had been victims of CSE in the design and development of the framework. Article 12 of the UNCRC sets out children's entitlement to express an opinion on all matters that affect them and to have those views taken seriously and attended to. The strength of the framework lies in the fact that children and young people brought their experiences to bear in its development ensuring it genuinely focused on and addressed the needs and priorities of victims.

Where children are partners in the safeguarding process, rather than a subject of it, positive outcomes are more likely. The OCC recommended that young people should be consulted in the design of local CSE strategies, policies and procedures to ensure that responses are consistent with the particular needs of children in the local area. In particular, the needs of Black, Asian and minority ethnic children and children with disabilities are often not addressed adequately. However, of the LSCBs with a CSE strategy, only 31% involved children and young people in its design. Only one voluntary sector organisation which submitted evidence to the OCC stated that they were aware of the involvement of children in the development of CSE strategies.

***Children and young people are often not involved if at all. When it happens it is often tokenistic.***

Voluntary sector agency

Our Inquiry found that where organisations listened to children and enabled them to participate in strategies and safeguarding processes, children and young people said they felt more engaged with services, better supported and less isolated.

The See Me, Hear Me, Framework has been influential in driving changes to practice so that children and their best interests become the central focus for professionals.

- Seven authorities within the West Midlands police force area have implemented, or commenced implementation of the Framework.

- 68% of LSCBs have fully or partially reviewed their plans and procedures against the Framework.
- 71% of LSCBs have fully or partially reviewed their plans and procedures against the foundations for effective practice.
- 94 LSCBs (65%) have fully or partially reviewed their plans and procedures against both the Framework and the foundations for effective practice.
- 92% (24) of voluntary sector services that submitted evidence stated that they have reviewed their policies and procedures against the key findings and frameworks highlighted by the Inquiry.

### **Effective practice: See Me, Hear Me Framework**

The seven LSCBs of the West Midlands metropolitan area have implemented a regional CSE framework, based on the OCC's See Me, Hear Me Framework, in order to establish a consistent and high quality response to CSE across the West Midlands. By using the Framework, the response to CSE across the West Midlands is child-centred and rights based.

This has been accompanied by a public 'See Me, Hear Me' campaign across the West Midlands, launched in June 2014, and supported by a [website](#) containing various resources for professionals working with children and young people.

It is cited in the [LGA's resource pack for councils](#) that as a result of the standards and pathways created using the See Me, Hear Me Framework, there has been a significant increase in the number of young people identified as at risk of harm from CSE in Solihull, with an increase of 104% of children identified at risk between May 2013 and October 2014. Based on the most [recent census data](#), there are approximately 1.2 million children and young people in the West Midlands, each of whom is now protected from CSE in accordance with the See Me, Hear Me Framework.

## Gaining a child's confidence

In order to gain a child's confidence, it is important that children and young people are equipped with the knowledge to recognise abuse and feel supported to be able to tell someone about it. This is clear not only from the Inquiry, but also our [Recognition, Telling and Help](#) report.

***Children's voices are still not heard as part of the process. Investigation findings often provide an adult perspective and not that of the child.***

Voluntary sector agency

The OCC has identified Relationships and Sex Education as an important means of equipping young people with the knowledge to recognise abuse, understand the issues around sexual consent and healthy relationships, and mitigate the impact of pornography on attitudes and behaviour. Children and young people have stated that Relationship and Sex Education builds their confidence, as well as increasing their awareness of safety issues and available services.

The OCC made a series of recommendations on the way in which schools and education providers can contribute to tackling CSE. We recommended that Sex and Relationships Education (SRE) is renamed Relationships and Sex Education to place the emphasis on the 'relationships' aspect of this subject. Furthermore, the OCC has recommended that Relationship and Sex Education is included in a robust PSHE education programme, taught in every school in England, with content and methods appropriate to the developmental level of the pupils.

Despite this clear recommendation, the OCC remains concerned that PSHE education is not yet part of the statutory curriculum. There is considerable support for making PSHE a statutory subject from a number of expert organisations and academics working in this field, and from teachers, parents and children and young people themselves, with the UK Youth Parliament making 'a curriculum for life' a national campaign priority two years running.

The PSHE Association has led a campaign calling for PSHE to be a statutory subject, gaining the support of over 100 organisations including five royal medical colleges, four teaching unions, two royal societies and expert bodies such as the NSPCC and Barnardo's. The Equality and Human Rights Commission (EHRC) and Public Health England have also made public statements in support of the subject. Furthermore, there are two relevant Bills before Parliament regarding this issue – the Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (Statutory Requirement) Bill 2014–15, and the Sex and Relationships Education (Curriculum) Bill 2014–15. Both Bills will receive their second reading on 27 February 2015.

## Leadership

Evidence gathered by the Inquiry demonstrated that effective and committed leadership where senior officers are in touch with those who use their services as well as with frontline staff is essential if CSE is to be comprehensively tackled. This applies equally at both national and local levels.

At a local level, the leadership role of lead members for children's services, Directors of Children's Services, Chief Constables, Police and Crime Commissioners as well as chairs of LSCBs can be measured by compliance with guidance. The role and responsibilities of LSCBs are outlined in Appendix 5. [Statutory guidance](#) clearly outlines the responsibilities of LSCBs for protecting children from sexual exploitation. The OCC has therefore recommended that LSCBs improve their compliance with guidance.

The Inquiry found that levels of compliance with the key requirements of the statutory guidance were relatively poor. LSCB data which covers the performance of local authority children's services, the police and other statutory agencies, was compared against the key requirements enshrined in guidance, including:

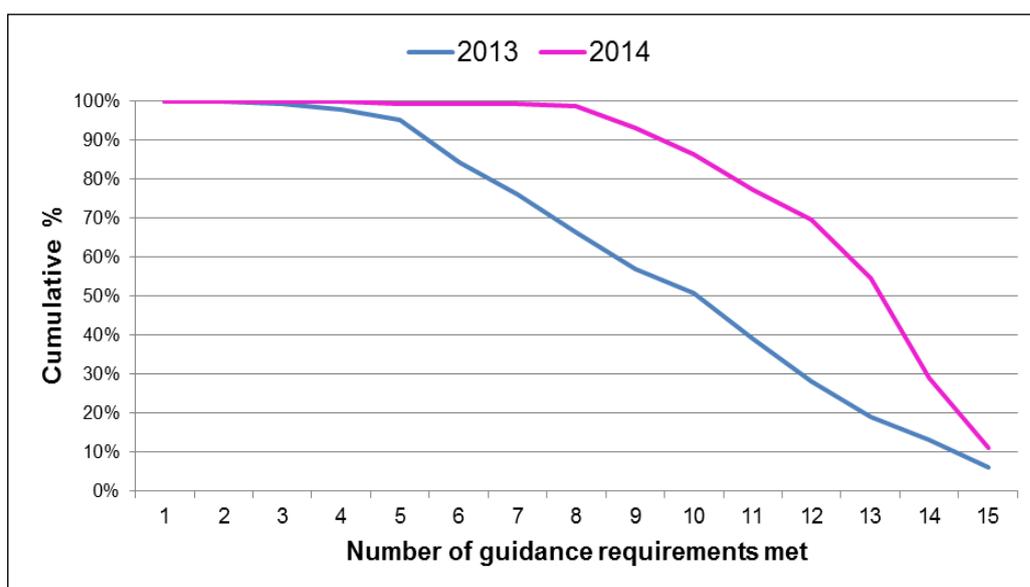
- the establishment of a CSE sub-group
- the delivery of training
- monitoring of prevalence
- the establishment of local procedures
- identification of CSE leads across key local agencies.

In 2013, the Inquiry found that only 6% of LSCBs had met all of the requirements set out in the guidance and only a third met half of them. Since the conclusion of the Inquiry, compliance with the guidance has improved substantially. Research undertaken for this report has found that:

- 99% of LSCBs now meet half of the requirements
- over half of LSCBs now meet 13 out of 15.

However, only 11% of LSCBs meet all of the requirements and further work is clearly necessary to ensure full compliance. This improvement has been driven by the prioritisation of CSE – the overwhelming majority (97%) of LSCBs report that CSE is a strategic priority. In a very small number of cases, the local response to CSE is now considered 'business as usual' rather than a priority.

**Figure 7: Comparison of number of guidance requirements met**



In general LSCBs have made substantial improvements in meeting their responsibilities for safeguarding children from sexual exploitation since the conclusion of the Inquiry. However, the recommendations of the Inquiry were quite clear that LSCBs member agencies must implement in full the statutory guidance on safeguarding children from sexual exploitation. Given that the guidance has been in place since 2009, the OCC remains concerned that only a very small number of LSCBs have been able to achieve full compliance. Although LSCBs work with partners to ensure compliance with the guidance, ultimately, compliance rests with the partners themselves, including children's services. Delivery is the responsibility of the operational agencies and there remain some clear gaps in their performance.

In addition to leadership at a local level, it is vital that government plays a leading role in the national response to CSE. We welcome the leadership and initiative shown by the Home Office. The Home Office has been resolute in its commitment to tackling CSE. However, the Government should provide clarity on the responsibility of respective government departments on all forms of child protection, including the Department for Education (DfE) as the named department responsible for child protection. A lack of clarity contributes to fractured responses.

The DfE is responsible for the child protection guidance, [Working Together to Safeguard Children](#). While this guidance was substantially updated in 2013, the supplementary guidance on CSE, [Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation](#), was omitted from this exercise. The OCC has recommended that the DfE update the supplementary guidance. Although much of the guidance remains valid and useful, knowledge and understanding of CSE has advanced considerably since the guidance was issued in 2009. The OCC remains concerned that the definition of CSE outlined in the guidance is outdated. We have found that the shortcomings in this definition have led agencies in local areas to adopt their own definition,

causing confusion between agencies operating in different areas and undermining attempts to implement a multi-agency approach to CSE. The DfE has now commenced a consultation exercise on revising the guidance.

It is vital that the DfE provides leadership on CSE through strong guidance to children's services, LSCBs and others responsible for the protection of children. The OCC made this recommendation in 2013. The DfE have recently stated that they intend to revise the guidance. We are informed that innovative local projects to tackle CSE will also be funded through the social care Innovation Programme.

#### **Effective practice: Gang-related CSE**

Nottingham Constabulary has mapped gang activity in the local area. Following the OCC's identification of issues relating to CSE in a gang-related context, a report on women and girls affected by gang-related violence and exploitation was commissioned by the PCC and the Nottingham Ending Gang and Youth Violence Board. The findings of this report have led to the development of a risk matrix and risk management strategies for gang affected girls and women, and informed funding initiatives led by the PCC. A multi-agency team, Vanguard Plus, is in place to lead on the implementation of practice guidance on the identification of girls at risk of violence through exposure to gang-related activities.

## Strategic planning

Strategic planning was identified by professionals as being central to effective practice. Given that CSE requires a multi-agency response, responsibility for strategic planning at a local level is shared by all agencies. LSCBs have a role in the strategic coordination of responses to CSE, and partners should produce strategic analyses or problem profiles of CSE to inform the development of local plans and strategies.

97% of police forces have an action plan in place for CSE, and in each case, this is linked to an LSCB strategy. 79% of police forces have produced a strategic analysis or problem profile, and the remaining 21% plan to do so in the near future. However, only half of these are based on multi-agency intelligence, and therefore give only a partial picture. Appendix 4 repeats guidance set out in the final report of our Inquiry which outlines the way in which a multi-agency problem profile should be completed, including prevalence mapping using the methods developed during the first phase of the Inquiry. This method of prevalence mapping will enable the development of a more comprehensive understanding of the scale of CSE in the local area and in particular identify those from marginalised groups (e.g. children who are Black, Asian or from another minority ethnic community). It is also notable that around half of voluntary sector responses to the OCC highlighted that although problem profiles or audits of CSE had been undertaken, these did not consider peer on peer exploitation.

***Data gathering and analysis remain a challenge. The Board intends to be more proactive about mapping and problem profiling but resources and capacity are currently issues we are trying to resolve.***

LSCB

92% of LSCBs have now produced a strategy for tackling CSE – this is a considerable improvement on 2013, when only 57% of LSCBs had one. However, of those LSCBs with a CSE strategy, only 66% are linked with other safeguarding strategies and 61% with the strategies of neighbouring LSCBs. Given that CSE is closely linked with other safeguarding issues, such as gang violence and missing/runaway children, the OCC emphasises that CSE should not be regarded as a standalone issue. Also, the OCC's Inquiry found that many victims of CSE are moved across LSCB areas by perpetrators. Without a close link between the strategies of neighbouring areas, there remains a risk that some victims will slip through the net.

In addition, a failure to coordinate strategies with neighbouring LSCBs can cause significant challenges for the police. Police force areas will, in most cases, cover multiple LSCBs. Although it is absolutely reasonable for LSCBs to expect police forces to participate in the delivery of their CSE strategy, consistency in strategic approach across LSCB areas can reduce the administrative burden on the police force and ensure a consistently strong level of performance.

52% of the Health and Wellbeing Boards which submitted a self-assessment questionnaire to the OCC have considered the availability of services for CSE in their Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA), or a separate Health Needs Assessment (relating to FGM, substance misuse, sexual violence). Of those Health and Wellbeing Boards which have considered CSE, 46% have commissioned services to meet the level of need identified. It is a concern that, based on responses received, only half of Wellbeing Boards have considered CSE in their JSNA, given the particular support and recovery needs of victims.

It should also be noted that having a strategy in place is not an indication of operational effectiveness. Some voluntary sector organisations consulted by the OCC have reported that, in their view, many LSCBs with strong CSE strategies are characterised by poor operational delivery and others without strategies are nonetheless very effective. Many strategies are also relatively new – delivery mechanisms may take some time to become embedded.

***Strategic managers in partner organisations understand the importance of the response to CSE – this needs to be effectively translated to operational managers and staff.***

LSCB

***Many LSCBs with good strategies have poor operational delivery and others who have poor or no strategies are very effective at operational delivery. It also varies geographically.***

Voluntary sector agency

The challenges in translating progress at a strategic level into improved frontline practice have also been noted in several inspections of child protection performance by Her Majesty's Chief Inspector of Constabulary (HMIC). For example, in regard to [Greater Manchester Constabulary](#):

*Inspectors found that progress against the [CSE] delivery plan has been made, but there is still some way to go to ensure that there are consistently high standards of practice in all aspects of child protection across the whole force area.*

In regard to [West Midlands Constabulary](#), HMIC noted that:

*...a strategic group to tackle child sexual exploitation was developing a set of standards to provide a single approach across the police and local authority areas. This, coupled with co-ordinated plans at a strategic level, may improve future practice but was not yet influencing operations or multi-agency approaches.*

Overall, it is vitally important that local authorities, police forces, health services, schools, LSCBs and other relevant agencies not only develop a robust strategy for tackling CSE, including prevention, protection and recovery, but also monitor its delivery and ensure that an understanding of the

issue at a strategic level leads to genuine operational effectiveness.

**Effective practice: Prevalence mapping**

East Sussex police force has undertaken detailed prevalence mapping as a result of the recommendations outlined in the CSEGG Inquiry [interim report](#). In brief, the police collated the indicators set out in the OCC Interim Report through their multi-agency intelligence system. Young people who exhibited three or more indicators were subject to immediate safeguarding activity. 'Hotspots' for CSE were identified, and the relevant intelligence was shared with schools and other agencies to raise awareness and direct activity. Under the direction of the LSCB CSE sub group, a report was produced and the results shared with local partners. A further CSE local prevalence scoping sub group was established specifically for the project.

## Joined up working

The OCC Inquiry found that joined-up working improved identification and enabled all-encompassing child-centred practice. Evidence to the Inquiry conclusively demonstrates that no single agency acting in isolation can adequately respond to child sexual exploitation.

Guidance specifies that LSCBs should appoint a lead professional in key agencies to implement duties in respect of CSE, facilitating joined up working across the multi-agency response. In total, 94% of LSCBs report that lead professionals have now been named. This is excellent progress. Furthermore, 61% of LSCBs have appointed a dedicated CSE coordinator. In guidance, it is envisaged that the coordinator will lead multi-agency efforts to tackle CSE within the LSCB area. However, responses from voluntary sector organisations suggest that CSE coordinators often undertake a more operational role, limiting their capacity for managing delivery of a local CSE strategy.

98% of LSCBs report that a strategic CSE sub group is in place. Sub groups are multi-agency and facilitate joined up working. However, only two of the voluntary sector organisations that submitted evidence to the Inquiry were consulted or contributed to their LSCB's CSE strategy, and only three were represented in specialist sub groups. Given that these organisations provide specialist services for victims of CSE, their attendance is vital. The importance of the voluntary sector was clearly demonstrated in Rotherham where Risky Business had the most comprehensive understanding of CSE in the area. Failure to listen to them and take them seriously as full partners resulted in children being very badly let down.

The Inquiry found that failures by agencies and professionals to share information about children at risk and those known to be victims was a significant contributory factor in poor practice and ineffective outcomes. We were pleased to establish that 81% of LSCBs now report that an information sharing agreement is in place in their area, with a further 11% of LSCBs stating that an information sharing agreement is under development. Many have noted that information sharing is captured in their CSE strategy. An information sharing agreement should exist independently of a strategy, and should cover all forms of child abuse.

The OCC has ascertained from police forces that of 38 police forces in England, 31 have a full information sharing protocol in place with children's services. This is a crucial statutory partnership for safeguarding children from sexual exploitation, and the OCC maintains that all police forces should have an information sharing protocol in place with the relevant local authorities. The number of police forces with information sharing protocols in place with other services varies – 25 police forces have a full protocol in place with Youth Offending Teams, and 20 police forces have an information sharing agreement with sexual health services. Where protocols are in place,

information is generally shared through referrals, Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hubs (MASHs)<sup>4</sup>, child protection conferences, and specific multi-agency CSE meetings.

***...a multi-agency information sharing report has been approved for all agencies to enable information/intelligence to be submitted from partner agencies/voluntary sectors to the police intelligence team to assess/analyse/respond to CSE.***

Police force

While this picture is encouraging, the evidence confirms that information sharing protocols remain relatively patchy and do not always include all relevant partners. Added to this is poor and/or inconsistent compliance with agreed information sharing protocols which means there remains a significant gap between strategic commitments and practice.

The majority of voluntary sector agencies, often in possession of crucial intelligence on the local picture of CSE, stated that information sharing agreements were poor or partial. The consequence is that vulnerable children continue to fall through what should be safety nets with others who are being identified not getting their needs effectively met as professionals without essential information are unable to plan and deliver comprehensive protection and care services.

***Information sharing with some agencies still proves difficult even though there is an information sharing agreement in place.***

LSCB

Over half of police forces report that they have experienced barriers to multi-agency information sharing. During the CSEGG Inquiry, 53% of police forces reported that information sharing was a barrier, so little progress has been made in this regard. A number of police forces have cited health agencies as being particularly problematic in a number of ways – refusing to share information outright and citing patient confidentiality, only sharing information when the child is subject to a section 47 investigation, or not sharing information proactively and only in response to a specific request from the police with the consent of the individual concerned.

In January 2014, the Health Working Group Report on Child Sexual Exploitation considered the balance between maintaining confidentiality and complying with the paramountcy principle of the Children Act 1989, in light of the [Caldicott review of health and information sharing](#). The working group recommended that ‘*staff should be clear that safeguarding considerations override the usual requirements for confidentiality and be confident to act accordingly, following the advice of the safeguarding professional*’. Although work is ongoing to address this recommendation, as outlined in the

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<sup>4</sup> MASHs are multi-agency service models, based on the principles information sharing, joint decision making and coordinated intervention. They vary in composition and scale, with some being fully co-located service delivery centres, and others being virtual information sharing platforms

[government response](#) to the report of the Health Working Group, it is evident that police forces continue to experience some barriers in obtaining information from health agencies.

The Government committed to publishing a ‘myth busting’ guide to information sharing. We are informed that this report is due to be published in the spring of 2015. Given that the OCC made a series of recommendations relating to information sharing and multi-agency working in the final report of the Inquiry in November 2013, it is disappointing that, over 12 months later, this guide has not yet appeared.

***Some local authorities still send child protection referrals by fax. This has been the subject of recent executive level correspondence which has resulted in renewed efforts to resolve the issue in favour of secure email.***

Police force

***We cannot yet extract specific data on CSE from all agencies (because of the existing electronic data systems in place)***

LSCB

In July 2014, the Home Office published [a report on information sharing and MASHs](#). This report highlighted many of the barriers to the establishment of a MASH, and the benefits of sharing information for safeguarding children. In total, 53% of LSCBs report that a MASH is in place, with a further 8% reporting that a MASH is ‘underway’, and 18% reporting that a MASH is ‘planned’. This is a considerable increase on 2013, when only 23% of LSCBs had established a MASH, with 18% and 28% stating that a MASH was ‘underway’ or ‘planned’ respectively.

Police forces have also stated that working with multiple local authorities can pose a problem, as processes for sharing information may vary with each. Similarly, police forces working with multiple LSCBs will be working to multiple CSE strategies, each underpinned by different processes and administered through multiple sub-groups. The urgent necessity for clear and unambiguous national guidance and standards on information sharing remains. It is not acceptable that children should be left unprotected and unsupported because agencies and professionals do not understand their responsibilities regarding information sharing.

#### **Effective practice: Resources for local government**

The Local Government Association (LGA) has published a resource pack for council on ‘Tackling child sexual exploitation’. The resource pack draws very heavily on the findings of the OCC’s Inquiry. The warning signs and risk indicators are reproduced in full, and many of the recommendations made by the OCC for frontline practitioners have been reiterated in full. A section on the ‘myths’ of CSE is particularly useful, tackling head-on many of the harmful misconceptions related to CSE using evidence provided by the OCC and others.

## Pre-emptive action

Early identification and pre-emptive action leads to the breaking-up of networks that exploit children. At a local level, this can involve education programmes for children and young people and sharing information regarding children at risk of CSE.

At a national level, government should ensure that policies and regulations are consistent with expert knowledge on child protection, establishing an operating environment in which practitioners at a local level can safeguard children from sexual exploitation more effectively.

In this regard, the OCC welcomes the amendments to regulations made by the DfE as recommended by the OCC in its accelerated report on the sexual exploitation of children in care. The OCC is confident that these amendments will establish a regulatory environment in which children at risk of CSE can be adequately safeguarded by local agencies. For example, the OCC recommended that children in care who are at risk of CSE should not be placed outside of their local authority area, without a full assessment that such a placement is the most appropriate and will meet the child's needs as identified in their care plan. This amendment was made to the Care Planning, Placement and Case Review (England) Regulations 2010. Regulations alone cannot mitigate risk, and it is important that all agencies act in compliance with them.

***Placement panels with care homes established for children from other local authority areas – this was developed by CSE co-ordinator and has some impact on advising prior to arrival whether child is suitable for that facility or not at multi-agency meeting***

Police force

***We have identified that a number of local authorities are choosing to place children at risk of CSE with private providers (residential and fostering) within the boundaries of our authority. We are still not being given sufficient information upon placement of these children in order to formulate a partnership to safeguard children***

LSCB

However, some of the OCC's recommended amendments to regulations have not been made. Further detail is provided in Appendix 1.

### **Effective practice: Integrated services**

Peterborough City Council has commissioned a single, integrated service to support victims of domestic abuse and sexual violence. The service offers both adult and child orientated support services for children and adults affected by domestic abuse and/or sexual violence.

The rationale behind integrating domestic abuse and sexual violence support services in part comes from the evidence outlined in the OCC's Inquiry, including the complex inter-dynamics of domestic abuse and sexual violence and the way in which young people can be both victims and perpetrators of sexual exploitation.

These issues were investigated at a local level through a needs assessment. The adult and children/young people services were then structured so that young people aged 16-18 could attend either, depending on their needs.

The Youth Offending Service has also developed a programme of interventions to work with young perpetrators of domestic and relationship abuse. The effectiveness of these interventions is monitored through the Safer Peterborough Partnership's performance framework on a bi-monthly basis, and in more depth at the Domestic Abuse Strategic Board. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment links to this partnership but outcomes are monitored by the Safer Peterborough Partnership, which in turn is accountable to the Health and Wellbeing Board.

### **Effective practice: The Kingfisher Team, Oxfordshire**

The Kingfisher Team in Oxfordshire has established a specialist BME child sexual exploitation post. The post holder has:

- created a toolkit that supports South Asian mothers so that they feel empowered to protect their children from sexual exploitation and abuse
- developed a programme to address equality and gender based violence by young men with the aim of influencing and changing attitudes. A boys group will be established to highlight the issues of identity, misogynistic attitudes towards girls/women and challenge fixed mind-sets.
- this group will be made up of Asian, White and Eastern European boys and will enable the Kingfisher Team to challenge myths, explore identity, childhood scripts, legislation and raise self-esteem and future aspirations. It will also address the barriers to achieving aspirations.

The priorities for the next phase of development are:

- design of a male perpetrator programme
- work with BME males in relation to barriers to parenting.

The Kingfisher Team will be delivering a targeted group for girls (focusing mainly on South Asian girls) enabling them to explore issues of safeguarding, CSE, overprotection, gender based issues, dual identity, virtual relations, FGM, 'honour' based violence, domestic abuse and other related matters.

## Scrutiny and oversight

In order to maintain good performance, effective and robust scrutiny and oversight are essential. However, only 64% of LSCBs report periodic audits of multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in their area, with specific regard to CSE. Where auditing has taken place, a number of tools have been used to self-assess performance, including statutory guidance on safeguarding children from CSE (56%), the DfE CSE Step by Step guide (46%) and the CSE self-monitoring tool offered by the University of Bedfordshire (43%).

***In relation to the findings of the CSEGG, the independent audit was commissioned using the principles and continues to develop services to meet these principles. The local authority has invested additional funding for the supervision of staff within our service to provide regular external supervision and reflection of practice.***

Voluntary sector agency

### **Effective practice: inspections**

A Joint Inspection by HM Inspectorate of Probation, the Care and Social Services Inspectorate Wales, the Care Quality Commission, HM Inspectorate of Constabulary, HM Inspectorate of Prisons, and Ofsted entitled [Girls in the Criminal Justice System](#) was published in December 2014. This report noted that CSE was a major risk to girls in the criminal justice system, often through involvement in gangs or with groups of older men. The inspection picked up a number of issues related to CSE and the work undertaken by YOTs, including insufficient consideration of risks and under-developed relationships with partners within multi-agency responses to CSE. The report explicitly notes that the OCC's CSEGG Inquiry was influential in the design of the inspection.

## OCC's commitments to action

At the conclusion of the Inquiry, the OCC made a number of commitments in order to improve responses and services to children who were at risk of becoming, or were already victims of sexual exploitation. Above all, the OCC pledged to 'continue to provide leadership, challenge, expertise and acknowledgement of effective practice so that momentum is not lost'. This report is part of our determination to honour that pledge, holding to account all those at both national and local level who are responsible for the protection of children.

### ***Establish a pilot to test out the efficacy of See Me, Hear Me and report on the findings***

The OCC has now established a project for the implementation and evaluation of the See Me, Hear Me Framework. This project is being led by the University of Sussex, and involves Brighton and Hove, Oxfordshire and Sandwell. Local authorities, the police, LSCBs and other relevant agencies in those areas are now working together to test out the framework and achieve better protection for children at risk of or suffering sexual exploitation. This project will issue its final report in late 2016, though the learning will be shared at appropriate junctures throughout the project.

### ***Produce a series of briefing papers on the evidence that we have not yet published***

We decided to prioritise this follow up report rather than produce briefing papers as we considered this would have greater impact on driving improvements. Any relevant unpublished evidence has been shared with affected agencies in face to face briefings, working groups and advisory bodies.

### ***Communicating our key messages***

The OCC has spread the key messages from its Inquiry by participating in working groups, advisory bodies, etc, and giving presentations to professionals at over 50 conferences.

The OCC sits on numerous working groups, committees, advisory bodies and steering groups on projects related to CSE.

- Home Office Sexual Violence Against Children stakeholders' group
- Working groups on children and care chaired by the Department for Education
- Crown Prosecution Service / ACPO National Child Sexual Abuse Review Panel
- HMIC Child Protection Reference Group

- National Working Group on CSE Policy Forum
- In 2013, chairing the Funders' Experts Alliance; advising Comic Relief, the Big Lottery Fund and other major funders on issues regarding child sexual exploitation
- NSPCC Sexually Harmful Behaviour Strategic Group
- National Strategic Coordinating Group, Operation Hydrant (police investigations into historic child sexual abuse)

In addition, we have reported to the following Select Committees.

- Education Select Committee
- Joint Committee on Human Rights
- Home Affairs Select Committee
- Justice Select Committee

We have also given presentations outlining our Inquiry findings to a range of professional audiences, including strategic managers, policy makers and frontline professionals, at numerous conferences.

- Young Minds conference: Young People in the Internet Wilderness: A Psychological Time-Bomb November 2012
- Women of the World, Southbank, March 2013
- The UK Association of Women Judges, AGM, May 2013
- Local Government Association, Raising awareness of child sexual exploitation in local communities, November 2013
- Scottish Association for the Study of Offending, March 2014
- 4Children, Safeguarding the Victims of Sexual Victimization and Gang-related Violence conference, March 2014
- Association for Child and Adolescent Mental Health, Emanuel Miller Lecture and National Conference, March 2014
- Public Policy Exchange, Preventing gang-related CSE, April 2014
- Home Office Ending Gang Violence conference, June 2014
- Community Care Live, November 2014
- The Lord Scarman Lecture, Leicester University, November 2014

***Launch a statutory inquiry into the prevalence of child sexual abuse that takes place in intrafamilial settings or those that are within the family context***

The CSEGG Inquiry identified that many victims of CSE had previously been sexually abused within the family environment and that this abuse had not been recognised and acted. The OCC launched our Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment (CSAFE) in July 2014 which will also examine early and forced child marriage. In May 2014 we published a [Rapid Evidence Assessment](#) of the international literature and research on child sexual abuse linked to the family, undertaken for the OCC by the University of Middlesex. The inquiry focuses on prevalence in year one and we will publish these findings in Autumn 2015.

## Conclusions and recommendations

At both a national and local level, many agencies responsible for child protection have woken up to the scale of CSE. Many agencies have taken steps towards the full implementation of our recommendations and we are confident that measures to protect children from sexual exploitation are much more robust as a result. However, there remain a number of recommendations which have not been implemented at all, or where progress is unsatisfactory.

Too many children at risk of sexual exploitation, or who are victims of CSE, are still not being identified. There are many parts of England where the identification of victims of CSE is particularly low, and this does not fit with our evidence that some children are victims of CSE in every part of England. In response to the questionnaire issued for gathering data for this report, 70 LSCBs (48% of the total number of LSCBs in England) identified 2,092 known victims of CSE in 2013. This does not represent a significant increase on the number of victims identified as part of the Inquiry in 2012.

Identification remains particularly weak with regard to the following groups of vulnerable children:

- Black, Asian and minority ethnic children including those of Gypsy, Roma or traveller origin
- disabled children
- child victims of peer-on-peer sexual violence and sexual exploitation.

The continued under-identification of victims is linked to persistent failures by agencies and individual professionals to share information and work collaboratively in the best interests of children. While there is an improvement in the number of agencies with agreed information sharing protocols, turning good intentions into effective action remains difficult. Over half of police forces report that they have experienced barriers to multi-agency information sharing.

There is no doubt that myths and confusion about the legal requirements regarding information sharing are acting as a barrier to effective practice. These failures are leading to children falling through what should be a comprehensive multi-agency safety net. The Government committed to publishing a myth-busting guide to information sharing. It is regrettable that this has not been done.

We remain concerned that our recommendation that Relationship and Sex Education be taught as part of a robust PSHE programme, and that PSHE be a statutory component of the curriculum, has not been adopted by the Government. We reiterate our recommendation that Relationships and Sex Education be mandated in all schools in England with the emphasis being on

building empathy, respect and understanding of what constitutes a safe and healthy relationship.

Only 31% of LSCBs have involved children and young people in the design of CSE strategies and the participation of children has been described as 'tokenistic' by some voluntary sector agencies. This is contrary to Article 12 of the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child, which states that children have a right to express their views on matters which affect them. The OCC maintains that there is much to be gained from involving children and young people in the design of local responses, particularly victims and survivors of CSE. Indeed, survivors of all forms of child abuse, including adults and children, have a very clear role to play in the design and delivery of protective measures.

Nonetheless, increased awareness of CSE has led to considerable progress at a strategic level among LSCBs and police forces. Evidence provided to the OCC clearly demonstrates that LSCBs have made a concerted effort to implement the guidance, establish CSE strategies, train staff, and audit performance against the principles of good practice identified by the OCC. Similarly, ACPO has established a robust national CSE strategy, and police forces have resourced dedicated coordinators to ensure its delivery. However, the effectiveness of strategies and policies should be measured by the outcomes they achieve for children who have been sexually exploited. Many of these strategic initiatives are relatively new. Consequently, there has been no appreciable increase in the number of victims of CSE identified by local agencies, and as such, improvements at a strategic level have not yet resulted sufficiently in improved operational effectiveness.

Throughout the Inquiry, the OCC observed that victims of CSE had frequently been abused in the family environment, prior to being sexually exploited. Consequently, in July 2014, the OCC launched a new two year Inquiry into Child Sexual Abuse in the Family Environment (CSAFE). This Inquiry is in its early stages, with an interim report scheduled for publication in September 2015. The OCC emphasises that agencies responsible for safeguarding children must be able to hold all forms of abuse in mind – a coherent, national approach to child protection is necessary to ensure that all children are adequately protected from all forms of abuse, including CSE and child sexual abuse. The learning from work on CSE should inform the strategic and operational approaches to all forms of abuse and enable professionals to understand the links.

## **Recommendations**

We do not make any new recommendations in this report. We simply reiterate that all of our recommendations should be implemented in full, as part of a national approach to child protection and safeguarding, in order to effectively protect children from sexual exploitation.

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