

Practice and Learning Bulletin

September 2021



Welcome to Septembers Edition of the Practice and Learning Bulletin

In this edition I want to focus on some aspects of the findings from the thematic review into the sexual exploitation of young people in Bradford. It is important that we take the learning from this review and ensure that this is part of our continuous learning and not just a one off briefing event. We need to embed that learning in to our everyday practice so we are confident in our safeguarding practice, recognising signs from our knowledge, observations, and discussions that tell us something is not right. We need to demonstrate professional curiosity by asking the right questions, critically analysing what we know and work out what we don't know but need to know.

Therefore, in this month's edition of the bulleting the following articles are included.

- Working with child sexual exploitation
- Learning from Research (CSE)
- Professional curiosity revisited
- Training and Development



As always please let me know if you want to see something in the bulletin or want to contribute.



Best wishes

Traci Taylor

Principal Social Worker/Service



ON PRACTICE

Working with Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a complex area of work and it is important to recognise that each child or young person who is being sexually abused and exploited has individual experiences so “one size does not fit all”. This means that while we may develop processes, procedures and working practices that help us to identify who may be at risk of CSE and how to work with children and young people involved, there is not a “**typical CSE case**”. CSE takes many forms.

However, we do know that there are key features of child sexual exploitation; vulnerability factors that increase the risk of CSE and that there are indicators that a young person may be experiencing exploitation.

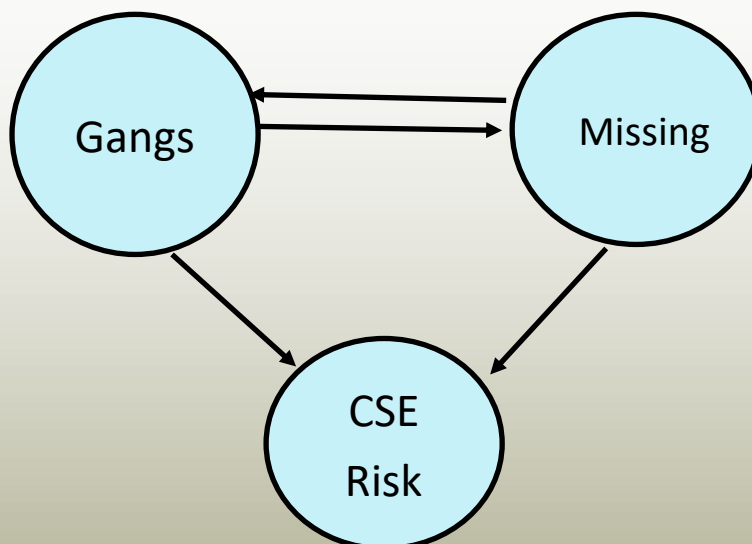
Vulnerabilities that increase the risk of CSE	Signs of sexual exploitation.
<p>Disengagement from education</p> <p>Disorganised attachments</p> <p>Previous or current exploitation</p> <p>FGM, Modern slavery, risk of forced marriage, risk of honour based violence</p> <p>Gang involvement/association - gang-associated CSE</p> <p>Homeless - living in a hostel, B and B, sofa surfing</p> <p>Instability and insecure relationships with family</p> <p>Learning disabilities</p> <p>Living in a household with a disrupted family life</p> <p>Living in a gang neighbourhood</p> <p>Living in residential homes</p> <p>Low self esteem or confidence</p> <p>Previous exploitive relationship</p> <p>Recent bereavement or loss</p> <p>Self harm</p> <p>Substance misuse (drugs and alcohol)</p> <p>Poor health and wellbeing</p>	<p>Missing from home or care</p> <p>Physical injuries</p> <p>Drug or alcohol misuse</p> <p>Involvement in offending</p> <p>Repeat sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations</p> <p>Absent from school</p> <p>Change in physical appearance</p> <p>Evidence of sexual bullying</p> <p>Estranged from family</p> <p>Gifts from unknown sources</p> <p>Recruiting others</p> <p>Poor mental health</p> <p>Self harm</p> <p>Thoughts of or attempts at suicide</p> <p>Exploitive relationships</p>

Grooming: This is term given to the process that perpetrators use to create or increase the vulnerabilities that lead a young person into an exploitive situation. Because of this process, coupled with their vulnerabilities young people will not be able to recognise that they are at risk. .This is an example of some of the methods used by perpetrators—not an exhaustive list.

Giving presents - especially in the grooming phase
Food treats
Rewards such as phone top ups
Giving the child or young people attention - showing interest.
False promises of love and or affection
Giving them alcohol
False promises of opportunities - modelling
Drugs - either giving drugs or paying off a debt
Giving money
Paying off debts
Mental manipulation
Fear
Physical violence

To combat the increasing risk of CSE there has been a lot of research and collaborative working in order to look at how this can be prevented; CSE now falls under the umbrella of Criminal Exploitation, or contextual safeguarding which recognises all the factors that play a role.

This is shown in the example below :



In this example, missing increases the risk of gang involvement and the relationship between missing and gang involvement leads to an increased risk of child sexual exploitation.

It is really important that as practitioners we are aware of the up to date thinking, research and evidence



Learning from Research: Tackling Child Sexual (TEC) Support Programme

Research in Practice, the Children's Society and The University of Bedfordshire have been working together and have formed the TEC support programme which aims to support local areas to develop an effective strategic response to child exploitation and risk of harm outside of the family home; known as extra familial harm. The support programme covers child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation, including county lines, drug trafficking and modern slavery.

Information about the TEC support programme along with the resource library can be accessed via your Research in Practice account (if you don't have one please set one up)

RiP says '*Joining the dots - our collective knowledge of and understanding of child exploitation is still a developing field. Ideas and examples from across the sector and beyond may help bring a fresh new perspective or unlock a problem*'

Hearing Young People' Voices - is one of the TEC support programmes key priorities with an aim to identify and share ways in which senior leaders can bring children and young peoples voices into strategic discussions about child exploitation and extra familial harm.

RiP have previously published 'Working Effectively to Address CSE - An Evidence Scope (2015) and evidence from young people's voices is as relevant now as it was 6 years ago when the research was first published.

What Young People Want:

Vigilance: To have adults notice

Understanding and action: To understand what is happening; to be heard; to have that acted on.

Stability: To develop a stable relationship of trust

Respect: To be treated with the expectation of competence.

Information and Engagement: To be informed and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans

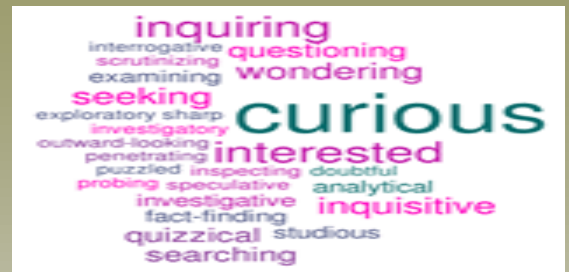
Explanation: To be informed of the outcome

Support: To be provided with support.

Advocacy: To be provided with advocacy to assist in putting forward views.



Professional Curiosity



What is professional curiosity?

It is the capacity and communication skill to explore and understand what is happening within a family rather than making assumptions or accepting things at face value.

In practice this means 'thinking outside the box', beyond the usual professional role, and consider families' circumstances holistically.

Curious professionals engage with individuals and families through visits, conversations, observations and asking relevant questions to gather historical and current information.

It is a combination of looking, listening, asking direct questions, checking out and reflecting on information received it means:

- testing out your professional hypothesis and not making assumptions
- triangulating information from different sources to gain a better understanding of individuals and family functioning
- getting an understanding of individuals' and families' past history which in turn, may help you think about what may happen in the future
- obtaining multiple sources of information and not accepting a single set of details you are given at face value
- having an awareness of your own personal bias and how that affects how you see those you are working with
- being respectfully nosy

Why is it important?

Professional curiosity is a golden thread through Safeguarding Partnership learning reviews and audits.

Nurturing professional curiosity is a fundamental aspect of working together to keep children, young people and adults safe. A lack of professional curiosity can lead to:

- missed opportunities to identify less obvious indicators of vulnerability or significant harm
- assumptions made in assessments of needs and risk which are incorrect and lead to wrong intervention for individuals and families
- the presenting issues are dealt with in isolation

Professionals asking questions and seeking explanation from parents/carers is something to be valued; healthy challenge is good and can provide assurance that your assessment of the situation is accurate.

A high reliance by professionals on self-report by parents/carers brings with it significant risks of proceeding on false information.

Good information sharing, supervision and open discussion at key decision-making meetings to 'check and test' information can be crucial in ensuring this does not happen.

Top Tips to practice in a professional curious way!

LOOK:

- Is there anything about what you see when you meet with this child/adult/family which prompts questions or makes you feel uneasy?
- Are you observing any behaviour which is indicative of abuse or neglect?
- Does what you see support or contradict what you're being told?

LISTEN:

- Are you being told anything which needs further clarification?
- Are you concerned about what you hear family members say to each other?
- Is someone in this family trying to tell you something but is finding it difficult to express themselves? If so, how can you help them to do so?

ASK:

Are there direct questions you could ask when you meet this child/adult/family which will provide more information about the vulnerability of individual family members? Here are some examples:

- How do members of your family deal with conflict?
- How do adults in the household respond to stress?
- What arrangements are in place for the child or young person to access education? Why are you not at school?
- Who are the professionals working with individual members of your family?
- What is it like to be (name) living in this family/household?
- What is a typical day like for you?
- Who is this with you at this appointment?
- Who is living with you?
- What is the first thing you think of when you get up in the morning and/or the last thing you think of before you go to sleep?
- When were you last happy?
- Do you feel safe?
- What do you look forward to?
- Are there people who regularly visit your home apart from those who live there?
- Are you in fear of the consequences of doing something, or not doing something?

CHECKOUT:

- Are other professionals involved?
- Have other professionals seen the same as you?
- Are professionals being told the same or different things?
- Are others concerned? If so, what action has been taken so far and is there anything else which should or could be done by you or anyone else?



As always, there are lots of opportunities for your continual professional development.

Mandatory training: Please make sure that you have completed all of your mandatory e-learning training and completed any refresher training required. For our mandatory training some of the modules have e-learning workshops to complete before attending the virtual training. We will be completing the next series of workshops over the next 6 months, starting with Hidden Men; there will also be a workshop on **developing professional curiosity**.

Tri-x: Just a reminder that you should all know how to access Tri-x and be using this on a regular basis; you can sign up for alerts when new documents are added. Tri-x is where we keep all of our policies, procedures, practice guidance and our practice standards. **It is useful to have this open and minimised as it is then easy to go in and check things you are not sure about.**

Evolve: Just a reminder that Evolve is always being updated with new training classes offered by the corporate workforce development team, other trainers across the council as well as new workshops added by the children's workforce and learning Service. Most training is available to our agency staff so please ensure that you have a look at what is available.

There are lots of workshops that are may be of interest to you no matter what your role, if you are interested in attending a workshop/training course but not sure if this fits with your role please discuss with your manager. It is important that everyone in the organisation understands the roles of others and how your role fits in so I am keen to open up training offers to everyone.

Recommendation for training available via Evolve:

Tuning in to Parent Infant Relationships - Little Minds Matter

This course will take place on Zoom and the dial in details will be emailed 48 hours in advance.

Tuning in to Parent Infant Relationships is a free 2 1/2-hour online training course delivered by Little Minds Matter: Bradford's Infant Mental Health Service.

The course aims to support practitioners in their work with families and help them to gain an increased confidence on how to observe relationships, build knowledge on what to look for when assessing concerns and when discussion observations with professionals.

Attendees will also be introduced to the concepts of 'attunement' and 'being with' as two practical ideas that can help when working with families where there are difficulties in the parent infant relationship.





If you have not already done so please set up your learning accounts with the following— both are excellent sources of information, resources and webinars. There is training that you can book on also. There is lots of valuable reading around child exploitation.

Research in Practice: www.researchinpractice.org.uk

Children's Social Work Matters: www.childrensocialworkmatters.org

Other training opportunities:

The safeguarding partnership is offering a multi-agency training session on **cumulative harm** on the 8th September 2021 an email has been circulated on how to book on to this.

Research in Practice have a **live webinar** on 21st September 2021 2 - 3.30pm **Supporting Practice: Having courageous conversations.**

Social care practitioners have courageous conversations every day. However, some can feel more challenging than others.

This webinar will explore why some conversations may feel 'difficult' or 'uncomfortable' and will support you to reflect on your practice by identifying strategies that can be used to prepare and take forward courageous conversations. Ensuring you are able to identify and receive support around courageous conversations is also covered. There will be a chance to access the recorded version shortly after the live event: Application is via your RiP Account.

Social Work England:

For qualified social workers : The window to update your Continued Professional Development opens on the 1st September - you need to prioritise this so that you continue to be registered as a social worker; I will send out reminders and if you need support to update you CPD please contact me. Traci.taylor@bradford.gov.uk

As a learning organisation feedback is really important to us to make sure that we are getting things right.

Please have your say about the training and development being offered via your evaluation forms as we are using this feedback to adapt our workshops.

Thank you to everyone who has sent responses, feedback and suggestions for this Practice and Learning Bulletin and the bite size learning events and emails sent.



**WE APPRECIATE
YOUR FEEDBACK
THANK YOU!**