



## Redcar & Cleveland Safeguarding Children Board

# Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked Strategy 2017 - 2019

***Redcar & Cleveland working together to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation***

### Redcar & Cleveland Strategic Aims

**Preventing**

**Protecting**

**Prosecuting**

**Publicising**

## Introduction

The Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing or Trafficked Redcar & Cleveland Safeguarding Children Board (RCSCB) sub group is a sub group of the RCSCB. Its primary function is to undertake a responsive and proactive role to identify good practice and areas for development on behalf of the RCSCB. The purpose of such a role is to the safety and wellbeing of all Children and Young People in Redcar & Cleveland and to ensure they are provided with efficient and effective services that provide appropriate outcomes to meet their needs. This may include identifying what services are available, the standards of practice, their continuous review and to demonstrate the effectiveness and improvement of services.

This document has drawn on guidance, recommendations and current research about Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing or Trafficked children. This work plan highlights the outcomes to be achieved within our area and will detail the progress being made towards national and local recommendations.

There will be task and finish groups arranged as and when required to progress specific work streams identified within the RCSCB VEMT sub group. Each task and finish group will produce their own work plan to track and provide evidence of progress.

Redcar & Cleveland have a VEMT Practitioner's Group (VPG) which is a multi-agency forum for discussion about individual young people either at risk of or who have experienced CSE.

The VPG provides an opportunity to share information and intelligence in relation to CSE as well as to:

- Provide a multi-agency response to operational issues.
- Review progress on individual cases
- Review children missing from home or care and children missing from education
- Overseeing local prevention activity
- Reviewing the profile of local CSE
- Identify any local trends or "hotspots" where CSE appears to be a particular issue
- Ensuring the disruption and prosecution strategy is implemented and effective
- Ensure coordinated approaches with other boroughs where required, including where looked after children are placed out of authority and at risk of CSE.

### **Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation**

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 victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the 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 also occur through the use of technology.

### **Definition of Running Missing from Home or Care**

The term refers to children, who have run away from their home or care placement, have been forced to leave, or whose whereabouts is unknown. Every child aged under 18 years of age reported missing from home should be classified as a young runaway.

### **Definition of Trafficked**

- a.** “Trafficking of persons” means the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;
- b.** The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;
- c.** The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article;
- d.** “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

## National and local context

Sexual exploitation of children is an area of national concern following a number of high profile prosecutions and serious case reviews, and publication of extensive research into the subject. **Any child, in any community is vulnerable to CSE:** Child sexual exploitation is occurring across the country but is often hidden so prevalence data is hard to ascertain. However, areas proactively looking for child sexual exploitation are uncovering a problem.

This strategy reflects guidance and recommendations from:

- DfE CSE definition and guide for practitioners 2017
- DfE Care of unaccompanied migrant children and child victims of modern slavery 2017
- 'Time to Listen' – a joined up response to CSE and missing children 2016
- Safeguarding children in schools 2016
- Working Together 2015
- United Nations convention on the rights of the child
- Sexual Offences Act 2003 amended 2013
- Safeguarding children and young people who may have been trafficked 2012
- ACPO CSE action plan 2012 – College of Policing APP 2015
- OCC 'See Me Hear Me' Framework: Inquiry into Sexual Exploitation in gangs and groups 2014
- OCC report on CSE in gangs and groups – one year on 2015
- Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 – 2013) 2014
- The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn't happen here, could it? Ofsted Thematic Report 2014

\*This is not an exhaustive list of reference documents. The strategy will be subject of review, taking into account future publications.

## **Our Vision**

Redcar & Cleveland seek to create an environment where child sexual exploitation is prevented, identified and challenged and will engage with communities, activity providers and faith organisations across the area.

Redcar & Cleveland acknowledge that children, young people and parents or carers are best placed to recognise and prevent child sexual exploitation. The local authority's aim is to educate and support these groups in their understanding of sexual exploitation.

Our vision is to ensure that children, young people and families whose lives are affected by child sexual exploitation will receive a high level of support as well as protection, and that perpetrators are held accountable for their actions, and where possible brought to justice.

## **The voice of the child**

Redcar & Cleveland will champion the voice of the child and ensure this principle is evident throughout work undertaken with children and young people experiencing or at risk of sexual exploitation.

## **Strategic Aims**

The Redcar & Cleveland Safeguarding Children Board and partner agencies will work together to reduce the level of, and harm from CSE equally through the coordination of the strategy via the Strategic and Local VEMT groups. The strategic aims are taken from the 'See Me Hear Me' Framework (January 2014 Inquiry into Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, Office of the Children's Commissioner) based around the 4 P's:

- **Preventing** the abuse from happening
- **Protecting** young people who are victims or at risk of sexual exploitation
- **Prosecuting** offenders wherever possible
- **Publicising** this activity, including how people can report child sexual exploitation

## **Preventing the abuse from happening**

- To engage with Children & Young People, parents, families, communities, activity providers and faith organisations across the area to engender a lack of tolerance of CSE and high levels of support to agencies tackling CSE.
- Preventing opportunities for perpetrators, using shared intelligence and focusing on identified hot spots.
- To offer Children & Young People at risk of CSE the opportunity to form trusting and sustained relationships with people who can help and support them.
- To develop our understanding of those most likely to be at risk, to enable focused early intervention and support to take place.
- Ensuring that CSE is considered when agencies and partners develop their strategies and business plans.
- To ensure the Joint Strategic Needs Assessment reflects research around the circumstances likely to create vulnerability to CSE and gaps in provision.

## **Protecting young people who are victims or at risk of sexual exploitation**

- To ensure that professionals working with Children & Young People are able to;
  - Recognise the signs of CSE
  - Conduct an effective risk assessment
  - Refer the victim appropriately to Children's Services
  - Gather information and intelligence which contributes to the multi-agency understanding of CSE issues in the local area.
- Supporting young people who may be vulnerable to CSE.
- Ensuring young people who are at risk of, or are being, exploited:
  - are identified as quickly as possible e.g. those who self-harm or go missing
  - have their needs assessed and the level of risk established
  - are protected through a multi-agency plan at an appropriate level
  - are supported to work with others to reduce or remove risks
- Making provision available for personal and/or therapeutic support for young people affected by CSE and their parents.

- To develop awareness about access to specialist support for CSE amongst Children & Young People, their teachers and their parents, to assist them in dealing with CSE or helping those thought to be at risk.
- Keep professionals informed and updated so they have the skills and knowledge required to work and respond to CSE.
- To use police intelligence systems as a single point of collation for data on CSE.

### **Prosecuting offenders wherever possible**

- To proactively identify perpetrators of CSE and work tirelessly to disrupt their criminal activity, prosecuting offenders wherever possible.
- Maximising the detection and prosecution of perpetrators through:
  - Identification of perpetrator behaviours and areas of risk
  - Effective evidence gathering
  - Successful prosecutions of perpetrators
  - Support to victims and witnesses throughout and after conclusion of the criminal justice process.
- Disrupting perpetrator behaviour, maximising the use of legislative orders and regulatory powers to prevent access to victims or locations in which grooming and abuse can take place.

### **Publicising this activity, including how people can report child sexual exploitation**

- To promote, through schools, an awareness of CSE and on-line abuse and an understanding of healthy relationships amongst Children & Young People.
- Develop a media communication strategy that informs the public and the community.

### **Monitoring and reporting**

The Redcar & Cleveland Safeguarding Children Board has a responsibility to monitor the incidence of CSE locally, including online abuse, and oversee agency responses. Agencies working within Redcar & Cleveland will be required to provide performance and

monitoring information to the VEMT RCSCB sub group and onward submission to the RCSCB. Single and multi-agency audits relating to CSE will be undertaken and findings reported to the RCSCB.

RCSCB Business Plan 2016-19 priority 2.4 relating to multi-agency working to ensure the needs of Vulnerable, Exploited, Missing and Trafficked (VEMT) children are embedded in practice, is evident within the aims and actions contained in the VEMT work plan and regular updates are presented to the RCSCB. The RCSCB Business Manager is a member of the VEMT RCSCB Sub Group.

Progress of the VEMT work plan is monitored and evaluated by RCSCB VEMT sub group, with oversight from RCSCB and the Tees Strategic VEMT group.

V6 May 2017

Approved by VEMT RCSCB sub group 23/05/2017