



Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation

A joint Communications Strategy

2017 - 19

APPROVALS

Northamptonshire

- Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board (NSCB)
- Force Executive Group (FEG)
- NSCB Exploitation and Harm sub-group

Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland

- Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)
- CSE Executive Group

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Introduction and background

More than any other factor, the Alexis Jay report into the sexual abuse of children in Rotherham, published in August 2014, proved to be the catalyst to catapult Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) onto the national agenda and firmly into the public psyche.

The following year, the Government announced that tackling CSE must be treated as a strategic priority by all police forces.

In its report entitled ***Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation***, the Government said:

“To help tackle offenders we have given child sexual abuse the status of a national threat in the Strategic Policing Requirement so that this is prioritised by every police force. Tackling child sexual exploitation must be a shared effort. Government can lead the national response. Local authorities, police, children’s and health services have a statutory duty to work together to identify and stamp it out in their area.”

Published in February this year, the Government’s ***CSE Progress Report*** identified that there had been a 24% increase in the recording of contact child sexual abuse offences by police forces, and the report highlighted successes in tackling the culture of denial.

Other improvements cited by the progress report included a 14% increase in prosecutions, and a 19% increase in convictions for child abuse-related offences in the year to December 2015, compared with the previous year.

In Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR), and in Northamptonshire, combating CSE had been recognised as a priority for all the partnership agencies some time before the Jay report was published and the Government identified the issue as a national threat.

But the last two years has seen an uplift in the work undertaken to combat CSE, supported by innovative partnership-wide communications activity.

In **Northamptonshire**, a police-led multi-agency campaign titled ***‘Say Something if you See Something’*** was promoted to 3.8 million people via social media and 3.2 million people via billboard and advertising, and referrals into the RISE (Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation) rose by 50% as a result. A second phase of the campaign followed, targeting young people. This relied heavily on digital media, and reached 405,787 young people via DAX (the online music exchange).

Awareness-raising and training materials have also been produced and circulated to those engaged in the night time economy across the county, including bespoke literature for the licensed trade, taxis and hotels.

In **Leicestershire**, the CEASE (Commitment to Eradicate Abuse and Sexual Exploitation) pledge was launched in February 2016, calling for the public’s support to help raise awareness of CSE and online abuse by signing a pledge. More than 34,000 local people have already backed this major campaign.

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A short film entitled ***Kayleigh's Love Story*** (KLS) was created by the force following the tragic rape and murder of the Leicestershire teenager Kayleigh Haywood, in order to warn children of the dangers of online grooming. The film has been shown to 55,000 LLR schoolchildren aged 11 and above and, since being posted online on January this year, ***KLS*** has been viewed an estimated 35 million times worldwide and has won a string of industry awards. Most importantly, it has led to more than 50 disclosures from children in LLR as well as from residents in countries around the world, including Australia.

Further innovative work is being undertaken in LLR including the appointment of a psychologist who works within the Multi-agency CSE team in the Safeguarding Hub, profiling victims and offenders in order to provide bespoke care for victims while supporting police to ensure the best chance of a successful prosecution. Additionally, a Faith and Communities CSE Champion Service provider has recently been appointed to work with minority ethnic communities, organisations and individuals to address a range of issues including CSE.

Both Police Forces have made improvements in the way CSE is tackled operationally. Both have introduced pioneering work across their services, demonstrating their commitment to its prevention.

To help enhance the communications work in support of combating CSE, an agreement was reached earlier this year by Leicestershire and Northamptonshire Police, with the support of both PCCs and Child Safeguarding Boards, to pool resources and commit to a joint, multi-agency communications strategy for a two-year period, to benefit from economies of scale and increased profile. This decision was reached following the appointment of a dedicated CSE Communications Officer on a two-year contract, appointed to support the various work streams in both force areas to deliver partnership communications activity aimed at greater awareness of CSE and the work taking place to combat it.

This paper sets out the shared strategic communications aims for both Forces and the partnership agencies. Adoption of this as a strategic framework will enable the newly-appointed communications officer, and all partnership communications teams in the two Police Force areas, to build upon the communications activity already delivered to design and deliver further, evidence-based and targeted activity to further raise awareness of the signs of vulnerability, encourage reporting and help bring offenders to justice.

What is CSE?

For the purpose of clarity across partner agencies and the public, both Police Forces have adopted the 2017 national agreed definition of Child Sexual Exploitation:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the

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perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation.

Issue and threat – The national picture

CSE can have a serious long-term impact on every aspect of a victim's life, health and education.

A number of high-profile cases of CSE – in Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxford and most recently in Newcastle - have received significant national media attention, leading to a series of inquiries, reports and research into perceived failings in local and national systems and procedures, seeking to identify how the abuse could have been prevented, and how victims could be better supported in future.

A recent NSPCC prevalence study indicated that roughly 5% of 11–17 year old children (1 in 20) experience contact abuse – the equivalent of around 50 children in each state-funded secondary school. It is believed, however, that there is a great deal of abuse which goes un-reported. Estimates vary, but evidence tends to suggest that only 1 in 10 (10%) of all survivors of childhood sexual assault by rape or penetration (including attempts) told someone in an official position about the abuse at the time, and only 7% report it to the police.

Nationally, victims of CSE are mainly female (a 4:1 ratio with males), but boys and young men are affected too, with an estimated 33% of all victims believed to be male (Barnado's data).

Statutory agencies are increasingly better informed about the risks of online grooming. The internet and wider information and communications technology are now firmly embedded within the everyday lives of UK children. Online activity features prominently in children's entertainment, education and social lives. As a result, UK children are now more accessible to offenders online, with 91% of children living households with internet access.

The numbers of hours 12 to 15-year-olds spend online each week rose from 14.9 hours in 2011 to 17.1 hours in 2012, and by 2016 it had increased to 21 hours. British children are online more than almost any other developed nation, according to a study based on the Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development's Programme for International Student Assessment (Pisa) tests, which surveyed 540,000 pupils aged 15 from around the world.

Our communications activity, therefore, must reflect this national picture and be responsive to new apps, social media platforms and the threat posed by online gaming.

Local Context

Northamptonshire

Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board is committed to tackling the issue of CSE and to ensuring evidence and information is used to understand what is happening locally, to develop a strategic response, to support victims and to facilitate disruption activity and prosecutions.

In 2016, a local problem profile was completed to help better understand the issue of CSE in Northamptonshire. It found that:

- There were 170 victims of CSE crimes recorded by Northamptonshire Police between 01/04/2015 and 31/03/2016
- During 2015/16, 456 children and young people were recorded by Children's Social Care at Initial Contact stage with a presenting issue of CSE, a total of 512 times; and
- During 2015/16, a total of 534 Initial Assessments were completed by Children's Social Care that indicated a risk or known concerns around CSE or Missing for a total of 497 children being assessed.

Victim profile

- 91% of victims were female, 9% were male
- 53% were aged between 13 – 15, 33% 10 – 12, 10% 16 -17 and 5% 0-9

Offender profile

- 8% female, 92% male
- 44% aged 30 plus, 21% 22 -29, 21% 18-21
- 92% white European, 8% unknown

The under-reporting by boys and young men continues to be an issue for CSE services across the county and the following recommendations were published in the CSE August 2016 Partnership Assessment:

- Conduct a publicity campaign to increase the awareness of CSE among boys and young men for both the general public and professionals working with U18s
- The significant consequences of committing CSE offences need to be publicised in order that potential offenders realise the implications these offences will have.

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- Organised crime and gangs where CSE is a feature is now an emerging threat in Northamptonshire.

LLR

In LLR, between April 2015 to March 2016 there were 1,233 CSE victims recorded in 1,020 crime and non-crime CSE related reports aged between 0 and 82. Where recorded, 922 (75%) were female and 264 (21%) were male.

Data relating solely to child victims shows 965 children identified at risk of CSE (this includes repeats; there are 647 individual victims) within 858 reports:

- 776 are female victims (490 individuals – 76%)
- 189 are male victims (157 individuals – 24%)

Over 50% of all victims of CSE-related crime are females aged between 13 and 17. Male victims of the same age account for just 12% of victims, suggesting under-reporting.

15-year-old victims are currently the most prevalent in the data (16% of victims).

*The above data was recorded by Leicestershire Police.

Strategic communications aims

Across both force areas, police and partners are committed to tackling CSE through three strands of work - **Prevent, Protect** and **Pursue**:

- Preventing CSE from happening
- Protecting those who may be at risk
- Pursuing those who may be offending against children

Accordingly, communications activity will be delivered and developed to support these three strategic aims, and measured (see below) accordingly.

Both force areas have much in common in terms of the CSE profile. Accordingly, much of the planned communications activity that can be developed to support this strategy will be appropriate to both police forces areas and can be pooled. That said, there are specific issues that relate only to certain geographic or demographics within the two areas, and accordingly bespoke activity will also be developed, drawing on up-to-date data analysis and recommendations.

i) Target Audience

Geographic

Communications activity will be targeted and responsive to hot-spot areas, but will be adapted to areas of under-reporting too.

Among other, generic issues which are common to both police force areas, tactical activity will also:

- focus on raising awareness of CSE among boys as recommended in each county's partnership assessment
- focus in Northamptonshire on raising awareness of organised crime and gangs where CSE is a feature

External

- General public
- Young people
- Boys
- Parents and Carers
- Teachers and others involved in the wider education sector
- Health representatives
- Perpetrators
- The night time economy
- Taxi firms
- Hotelliers
- The on and off-license trade
- Park wardens
- GP surgeries
- Chemists
- STD clinics
- Youth clubs
- Community and voluntary groups
- Street pastors

Internal

- All frontline workers
- Directors of service and equivalents across the partnerships

Stakeholders

- Local councillors
- Mayors
- Probation service staff

- HMIC
- Home Office
- Charities
- Children's Commissioners
- CPS staff and Magistrates
- MPs

ii) Communications channels

It is proposed that, inter alia, the following communications channels will be used to deliver the tactical communications products to be developed in support of this strategy:

External

- Websites – police and partner agencies
- Social media – Facebook, Twitter, Snapchat, Instagram
- DAX (Digital Audio Exchange)
- YouTube
- Print and digital media, television and radio
- Film

Internal

- Force websites and social media channels
- Safeguarding board websites
- Council websites and social media channels
- Conferences

iii) Method

Tactical plans

Bespoke communications plans are being developed, one for LLR and one for Northamptonshire. These will set out in detail what communications will be delivered in the coming 22 months. While there are significant areas of overlap and commonality, these plans will also set out communications activity which is bespoke.

For both forces, an innovative, high-profile campaign is planned to be launched in February 2018 to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation among boys, with a focus on the threat posed by online gaming.

Communications activity will include training for all professionals across the board to ensure they understand early warning signs/ CSE indicators.

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It will also include quality-assured information and training packs for those engaged in the night time economy, hotels and taxis firms, and widened to include those services not traditionally associated with safeguarding (see 'audience' above).

A key feature of the planned communications activity will be proactive media engagement, communicating news of arrests and court outcomes, ensuring a strong message is given to the public that police and partners are taking positive action to bring offenders to justice and safeguard children – and a warning to potential offenders.

The underlying message in all communications will be that Safeguarding children and young people is everyone's business.

It is imperative that the planned activity engages all target audiences including parents, carers, children and young people to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation, internet safety, risk-taking behaviours, how to ask for help and how to keep safe.

A second-phase campaign is being planned which will be aimed at perpetrators, delivering a strong deterrent message while directing them to where help and support can be obtained.

iv) Evaluation and monitoring

The effectiveness of this communications strategy will be measured by:

- General percentage increase in referrals, particularly in relation to boys
- Social media engagement
- Media coverage
- Anecdotal evidence

Governance and Accountability

This communications strategy will be driven and delivered on a daily basis by the CSE communications officer for LLR and Northamptonshire, Claire Tompkins, under the day to day supervision of Matt Tapp, Director of Communications and Engagement, Leicestershire Police.

They will formally report into the various governance bodies (see **approvals** list above), providing verbal and written updates on progress.

Ends.../