



Reducing Child Sexual Exploitation: Strategy and Action Plan (2016-2017)

1. Introduction

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse and child abuse is a crime. CSE destroys lives and affects all our communities and is recognised nationally as one of the most important challenges facing local agencies today. It has a serious long term and lasting impact on every aspect of a child's life including their health, physical and emotional wellbeing, educational attainment, personal safety, relationships and future life opportunities.

Developing a co-ordinated response to CSE in Surrey is therefore a priority for the Surrey Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) and its partners. This strategy outlines the agreed actions we will take to implement a robust, co-ordinated multi-agency response to CSE across Surrey. It has been agreed by all partners who are equally committed to prevent the sexual exploitation of children in Surrey.

The delivery of this strategy supports the SSCB's statutory duties to co-ordinate activities to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in Surrey, as well as ensuring the effectiveness of what is being done by partners. It fully aligns with Surrey County Council's and Surrey Police's wider improvement work.

2. Our vision

**Surrey Children are protected from child sexual exploitation
and feel safe in their communities.**

3. What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

SSCB has adopted the nationally agreed Association of Chief Police Officers (now National Police Chief's Council) definition of CSE which is:

- sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where the young person (or third person/s) receive 'something' (eg, food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.
- child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.
- Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice, as a result of their social, economic or emotional vulnerability.
- A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of

exploitation. The grooming process furthermore removes any real sense of self-determination from victims.

CSE encompasses a spectrum of activity. However, children do not become entrenched in CSE without first being subject to targeted grooming or opportunistic abuse. Systemic sexual abuse is the final stage in a process.

4. The Surrey Context

What do we know about children at risk of/experiencing CSE and perpetrators?

The number of children at risk of or experiencing CSE known to partner agencies has been increasing steadily since we began collecting records. In October 2016, we were aware of 128 children – an increase of 13 from July 2015 when recording began.

As the tables below shows, the majority of children known to us are female and aged between 14 and 16.

Table 1: Ages of children at risk of CSE known to Children’s Services (July 2015 – October 2016)

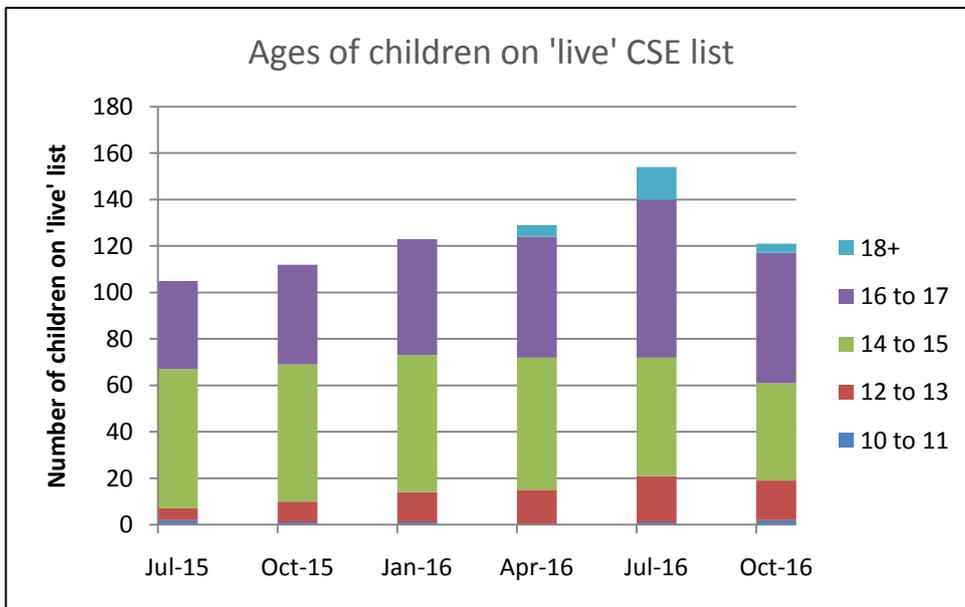
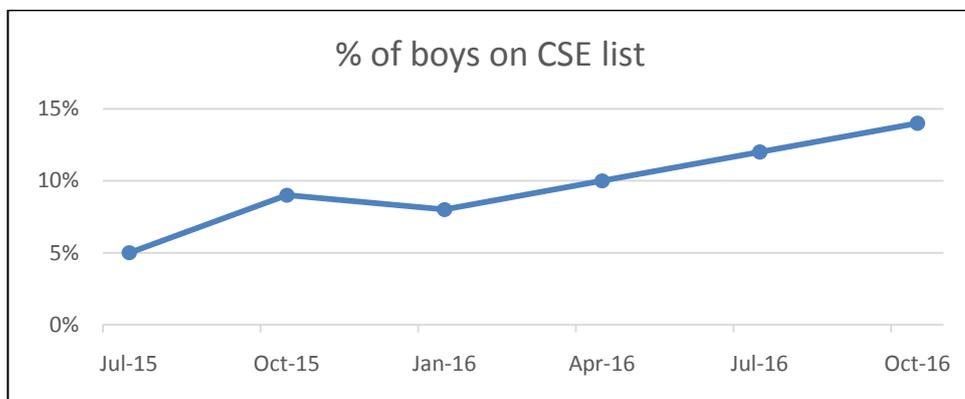


Table 2: Proportion of boys identified as being at risk of CSE and known to Children’s Services (July 2015 – October 2016)



Reflecting national findings, children at risk of/experiencing CSE in Surrey often face a range of additional vulnerabilities. The most recent problem profile (December 2015) suggested that:

- 88% of CSE victims have experienced at least one missing episode.
- A third were in a short stay school, home schooled or not in any educational establishment at all.
- Just under a third feature as being at risk of not being in education, employment or training (RONI).
- One in five CSE victims have a current child protection plan and one in four have previously had a child protection plan in the past.
- A minimum of one in five CSE victims have witnessed parental domestic abuse.
- 16% of the CSE victim cohort are looked after predominantly due to abuse or neglect, or family dysfunction.
- A fifth of all CSE victims have previously made an allegation of rape.

Over the last 12 months, the police have actively investigated 64 perpetrators of CSE. The majority of perpetrators are male, and between the ages of 18 and 35.

We will continue to undertake routine problem profiles in order to better understand the needs of our cohort. This will allow us to identify the most effective ways to reduce CSE in Surrey, protect victims and pursue and prosecute perpetrators.

LGA Peer Review

We know that responses to CSE in Surrey need to improve. To test and improve our approach we arranged for an independent team of experts to visit the county in May 2016.

The five-strong independent team, led by the Local Government Association (LGA), assessed strategic responses to child sexual exploitation and reviewed the day-to-day practice of police, health and social care professionals and youth workers in dealing with the issue.

The final report identified some encouraging areas to build on, including:

- a commitment across all agencies to improve and develop
- agreeing child sexual exploitation as a shared priority
- some specialist services were highly regarded
- good engagement with the community and district and borough councils
- recognition that the partnership has a lot to do to ensure it has the most effective system and processes in place

The team also identified areas we must now improve in order to ensure consistently good practice. These include:

- ensuring children's voices are always heard
- improved data collection and analysis
- practitioners working to a common understanding and standards
- streamlining processes and procedures so the focus is on outcomes for children
- refreshing our partnership strategy

The findings and recommendations made in this report have directly informed the development of this strategy and the choice of priority actions.

5. Our Principles

The following principles have been agreed by all partners and will underpin the multi-agency response to CSE in Surrey. The principles have been informed by the 'See me, Hear me' framework devised by the Office of the Children's Commissioner for England (OCC)¹ and reflect 'Safer Surrey' principles.

1. We will listen to and learn from children, their families and friends who have been affected by CSE and provide messages for both professionals and other children at risk of CSE to influence and improve practice!
2. Victims of CSE cannot consent to their abuse, and there cannot be any scenarios in which victims are viewed as young women or men making informed choices!
3. Strategic and operational decisions will be based on the best available data, feedback from children and their families as well as and insights from across the partnership. Our efforts will be focussed on the most effective ways of supporting and improving the front-line response!
4. We will employ a wider range of initiatives aimed at increasing children's and the wider community's understanding of CSE and develop targeted approaches to engage those children most at risk.

6. Our approach: What we will do to address CSE in Surrey

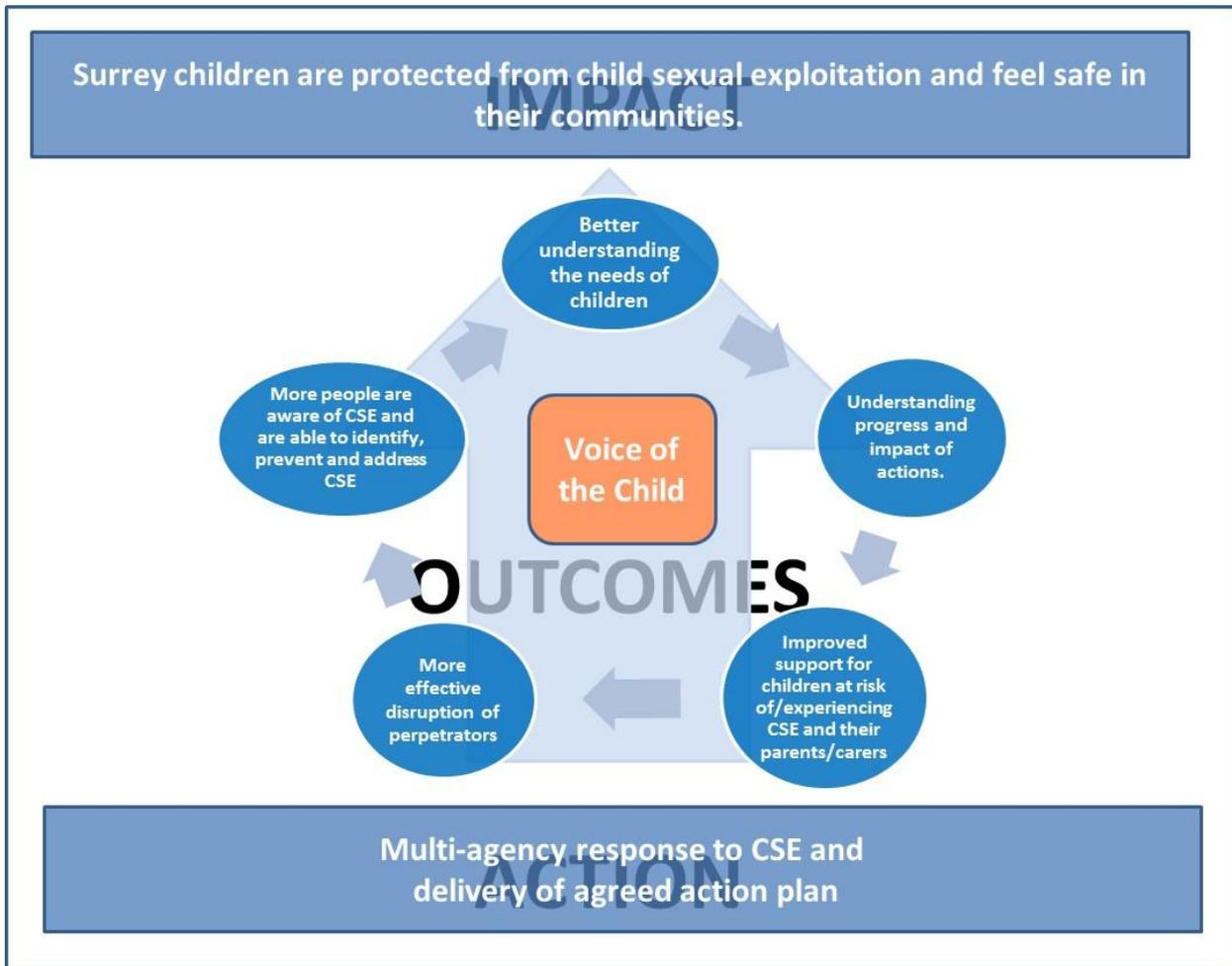
CSE needs to be tackled at different levels. Our approach balances the need to **prevent** CSE of those most at risk, **support** those who are victims of CSE, as well as direct actions to **disrupt** and prevent perpetrators.

As a priority, we will focus our activities on the following priority actions:

- **Priority Action 1:** Revise the existing strategy and action plan and put in place processes to monitor delivery and impact
- **Priority Action 2:** Listen to, record and use the experience of children and their parents/carers to impact on decisions made about them and influence operational, commissioning and strategic decision making.
- **Priority Action 3:** Develop holistic service responses to support children at risk of CSE and their families/carers.
- **Priority Action 4:** Review and update multi-agency CSE operating procedures and improve multi-agency operational response to CSE
- **Priority Action 5:** Co-ordinate activities to strengthen disruption of known and suspected perpetrators
- **Priority Action 6:** Raise awareness of CSE amongst children's workforce and wider stakeholder groups

¹ Berelowitz, S. et al (2013). "If only someone had listened" *The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report*. London: Office of the Children's Commissioner.

Table 3: CSE Action Plan – Overview



7. How this will be achieved – governance and delivery

The effective implementation of the action plan is dependent on robust governance and delivery structures.

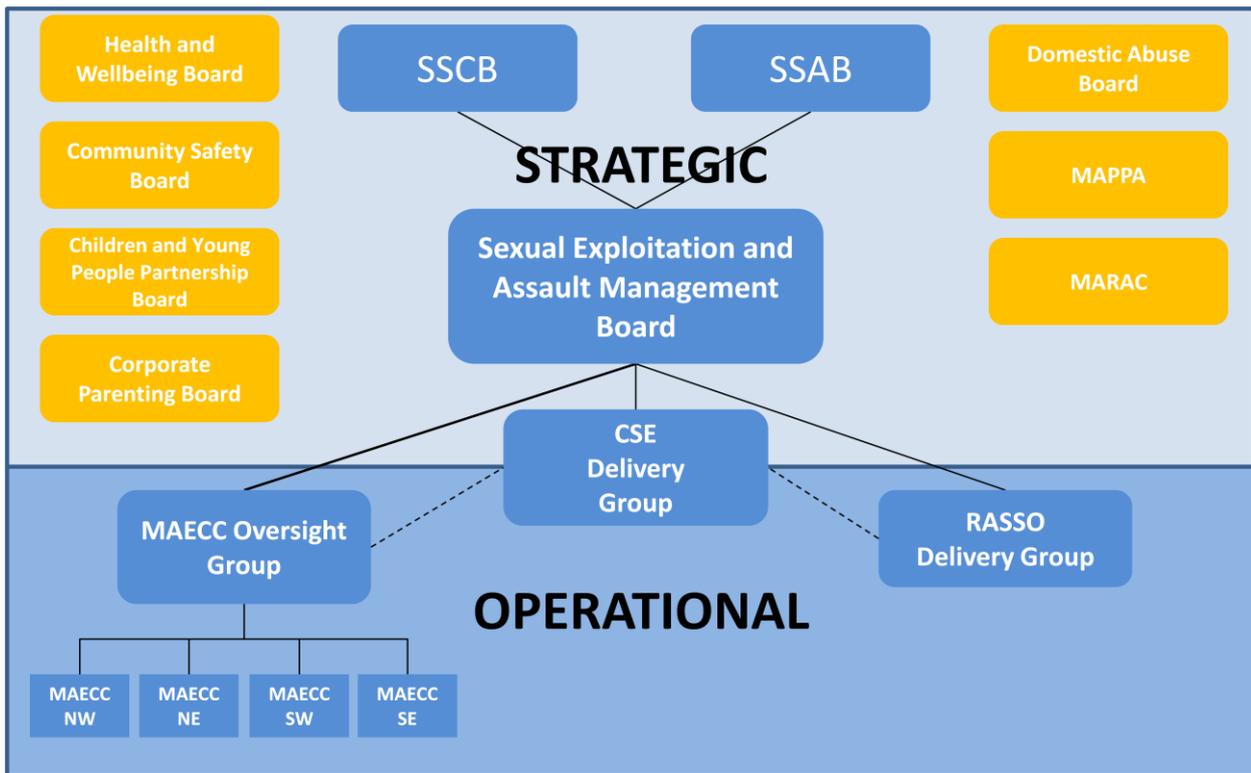
At the strategic level, the Sexual Exploitation and Assault Management Board (SEAMB) is responsible for the development of an action plan and monitoring delivery. The SEAMB will put in place mechanisms to monitor progress and measure the impact of activity as well as ensuring the action plan remains fit for purpose.

The SEAMB is accountable to the SSCB, and will provide regular updates, appropriate assurance and assessment of impact.

At operational level, the multi-agency Missing and Exploited Children’s Conferences (MAECCs) will ensure a joined-up response to children who are missing, exploited and trafficked. The operational insights of this group will inform strategic decision making.

A Delivery Group will be convened to deliver bespoke projects supporting the board’s overall purpose but which fall outside of routine operations/practice.

Table 4: CSE Governance Structure



This strategy does not replace existing single-agency governance and operating procedures. Each agency retains responsibility for safeguarding children at risk of or victims of CSE.