1. CONTEXT OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION WORK IN GLASGOW
(taken from Sexual Exploitation of Vulnerable Young People Looked After and accommodated in Glasgow, 2013, Rigby & Murie)

1.1 This Glasgow response has been prepared by Glasgow Child Protection (CPC) and reflects the multi agency commitment within the City to improving practitioner awareness, practice standards and better outcomes for children who are experiencing child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Colleagues in partner agencies will be responding to the call for evidence specifically around the issue of trafficking. This response will consider CSE in the broadest sense, however, Glasgow has been intensively involved in developing services for child victims of trafficking (see 3.4).

Glasgow welcomes the opportunity to respond to the call for evidence to contribute to the practice debate.

2. CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

2.1 The issue of sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people is increasingly attracting political, media and academic focus, brought starkly to the fore in the public spotlight by the media reporting of the Rochdale cases (Rochdale LSCB 2012), emerging allegations about Jimmy Saville, and the recent publication of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner in England. The National Action plan in England and Wales (Department for Education 2011) stated that local authority areas should assume that sexual exploitation is in their areas, and a recent Scottish review (Brodie and Pearce 2012), indicated that experiences south of the border are likely to be replicated in Scotland. The Scottish review found that establishing the prevalence of sexual exploitation is difficult due to the hidden nature of the problem, limited awareness, differential application of policy and differing definitions applied by young people, parents, carers and professionals (Brodie and Pearce 2012).

2.2 While the definition for sexual exploitation contained in the England and Wales guidance is now generally highlighted as a comprehensive definition, its wide scope may still cause confusion and raise questions when young people present with complex issues and histories. The English definition is more comprehensive than the definition given by the Scottish Government in 2003 and has been considered more helpful in relation to understanding CSE.

2.3 In Scotland and Glasgow concerns about sexual exploitation are not new; in 2003 there was recognition by the then Scottish Executive that vulnerable young people, both boys and girls, were being sexually exploited across the country, although there was also an acknowledgment that the numbers
involved was not known (Scottish Executive 2003). Glasgow Child Protection Committee multi-agency guidance was first published in 2001, at a time when multi-agency working groups were meeting in the city to discuss the issues. The guidance was reissued in 2006 (Glasgow CPC 2006) for workers to provide an updated framework to assist practitioners in assessing and safeguarding children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. This guidance was located within the overall vulnerable young person procedures (VYP)\(^1\) and was recognition that the sexual exploitation of children and young people was child abuse. It also provided a list of potential indicators for practitioners to refer to and identified areas in the city where there were concerns about young people congregating and accompanying risk of exploitation.

The VYP procedures are currently being evaluated and will be updated to reflect current research and practice. The CSE practitioner’s guidance will be updated as part of this process.

2.4 CSE continues to be a priority for the CPC and significant work has been undertaken over the last four years in the management of child trafficking which sits within the wider CSE spectrum of concerns and behaviours. Worker knowledge and practice developments relating to trafficking have been underpinned by robust research overseen by the Vulnerable Children & Young Persons sub-Group and a series of research papers have been published which have significantly influenced practice development.

2.5 Glasgow has also experience of working with the police where CSE has been identified. Such investigations are complex, require considerable multi-agency co-ordination and co-operation. These investigations have identified practice challenges for all partner agencies, especially police and social work, and the lessons learned have been shared within agencies.

3. RESPONSES TO THE QUESTIONS RAISED

3.1 What barriers exist to identifying, disrupting or prosecuting child sexual exploitation (CSE) perpetrators? How might these be overcome?

Glasgow recently undertook the first in a series of research activities around CSE. For many years practitioners have been trying to manage complex scenarios involving young people who are at risk of CSE. However, this task is often made very difficult as the young person themselves do not always consider themselves to be at risk and do not want to engage with professionals around their safety and well-being.

The first phase of the research identified that professionals awareness of CSE needs to be enhanced and supported. Workers are identifying a range of risk indicators, but are not reflecting on these and identifying the YP as a victim of

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\(^1\) Children and young people in Glasgow may be managed under the Vulnerable Young Persons Procedures if child protection procedures are not appropriate or the young person is vulnerable to exploitation or harm.
CSE. Work needs to continue with all professionals in this area of practice to ensure an increased awareness of potential indicators and what action is necessary to keep YP safe.

Through the use of the VYP procedures professionals come together to consider the needs of the YP, the potential risks they may be exposed to and agree a multi agency plan to manage and support the child and the risk. Often the YP’s needs are multi factorial and young people are exposing themselves to significant risk at the hands of adults who provide them with accommodation, food, clothing, phones etc in return for sex.

Glasgow’s current experience of working with the police in investigating CSE has highlighted the need for a multi agency approach. While the police lead on the investigation, all agencies contribute to the collation of information relating to the YP and potential suspects. Discussion between agencies takes place and interview strategies are agreed and the needs/vulnerabilities of the young person are fully addressed and appropriate supports put in place. It is recognised that YP may not want to engage with the police, may take some time before they feel able to talk about what is happening and interviews and the gathering of information requires to be undertaken at the YP’s pace (this may extend over weeks and in some instances months). This presents management issues for agencies trying to co-ordinate professional activity and support to the YP.

While professionals are identifying concerns and possible perpetrators of CSE, it has been very difficult to evidence criminality and the focus has often been on the victim rather than the perpetrator. Existing legislation needs to be used more effectively to intervene and protect YP and criminal proceedings should not solely rely on the YP giving an account of their abuse. In the past if the YP has refused to speak to the police there was a sense that nothing could then be done and professionals were left trying to work with the YP where they were concerned that risk continued and the YP was still potentially in contact with adult who was believed to be abusing them.

3.2 What difficulties exist around keeping looked-after children and young people (accommodated or at home) safe from CSE perpetrators? How might these be overcome?

Keeping LA children/YP safe within their care setting or in the community can be very challenging for parents/carers and workers. Modern technology such as mobile phones means that YP can communicate with others and care staff have now knowledge of YP may be in contact with. One young person may be targeted by a potential perpetrator and they may be encouraged to introduce their friends to this person and so young people can also be seen as facilitating the abuse - although this needs to be seen in the context of the YP victimisation.

It is essential that YP are made aware of potential dangers from an early age and education services in Glasgow are actively delivering awareness programmes in a number of schools. These are delivered by education staff,
but specialist services are also involved in the external delivery of certain aspects of a wider safety programme for children.

Professionals need to challenge the notion that it is acceptable for a young person under the age of 16 yrs to have older boyfriends (often several years their senior). There is a need to identify vulnerability as soon as possible and intervene at a much earlier stage to prevent further exploitation. Intensive services need to respond to the complex needs of this group of young people.

3.3 **What barriers exist to combating perpetrators’ use of online / social media? How might these be overcome?**

Social media has presented professionals with a range of challenges. Professional knowledge needs to be more robust and workers need to understand how technologies can be used to target and exploit YP. Educational programmes in schools is essential to ensure that children/YP and parents are made fully aware of the dangers and what measures can be taken to protect children/YP.

Once again greater consideration needs to be given the use of existing legislation to target potential perpetrators.

34 **What types of training has your organisation had on ways of identifying, disrupting or prosecuting CSE perpetrators?**

Multi agency training has previously been delivered across the City and the CPC inter agency training programme offers training on CSE as part of its annual training calendar. The CPC Vulnerable Young Person’s Sub-group has prioritised training for the latter half of 2013 and is keen to raise awareness of the indicators of CSE and the need for structured multi agency intervention that not only identifies the YP’s needs and vulnerabilities, but which also focuses on the perpetrator and what legal measures can be used to investigate suspected crimes of CSE.

The annual CPC conference 2013 will focus on CSE.