

Joint Child Sexual Exploitation High Level Case Concern Agreement

1.0 Background

1.1 Young people who are victims or at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) are often living in very complex personal situations, that may include problematic use of alcohol or substances, disrupted family relationships and potential homelessness. The multi-faceted difficulties they face make them vulnerable to becoming or remaining a victim of CSE. The same difficulties challenge professionals making efforts to support and protect the young person and their family. Decisions associated with their care and protection is further compounded by the challenges around disruption and prosecution of alleged perpetrators.

1.2 Experience in Cumbria over the last 12-18 months has demonstrated that there are times when agreement regarding how best to protect the young person cannot be reached. This is particularly so in regard to removal from home or change of placement and can prove extremely challenging. Different professionals involved in the management of the individual CSE matter may have a range of expectations and professional views about how best to protect a young person. The voice and behaviour of the young person may make decisions more challenging. Experience shows that victims of CSE not only struggle at times to recognise their status as a victim, but also may struggle to seek or accept the support and protection offered by professionals such as Social Workers and the Police.

1.3 The primary areas of potential conflict in relation to such concerns stem in the main, (although are not exclusive to) from the decisions about care and protection provided through Social Work services, particularly accommodation, and those from the Police, particularly disruption. The Police will generally have the most detailed intelligence surrounding the victim's community and perpetrator risks and are responsible for disrupting offenders where possible to avoid unnecessary removal of young people from their home.

1.4 Whilst all perspectives are valid and bring in their own challenges, if these are not congruent, difficult decisions need to be made, in a timely manner to ensure that the young person's needs and risks are fully taken account of, and they are protected as best as they can be.

2.0 Case Resolution

2.1 When such occasions arise and professional perspectives remain in conflict, there is a potential for professional focus and working relationships to deteriorate. Whilst the LSCB [Escalation Procedure](#) needs to be followed, this CSE agreement puts in place an agreed timescale to ensure such cases can be resolved within a total maximum of 10 working days:

- Stage 1 : Level 1 & 2 must be concluded within 3 working days

- Stage 1: Level 3 a request to progress a case to a CSE level 3 Panel can be made by any organisation working with the young person. The Level 3 Panel will be chaired by the CSE Strategic Group Chair and held within 2 working days of the request. The Level 3 Panel will consist of: Senior Manager Children's Services (CSE lead), and DCI from Police PPU in the police. (The Panel will read all CSE plans and other case recordings to ensure that all efforts have been made to adequately address the vulnerability factors in the young persons life and community efforts to disrupt offenders. After discussion an agree joint approach will be communicated to all involved and an expectation that this is then adhered to with immediate effect.

On the rare occasions that agreement cannot be reached at Stage 1, the case will be progressed in line with the LSCBs Resolution procedure, but with the following timescales:

- Stage 2 will be concluded within 2 working days of Stage 1 completion
- Stage 3 to be concluded within 3 days of Stage 2 completion

3.0 ***Review and Monitoring***

3.1 Cases as described in this agreement are infrequent. However when they do occur, it is imperative that decision making is swift and considered by all key parties. This agreement does not replace the LSCB's resolution procedure, but compliments it. In order to ensure it is applied consistently and is leading to timely, safe decisions about young people, any case progressed under this agreement will be referred for review and update to the next available CSE Strategic Group.

3.2 A record of all such cases will be maintained and reviewed twice yearly to consider any amendments required to this agreement.