

The impact of CSE on families

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Pace
Parents against
child sexual exploitation

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Pace is a national charity established in 1996.

Across England we have supported and worked alongside over 800 parents and carers of sexually exploited children.

Parents come to us a result of referrals from the police, social services and other NGOs plus self-referrals.

Pace acts as a bridge between affected parents/carers and statutory agencies.

Safeguarding children.

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Quotes from parents

*“We woke up to find the house had been graffitied. They'd daubed across the house 'Rachel is a **cock-sucking slag**'. ”*

*“**Me and her mum split up**, we could not cope. Her **younger sister hated her** for the misery she caused the family.”*

*“We tried locking the doors and hiding the keys. I even called the police and had her arrested. It was the hardest thing I have ever done in my life, but I was desperately **trying to keep my daughter safe**. The men had manipulated her so successfully, that **she only saw us as the enemy**.”*

Quotes from parents

"I took six weeks off work so I could keep my daughter in the house and away from the gang who were exploiting her. I nearly lost my job.

Two weeks in, the groomers started sending gang members round to patrol the outside of my house.

The police could do nothing. I thought about selling up, buying somewhere cheaper so I could leave my job and live off the equity. But my other children begged me not to, and my elderly parents also needed me."

Quotes from parents

*“My daughter threw her phone in water when she was asked to show (to the police) the text messages from the man. She was **very angry & refused to talk** to me at first but has now talked to me which is good.”*

*“I still **feel ashamed** that I was **unable to protect my daughter** and that it is my failure as a Mum that I allowed such things to happen to her.”*

College of Policing guidance 'Authorised Professional Practice - Child Sexual Exploitation' Feb 2014

*"Sexual exploitation can have a **significant impact** on families and can affect their health, work life, family relationships, economic stability and social life.*

*Parents and carers often feel **distraught, traumatised and guilty** for not having protected their children from being sexually exploited.*

*The stress of the situation can **limit their capacity** to respond to the needs of their children and to deal with crises that occur following the exploitation.*

*The sexual exploitation of one child in the family can place **other siblings at significant risk** of being groomed and exploited too.*

CSE will have a traumatic and negative impact on the family unit

- The **parent and child relationship** will be undermined and potentially **broken** through **grooming, intimidation and coercion**.
- **Family intimidation by the perpetrators** (via the child, siblings or directly) includes assault, harassment, threats to rape, threats to kill parents, siblings & pets.
- **Disempowerment** of parents can be unwittingly increased by statutory agencies who assume parent or family unwilling, or incapable, of protecting their child. Presumption 'chaotic household.'

Excerpt Pace report to Bradford LSCB – October 2014

*“As the parent is often dealing with her daughters missing episodes she has missed appointments at the Job Centre leading to her benefits being withdrawn and sanctions put in place. This leaves the parent surviving on a significantly **reduced income** and dependent on food banks.*

*The parent is **anxious** if she has to leave the house as she is often approached in the street by adult males (perpetrators) making **offensive comments** about her daughter.*

*The family have also **received threats** to **fire bomb** the house which has been reported to the police.”*

Video

<http://bcove.me/c7vol0k3>

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Residue of victim blaming

Affected parents are often blamed for the exploitation of their child.

YouGov surveys identified that although society is finally moving away from blaming a victim for their sexual exploitation, parents are still being held responsible in part for the crimes committed against their child.

Over two fifths of professionals (44%) & parents (41%) agreed in most cases parents are in part responsible for the sexual exploitation of their child.

**'They
needed to
be
backed,
not
blamed.'**

Complex and at times contradicting YouGov results may in part explain why **affected families can find it difficult to engage with statutory agencies.**

Once a perpetrator commits a crime against a child, their parents are no longer '**forgotten safeguarders**' but '**failed carers**'.

'Even when it is clear that parents are struggling to protect their young children from risks outside the home we still expect them to have a magic solution.'
Carlene Firmin

What police and social care workers have said to parents

‘You need to keep her under control.’

*‘It’s your responsibility you should
keep her in.’*

‘You need to rein her in.’

*‘Can’t you take her out to the cinema
or something on an evening?’*

*‘I wouldn’t put her in charge of an
empty pram’*

*“Has anyone ever said no
to your daughter?”*

Causes of disempowerment of parents

- Impact of CSE.
- Intentions/interventions of perpetrators.
- Agency responses.
- Lack of relevant advice and support.

Child Protection Model

- Based on understanding of ‘rescuing’ young children from sexual abuse, emotional abuse or neglect within the family.
- Focus is identifying risks in the home and deciding whether to remove the child from the home environment.
- Misses the more complex needs of older children, including *“how to support parents/carers to identify and understand incidents of abuse taking place outside their home domain.”*

Child Protection Model and CSE

“Our understanding of child protection must develop from one focused on protecting younger children from abuse in the home to one incorporating the protection of older children from abuse located and experienced outside the home.”

(Pearce, 2014:125)

Why involve parents?

- Primary **safeguarders** of their children.
- Supply the **majority of out-of-hours and long term** support in assisting a child to exit from exploitation.
- Key in gathering **evidence to assist in prosecutions**.
- Need to support their child through the **prosecution process** – leading to increased likelihood of convictions.
- Involving/supporting parents may **prevent family breakdown**.
- **Supported, informed and engaged parents have greater resilience in** safeguarding their children from continued exploitation.

College of
Policing new
national policing
guidance
'Authorised
Professional
Practice - Child
Sexual
Exploitation'
Feb 2014

*"Parents and carers may be the first to notice any changes in a young person's behaviour which may give cause for concern. The information a parent or carer can provide may be **valuable evidence to help build a case against the offender.**"*

This can include:

- *intelligence on suspects*
- *third party accounts supporting the allegations*
- *evidence showing the suspect in contact with the victim (e.g. via texts or social media platforms)*
- *DNA evidence, clothing and mobile phones.*

If the victim's family contacts the police, they should be actively supported and referred to relevant support agencies.

The Relational Safeguarding Model – a different approach

Professionals work in partnership with parents, facilitating and supporting them, in order to **maximise** the ability and capacity of statutory agencies' and families' to safeguard a child at risk of/ being sexually exploited.

The Relational Safeguarding Model

The model's **approach and culture** of working with parents can be used and adapted in different environments:

- ✓ individuals
- ✓ MASHs
- ✓ specialist multi-agency CSE teams
- ✓ organisations

How can families be best supported?

Parent Liaison Officers (PLOs) work in partnership with the individuals and agencies supporting the child within the multi-agency team.

- Provide effective wrap-around support for the family- already in Kingfisher, Sunrise, Bradford Hub, Engage, Cherish, Protect.
- Recognises the **child's identity as both an individual and as part of a family unit.**
- Facilitates parents **sharing knowledge on the child and intelligence** on perpetrators.
- Facilitates high level of support needed. Evidence shows it is **better this emotional support comes from an independent outside agency rather than police or social care.**

Engage!



Benefits to statutory agencies?

Very cost effective specialist family support.

Improved parent and family engagement with professionals - partnership approach.

Information and intelligence sharing.

Court preparation and witness support including consequences of police investigation – housing needs, managing harassment, schooling needs of siblings.

Post trial support and longer term needs.

Benefits to child, parents & statutory agencies?

The empowerment of parents to provide long term support for their child.

Parents able to identify CSE signs and understand manipulation. Risks to the child are reduced.

One to one support. Knowledge and context of the whole family.

Improved family relationships between child, siblings and parents. Helps prevent family breakdown.

Early intervention. Work with families where police identified risk but below criminal investigation threshold.

ACPO & Barnardo's

'Identify support services to provide care to victims and their extended families for the duration of their criminal justice journey and beyond.' ACPO CSE Action Plan 2012

'Recognition of the importance of working with parents and carers should be included in local arrangements and planning to meet the needs of young people who experience both running away and CSE.'

'Commissioners should ensure commissioning processes for services to meet the needs of young people who experience running away and CSE include provision of a specialist parents' support worker.'

Barnardo's Report 'Running from hate to what you think is love: the relationship between running away and child sexual exploitation'

Emilie Smeaton, 2013

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Summary

Key elements of good practice in working and supporting affected parents/carers

- Listening.
- Non judgemental approach, no stereotypes.
- Signposting to support agencies.
- Explaining agencies procedures.
- Including them and preparing them for meetings.
- Encouraging them to and informing them how to gather information and pass it on
- Keeping them informed of any developments.
- Consistency of staff.
- Explaining legislation.

Summary- supporting families through the criminal justice system

Parents' recommendations to you

- Multiagency co-located teams.
- Proactive investigation and use of collaborative evidence.
- Minimise delay.
- Engage and support families.
- Special measures addressed at earliest opportunity.
- Comprehensive victim care – before, during, post trial.
- Manage the expectations of all involved.
- Dedicated specialist skilled prosecutors.
- Clear channels of communications throughout.

Pace services available to Norfolk

- On-going and long term free **telephone-based support** and information for affected parents.
- Free Parent **Network Days**.
- Free online parent **forum**.
- Free online **interactive information learning package** for parents on CSE.
- Co-located **Parent Liaison Officers**.
- **Specialist training** about child sexual exploitation for professionals: statutory and voluntary.

Video

http://youtu.be/ZTZSH2ywL_I

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