

**CHILDREN AND FAMILIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY  
COMMITTEE – 5 SEPTEMBER 2016**

**REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR OF  
CHILDREN AND FAMILY SERVICES**

**LEICESTERSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL'S RESPONSE  
TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

**Purpose of Report**

1. This report is the fourth in a series focusing on the deployment of resources to address child sexual exploitation (CSE). The report sets out progress of the County Council's CSE team. The report comments on the work of the team, related multi-agency developments and outlines intended next steps.

**Executive Summary**

2. The Council's CSE team is now fully established and embedded within the multi-agency CSE team. The remit of the team has been promoted across the partnership.
3. There was a 64% increase in referrals in relation to children at risk of CSE during 2015-16 mirroring the national trend. The team is coordinating and delivering the Council's safeguarding response. During the past 12 months the CSE team has directly supported 94 children, demonstrating added value in working collaboratively with colleagues in early help and children's social care and building an evidence base of achieving a positive impact on outcomes for children.
4. The CSE team is responsible for coordinating the response to missing children ensuring return interviews are undertaken. Performance has significantly improved from 14% to 80% of return interviews recorded as completed.
5. The CSE team has supported 35 joint investigations with the police resulting in an increasing number of successful prosecutions.
6. The SPDF CSE Project led by the Council arising from the successful partnership bid to the Strategic Partnership Development Fund has begun to deliver a number of initiatives and posts intended to further bolster the local response to CSE. Two specialist nurses joined the multi-agency CSE team in July 2016. The fund runs until April 2018.

7. Agreement has been reached with partners to build on the success of the current strategic approach and operational model and develop a fully integrated Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland multi-agency CSE team. It is proposed that this development is piloted, subject to review and external evaluation and a future business case developed.

### **Policy Framework and Previous Decisions**

8. In February 2015, the County Council approved growth of £560k to the budget for Children and Family Services in order to address the emerging challenge of CSE.
9. This step had been taken to begin to address local incidents of CSE and to take account of the growing national concern of the role played by councils and other public bodies following events in Rochdale, Oxfordshire and Rotherham.

### **Introduction**

10. CSE has a national and local prominence. In March 2015 the government elevated CSE to the level of a national threat and set up an independent national inquiry to investigate the extent to which institutions have failed to protect children from sexual abuse including CSE.
11. CSE is deemed a local threat evidenced through high profile cases across Leicestershire and also demonstrated in the Leicestershire Police problem profile for CSE that highlights a number of threat and risk areas. CSE is a strategic priority of the County Council, Leicestershire and Rutland Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) and Strategic Partnership Board (SPB).
12. The LSCB has overall responsibility for ensuring there is a co-ordinated, multi-agency response. The LSCB has had until recently an established joint CSE, Trafficking and Missing Subgroup with the Leicester City LSCB. The work of the Subgroup is underpinned by a strategy and action plan. A strategic priority of the group has been to develop a joined up multi-agency strategic and operational response. To help achieve this aim a key priority within the local action plan has been to establish a specialist multi-agency CSE team. The subsequent development followed on from a local example of strong partnership working and a number of recommendations from government, supported by national evidence based research, suggesting a multi-agency team to be the most effective model for tackling CSE.
13. In September 2014 joint arrangements commenced when a number of County Council staff were embedded in the police CSE investigation, missing from home and paedophile online investigation (POLIT) teams. In February 2015, the County Council approved growth to address the emerging challenge of CSE and establish a dedicated Council CSE team.
14. During 2015 key principles were agreed to further strengthen the multi-agency response across Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR):

- Consolidation of a single Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland (LLR) approach to tackling the issues of CSE, trafficked and missing children
  - Sharing, pooling and an equitable distribution of resources within a single multi-agency specialist CSE team in line with emerging threat and need
15. In June 2015 a LLR CSE coordinator was appointed, reporting to the County Council's Strategic Lead for CSE and Complex Abuse. In October 2015 a joint LSCB partnership bid of £1.23 million aimed at funding CSE provision until April 2018 was endorsed by the SPB. A project management approach has subsequently been established. The County Council is leading the Strategic Partnership Development Fund (SPDF) CSE Project on behalf of the partnership with the CSE coordinator as the nominated project lead. The work on the SPDF CSE Project commenced in January 2016. The 13 work streams have been progressed using a staggered approach to ensure the set up and delivery achieves optimum results. Work streams have been progressed wherever possible according to risk, need and interdependencies.

### **Background**

16. The multi-agency CSE team was developed following Operation Fedora (2013), an investigation that resulted in the first successful CSE related prosecution in Leicestershire. The development of the team has been based on a number of other successful models operating across the country. The operating model is based on the application of a hub and spokes model. This approach aims to ensure that whilst the multi-agency CSE team (hub) has overall responsibility for coordinating the response to CSE, tackling CSE will remain everyone's business (spokes). To help achieve this aim and strengthen the current approach the plan is to embed 'CSE champions' in all agencies.
17. The tactical approach of the multi-agency CSE team is closely aligned to the objectives of the local LSCB strategy underpinned by the following strategic priorities:
- Prevention (reduce the numbers of children at risk)
  - Protection (reduce the risk of harm to children)
  - Pursue (disrupt and bring offenders to justice)
  - Provision (provide effective services for support and recovery)
  - Partnership (build public confidence)
18. The multi-agency CSE team is intended to be fully integrated; pooling resources, powers, procedures and expertise.

### **Council CSE team**

19. The purpose of the Council CSE team is to identify and take action to safeguard and protect children at risk of CSE (online or in the real world), trafficking and/or missing. The team works with children known to Leicestershire County Council Children and Family Services and/or children who reside in the County Council

boundaries. This includes providing safeguarding oversight for children placed in Leicestershire by other local authorities where there are concerns about CSE or missing. The team:

- Provides an initial point of contact and consultation for concerns about CSE and missing children
- Coordinates the Council's response to CSE and missing children
- Provides a victim-centred approach combining educational programmes and safeguarding
- Supports children, families and other professionals to reduce the risk of CSE, raise awareness and implement disruption strategies – this includes case discussion, consultation, providing resources and attending professionals meetings
- Gather and pursue best evidence to support criminal prosecutions
- Supports children and families through and after the judicial process
- Identifies appropriate recovery services for victims of CSE

20. The manager and senior practitioners in the CSE team are responsible for: triaging referrals with the police and health colleagues; on a weekly basis allocating and reviewing ongoing investigations; chairing strategy meetings; and offering consultation to other professionals and partner agencies. The central coordination and oversight of the response to CSE and missing aims to ensure it is consistent, effective and of high quality. The manager is responsible for coordinating the Council's operational response to a number of high profile and cross boundary investigations ensuring the resources of the team are deployed efficiently, effectively and focused on the individual child's needs and delivery of the CSE action plan.

21. The Council CSE team has a low caseload of no more than 10 children enabling the team to deliver intensive and focused direct work and respond quickly to incidents. The team does not directly case hold; this occurs only in exceptional cases or in response to child protection enquiries that lead straight to a joint CSE investigation. CSE officers work jointly and collaboratively with colleagues from other early help and children's social care teams. The CSE officers are responsible for undertaking specialist CSE assessments. Information gathered in the assessments is used to inform strategy meeting actions and contribute to other assessments and care planning. The CSE officers focus is on the plan to reduce risk and harm in relation to CSE and missing. This impact of this collaborative approach is highlighted in a number of case studies in Appendix 1 demonstrating the significant added value of the CSE team on achieving positive outcomes for children.

22. A daily duty process ensures all CSE referrals and missing incidents are reviewed in a timely manner. Liaison with partners within the multi-agency CSE team, First Response and YOS duty team ensures a coordinated response. Consultation with outside partner agencies is also offered. On a Friday the duty CSE officer provides a summary of potential high risk cases which may require a specific response over the weekend period. CSE officers are available out of hours if required to support a crisis situation in relation to children known to the

team, for example a medical or video recorded interview at the point of a child disclosing abuse. Weekly multi-agency meetings are held to review progress in relation to CSE referrals and children reported missing during that period. A strong focus is on developing and planning joint investigations, delivering disruption activity with the police and other partners and achieving successful prosecutions as a key way to safeguard and protect children. One of the senior practitioners in the team is responsible for coordinating the response to missing children ensuring return interviews are conducted and information from return interviews centrally collated to help build intelligence in relation to trends, hotspots and potential perpetrators. This information is shared at the weekly meetings ensuring the links between children going and missing and CSE is understood and acted upon.

### **Current Situation**

23. The development of the County Council CSE team has been planned in phases. The initial phase involved the development of joint arrangements with Leicestershire Police with a small number of seconded County Council staff co-located with the police. These arrangements went live in September 2014. The second phase commenced in April 2015 involving the permanent recruitment of a specialist Council CSE team. An operating protocol has been developed outlining the role and remit of the team, internal procedures and external referral pathways.
24. Recruitment to the Council CSE team was completed in July 2016. The team is led by the Strategic Lead for CSE and Complex Abuse and comprises of a manager, 2 senior social work practitioners, 6 CSE officers and an admin officer.
25. The team is currently co-located in police premises in South Wigston. However this office location is deemed to be no longer fit for purpose, in part due to the rapid development of the multi-agency CSE team. During October 2016 there are plans to move to a purpose built office on police premises in Wigston.
26. The capacity of the multi-agency CSE team is due to be significantly bolstered by the imminent recruitment of posts through the SPDF CSE Project. Additional posts joining the team include: an intelligence analyst, a psychologist, outreach workers, and a parenting support coordinator. In July 2016 two specialist health professionals joined the team. Leicester City Council staff are scheduled to join the multi-agency CSE team in October 2016. Rutland County Council remains a virtual partner in the arrangement. Discussions have been initiated with partners to ensure that the wider development of the multi-agency CSE team is strategically planned and managed effectively. The feasibility of developing a seamless and borderless LLR operational approach to CSE is also being explored. In advance all partners have agreed that the recruitment of a single manager to oversee and develop the team is essential.

### **Data and Performance Information**

## CSE data

27. It is estimated that only 1 in 8 victims of sexual abuse come to the attention of statutory authorities (Children’s Commissioner November 2015). It is likely that the true scale, nature and extent of CSE in Leicestershire - in all its forms - are only now beginning to be revealed and understood. The numbers of CSE referrals continues to rise and is predicted to grow mirroring the national trend. 303 referrals were received during 2015-16 compared to 184 referrals in 2014-15. The increase highlights greater professional and public awareness following national media attention, and success of local campaigns to raise awareness including the ‘spot the signs’ campaign, implementation of the CSE risk assessment tool across all agencies and promotion of the CSE team. The development of the CSE team ensures the Council has in place the capacity and capability to provide a specialist safeguarding response to this emerging issue.

### Numbers of CSE referrals to children’s social care:

2013-14	2014-15	2015-16	July 15- July16
85	184	303	317

28. Since the end of Q2 in 2015-16 the quality of data has significantly improved due to the impact of the work of the CSE coordinator and admin officer within the CSE team. This means the data below can be reported with an increasing degree of confidence. The data tells us that in relation to CSE referrals over the last 12 months:

- 83% relate to females, 16% males, 1% transgender
- 7% relate to BME children compared to 14% of BME children within the population in Leicestershire (Ofsted: 2012)
- The primary models of exploitation are online CSE and party model where teenagers are lured to a party with the promise of alcohol and drugs
- Increasing numbers relate to children under age of 12 – the majority of these referrals are linked to online CSE
- 75% of referrals relate to children living at home
- The majority of referrals are centred on towns as highlighted in the local problem profile

29. The increase in referrals over the last 12 months has translated into:

- 94 allocations to the CSE team
- 35 joint investigations with the police
- 5 successful trials resulting in the prosecution of 21 perpetrators

30. The CSE team currently coordinates the County Council’s response to 7 police operations, including complex operations spanning local, sub-regional, national and international areas, collaborating with a number of police forces.

31. Co-location with the police has realised significant additional benefits. The main benefits have been the opportunity for real time sharing of 'soft' and 'hard' information from a variety of sources including police intelligence and development of real time responses and coordination. It has significantly assisted in the development of the collective understanding of those at risk of CSE resulting in 94 allocations to the CSE team. Profiling of suspects, perpetrators and locations and been instrumental in the development of the 35 joint investigations.
32. In early 2016 the CSE team, YOS, police, locality partnership, schools and children's social care were sufficiently curious to share concerns they had about a group of children in Charnwood. They were worried about the risk of CSE because of concerns about the children's anti-social behaviour, links to criminality and gangs and the number of times they were going missing from care, home and school. Agencies mapped the connections between these children and the services they were known to and liaised with local businesses where children were congregating. This confirmed there was no organised or prevalent CSE issue. However partners and businesses continue to share information to monitor the situation and keep the children safe.
33. The majority of referrals received are in relation to children at risk of CSE living at home (75%). The previous report in April 2016 highlighted that earlier referrals into the team has provided the opportunity for earlier intervention to reduce the risk of harm. Since April the team has directly delivered 20 bespoke up to 12-week intervention packs to individual children. Work is undertaken in relation to the identification of models of CSE, consent, the grooming process and online safety.
34. The team also offers consultation and a 6-week prevention pack to be delivered by the allocated early help/social worker. Through cascading specialist knowledge, expertise and best practice, raising awareness, and embedding of CSE champions within teams, the aim is to the develop a longer-term and sustainable strategy to tackling CSE by building capacity in the wider children's work force. This will ensure demand is managed and the CSE team is able to focus on the most complex cases. During the past 12 months the CSE team has delivered raising awareness sessions: with all children's social care and early help teams; professionals within the local substance misuse and sexual health networks; district councils; at whole school assemblies; training for designated senior leads for safeguarding in schools; school governors; and officers across Leicestershire constabulary. The delivery of this work supports the local strategic aim to reduce the numbers of children at risk of CSE and reduce the level of harm through prevention, early identification and early intervention activity.
35. The promotion of the CSE team is resulting in a wider range of professionals directly contacting the team for consultation. A daily duty system is now in place that responds to professional enquires, signposting to specialist services and taking referrals. This quarter the CSE team has received 52 direct referrals, 6 referrals via partner agencies and 31 referrals from partners after duty

consultation. Recently a community based GP directly rang the duty CSE officer to make enquiries around the specialist support the team provides and to request information around indicators.

36. As highlighted the number of referrals continues to increase. However the profile of these cases has changed with an overall reduction in the level of risk and harm. Further research needs to be undertaken but suggests a successful outcome of the local strategy. Case study evidence (Appendix 1) suggests that the coordination of response and targeted and specialist interventions delivered by the CSE team is effective. A lower proportion of referrals are being made in relation to children in care (25% of total referrals compared to 50% in 2013-14) and lower numbers of children are deemed to be at medium or high risk of CSE. The CSE team has undertaken a deliberate strategy to target its resources to safeguard and protect children identified at medium and high risk of CSE including children in care. There are a small number of children in care who continue to provide a challenge and concern to both professionals and partner agencies. For example, in July 2016 a child in care went missing on 16 occasions. In this instance the CSE team are actively involved in developing strategies to reduce the risk of harm.
- 37.2 specialist nurses have recently joined the team. Their priorities include increasing the low number of referrals from health professionals. A joint audit undertaken by the designated nurse for looked after children and the manager of the CSE team lead to an improvement in the number of health professionals being notified and contributing to CSE strategy meetings. The specialist nurses are already contributing to information sharing by accessing children's health records, flagging concerns about children at risk of CSE on health records, and replicating information held on children's social care and police records on to individual health records. It is hoped that this will enable health professionals to assess presenting symptoms and consider any underlying issues or indicators of CSE. The lead specialist nurse now attends the local CAMHS allocations meetings. This provides an opportunity for case discussion and the early identification of children where there are shared concerns.
38. Where CSE is evident, a key role of the CSE team is to support children to disclose abuse and where possible support them to achieve justice. Supporting disclosure is an important first step to help the child to deal with the abuse and trauma they have experienced. Supporting children to take this first step requires skill, time and patience, persistence and resilience, and a proactive approach, particularly when in relation to CSE children often do not see themselves as a victim of abuse due to the grooming process. Quite often there is strong evidence of CSE without a disclosure. However achieving a disclosure increases the chances of a successful prosecution; in a number of recent cases perpetrators have pleaded guilty once they became aware that with the support of the CSE team a child has disclosed and is willing to give evidence.
39. There have been a number of examples where the CSE team has used experience to inform new investigations that have led to successful prosecutions. In the last 12 months there have been 5 successful CSE related



prosecutions compared to none prior to Operation Fedora 3 years ago. During the last 12 months the CSE team has provided individual support packages for 8 children facing the criminal judicial system as victims and/or witnesses in these cases, including pre-trial and post-trial specialist support. Operation Fedora demonstrated how vulnerable victims should be treated when giving evidence both to safeguard the victim and in order to achieve a successful prosecution. Operation Quartz (2015) and Operation Barzini (2016) benefitted from this approach and the CSE team has developed detailed support packages for all victims giving evidence, working closely with family members.

40. A critical success factor has been the approach of the CSE team to safeguarding victims and supporting children through the process from disclosure through to prosecution and recovery: not giving up even when the child appears to be non-cooperative and abusive; allowing the time the child needs to build trusting relationships to disclose their abuse and showing a determination to hold perpetrators to account for their actions.
41. The specialist role of the CSE team includes providing information to the Crown Prosecution Service to promote trial requirements; preparation for victims and/or witnesses includes visits and exposure to out of force trials. CSE officers are designated to provide support for attendance at court. During Operation Quartz 2 CSE officers were deployed full-time for the duration of the 2 week trial and in the weeks leading up to the trial providing the necessary preparation and support to the 4 victims and their families. The children involved weren't required to give evidence but were supported by the CSE team to be sufficiently confident to do so. The fact they were confident enough and willing to give evidence contributed to the perpetrator changing their plea to guilty subsequently receiving an 8 year custodial sentence. The prosecuting barrister met the children, supported by the CSE officers, on 4 occasions through the court process ensuring the children were fully involved. The CSE officers supported the children to complete victim impact statements that were read by the judge and influenced sentencing.
42. During Operation Barzini, due to the complexity of the case, the team manager was deployed to act as the at court single point of contact for the Council, throughout the 3 week duration of the trial. In addition the manager and two social workers were deployed in 24-hour shifts to provide the necessary intensive support the child needed to get through the week of giving their evidence. Operation Barzini resulted in 12 perpetrators receiving 75 years in custodial sentences.
43. Post-trial support and recovery is essential. The team is currently maintaining a level of post-trial support to 10 survivors and their families. 2 survivors provide consultation to the CSE team and have been fully involved in recruiting staff to the team.

### **Missing children data**

44. The CSE team has had sole responsibility for the coordination of the response provided to all missing children across Leicestershire since March 2016. Prior to this date the CSE team had a level of involvement in the coordination via a weekly multi-agency meeting. This change has resulted in a more targeted response to missing children and supported investigations into CSE.
45. Central coordination has led to improvements in the follow up to the report of missing episodes to children's services. Return interviews are now being allocated and completed in a more timely way, in most cases within the 72 hour timespan identified in statutory guidance.

#### **Numbers of return interviews completed following a child going missing:**

1st March 2015 – 8th August 2015		1st March 2016 – 8th August 2016	
Missing episodes	Return interviews completed	Missing episodes	Return interviews completed
312	43 (14%)	476	288 (60%)

46. The figures above relate to missing episodes (not individuals) logged with Leicestershire Police for children who have a Leicestershire address. It should be noted that a return interview will not have been allocated on all of these missing episodes; each occurrence is dealt with on its own merit. If a child is under 10 years old it is likely that a return interview would not be allocated as this would be addressed through different processes, either through First Response or via child protection procedures. If it is the first time for an individual to be reported as missing but the actual circumstances did not warrant that status a return interview may not have been allocated.
47. Evidence of a return interview being completed and recorded on the child's file remains an issue and explains a proportion of the previous and current shortfall in performance. This is being addressed through monthly performance meetings with managers. However overall performance has improved from 14% 12 months ago to 60% in the corresponding period this year, and to 80% in July 2016. There are plans to collate the information gathered from return interviews to support the development of shared intelligence and trends.
48. If the figures were reflective of individuals they would show that within Leicestershire there are a small number of children who have had several repeat missing episodes. For some of these individuals the CSE team has a direct role in supporting them and coordinating preventative services, in others the value of the CSE team is in being a conduit between the police and children's social care to ensure that all relevant information is shared and safeguarding procedures adhered to.

#### **Planned Next Steps**

49. The following steps are planned to be undertaken in the next 6 months:

- Collate information gathered from return interviews to inform the development of intelligence and trends – CSE team manager September 2016
- Development of the operating protocol to set out how all partners will collaborate in the multi-agency CSE team – Strategic Lead CSE and Complex Abuse October 2016
- Integration of the remaining SPDF CSE Project posts into the multi-agency CSE team – this is planned to be achieved October 2016
- Recruitment of a LLR Service Manager to oversee and develop the team – the County Council has agreed to lead the recruitment process, to be completed December 2016
- Continued promotion of the Council CSE team to increase its profile and build capacity – the team will be touring Leicestershire schools in the Autumn in support of the wider roll out of the Kayleigh Haywood film

### **Proposed Next Steps**

50. As indicated earlier in the report partners are exploring the feasibility of developing an integrated sub-regional arrangement involving LLR local authority staff and partners working seamlessly across borders within the multi-agency CSE team. Partners have agreed that the current model operated by the County Council in partnership with the police is working well and any proposed expansion should be built on the existing approach. The benefits of developing and expanding the current integrated approach include:

- Builds on current successes – there exists a single LLR strategic approach to CSE, a single action plan, and shared practice guidance and procedures
- Enhances coordination and consistency of response across local authority boundaries
  - Supports enhanced safeguarding - children and families cross boundaries
  - Supports criminal investigations - children at risk of CSE and suspected perpetrators cross local authority boundaries
- Police and health partners are already organised to work sub-regionally
- The SPDF CSE Project is LLR and involves developing posts in the current team
- Potential for efficiencies and savings linked to a reduction in bureaucracy and duplication

The possible risks associated with such an arrangement include:

- The progress of the existing Council CSE team may be adversely affected as new arrangements are developed
- County resources are diverted away from Leicestershire residents
- There are currently underlying differences in the wider operating models across the respective local authorities in respect of children's social care and early help services
- Working across multiple IT systems could hinder effective collaboration

- Variances in the underlying infrastructure of partner agencies including IT, also HR issues such as terms and conditions, and budget and finance
- Lack of a long-term vision for future collaboration

51. Leicestershire Police already has similar working arrangements in place with their regional counterparts. Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC) has found clear evidence that these arrangements have proved to be effective and provided added capability, capacity and resilience.

52. It is proposed that an integrated sub-regional arrangement is developed, piloted and:

- Subject to review and external evaluation after 6 months
- The benefits for joint working are assessed
- A future business case is developed and presented for consideration
- The sustainability of the current approach is reviewed

53. A key role of the LLR Service Manager will be to manage the above benefits and risks.

### **Resource Implications**

54. The resources dedicated to tackling CSE and establish a specialist multi-agency team are considerable and have been deployed innovatively, and thus far, successfully. However the sufficiency of these resources may need to be reviewed in the light of the continuing increasing referrals and demand as the true scale, extent and nature of CSE becomes evident. Raising the profile of the work of the team continues to be a priority so that Leicestershire residents and bodies such as schools can continue to 'spot the signs' and make referrals if they have concerns. A longer-term and sustainable approach will need to be developed in order to manage future demand and reduce the levels of risk and harm; this will include implementing an effective prevention and early intervention strategy.

### **Background Papers**

- Report to Children and Families Overview and Scrutiny Committee: 4<sup>th</sup> April 2016 - <http://ow.ly/uMuA303zIMV>
- Report to Cabinet: 6<sup>th</sup> February 2015- <http://ow.ly/s20K303zIH1>

### **Circulation under local issues alert procedure**

None.

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### **Equality and Human Rights Implications**

55. Children and young people at risk of CSE come from families across the demographic profile of the County. The insidious nature of this abuse means that those children are very likely to need a timely response from the County Council and police. In addition, national and local research indicates that concerns about boys and young men are less frequently coming to light that might be expected. Similarly, children and young people from Black and Minority Ethnic communities are less frequently identified. Both of these important areas are addressed in the strategic approach guiding the work of the CSE team.

## **Appendix 1**

### **Case studies**

#### **Child A**

*The CSE team became involved with A following a referral highlighting concerns linked to missing episodes, inappropriate and sexualised online communication with older adult males and significant concerns linked to the family. A was subject to a child protection plan due to concerns about the lack of parental responsibility, the exposure to risky adults and the impact this was having on A. The family had a history of poor engagement with professionals*

*The social worker and CSE officer worked collaboratively to engage the family. The CSE officer focused on building trust, rapport and engagement through consistent direct work with the aim to assess the risk of CSE and to reduce this by delivering prevention work. A's social worker focused on assessing the family and wider issues to identify the next steps in the child protection, court process and care planning for A.*

*The family have addressed the concerns about the impact on A of her exposure to risky adults. A has remained in the care of her family. The CSE risk has reduced. A is now able to identify safety both in and outside of the home. A is now in full time education, with improved attendance. The family are now actively engaging with the social worker.*

#### **Child B**

*B became known to the CSE team as a result of being involved in an ongoing investigation relating to an older male. B was one of the identified victims. The perpetrator had been plying B with alcohol, drugs, and exploiting B in the process through sexual activity and indecent images taken whilst B had been under the influence.*

*The CSE officer supported B through the entire police investigation, from prior to disclosure, the video recorded interview, the court process and after court support. B was not required to give evidence as a result of the perpetrator pleading guilty however B required after court support so she could understand and work through what had happened.*

*B reported that without the support from the CSE team, she would not have been able to get through the entire process and would have given up on taking the disclosure forward. B also feels that she learnt a significant amount from working with the CSE team about laws, maintaining healthy relationships, recognising what CSE is, and how to deal with negative incidents that occur in her life and to come out through the other end. B successfully completed her college course, is living independently with her partner in a flat, has a job and also attends further education.*

**Child C**

*The CSE team first became involved with C following a referral indicating C was going to an older males' house, taking drugs and sexual activity was taking place. C's mother had been told about inappropriate pictures of her child on Facebook and informed the police. C disclosed to the CSE officer several incidents of harm and was supported to speak to the police and complete a video recorded interview. A prosecution of the alleged perpetrator followed.*

*The CSE officer had weekly sessions with C around what had happened to and what exploitation is. The CSE officer also supported the mother emotionally who was struggling with her child's behaviour and helped her employ strategies to set boundaries and create safety. C was volatile towards her mother and on occasion C requested care provision. The CSE officer was available to work with them individually and bring them together to reach a level of mediation. The CSE officer prepared C and her mother for court.*

*C was struggling with attending school and this became more apparent the closer that to the court case; the CSE officer met with the school to improve their understanding of C's presentation.*

*The perpetrator pleaded guilty and received a custodial sentence. C was not required to give evidence. A year on from the case, C is still living at home, relationships have improved. A is doing well at college, is in an age appropriate relationship and has even given a presentation at college on CSE. C and her mother have been very positive about the CSE team's involvement through a very difficult time. They have agreed to share their story in the media and for training purposes.*

**Child D**

*D, 13 years old, was believed to be in a relationship with an adult male, a neighbour. D was moved out of the family home to a safe placement to protect her from the perpetrator. D and her siblings were subject to child protection plans; during the assessment it had become evident that D was spending time away from home without parental permission and no one knew where she was or reported her as missing. D had stopped going to school and was isolated from her peers and changes to her behaviour were noted in relation to her appearance, attitude and even the music she listened to.*

*At first D did not engage with the CSE Officer; the perpetrator had told her not to cooperate. For 3 months the CSE officer visited weekly to build a relationship and gain her trust. D started to trust the CSE officer and shared information about the relationship with me, graphically depicting the grooming process. The CSE officer supported D in undertaking three video recorded interviews in relation to the abuse.*

*The perpetrator pleaded guilty on the first day of his trial and received a custodial sentence. D was supported to attend sentencing by the CSE officer. Work around her psychological wellbeing has been crucial as D still held an attachment for the perpetrator and blamed herself for his imprisonment.*

*D now accepts that she was abused and her understanding of risk and consent has improved. D is now able to recognise she can make safe choices. Work around keeping safe has been completed. Follow up work has been completed around relapse. D is now in full time education; has become involved in horse riding, getting up early to care for the animals. D is now involved in supporting another young person who is just beginning her escape from CSE.*

*D now speaks positively about the service she received from the CSE team. D is happy to share her story with professionals to help them understand they need to show 'stickability' with their engagement with children who may fight against engaging with them to begin with.*