

Kent and Medway

Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation

Procedures

These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Kent and Medway
Safeguarding Sexually Active Children Procedures.

Version 8

July 2017

File Location	\\invicta.cantium.net\kccroot\Universal\FSC KSCB\Policy and Procedures\Procedures\Child Sexual Exploitation
Document Author	Kent Safeguarding Children Board
Document Owner	<p>Kent Safeguarding Children Board Sessions House County Road Maidstone ME14 1XQ Email: kscb@kent.gov.uk</p> <p>Medway Safeguarding Children Board Gun Wharf Dock Road Chatham ME4 4TR Email: mcsb@medway.gov.uk</p>
Summary of Purpose	This Guidance is a means of supporting the professionals in all the agencies and the community in Kent and Medway, to identify and respond appropriately to safeguard children who are or are at risk of Sexual Exploitation.
Review Date	This document will be reviewed in July 2019.
Accessibility	This document can be made available in large print, or in electronic format. There are no copies currently available in other languages.
Equalities Impact Assessment	During the preparation of this policy and when considering the roles and responsibilities of all agencies, organisations and staff involved, care has been taken to promote fairness, equality and diversity in the services delivered regardless of disability, ethnic origin, race, gender, age, religious belief or sexual orientation. These issues have been addresses in the policy by the application of an impact assessment checklist.

Contents

1.	Introduction	4
1.1	Definition.....	4
1.2	Summary of Profile.....	4
1.3	These Procedures	5
2.	Underpinning Principles for Multi-Agency Responses	5
3.	Risk-Vulnerability Factors, Levels, Indicators and Responses	7
3.1	Vulnerability Factors to Sexual Exploitation.....	7
3.2	Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework.....	7
3.3	Initial Professional Response.....	8
4.	Intervention	9
4.1	Early Multi-Agency Intervention.....	9
4.2	Low Risk / Vulnerability: Multi-Agency Network Meeting/Discussion and Division Plans.....	10
4.3	Substantiated Risk/Medium and High Risk: Multi-Agency Planning.....	11
5.	Role of the Local Authority Children’s Services	12
5.1	All Children.....	12
5.2	Children in Care of Local Authorities.....	13
5.3	Involvement of Groups of Children in Care.....	16
5.4	Leaving Care/Aftercare.....	16
6.	Role of the Police	17
7.	Role of Leisure and Community Services	18
8.	Role of Education Services	18
8.1	Prevention.....	18
8.2	Recognition and Referral.....	19
9.	Role of Health Services	20
10.	Role of Voluntary and Community Groups/Agencies	21
10.1	Support Services.....	21
10.2	Recognition and Referral.....	22
	Appendix 1: Definitions of Children in Care	23

1. Introduction

1.1 Definition

- 1.1.1 The sexual exploitation of children is child sexual abuse. The sexual exploitation of children defines a broader context of abuse than formal 'prostitution'; the full spectrum of sexually exploitative situations includes children and young people exchanging sex for accommodation, food, gifts, drugs and/or safety.

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 victims needs or wants, and/or (b) for financial advantage or increased status of the 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 occur through the use of technology. (Child Sexual Exploitation – Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from Child Sexual Exploitation - DfE February 2017)

1.2 Summary of Profile

- 1.2.1 Sexually exploited children are rarely visible on the streets, and it is therefore difficult to gather meaningful data. Moreover, street based sexual exploitation of children is only a small part of the bigger picture of sexual exploitation of children by adults and other children and young people.
- 1.2.2 A growing number of the young people are being sexually exploited by adults and other young people they meet via the Internet. This is referred to as 'online or non-contact abuse', and the access it affords to groom children for abuse has contributed to the invisibility of the sexual exploitation of children.
- 1.2.3 The age range of children who are victimised through sexual exploitation has lowered in recent years from the 16-18 age group, to children under 16 years of age. The evidence suggests that children across all cultures, and including a significant proportion of children in the care of Local Authorities, can be at risk of sexual exploitation. Vulnerability and low self-esteem are the most common factors amongst children who are at risk of being sexually exploited.

- 1.2.4 In some cases, children may be drawn into sexual exploitation by peers who are already involved. Girls in particular are frequently coerced into sexual exploitation by an older young person or man who poses as, and who they view as, their boyfriend. The girl becomes physically and emotionally dependent upon the 'boyfriend', and this may be reinforced by the use of alcohol and drugs. Over time, the girl's access to her friends and family becomes curtailed and she becomes alienated from agencies which may be able to identify and interrupt the abuse.
- 1.2.5 There is some evidence of the involvement of gangs in sexual exploitation in Kent and Medway. Sexual exploitation is used in gangs to exert power and control over members. It can be part of the initiation of young people, male and female, into the gang. Young people may exchange sexual activity for status or protection. Gangs may entrap rival gang members by exploiting girls and young women or inflict sexual assault as a weapon in conflict.

1.3 These Procedures

- 1.3.1 These procedures should be read in conjunction with the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Sexually Active Children Procedures, and particular note should be taken to guidance about assessing whether a relationship presents a risk of harm to a child.
- 1.3.2 The Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Abuse through Sexual Exploitation Procedures provides guidance on identifying concerns that a child may have been, or is currently being exploited.
- 1.3.3 Professionals should consult the Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures for concerns, decisions and actions related to, but not covered, in the document.

2. Underpinning Principles for Multi-Agency Responses

- 2.1 The principles underpinning multi-agency responses to the sexual exploitation of children include that:
- Sexual exploitation incorporates sexual, physical and emotional abuse, as well as, in some cases, neglect.
 - Children do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation. Rather, they do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation.

- The Sexual Offences Act 2003 creates a number of offences to protect children under 18 and acknowledges the vulnerability of younger children by removing their ability to consent when under 16; there are further measures to protect children under 13.
- Sexually exploited children should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders. Children under 16 will always be dealt with as actual or potential victims.
- With increasing use of online media and technology (such as mobile phones, games consoles, social networking sites, instant messaging and webcams etc.) children, young people, and adults need to be aware that it is a crime to take, make, permit to take, distribute, show, possess, possess with intent to distribute, or to advertise indecent photographs or pseudo-photographs or any person below the age of 18, as per Section 1 of the Protection of Children Act 1978, as amended by Section 45 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003, to extend the definition of children from under 16s to under 18s.
- For young people from 16 to 18 years old, consideration may be given, **in very limited circumstances** and where all other options have failed, to the use of criminal justice action;
- Many sexually exploited children have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices around sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities they are coerced into. This potential confusion needs to be handled with care and sensitivity.
- The primary law enforcement effort must be against the coercers and sex abusers who may be adult, but could also be the child's peers, or young people who are older than the child. Careful consideration needs to be given to criminalising offending behaviour by children who are also victims.

2.2 Children and young people who are sexually exploited are children in need of services under the Children Act 1989. They are also children in need of protection. A multi-agency network or planning meeting / discussion should take place for all children considered at risk of sexual exploitation. The younger the child, the more likely it is that the child protection procedures set out in Kent and Medway Safeguarding Children Procedures should be followed. Child protection procedures must always be followed where:

- The child is at immediate risk of significant harm and has other additional vulnerabilities.
- There is a concern that the sexual exploitation is being facilitated by the child's parent/carer.
- There is concern that a related or unrelated adult in a position of trust or responsibility to the child is organising or encouraging the sexual exploitation.

3. Risk-Vulnerability Factors, Levels, Indicators and Responses

3.1 Vulnerability Factors to Sexual Exploitation

3.1.1 Children are more vulnerable to abuse through sexual exploitation if they have experience of one or more of the following:

- Child Sexual Abuse.
- Domestic Abuse within the family.
- Family breakdown.
- Physical abuse and emotional deprivation.
- Bullying in or out of school.
- Family involvement in sexual exploitation.
- Parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (drug, alcohol, mental health issues etc.)
- Drug, alcohol, mental health or other difficulties themselves.
- Being looked after in residential care.
- Going missing frequently.

3.2 Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework

3.2.1 Vulnerabilities and risks relating to Child Sexual Exploitation very rarely present themselves in isolation of other factors such as missing episodes or drug related concerns.

Tier 1 provides a **Risks, Threats and Vulnerabilities Checklist**, and is designed for professionals who typically do not undertake assessments. It is intended for use by partner agencies – not Specialist Children’s Services (SCS), Youth Offending Services (YOS) or Early Help and Preventative Services (EHPS) workers, who undertake assessments as part of their everyday intervention with children and young people. Its purpose is to support those professionals, with the help of their safeguarding lead, to decide on appropriate action to support the child/young person. This may result in a referral to the Local Authority Children’s Services.

Tier 2 provides an **Exploitation Risk Assessment**, and is for use by assessing staff (SCS, YOS, and EHPS). This has replaced the Kent and Medway Child Sexual Exploitation Toolkit and should be used as part of ongoing planning and assessment work. It is not intended to be a document which should be completed with the child/young person. However, elements of the assessment or areas of risk should be shared and discussed as part of your interaction with the child/young person to gain their views and to clarify

elements of risk. It is Signs of Safety compliant in order to aid ease of transfer to ongoing planning and interventions.

3.3 Initial Professional Response

3.3.1 Professionals in all agencies should be alert to the possibility that a child with whom they are in contact may be being sexually exploited. The professional may already have concerns about the child e.g. that she/he is missing school, frequently missing from home, misusing substances, is depressed or self-harming etc.

3.3.2 The professional should discuss their concerns with their agency's nominated child protection advisor and, together with the nominated adviser; they should use the Risk, Threats and Vulnerabilities Checklist or complete the Exploitation Risk Assessment to determine the perceived level of risk of significant harm posed towards the child or young person.

If it is suspected that the child or young person you are working with has either a vulnerability or risk around sexual exploitation then you have a responsibility to complete the **Partner Information Sharing Form** and submit it to **Operation Willow** – the multi-agency **Child Sexual Exploitation Team (CSET)** to share the soft intelligence. The primary role of the CSE team is to identify the intelligence picture for the County in order to establish the prevalence of CSE. In addition the CSE team will proactively investigate the highest/substantiated risk CSE cases. All other cases that may require a response under the safeguarding procedures will progress through to the district Police Missing Children Exploitation Team (MCETs).

3.3.3 In cases where a child is considered to be at low risk of harm (Level 1), a plan for focused early intervention and diversion should be made to safeguard the child. Agencies should consider, in discussion with the Local Authority Children's Services, the extent to which the agency is able to meet the child's needs themselves as a single agency, and how to proceed if not (see Sections 4.1 and 4.2 below).

3.3.4 In cases where the risk is considered to be substantiated – medium or high, the professional and/or their nominated adviser should make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Services in accordance with Section 6 below and using the appropriate Referral Form.

Operation Willow's CSE team will become actively involved if the case meets the following threshold criteria for CSE:

- On street CSE.
- A degree of organisation.
- Multiple offenders and/or victims.
- Victims deemed as high risk of CSE or are otherwise particularly vulnerable.
- The CSE Team will then develop the intelligence and utilise the full array of multi-agency investigation, disruption and safeguarding opportunities that is available to manage and reduce risk to the victims and bring offenders to justice.

4. Intervention

4.1 Early Multi-Agency Intervention

- 4.1.1 Interventions to interrupt abuse through sexual exploitation and support children to recover a healthy lifestyle are more likely to be successful if a child who is at risk can be identified and information about concerns shared within a multi-agency support network as early as possible.
- 4.1.2 Professionals are often in a position of having to develop the child's trust, or having established this are concerned about breaking that trust through the sharing of confidential information with other agencies. These issues should be discussed with the agency's nominated safeguarding children adviser, and efforts made to share information as soon as possible. (See the KSCB and MSCB Information Sharing Agreement).
- 4.1.3 A professional or agency view that a child is low risk i.e. has a vulnerability to being harmed through sexual exploitation may be inaccurate. Sharing information about the child with other agencies may reveal that there is a medium or high risk i.e. that there is a substantiated concern or that the child is in need of immediate protection. The process for gathering information from the Police is in line with current safeguarding procedures and information sharing agreements.
- 4.1.4 All professionals should maintain clear records of contact with the child, their concerns, all information shared and discussed and with whom, and decisions made and actions taken.

4.2 Low Risk /Vulnerability: Multi-Agency Network Meeting/Discussion and Diversion Plans

- 4.2.1 In cases where there are indications that a child is at risk of being groomed for abuse through sexual exploitation, professionals in **any agency** may, after consultation with their agency's nominated safeguarding children adviser, call a meeting or discussion of the network of agencies currently in contact with the child.
- 4.2.2 Network meetings/discussions should be attended by/involve agencies currently providing services for the child e.g. the child's school and/or Education Welfare Officer, Health Services as appropriate (School Nurse, Sexual Health Professional, GP), Local Authority Children's Social Care Lead Professional (if involved) or equivalent; and any other agency which is in a position to contribute significantly to the development of a diversion plan for the child. This may include the nominated worker for your agency within the CSE team being consulted beforehand or being invited to the meeting.
- 4.2.3 Where appropriate, the child and their family should be made aware of the concerns engaged in developing the diversion plan and involved in all subsequent network meetings to review the plan. However, engaging the child and family and alerting them to the risks should be approached with a high level of sensitivity to avoid compounding risks of furthering alienation. There are circumstances where a child and/or their parent/carer may be not invited to attend a network meeting – these are set out in paragraph 4.2.6 below.
- 4.2.4 The meeting/discussion should be minuted and the diversion plan should be shared with relevant professionals in the child's professional network.
- 4.2.5 Agencies which have access to a family group conference service may wish to consider a conference as a way to formulate a diversion plan in partnership with the child and their family.
- 4.2.6 Criteria for deciding whether or not to invite the child and their family includes:
- The child's age and level of maturity, taking into account learning difficulties.
 - The child's perception and interpretation of their involvement.
 - Patterns and frequency of any behaviours causing concern.
 - Identity and role of adults involved.

- Age and maturity of other participants.
- Nature of sexual activity, who is controlling the sexual activity, and where it is taking place.
- The actual and potential physical and emotional effects.
- Existence of substance misuse and their significance for the child's behaviour.
- Likely reaction of parents/carers.
- Likely reaction of peers.
- Likely reaction of other agencies.
- Any objections to the child/family's attendance raised by other agencies, needs to be considered carefully.

4.2.7 The purpose of the meeting is to:

- Share and clarify information.
- Establish exact nature of concerns.
- Agree on action and make recommendations to address the concern.
- Develop a diversion and support plan for the child and parent/carer.
- Work towards a recovery strategy.
- Identify the factors to be taken into account (these will include the indicators in the Risk Assessment Framework).
- Agree what information should be recorded and stored in relation to gathering data and intelligence for possible evidential purposes.

4.3 Substantiated Risk / Medium and High Risk: Multi-Agency Planning

4.3.1 In cases where a child is considered to be at high or medium risk of sexual exploitation, this assessment should be reached by the professional in consultation with their agency's nominated safeguarding children adviser. The professional and/or the nominated adviser should make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Services, in line with their referral procedures.

4.3.2 As in all cases of suspected abuse and neglect, the Local Authority Children's Services will respond in one of three ways and will advise the refer which plan is in place:

- As assessment will be undertaken to identify the child's level of risk and need for service provision.
- The assessment may identify the child to be at risk of significant harm and in need of protection. This will necessitate a child protection enquiry

and a core assessment of need under *Section 47 of the Children's Act 1989*.

- Where no concerns are identified, there will be no further action. In these cases, Local Authority Children's Services will advise the referral verbally and in writing as to why the agency is to take this position.

4.3.3 In cases where a Social Services assessment confirms that a child is at risk of significant harm, they will convene a Strategy Discussion; in order to determine whether child protection enquires should be made in line with KSCB and MSCB Safeguarding Procedures.

4.3.4 As with all child sexual abuse cases, child sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, reward, secrecy and fear, which means that interventions to support and rehabilitate children may need to be long-term, and safeguarding and support plans should be progressed at the child's pace.

5. Role of Local Authority Children's Services

5.1 All Children

5.1.1 The Local Authority Children's Services hold the lead responsibility for responding to children abused through or are at risk of sexual exploitation.

5.1.2 On receipt of a referral, the Local Authority Children's Services must consider whether the child is at immediate risk of significant harm, and if so, child protection procedures apply. If the risk relates to sexual exploitation the CSE team must be included in the planning e.g. Strategy Discussion.

5.1.3 If child protection procedures are not considered appropriate, the Social Worker, in discussion with their Team Manager and/or the Lead Professional/Child Protection Manager, will identify and assess the level and the level of risk of harm to the child.

5.1.4 The Local Authority Children's Services are encouraged to collect information to monitor prevalence activity patterns and effectiveness of interventions for children who are sexually abused, including sexually exploited, in their area. They are expected to complete the Partner Information Sharing Form and submit to the CSE team.

- 5.1.5 When a case is already allocated, concerns may be presented by another professional or by the child's Social Worker. The risk of harm to the child's needs are to be re-assessed in accordance with their responsibilities under the Children Act 1989. In light of new information, a discussion is held with the relevant team or service manager and lead professional/child protection manager, and the case is progressed.
- 5.1.6 The outcome of the assessment should be discussed within an Outcome Strategy Discussion, and an appropriate safeguarding and support plan put in place.
- 5.1.7 Implementing an effective safeguarding and support plan for a child may require professionals to be extremely persistent in continuing to offer support and services. It may be that non Local Authority Children's Services professional may be able to provide a direct service. Nevertheless, in medium and high risk cases the case should remain allocated to a Social Worker as a Child in Need whilst a safeguarding and support plan is in place, in order to act as a point of contact for the child, family and professionals, and to coordinate the plans.
- 5.1.8 Resources which may be appropriate as part of the safeguarding and support plan include:
- Use of accommodation.
 - Application to court for a care or supervision order.
 - Provision of counselling and health services.
 - Provision of advice, support and mentoring.
 - Opportunity to access leisure, education, employment, and housing.
 - Direct provision of family support service.
 - In extreme circumstances, application for a secure order (Section 35 of the Children's Act 1989).

5.2 Children in the Care of Local Authorities

- 5.2.1 When a referral is received regarding a Child in Care, the allocated Social Worker must inform their Team Manager and Independent Reviewing Officer.
- 5.2.2 A Strategy Discussion should be considered, in accordance with the procedures in Section 5.1 above, including the CSE team. In addition, the following factors should be taken into account:
- The risks of other children in the placement.
 - Whether the child should remain in their present placement.

- Whether effective safeguarding measures can be put in place to reduce the risks sufficiently in the current placement.
- 5.2.3 As in paragraphs 5.1.8 and 5.1.9 above, a safeguarding and support plan should be drawn up, which will form part of the overall care plan for the child. The Social Worker must alert the Service/District Manager for a child who is in care of the Local Authority and where there are concerns for sexual exploitation.
- 5.2.4 The Strategy Discussion should consider the appropriateness and method of informing the child's/young person's parent(s). If the child/young person is accommodated, the parent(s) must be informed of all significant matters. When a child/young person is subject to a Care Order, generally their parent(s) should be informed. A decision not to inform the parent(s) should be authorised by the Team/Service Manager and recorded on file.
- 5.2.5 The child's/young person's Social Worker and carer(s) should put in place a written Risk Management Plan, which balances the need for assertive action and the need to not unduly increase the likelihood of the child/ young person running away, in response to the action being taken, and possibly placing themselves at even greater risk. Any consideration of restriction or liberty or confiscation or property needs to be agreed by the Team/Service Manager responsible for the child's/young person's case.
- 5.2.6 Active work should be undertaken with the child/young person to address any concerns of their self-esteem, relationships, sexuality, sexual relationships, and health.
- 5.2.7 Other children in the placement should be monitored to help identify if they are also at risk of harm from, or are in some way supporting, sexual exploitation.
- 5.2.8 If the child/ young person is in a residential unit, the staff should be asked to take positive action to clarify and record suspicions and minimise the child's/ young person's involvement in sexual exploitation. If suspicions are confirmed, the following steps should be taken:
- Treating the child/ young person as a victim of exploitation, not a criminal.
 - Ensuring that all relevant information is recorded in the child's/young person's care plan and file, concerning adults and identifying information e.g. appearance cars, telephone activity, the child's/young

person's patterns of going missing etc., together with decisions and clear directions for action, including timescales.

- Making every effort to dissuade the child/ young person from leaving to engage in sexual exploitation by talking to them, involving them in alternative activities, and ensuring they have the resources to attend, including escorting where necessary.
- Offering advice about appropriate clothing.
- Ensuring that the child/ young person is aware of the legal issues involved, including advice that staff cannot safeguarding money which is reasonably suspected to have been gained through sexual exploitation. When staff do acquire such money, they must retain it and seek legal advice.
- Monitoring telephone calls, letters and all forms of electronic communication, e.g. social networks, emails, instant messenger, by preventing the child/ young person from receiving some incoming calls, being present when phone calls are made, confiscating a mobile phone which is being used inappropriately, monitoring electronic communication, opening some letters in the presence of the child/ young person and withholding letters if necessary; reasons for intercepting letters and calls should be included in the care plan.
- Monitoring callers to the home, or adults collecting children/ young people by car. This may involve turning visitors away or passing information directly to the Police.
- Monitoring any suspicious activity in the vicinity of the home and informing the Police.
- Using physical control where appropriate, in accordance with agreed policy and practice guidance, to prevent the child/young person leaving home to engage in sexual exploitation.
- Where these efforts fail, and the child/ young person leaves, staff need to decide whether to follow them, and continue to encourage them to return.
- If they will not return, staff should inform the Police and pass on relevant information.
- Liaising with outreach agencies, so they can look out for a child/ young person who has gone missing.
- Offering sensitive and welcoming responses to children/young people returning home.

5.2.9 If the child/ young person is in foster care, the Social Worker and the Fostering Link Worker should meet with the Foster Carer to decide which of the above

steps could reasonably be taken by the Foster Carer. This needs to take place in consultation with the Fostering Team Manager.

5.2.10 The child's/ young person's behaviour and attitude may be extremely challenging and carers and staff will require ongoing support and training in knowing how to respond. These needs must be considered and resources identified, either by the manager of the residential unit or the Fostering Link Worker.

5.2.11 Professionals and carers should be aware of their own position in relation the child/young person e.g. male carers or staff may be viewed with suspicion or contempt.

5.3 Involvement of Groups of Children in Care

5.3.1 Where there is knowledge or strong suspicion that children/ young people are involved in sexual exploitation together, or are being controlled by the same person, particularly when that person is a child/young person, there will need to be additional planning, including consideration of the use of child protection and/or organised abuse procedures.

5.3.2 The Strategy Discussion will need to ensure that there are no inconsistencies between individual children's/ young person's care plans. Where the placement is in another authority, or children/ young people from other authorities are involved, that authority's child protection manager (or equivalent) must be contacted, to discuss which authority is to take overall responsibility for convening the meeting and coordinating the response.

5.4 Leaving Care / Aftercare

5.4.1 The same procedures as above should be followed in cases where young people in the leaving care service are considered to be at medium or high risk of abuse through sexual exploitation.

5.4.2 The Pathway Plan for any child/young person where there are concerns about sexual exploitation should specifically identify their vulnerability to sexual exploitation, and address the factors known to impede successful recovery from sexual exploitation e.g. homelessness, poverty, lack of educational and employment opportunities, lack of supportive social contacts etc. The Social

Worker must alert the service/district manager for a child/young person who is a relevant child and where there are concerns for sexual exploitation.

6. Role of the Police

- 6.1.1 Sections 47 to 51 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 deal with the exploitation of children, whether through prostitution or pornography. The act creates a number of offences that apply to both types of exploitation, see the [Sexual Offences Act 2003](#).
- 6.1.2 The priority for the Police is the investigation and prosecution of offenders who have been involved in abusing the child through sexual exploitation. This role should be undertaken in accordance with the principle of multi-agency cooperation to safeguard children.
- 6.1.3 Police may become aware of children/ young people at risk of sexual exploitation through normal Police work on the streets, in the course of other criminal investigations and by intelligence gathering. Where appropriate, and in consultation with partner agencies the Police will employ disruption tactics to prevent opportunities for perpetrators to operate and premises to be used for such purposes.
- 6.1.4 The initial Police response to the discovery of a child/ young person, who is being, or, is at immediate risk of being abused through sexual exploitation, must be to remove them from the source of harm using Police protection powers if necessary and ensure that evidence is secured. This action must be followed by referral to the Local Authority Children's Services. Following this, a Strategy Discussion will be convened. If there are suspicions that a child/ young person is a victim of sexual exploitation, but there is no immediate or direct evidence, the Police Officer noting the concern should consult with the combined safeguarding team that have responsibility for the locality or the Centre Referral Unit, and if deemed appropriate refer to the Local Authority Children's Services. If a crime has been committed, the matter will be allocated to an appropriately trained officer to investigate.
- 6.1.5 Criminal action in respect of the child in sexually exploitative circumstances will be carefully considered with partners. Such action should be instigated until the matter has been discussed within a Strategy meeting, when it is established that all attempts at diversion have failed. Particular attention should be paid to the following:

- The age and vulnerability of the child/young person.
- The protection of other children/young people.
- Any intent to return to sexual exploitation must be considered genuinely voluntary, with no evidence of physical, mental or emotional coercion.
- The child/ young person has been told and understands that criminal proceedings may take place, and the implications of this for them now and in the future. If the matter reaches the point of referral the Youth Offending Team, this provides further opportunity for positive intervention.

6.1.6 All interviews with the child/ young person as an actual or potential victim should be conducted, as far as possible, in accordance with the best evidence interview (ABE). However, flexibility needs to be applied, as it may take a number of interviews before the child is able to make or complete a statement.

6.1.7 If the child/young person has made a statement and/or is a potential witness, witness protection and support should be considered as early as possible.

7. Role of Leisure and Community Services

7.1.1 The role of Leisure and Community Services staff in relation to children abused through sexual exploitation is in the prevention, recognition and referral stages.

7.1.2 Where staff, such as Play Workers, Leisure Centre Workers or Librarians, have immediate they should, together with their agency's nominated Safeguarding Children Adviser, make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Services. Where the concerns are not immediate or are unclear, staff should discuss the case with their nominated adviser.

7.1.3 In the case of street activity being noted, including within parks, staff should contact the Police.

8. Role of Education Services

8.1 Prevention

8.1.1 Staff in schools, colleges, early years settings, and other education establishments, are uniquely places to recognise and refer children/ young

people who are abused through sexual exploitation. They are also in a position to help children/ young people avoid being sexually exploited, and support abused children/ young people.

- 8.1.2 Education settings should ensure that children/ young people are taught about safeguarding through a variety of teaching and learning opportunities, as part of providing a broad and balanced curriculum as identified within [Keeping Children Safe in Education \(KCSIE\) 2016](#). This may include covering relevant issues through Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE), tutorials and/or through Sex and Relationships Education (SRE). An effective and appropriate curriculum can help children/ young people make informed and health choices about issues such as sexual activity, grooming techniques, online safety, drug use, and keeping themselves safe.

8.2 Recognition and Referral

- 8.2.1 Education leaders (including Headteachers and Governing Bodies) should ensure that their setting is compliant with the statutory safeguarding obligations in relation to CSE (including children's safeguarding education, staff safeguarding training, and multi-agency working) as identified within KCSIE 2016.
- 8.2.2 All members of staff working within educational settings should be alert and competent to identify and act upon concerns that a child/young person is at risk of, or is experiencing abuse through sexual exploitation. Members of staff within schools and colleges must read and understand part one of the KCSIE 2016. School staff who work directly with children/ young people should also read Annex A, which contains important additional information about specific forms of abuse and safeguarding issues, including sexual exploitation.
- 8.2.3 The nominated Designated Safeguarding Lead (DSL) in each educational setting should monitor information to identify when any child/ young person in the setting, or community may be being targeted for sexual exploitation.
- 8.2.4 Because of the probability of attendance issues with sexually exploited children, a referral to the Kent PRU Inclusion and Attendance Services (PIAS) / Medway Advice, Attendance and Support to Schools and Academies (AASSA), is likely to have been made or considered. School Liaison Officers (SLOs) should be alerted to the possibility of sexual exploitation if concerns exist when referrals are made to the service. In Medway, these are known as Attendance Advisory Practitioners. In their general assessment and ongoing work with children, young

people and their families, and liaison with school staff, Education Welfare Officer's (EWOs) can identify children/ young people who are being, or are at risk of being abused through sexual exploitation. Where the child/ young person is known to an SLO, she/he would also be expected to attend the network meetings or Strategy meetings, and contribute to developing the child's/ young person's safeguarding and support plan.

- 8.2.5 Where school staff have immediate concerns that a child is at risk of sexual exploitation, they should, together with their DSL, make a referral to the Local Authority Children's Service. If the concerns are not immediate, or are unclear, the DSL should discuss the case with their named Area Education Safeguarding Advisor from the Education Safeguarding Team (Kent), of the Education Safeguarding Coordinator (Medway).
- 8.2.6 DSLs should ensure that they share any appropriate information or intelligence about possible sexual exploitation risks for children/young people within the setting or the wider community promptly with the CSE team (CSET).

9. Role of Health Services

- 9.1.1 Government guidance on children/young people involved in sexual exploitation notes: *'Because of the universal nature of most health provision, health professionals may often be the first to be aware that a child may be involved, or be at risk of becoming involved in sexual exploitation. Children involved in sexual exploitation are likely to need a range of services, including advice and counselling for harm minimisation, health promotion, advice on sexually transmitted diseases and HIV'.*
- 9.1.2 Health professionals should be alert and competent to identify and act upon concerns that a child/young person is at risk of, or experiencing abuse through sexual exploitation. They have a crucial role in providing support for the physical and mental health of these children/ young people.
- 9.1.3 The named or designated professional for safeguarding children in each health service trust should monitor information to identify when any child/ young person in the community may be being targeted for sexual exploitation.
- 9.1.4 Where health professionals have immediate concerns they should, following discussions with their named professional, make a referral to the Local Authority

Children's Services. Where the concerns are not immediate or are unclear, staff should discuss the case with their named or designated professional.

9.1.5 Health staff should offer and/or continue to provide health education, counselling, sexual health and medical intervention to the child/young person as an appropriate part of early intervention. The Kent and Medway Safeguarding Sexually Active Children Procedures provides specific guidance in relation to sharing information about children/ young people for whom a professional has concerns.

9.1.6 Health professionals who may be invited to attend network or strategy meetings include:

- All current health professionals involved with the child/young person, including School Nurses, Nurses working with Children in Care, GPs, Practice Nurses, Health Workers involved with Outreach Clinics, and sexual health and family planning resources.
- Any previously involved health professional (recent past) who would have a useful contribution to make to the meeting (i.e. most recent health reports and knowledge of the child/ young person while at school).
- Health professionals involved in any screening or medicals involving the child/ young person who is the subject of the meeting (e.g. Clinical Medical Officer, GP etc.).
- When no other health person is involved, current or past, the trusts designated or named professional should attend in an advisory capacity.

10. Role of Voluntary and Community Groups / Agencies

10.1 Support Services

10.1.1 Government guidelines on young people involved in sexual exploitation emphasise the importance of a multi-agency approach, which includes voluntary and community groups / agencies: *'The child may seek to avoid statutory services. They are more likely to respond to informal contact, for example, with health outreach workers, or local non-statutory agencies. The primary concern of all those involved must be the welfare of the child, and decisions on the sharing of concerns about a child's safety must form part of local protocols between Police,*

Local Authority Children's Services, Health and Education Authorities, and Non-Statutory Agencies'.

10.1.2 There is a wide range of specialist (drug misuse, HIV prevention, homelessness, counselling, and advice) and other voluntary and community agencies/groups (youth clubs, sport/drama groups, faith groups, and churches etc.) who may be well placed to identify children/ young people who are at risk of, or are experiencing abuse through sexual exploitation; because:

- Voluntary and community sector agencies often have a close relationship with their local communities.
- Voluntary and community sector agencies can develop relationships of trust with the children/ young people and maintain a link to the child/ young person if they become 'lost' to statutory services.
- Outreach agencies are often the first point of contact for children/ young people in risk situations.
- Specialist voluntary agencies often have the opportunity to provide vital health/harm minimisation/risk reduction support.

10.1.3 It is essential that voluntary and community groups/agencies operate as multi-agency network partners in order to provide children/ young people with access to the widest possible range of intervention and support services.

10.2 Recognition and Referral

10.2.1 Professionals and volunteers in voluntary and community groups/agencies should be alert and competent to identify and act upon concerns that a child/ young person is at risk of or experiencing abuse through sexual exploitation. They are well placed to receive and verify information about sexual abuse and exploitation of children in the local community.

10.2.2 Each voluntary and community group or agency should have a nominated safeguarding child advisor (referred to as the nominated adviser in this procedure).

10.2.3 All staff and volunteers working in voluntary and community agencies/groups should be aware of the Kent County Council's Child Sexual Exploitation Policy, and the Risk, Threats and Vulnerabilities Checklist. Where the level of risk is determined as significant a referral should be made to the Local Authority Children's Services. In cases where the level of concern is not immediate or clear staff should discuss the case with their nominated adviser.

Appendix 1: Definitions of Children in Care

An 'eligible child' is aged 16 or 17, who has been looked after by a Local Authority for a period (prescribed under the regulations as 13 weeks), or periods amounting in all to that period, which began after he/she reached 14 years of age and ended after he/she reached the age of 16. It is the duty of the Local Authority looking after an eligible child to advise, assist and befriend him/her with a view to promoting his/her welfare when they have ceased to look after him/her.

For each eligible child, the Local Authority shall carry out an assessment of his/her needs with a view to determining what advice, assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide while they are still looking after him, and after they cease to look after him/her, and shall then prepare a pathway plan for him/her.

The plan has to be kept under regular review. A Local Authority shall arrange for the child to have a personal adviser.

A 'relevant child' is a child who is not being looked after by any Local Authority, but was, before last ceasing to be looked after, an eligible child, and is aged 16 or 17. It is the duty of each Local Authority to take reasonable steps to keep in touch with a relevant child for whom it is the responsible authority, whether he is within their area or not to appoint a personal adviser for each relevant child. If no pathway plan has already been prepared, the authority must carry out an assessment of the child's needs with a view to determining what advice, assistance and support it would be appropriate for them to provide and prepare a pathway plan for him/her.

The responsible Local Authority shall safeguard and promote the child's welfare and, unless they are satisfied that his/her welfare does not require it, support him/her by (a) maintaining him/her; (b) providing him/her with or maintaining him/her in suitable accommodation; and (c) providing support of such other descriptions as may be prescribed, which may include cash.

If the Local Authority have lost touch with a relevant child, despite taking reasonable steps to keep in touch, they must without delay (a) consider how to re-establish contact; and (b) take reasonable steps to do so, and while the child is still a relevant child must continue to take such steps until they succeed.

A Local Authority has duties towards (a) a person who has been a relevant child (and would be one if he/she were under 18), in relation to whom they were the last responsible authority; and (b) a person who was being looked after by them when he/she attained the age of 18, and immediately before ceasing to be looked after was an eligible child (known as a 'former relevant child'). They must take reasonable step (a) to keep in touch with a former relevant child whether he/she is within their area or not; and (b) if they lose touch with him, to re-establish contact. They must continue the

appointment of a personal adviser for a former relevant child and continue to keep the pathway plan under regular review.

The Local Authority has a duty to give a former relevant child assistance to the extent that his/her welfare and his/her educational or training needs require it, in kind or, in exceptional circumstances, in cash until he/she reaches the age of 21, or longer if his/her pathway plan sets out a programme of education or training which extends beyond his/her 21st birthday.