

# Real Voices

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Child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester  
An independent report by Ann Coffey, MP. October 2014

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“I said, ‘Can you not see I am a little girl?’”

Greater Manchester schoolgirl



## Foreword by Tony Lloyd

Child sexual exploitation destroys the lives of individuals and affects all our communities. As the Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester, I am determined to address it.

We have got it wrong in the past and we need to improve the way we respond to those victims brave enough to come forward and report such a crime. We also need to refine the ways we disrupt this criminal behaviour. This is why I asked Ann Coffey to undertake an independent inquiry into the work that has been undertaken to tackle CSE in Greater Manchester since the sickening events in Rochdale. Those horrific crimes rocked and shocked the people of Greater Manchester, who found it difficult to believe such heinous atrocities could be happening so close to home.

As we listen and learn from the victims, their families and friends who have been affected by these terrible experiences, it is vital that we translate what they tell us into positive action so we can tackle these crimes more effectively.

Ann’s report highlights the actions needed and provides us with the momentum with which to achieve these positive changes.

Finally, I would like to offer my thanks to Ann for putting together such a thorough and well-researched report. It’s now up to all partner agencies in Greater Manchester to deliver on her recommendations and drive forward the positive changes needed to stamp out child sexual exploitation in our region.

**Tony Lloyd**  
**Police and Crime Commissioner**

“I lost my virginity to him.  
When my foster parent  
found out, she said:  
‘Why are you being a slag?’  
I was 12 and he was 19.”

‘F’ - Victim who gave evidence in court



## Foreword by Ann Coffey

I have prioritised listening to children and young people in this inquiry. I want to let their unaltered, authentic voices shine out.

Young people themselves hold the information about what is happening to them. All we need to do is listen.

Official report after official report has talked about the importance of ‘putting the voice of the child centre stage’.

Over the past few months, I have met some amazing young people, in schools, youth centres and their homes. I have met young victims of rape and sexual abuse and those at risk of sexual exploitation; I have met vulnerable young mums, peer mentors, young people who are leaving care, boys groups, and a girl in a secure unit.

I am not going to use their words as an ‘add on’ to this report.

I want to let them speak direct to you in the first chapter.

They reveal better than any dry statistics the scale of the problem we, and they, are up against.

The young people talked about the pressures they feel under, with the increased sexualisation of children and lack of respect for girls. Shockingly, they also talked about being approached regularly by older men in the street.

They spoke out about their fear of speaking to ‘suits’ and ‘uniforms’ in the agencies that are supposed to protect them, but which they feel look down on them.

They mentioned the ‘buzz’ and support they get from speaking to other young people who are in the same boat as them.

They highlighted the tremendous value and help of peer mentors – young people who understand the world the victims live in and support them to move on.

They also talked of child sexual exploitation being a new ‘social norm’ in some communities.

At a time when £1.3billion has been cut from public services in Greater Manchester, the statutory agencies

– such as the police, children’s services, health and schools – need to find different and more effective ways of working.

In all my discussions it has been clear how much support and information young people can offer

each other and how let down and alienated they often feel by agencies that are supposed to protect them.

They gave me the idea that young people themselves must be part of the solution if we are to be successful in preventing child grooming becoming more prevalent.

We need to support them to build a network led by young people to fight back against child sexual exploitation across the whole of Greater Manchester. My recommendations to do that are outlined in the Executive Summary.

I hope that the brave young people who spoke to me will feel, if they read this report, that their voices were heard.

First, let’s put children and young people up front and hear direct from them about how they see their lives.

**Ann Coffey MP**



“I get approached all the time when I am in school uniform.”

Greater Manchester schoolgirl

## REAL VOICES...

### 1. Greater Manchester schoolgirls

Girls at one of the schools I visited talked about a worrying amount of unwanted attention and touching from men in the street and talked about sexual exploitation becoming the ‘social norm’ in some areas.

They also spoke about pressure from social media and said young girls feel forced to do things they feel uncomfortable about.

They said if they needed help they would talk to their mum or friends but would not tell teachers because they would report it.

#### Unwanted approaches on the street

They were more worried about threats in person than online and gave many different examples of being stopped regularly by men in the street:

*“Big men will stop little girls in the road and the street. In person, it’s real. But you can block it online.”*

*“I was on my own the other day and a man said, ‘Come here and get in my car and we can go for fish and chips.’ It was on a main road so it was okay, but it would have been more scary if it had been at night.”*

*“I get approached all the time when I am in school uniform.”*

*“On sports day I was stopped right outside the school.”*

One girl was approached by a man who started touching her ear:

*“I said, ‘Can you not see I am a little girl? I am in my uniform.’”*

Significantly, none of the girls said they would report it because such incidents happened so often and they do not think anything would be done.

*“You do not report it because who is going to do anything? It happens so much I do not see the point.”*

*“I do not like going out on my own. I go out with my mum or friends. How can you blame someone because they dress nice and look a bit older? It’s not their fault.”*

One girl talked of being followed off a bus and approached five times on the way to her cousin’s house.

*“Big men look at little girls and some of the big women give us dirty looks. It makes me feel so low. You should not have to feel uncomfortable because of the way you dress.”*

*“I used to show my belly because I had a piercing, but I started to get more attention so I started to cover up and wear a big coat, but it still happens that the men were after little girls. So it has nothing to do with the way someone is dressed. Even girls who are not developed are getting comments and attention.”*

Two girls were out shopping:

*“This man came up and got hold of my friend from behind and started stroking her hair and said, ‘Nice hair’. It’s got to the point where men come up and touch us and try and get us into cars. It’s too much. We looked really uncomfortable but nobody came up and said what is happening?”*

The girls said the safest place to hang out was at friends’ houses.

*“The men do not care how old you are. There is a group of men who hang around outside a shop. When we go past in school uniform they say things and make us feel horrible.*

*“One man tapped me on the shoulder and said, ‘How old are you?’ I said 15 and he grabbed my arm and said come into the shop.*

*“He was about 40. I said do not come near me, get off me, you are old enough to be my dad.*

*“This is on a main road. They just hang around and they are disgusting and make you feel horrible. One said I cannot wait for summer to see what you are going to wear. They make you feel so uncomfortable.*

*“It makes you feel that all boys want one thing. When men approach us I think are all men like that? The majority of men I have come across are out to hurt women from what I have seen.”*

**A lack of trust with the police**

They said there was a lack of trust between the police and young people, which is why they do not report incidents.

The police tend to concentrate on looking for antisocial behaviour from the young people who say they feel ‘looked down on’. They said the police focus on the wrong things.

*“We all went to get a milk shake and we were stopped by the police and they said that girls have been groomed in this street and they took our names and addresses.”*

Another girl was running along in a tracksuit and a man started to follow her. She said she ran past some police officers who could see she looked scared.

*“They could see the man was following me but they just looked me up and down and gave me a dirty look and did nothing. So I had to run home on my own late at night with a man following me.”*

Another gave an example of standing in the street with her young cousins and a friend.

*“The police came up and said, ‘Do not be causing trouble’ and we were not doing anything.*

*“The police look down on all of us. If there is a group of kids, the police come over and make a big deal out of something. They seem to be expecting us to cause trouble. I do not really understand it.*

*“They look down on us so we would not go to them if we need help. We are being judged and they are not doing their job properly.*

*“The police have a stereotype of what we are, and we know that so we do not go to them for help. We think what’s the point? Young people do not call the police because we know how they look down at us. We have to just focus on getting away from the guys.*

“If my house got burgled, I would go to the police; but if someone touched me, I would not go to the police because it feels it would be a waste of time.”

Explaining why she did not report such incidents, one girl said:

*“But there are so many men out there and if we report one then the others will still not go away.”*

**What are the main pressures on you?**

*“Fitting in or else feeling isolated.”*

*“You have to look a certain way.”*

They said stereotyping is done by peers to each other – you have to listen to certain music and look a certain way.

*“You have to have a flat belly, big bum, big boobs and long curly hair. You have to look the piece; if you don’t, people don’t talk to you and you get the mick taken out of you. You have to be a ten out of ten.”*

The pressure comes mainly from boys but also from girls. It starts in primary schools but really kicks in at secondary school.

*“At high school you have to grow up quick. You feel you have to do certain things to show you have grown up.*

*“Girls who are in danger who do not have friends keep it to themselves. They keep it in. They are worried that they will be judged.”*

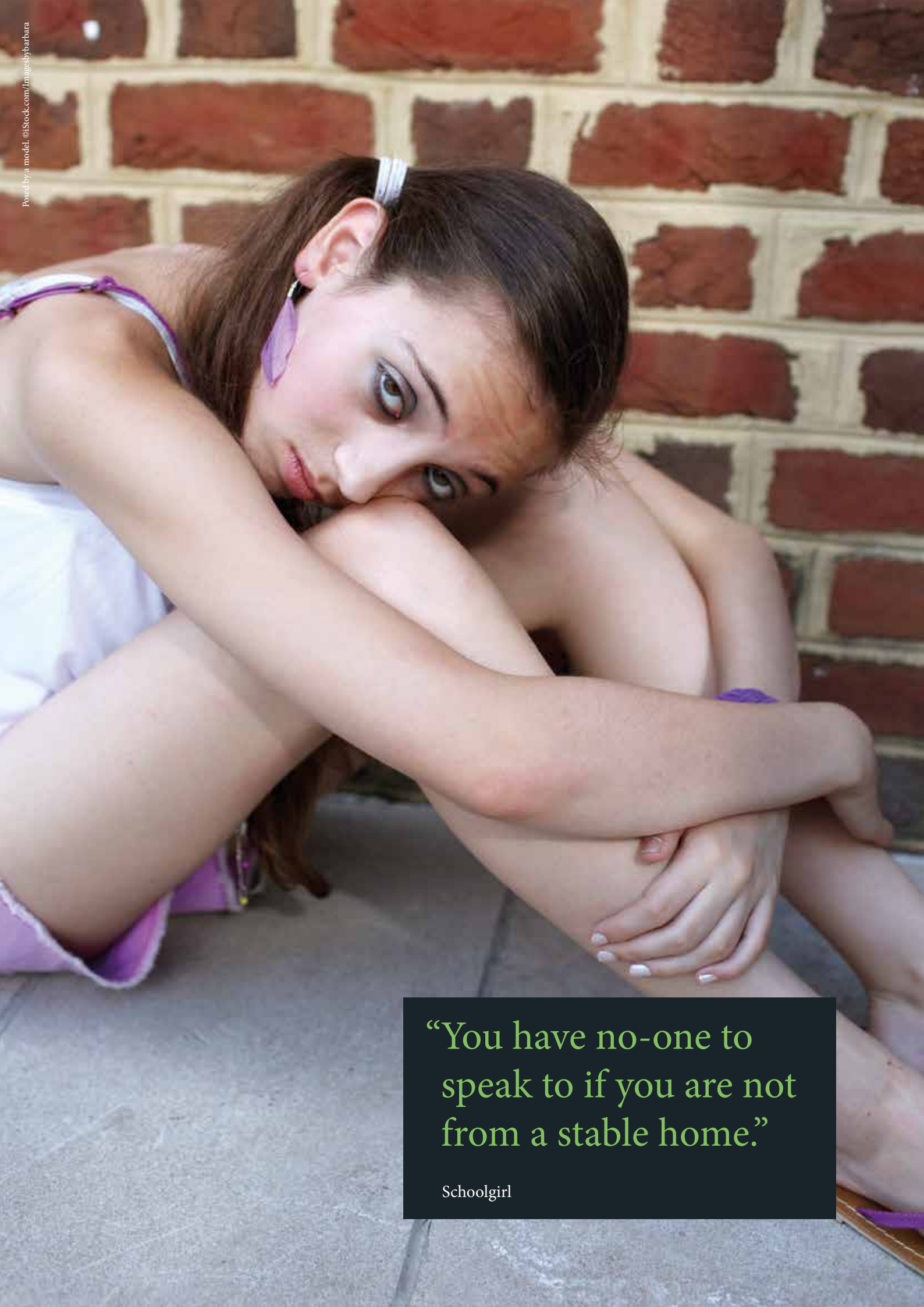
**Do you feel confident about engaging with social media?**

We talked about the ways young people keep in touch such as Snapchat/group chats among close friends, Instagram, Facebook, and Tumblr. They worried about sites such as Ask FM, which they said had turned into a bullying website.

They said there was a need for a more regulated safer advice site but without the bullying that comes with Ask FM.

Some no longer felt threatened by stuff online “Because you can just block or delete it.” It was the ‘real’ approaches on the street they feared.





**“You have no-one to speak to if you are not from a stable home.”**

Schoolgirl

## REAL VOICES...

### 2. Flixton Girls School, Trafford

Peer mentors, from Community Change Foundation, are tremendously valued by pupils at Flixton.

*“We do not have to talk to the teachers about anything personal. We talk to mentors. We have sessions with them and we can also text them.*

*“Sometimes kids get involved in a relationship to boost their self-confidence and do not take enough consideration about what they are letting themselves into. They get in too deep and then cannot get out.”*

The girls felt it was important for girls and boys to recognise they are being used at an early stage, but some young people have no-one to talk to so peer mentors are very helpful.

*“You have no-one to speak to if you are not from a stable home and you are also frightened of being judged.”*

The girls praised Flixton because the teachers are sympathetic and give them lots of information about the dangers of sexual exploitation.

*“It is good that we get taught about it so we are more aware of what is happening. I think we feel more confident in this school to speak to our teachers because of the sessions we do.”*

The school has an anonymous system where pupils can report anything that is worrying them. This leads to good communication and pupils tell teachers about risky websites. Girls now go to teachers because they feel they can trust them.

Many young people stressed how they value face-to-face co-operation and said they would not ring a telephone helpline or phone the police where an anonymous person would answer.

*“I would not be able to tell a person I could not see.”*

*“You are more comfortable speaking to a peer mentor than a teacher because it has happened to them. They have been there and they can guide you and give you advice.”*

All the girls had smartphones and they said that most bullying was on the internet and that it was important that young people know when to delete things.

## 3. A peer mentor

Kyra has been a peer mentor with Manchester Active Voices Youth Empowerment Programme for just over a year, after volunteering at her local youth club.

*“You need to find ways of empowering young people to help other young people. You need to train them and give them the ability to pass on their knowledge. We look at loads of things that young women face but are not covered in schools.”*

She said of one girl:

*“To watch her develop, it’s really great. When she first came she wanted to smash things up.*

*“Building aspirations and self-esteem is the key. Once you have got a goal then there is no reason to hang around with these older males. Many do it because they are bored and have been kicked out of school.*

*“It is important to have someone there to help build their aspirations and support them on their journey.”*

Describing grooming, she said:

*“The men are nice at first and after a couple of months when they think everything is fine they start forcing the girls to do things they do not want to do, like sleeping with them and all their friends, or forcing them to keep drugs in their mum’s house or asking them to carry things. By then the girls are too scared to say no.*

*“Many come from care homes or dysfunctional families where there is a lack of support at home or an alcoholic mum or something, and that’s why they can stay out so late.*

*“I have seen things get physical and girls forced to do things they do not want to do. I have seen a lot of crude stuff and girls forced to do sexual activities to males because they did not feel they had the power to say no. There is a complete lack of respect for females.*

*“When we show films in schools, often the penny drops and people realise they are in bad relationships.*

*“One girl ran out crying and said to her peer mentor afterwards, ‘I am in that kind of relationship.’ She did not realise until it was put in front of her. It hit home. Often, young girls do not know until they are out of it.*

*“You have to keep that message going in a consistent way. A lot of schools are aware it is happening to young girls and they get us in.*

*“There is a lack of understanding. If you go into a classroom and ask, ‘What is grooming?’, only a few will put their hands up. But once you have explained it and ask if you know anyone who has been in this situation, many more put their hands up.”*

Many children were scared to report:

*“They are frightened of being blamed. One girl did not report abuse because there was a child’s car seat in the car and she worried he had children. She did report it in the end but they know they should not really have been there or been drinking.*

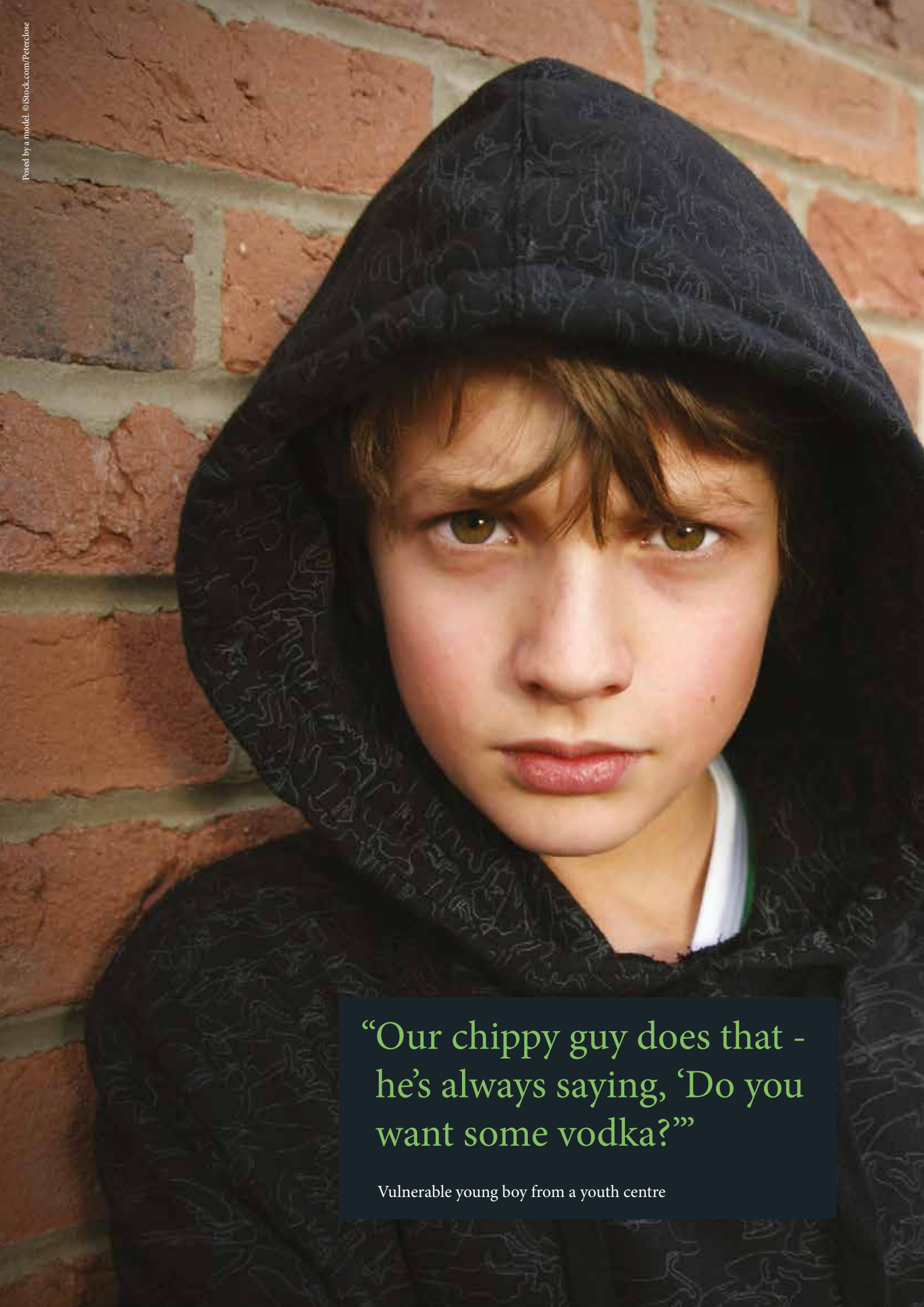
*“Having peer support is so important. You need the help of the local community too. I come from a community where there are big barriers with police and social workers. You need to work with the community and local people to get the message across about child sexual exploitation.*

*“I have been in meetings with social workers and police and other agencies who have been involved with a young person for years, and I realised that I know more about what is going on in their lives in two months than they do in years. I have won their trust by being open and honest with them, and they know I am aware of the environment they live in.*

*“The young people I work with do not trust anyone. There are big barriers, as they are frightened of things being reported back. There is a big fear that if you say too much it will cause too many problems, which they will then have to deal with. They are frightened of being seen to be a snitch or grassing someone up.*

*“Peer mentors don’t shout at people and there will always be ups and downs, but if someone does not want to talk, I will just sit with them and stay with them until they want to open up.”*





**“Our chippy guy does that - he’s always saying, ‘Do you want some vodka?’”**

Vulnerable young boy from a youth centre

## REAL VOICES...

### 4. Vulnerable young people from a youth centre

We have to remember the context of the environment these young people live in. There is a culture of ‘not grassing people up’ and hostility to the police, schools and social workers, which becomes a barrier to their protection.

Their families don’t protect them, but at the same time pass on attitudes that mean agencies cannot protect them either.

This was clear from a meeting I had with a group of eight at-risk young people at a Greater Manchester youth centre to find out what they thought could be done to protect children and young people from sexual grooming.

Asked who they would go to if they needed help, they all said they would not go to the police or schools because they did not trust them.

Another said about social workers: “They just take you off your mums.”

Clearly, the fact that vulnerable young people often brush up against authority figures, including teachers, means they are not confident they would be believed or get any help because they feel ‘written off’ as trouble.

**“They would just grass you up to your mum.”**

**“The teachers would just talk to each other and exaggerate.”**

**“The last place I would go to is the school.”**

**“The last place I would go for help would be the police.”**

Some of the young people said they would tell parents or grandparents, but others said they would be frightened of telling their mum they had had sex because they were worried they might get told off for accepting gifts and be blamed for what was happening.

**“You would feel guilty about taking gifts and worry you were going to get into trouble.”**

Most of the young people agreed they would tell their youth worker, making it clear they needed someone outside the normal agencies who they could trust before they would disclose.

**“Then I would just want them to tell the people who needed to know.”**

**“They go for the girls with the rubbish family lives because they know they will get away with it. They give you things and make you think they are your friend.”**

Many of the young people often found themselves in risky situations, sometimes without even realising it.

When we talked about men giving gifts to buy favours, one boy said, in a sort of penny-dropping moment:

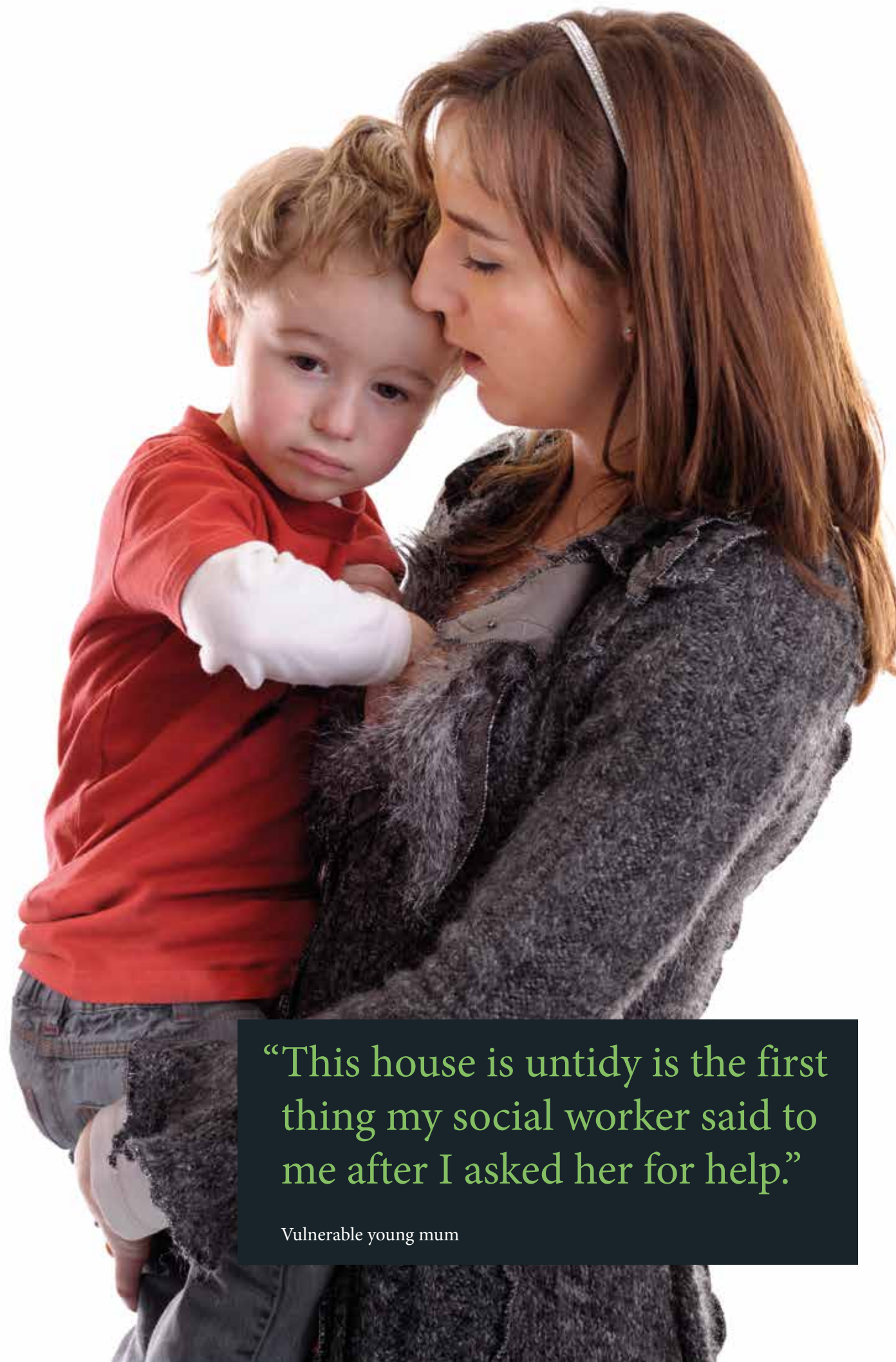
**“Oh. Our chippy guy does that. He is always saying ‘Do you want some vodka?’”**

Another boy said he had been offered a pair of Vans shoes by a man and another had heard of a girl being offered a night in a hotel.

Although there is a culture of ‘not grassing people up’ to the police, one girl pointed out:

**“There is a difference between grassing up someone for having put your windows through and grassing someone up for molesting you.”**





**“This house is untidy is the first thing my social worker said to me after I asked her for help.”**

Vulnerable young mum

## REAL VOICES...

### 5. Vulnerable young mums

I met a group of very young mums who have all had some involvement with social services and who are attending a young parents group. They too had difficulty with authority. When I asked who they would go to if they had a problem with sexual exploitation, one answered:

*“Young people do not want to go to people in a suit and say, ‘This is what is happening.’ They would rather go somewhere casual – like this – where they get face-to-face interaction and feel a lot more secure in themselves.*

*“When you come here you get a bond with people and feel you can talk. It is less stressful. If you make a phone call, you have to worry what is going to be the outcome – will they ring social services?”*

*“But we know if our worker was going to report she would tell us first and we would be fully aware of what was going to happen; she would not do it behind our backs.”*

Talking to peer mentors who had been in a similar position was a tremendous help.

*“You want to relate to someone who has been there and understands, and is not just reading a text book. Someone you can form a relationship with and bond with and see on a regular basis. It makes all the difference.”*

*“A peer mentor would go into a room and see straight away what dark place that person was in and think OMG I was there. Give me a hug.”*

*“You don’t want someone who has been to college for ten years and who has had nothing go wrong in their lives.”*

It was poignant listening to how much help and support the young mums had found in attending regular, supportive and consistent group meetings.

One young woman with mental-health depression issues had waited six months for therapy:

*“I would rather come to this group and talk than take medicine. I do not want tablets because they are not helping me – they are just numbing the pain.*

*“Groups like this allow you to sit down and talk things through and deal with things and talk about the wrong choices you made because you did not know any better. It makes you feel like a stronger person and that if it happened again you could make the right choice.*

*“I was dead low before I started here. I just used to sit there crying. Doing this course has helped me find out who I am again, and I can be me.”*

Another said:

*“I feel giddy after I have been here. I go home and clean up and feel positive. I feel excited and like I can do things.*

*“It’s hard in society today. It is often very bitchy and your confidence is low. So if someone shows you attention, you go for it because you have not got the confidence to say ‘I am not going to put up with this.’”*

They talked about the links between domestic violence and sexual abuse, and the importance of warning girls and boys that relationships can start off seeming caring but then become controlling and violent.

*“I watched my mum go through a lot of stuff and when I went through it I thought it’s not as bad as my mum suffered, so I must be doing okay. I just did not know any different.”*

They stressed the importance of educating boys and young men and challenging current negative and disrespectful attitudes towards girls and women.

*“There is no respect whatsoever from the boys on this estate. They are just obsessed with getting their leg over. They are all just out for a quick jump and that is it. It’s the culture.”*

They said sex education in school should be about relationships and respect, not just the mechanics of sex.

Many troubled children find themselves brushing up against teachers and then feel unable to seek help from them.

One girl, who had been to five different secondary schools, had brought up two younger children because her mother could not cope:

*“There was a lot of stuff going on at home and I felt like I had no-one. I used to go home from school and be in an empty house all the time. I brought myself up and I’d take it out on the schools. I misbehaved. I was raising my mum’s other two kids at the age of 12.”*

She would ‘play up’ so that she could run out of school early because she was worried about how the little ones were going to get home. But she did not dare tell anyone of her predicament in case they took the little children into care.

When she eventually tried to tell teachers they did not offer any real help:

*“They just kept saying, ‘Why don’t you do this or do that?’ I did not know what to do. I was trying to balance an adult’s life and a kid’s life.”*

Another teenage mum said she was naughty at school because she was beaten up by her dad:

*“No-one cared or listened, and when I did try and tell some things to the teacher she said they were too busy and said ‘shoo’. It’s wrong; teachers need to go to a kid and offer help.”*

One felt that social workers were too judgmental:

*“‘This house is untidy’ were the first words one social worker said to me after I asked for help.”*

“No-one cared or listened. When I did try and tell the teacher she said she was too busy.”

Vulnerable young mum



“It’s your life observed and judged by other people.”

Young person with experience of care

## REAL VOICES...

### 6. Young people with experience of care

These young people felt scared of talking to authorities to disclose child sexual exploitation in case they got into trouble. They were also nervous about using telephone lines and about where the information would go to, as they never knew who was at the end of the phone.

They had all had a number of different social workers. One said:

*“Sometimes they do not even tell you that you are getting a new one. They just turn up.”*

*“Nowadays you cannot trust anyone. So if you keep it to yourself, you can trust yourself. I would only ask my brothers and sisters for help. No-one else.”*

One girl said she felt that social workers did not really care and were just ‘box ticking’ until the end of their shift. They were also worried about what would happen if social workers went into their families:

*“You just tell them the good things to keep them happy and keep the meeting short. To them it’s just a job, but to us it’s our lives. They go home at the end of the day.”*

*“If you need help after that, you cannot get hold of them. Yet from Friday at 5pm to Monday is the most likely time you would need to phone them. Most of them do not let you have a phone number. It’s just a 9-to-5 office number.”*

This is in sharp contrast with the flexibility of peer mentors, who many young people told me texted them at the weekend to see if they were okay.

These young people clearly felt the more formal children’s services are organised to suit the people that work in them, not to suit those at risk.

Often they do not get the actual support they ask for but get into a situation where they feel they are being controlled and told not to put themselves in that situation again.

The other problem they identified was that when they get a different social worker, the new one works with the notes from the previous one.

One boy said:

*“You tell a social worker something and they might exaggerate it. Once I mentioned I missed a bus and it went down on my file as ‘has trouble with public transport and getting around.’*

*“Also, I once used an inhaler as a one-off when I was eight and it was down on my file that I was an asthmatic when I wasn’t.”*

*“It’s your life observed and judged by other people. You do not get to read your file so you do not know what is in there.”*

They wanted more control over what was in their files and more of their own words and updates on how they felt things had changed.

Social workers, talking to young people and agreeing what might go into their file, written in their own words, could be a way of building trust.

“There is not a word to describe how bad it was. One of the barristers was not even asking me questions, he was just shouting at me.”

‘F’ - Victim who gave evidence in court

## REAL VOICES...

### 7. A sexual exploitation victim who gave evidence in court

F was a victim of child sexual exploitation. She is the classic example of someone who does not present as a ‘model witness’.

F was born addicted to heroin. Her mum continued to take heroin after she was born and was also an alcoholic. Her dad was on heroin as well. He was taken to prison and later died when F was only eight.

After her mum went missing and left her and her sister in a hotel for four days, the girls were eventually fostered.

*“It felt like I had lost my mum and dad and everyone. I was eight years old in a stranger’s house and felt it was my fault. No one explained what was going on and that my mum was on drugs.”*

*“Someone should have sat down and explained to me and then I would not have felt so pushed out and rejected and as if no-one liked me.”*

When she was about 12 years old she started smoking, drinking and taking drugs. She was getting bullied in school and so started to frequently run away, which was when she met an older man.

*“I lost my virginity to him, and when my foster parent found out she said ‘Why are you being a slag?’ I was 12 and he was 19. Looking back on things, it should have been the 19-year-old’s behaviour that was being looked at and questioned, not the 12-year-old’s.”*

She kept running away and was approached by other men.

*“When I was younger, the main reason I got into that cycle was because there was no-one there for me, and then these men came along and they were there for me, so I grabbed it with both hands as instinct.”*

*“I was being bullied in school and pretty much at home, and the only time I felt okay was when I was with these men.”*

*“Sometimes I was picked up by the men after school. I would walk out of school where I was getting bullied and just go to a man’s flat and take drugs. That went on for a few years.”*

At one stage she was seeing six different services. In total she has had 12 social workers.

*“There were so many services, that nothing was being done. They were just sort of bouncing off each other.”*

*“The workers were always changing. All these services were involved but they did not seem really interested. They just came for an hour and then went. There was never anything focused.”*

She felt she would have benefited from a peer mentor and now wants to set up her own charity to help victims of child sexual exploitation.

*“I want to set up my own charity to show people that there is someone there for them other than these men. I know how I felt at that time when I had no-one there for me, so I want to change it and do not want to imagine that someone else is in that awful position that I was in so many years ago.”*



*“My way of coping is to do something about it to help other people going through the same situation.*

*“If you do not feel cared for, you look elsewhere for that care. It’s like a quick fix.*

*“I have low self-esteem because of what happened to me. I felt I was only worth what the men did to me.*

*“Now I want to help others and to feel I have done everything I can.*

*“I do not think the public understand, and I do not think I would if I had not gone through it myself. I think it is very hard to understand fully.”*

She added:

*“Just because something happened that made me a victim it does not mean I am a victim. I do not want something that happened to me to define me for the rest of my life.”*

She said one of the worst experiences of her life was the treatment she underwent in court, even though the men were eventually convicted.

*“There is not a word to describe how bad it was. I have never ever experienced anything like that in my life, and I never want to experience anything like that again.*

*“I want to do anything I can to get the trials changed for others.*

*“It was like one attack after another. One of the barristers was not even asking me questions; he was just shouting at me, and the judge kept having to tell him to stop shouting and move on, but he kept asking questions that he was not supposed to ask.*

*“When I could not remember things, they made me feel really bad.*

*“After the first trial I started getting Stockholm syndrome, and still get it sometimes now, because one of the barristers told me that one of the men loved me, and when the barrister said that to me, I was confused. I came out of the room and I said ‘I am confused. Am I doing the right thing? Did he love me?’”*

F is still suffering pain and distress. She and the other victims I spoke to have shown a great sense of moral and civic responsibility by giving evidence in court. The publicity their cases generated will help prevent others from the same suffering, and these young women have already had a profound impact on social policy.

**“I do not want something that happened to me to define me for the rest of my life.”**

‘F’ - Victim who gave evidence in court





Posed by a model ©/Stock.com/Erlick

“You have to keep going through the story again and again and reliving it.”

Victim of child sexual exploitation

## REAL VOICES...

### 8. A girl who has been sexually exploited

One young girl, with a very troubled background, started going missing. She was introduced by a friend to a 44-year-old man who had a sort of tuck shop in the back of his car and would hang around giving children cigarettes, alcohol and drugs.

He sexually assaulted her and she eventually reported him, but the police and social workers were not helpful at first. Her dad had to push for them to take the allegation seriously. She said:

***“I do not think highly of the police. They spoke to us very rude.”***

The attitude of social workers is also very important to young people, who just want someone to listen properly, be nice and treat them with respect.

***“One social worker was very snobby, and when dad showed her my certificates she looked at me as if to say they were worth nothing. They should be nicer and not stuck up, and politer than they were.”***

She added:

***“One looked down their nose at me another said: ‘Why don’t you move?’”***

She said that it was very important that there is one constant person:

***“Otherwise you have to keep going through the story again and again and reliving it.”***

Her dad said he had to fight ‘tooth and nail’ to get the police to take her complaints seriously. He believes they only proceeded because his daughter had kept evidence of more than 100 texts sent by the offender, which the father gave to the local child sexual exploitation team.

There was then a complete lack of information and the victim and her father were not even told when her accused pleaded guilty.

The knock-on effects for this girl have been tremendous. She has lost friends and has nightmares and mood swings.

## 9. A young girl in a secure unit

The horrendous level of risk for children who go missing was reinforced for me when I went to visit a 16-year-old girl in a secure unit.

J has had a hard life and was sexually abused from an early age and started to take drugs. This is the fourth time she has been put in a secure unit because of going missing. She said:

*“For me, the first time I went missing, I didn’t know where to go. I was confused, like for me drugs; I used to be bad on drugs, weren’t I? When I first come in here, I was just craving for me drugs.”*

J would go missing for anything from a few hours to a few weeks to a few months and was in almost constant risk of harm.

*“I heard her screaming and saying, ‘I don’t want to have sex with you. You’re older than me – go away, leave me alone.’”*

She said girls in care try to help each other. One night J took a call from a girl in another children’s home. She said:

*“I answered but I didn’t speak because I knew where she was. I was just listening. She had to lie to this lad and say that she was over 18 so she could hide away from her mum and the police and the other people that was looking for her. And then, I was still on the phone to her while he was saying to her, ‘Oh yeah, you can stay here. We can have a drink, you can chill out here, you can have that room and I’ll sleep in that other room.’ That didn’t happen, what he said to her. So obviously she was saying, ‘Oh yeah, thank you very much. I appreciate all this that you’re doing.’ And then I heard her screaming and she was saying, ‘I don’t want to have sex with you. You’re older than me – go away, leave me alone.’ And then, as I heard her saying that, I had to just cancel the phone call. I had to turn the phone off. I couldn’t listen to that. I was mortified. I was scared. I told my carer that if I go missing, just to go and find my mate and help her. And then I went missing and I got involved in it. Then it happened to me. So both of us were stuck in the same flat in the same situation, with not just one man or two – there was three of them.”*

She did not tell the police because the men threatened her and said they would attack her family.

*“So I thought to myself, I’m not getting my family involved in this. I’m keeping my gob shut.”*

Another time she went missing she was approached by a man in the street who said she could go to his house and hide.

*“I thought to myself, I can’t stay in town – too many police about, too many CID. If I get clocked, I’m in big trouble. So we went to his house and he got us wrapped round his little finger. Got us drunk and everything. And then I thought to myself, ‘I know what he’s doing, he’s trying to get me in bed.’ I went, ‘I need to go home.’ So I got my friend to ring me. So, I’ve put the phone on loudspeaker and my mate went, ‘Please can you come home?’ I went, ‘All right then, I’ll be down in two minutes.’ But he wouldn’t let us go. So we has to break the window and jump out of the window.”*

J has been working with a children’s charity project worker, who has helped her a lot. She said:

*“Sometimes, it’s really hard. Like, say if I go to a children’s home and there’s already children there that say, ‘Oh yeah let’s go missing.’ One minute. Go to me room, take me jacket, take me stuff and then I’m gone. And then, I think to myself after a week, ‘Oh, I wish I didn’t do that.’ Because I know what’s going to happen. But then, I think to myself, was it worth it, was it not? But sometimes like when I go missing, I see my friends that I’ve not seen for ages and I think, ‘Yeah, it has been worth it because I’ve not seen them.’ And it’s hard for me to say no to people as well. I’ve never been able to say no. I’ve always had to say yes. It’s only since I’ve been working with [the charity project worker] that I’ve been able to say no to people. I don’t know why. It’s just I’m learning me lesson, I’m taking baby steps. But I’m trying to get social services and the other people to realise that I’m only trying my best. I can’t do no more.”*

“I find it scary and it is becoming more and more common. You can see in the girls’ eyes that they are scared and are being controlled.”

Youth worker - Kemoy Walker

## REAL VOICES...

### 10. Factory Zone boys’ group run by youth worker Kemoy Walker

It was good to talk to boys who attend the Boys Group at the Factory Zone youth centre in Harpurhey run by youth worker Kemoy Walker.

I asked what they thought were the problems in relationships between boys and girls. They spoke about controlling behaviour and said it was becoming increasingly common for boys to ‘control’ girls and keep them ‘on discipline’. Some of the schoolgirls also told me this.

This involves constant ringing to check what girls are doing and demanding photos to prove their whereabouts, telling them what to wear and often keeping them in the house. Kemoy said:

*“I find it scary and it is becoming more and more common. You can see in the girls’ eyes that they are scared and are being controlled.”*

Kemoy wrote about our meeting:

*“The conversation turned to looking at relationships and controlling behaviour within them. The lads explained that a lot of their friends have boasted about the fact that they are controlling their girlfriends and that it is an act of discipline without realising the impact it has on the woman until a later stage, also mentioning that some ladies are left vulnerable at times.*

*“I mentioned about a programme on BBC Three called ‘Murdered by my Boyfriend’, which shows a young girl who had a great life and gets into a relationship which starts to get controlling and abusive and regularly has to take pictures to prove her whereabouts. Because she has a child with the guy he uses that against her all the time and because he tells her he loves her, each time she takes him back. In the end he kills her as his controlling behaviour got worse.*

*“One boy mentioned that sometimes it’s culture and how different people live. Making a note of Nigerian culture, he mentioned that in some homes the men are strict and the ladies listen and do the housework, cooking etc.*

*“I mentioned that when I was growing up with my friends, when they mentioned that they are controlling their girlfriend, everyone seen it as a good thing and wanted to follow. But thinking about it when you are older, it is not a good thing and it has an effect on the girl such as her confidence etc.”*



# Executive summary and recommendations

Our society is currently undergoing a profound shock as it learns about the huge number of children who have been victims of child sexual exploitation.

The Rochdale case, in which nine men were jailed in May 2012 for grooming girls with alcohol, drugs and gifts before forcing them to have sex with multiple men, stands out as deeply disturbing. It exposed the systematic rape of children and levels of depravity that shocked the nation.

Rochdale, along with children and young people who have been sexually abused in Rotherham, Derby, Oldham and Oxford and later in Stockport and Peterborough, was a deafening wake-up call that pricked our collective conscience.

There has been, quite rightly, a demand for action to safeguard young people from such revolting crimes in the future.

Tony Lloyd, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester, asked me for my observations on what changes have taken place in attitudes and culture among the police and other agencies in Greater Manchester since Rochdale, and also what more I think needs to be done to better protect children.

I have approached this report by talking to everyone who works in this difficult area, but most importantly I wanted to know from young people about how the world feels to them. That is why I have put their voices up front in this report. They have greatly influenced my recommendations.

My observations will make painful reading for those who hoped that Rochdale was an isolated case. This is a real and ongoing problem.

Figures obtained from Greater Manchester Police, as part of this inquiry, reveal that many children are still being preyed on each day and there are currently 260 ‘live’ investigations into child sexual exploitation. Of these, 174 are recorded crimes and 18 of those cases involve multiple perpetrators.

The majority of cases of children and young people who have been sexually abused involve single offenders, and there are big variations across police divisions.

Schoolgirls have told me of being regularly approached and harassed by older men urging them to get into cars or go into shops on their way home from school. One schoolgirl yelled:

***“Leave me alone, Can you not see I am a little girl. I am in my uniform.”***

The shocking thing is that the girls felt powerless and that they had to accept these approaches as part of everyday life. Many did not report it because they felt the police looked down on them.

This inevitably raises questions about wider attitudes and culture, which we must tackle and change if we are going to protect children and young people from sexual exploitation. We have seen how the culture at the time protected very well-known high-profile people, including celebrities like Jimmy Savile.

We have all seen the sea change in attitudes towards gay rights and we have to understand how those attitudes were changed. There was a strong message, reinforced in the media, relayed through culture and art and repeated again and again and reinforced in communities. This can be done again in changing attitudes to CSE.

Police, social workers, prosecutors and juries, made up of ordinary people, all carry attitudes around with them. This could go some way to explain why in the past six years in Greater Manchester there have only been about 1,000 convictions out of 13,000 reported cases of nine major sexual offences against under-16-year-olds.

I have been concerned about the number of people who have told me that in some neighbourhoods child sexual exploitation had become the new social norm.

They say there is no respect for girls: gangs of youths pressurising vulnerable young girls (including those with learning disabilities) for sex, and adults allowing their houses to be used for drinking, drug taking and having sex.

This social norm has perhaps been fuelled by the increased sexualisation of children and young people involving an explosion of explicit music videos and the normalisation of quasi-pornographic images. Sexting, selfies, Instagram and the like have given rise to new social norms in changed expectations of sexual entitlement, and with it a confused understanding of what constitutes consent.

The more people I have spoken to, the more I realised that although we can come up with more effective ways of working for agencies, the most important thing we can do to protect children is to tackle the cultural attitudes that cocoon sex exploiters and enable them to get away with what they are doing under our noses.

An important part of that protection is to enable young people to take the lead in the fight against sexual exploitation.

CSE has a massive effect on the physical and mental health of children and should be declared a public health priority issue, in much the same way as alcohol, drug taking and obesity.

Young people are still too often being blamed for being a victim of a crime. I was shocked that the Crown Prosecution Service highlighted the fact that a victim wore cropped tops as a reason for throwing out a case.

We have unearthed a very high number of children still going missing and absent from home and care in Greater Manchester, with over 14,712 episodes from January to September 17 this year alone. Missing children are at risk of sexual exploitation and children go missing because they are being sexually exploited.

We also have obtained evidence that some children’s homes are flaunting government rules by not informing the police and local authorities when a child vulnerable to CSE moves into their home from miles away.

This report is not an inspection of services, a task best left to HMIC and Ofsted.

In the coming weeks and months, Greater Manchester Police and all the local authorities in Greater Manchester will be inspected on the quality of their child protection services, including responses to missing children and child sexual exploitation.

I have listened to the experiences and views of children and young people, victims, practitioners and professionals across Greater Manchester, which has helped me to understand what changes have taken place in attitudes to CSE and what more needs to be done.

I also visited CSE teams, local voluntary projects, and safeguarding teams, with many dedicated and committed staff. It is clear from my discussions with people who work in this difficult area that there is a considerable amount of good work ongoing in identifying children at risk and preventing CSE.

There has been good progress made by Project Phoenix, set up to develop a cross-boundary multiagency response to child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester so that victims were not subjected to a postcode lottery.

CSE cannot be dealt with solely by individual local authorities, police divisions or public health authorities each operating in their own silos. Offenders and victims cross administrative boundaries and so should the statutory agencies’ responses.

We now have a specialist CSE team in all police divisions, which is an improvement on only two, pre-Rochdale. But more needs to be done to achieve a pan-Greater Manchester approach.

At a time of significant public spending cuts, I have found a lot of consensus in agencies that we need new ways of working across Greater Manchester boundaries. Any new models of working have to involve the wider community, parents, voluntary organisations, elected councillors and young people themselves.

To ensure this, I want to see the appointment of a CSE Champion to build on the successes of Project Phoenix, with a specific remit to develop new models of working across the boundaries of 10 local authorities, 11 police divisions, and 12 Clinical Commissioning Groups.

I am concerned about the underidentification of child sexual exploitation and want to see all front-line police response officers trained in spotting CSE, along with Police Community Support Officers. It is concerning that GMP figures on recorded sexual offences for under-18-year-olds between 1 June 2013 and May 31, 2014 show that only 111 cases out of 1,691 were ‘flagged’ on the police computer as CSE. This is concerning, as in my view this is likely to be significant underreporting.

More needs to be done by the Local Safeguarding Children Boards to engage the public. There has been a reluctance to talk about child sexual exploitation by LSCBs and schools because they do not want to be seen to have a ‘Rochdale’ problem. The result is that the public is ill-informed about CSE and is therefore not able to play a full role in protecting children. I was disappointed that only six out of ten LSCBs responded to my question about the incidence and trends of CSE in their area.

We all have a role in child protection and we all see and hear things. GMP and other agencies need to find better ways of engaging with all the different communities across Greater Manchester in the fight against CSE, including socially advantaged, disadvantaged and disengaged white and ethnic minority communities.

High-profile court cases, such as Rochdale, have elevated CSE into the public consciousness, but at the same time have left the impression that CSE is only about vulnerable white girls being exploited by groups of Asian men.

This isn’t the case, as GMP figures show that 10.34 per cent of recorded crimes currently being investigated involve multiple offenders, with the remaining being single perpetrators. The Rochdale Sunrise CSE team also told me that about 15 per cent of their cases involve groups, with the other 85 per cent being single offenders including peer on peer (where young people sexually exploit other young people).

It is important that the public understand the many forms of CSE so that they are better able to protect children and not miss signs.

The terrible harm children can suffer from CSE cannot be prevented by the social care system alone. Government social policies tackling the key issues of poverty, housing, poor education, unemployment, mental health, alcohol and drug use, and low aspirations, are vital.

We must take as our starting point listening to children and young people about how the world feels to them.

What has become clear to me is that those who have come of age during the digital revolution – the millennial generation – face massive challenges. Instant communication 24/7 has a big impact on their lives, including for some the constant pressure to share images and intimate details of everything they do.

In the past, the older generation passed down what seemed like a finite body of knowledge to the younger generation. My father thought all the world’s knowledge was contained in the Encyclopaedia Britannica, which could be handed down the ages. But now knowledge on the internet and social media is limitless, constantly evolving and shared and created by billions.

There has been a redefining of community with the digital age, and the geographical community has become less significant.

The internet and the new digital community connect all young people, spanning class, race, religion and culture in a way that static communities do not.

The internet via social media provides an arc across local authority boundaries in Greater Manchester. It is the communication of choice for young people.

I believe our role should be supporting young people to lead the fight back against CSE.

Intrinsic to this must be a well-informed and trusted network where young people can exchange knowledge, access useful information, build resilience, and learn from others who have the same experiences about how to keep themselves safe. This must be created and sustained by the young people themselves, and they are likely to need support by adults who have experience and knowledge.

That is why my central proposal is for a multimedia digital network led by young people to spearhead the fight back against CSE, including a high-profile weekly radio show produced and hosted by young people on CSE-related issues. This will be done in partnership with the youth radio station Unity Radio and would be linked to social media and online support.

This exciting idea came from a 13-year-old girl, who took part in a meeting of young people and charities we organised at the thriving Factory Zone youth centre in Harpurhey to find out what young people thought would help them.

Unity Radio, which was initially set up as an internet station led by young street DJs and MCs from across Greater Manchester, is an FM and multimedia platform. The weekly show on CSE-related issues will link to the Unity website, and be ‘shouted out’ via podcasts and other social media, such as Instagram, Twitter and YouTube, as well as other video networks. It could go viral, reaching many thousands of young people across Greater Manchester.

This project will be supported by a newly formed consortium of charities I have brought together, which we have named the Greater Manchester Consortium Against Child Sexual Exploitation (GMCASE). The Consortium will provide expertise and knowledge and support young people-led projects.

The content of the radio show will be decided, produced and hosted by young people, including those who have been sexually exploited.

Young people are more likely to trust and listen to other young people than ‘suits’ or ‘uniforms’. Isolated children who tune in, listening in the dark, will know that they are not alone and that there is help out there.

## Central Recommendation:

It should be recognised by police, children’s services and schools that a culture is emerging in some areas of CSE becoming a social norm.

Give young people the tools to lead the fightback against CSE themselves. Launch a young people-led multimedia digital network, including a high-profile weekly radio show produced and hosted by young people on CSE-related issues.

This will be done in partnership with youth radio station Unity Radio, and will be linked to social media and online support.

The project will be supported by a newly formed consortium of charities, which we have brought together for the first time during this inquiry. This will be known as the Greater Manchester Consortium Against Child Sexual Exploitation (GMCASE).

Big names already signed up include the Princes Trust, Barnardo’s, The Children’s Society, the NSPCC, and smaller groups, including St Mary’s Sexual Assault Referral Centre, Survivors Manchester, Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation, the Railway Children, Missing People, and Brook.

GMCASE will support and seek out funding for the young people-led project recommended in this report and any future projects young people wish to initiate. GMCASE will seek to give young people opportunities to influence policy and strategy in relation to GM’s approach to dealing with CSE.

## What is child sexual exploitation?

The term ‘child sexual exploitation’ has the potential to sanitise the horror of child rape and sexual abuse. Child sexual exploitation is not an offence in itself and offenders are prosecuted using 15 separate sexual offences.

High-profile court cases, like Rochdale, have elevated CSE into the public consciousness but at the same time have left the impression that CSE is only about vulnerable white girls being exploited by groups of Asian men.

This isn’t the case, as GMP figures show that 18 of 174 (10.34 per cent) recorded crimes currently being investigated involve multiple offenders, with the remaining being single perpetrators. The Rochdale Sunrise CSE team also told me that about 15 per cent of their cases involve groups, with the other 85 per cent being single offenders.

CSE can take many different forms, including the exploitation of boys, and it is not clear to the public in what way CSE differs from child sexual abuse. Clear communication with the public is essential.

There has been a significant cultural change in legislation in that what was previously seen as an issue of child prostitution is now seen as an issue of child protection.

However, offences relating to child prostitution still remain on the statute book, including the offence of loitering or soliciting for prostitution that can be committed by a child aged 10 or over.

## Recommendations

- The removal of all references to child prostitution in legislation.
- Focus groups should be commissioned with the public about their understanding of the nature of child sexual exploitation. This would underpin the ongoing communication strategy by the Phoenix group to improve wider understanding of this issue.
- All responses to CSE by statutory agencies in Greater Manchester should explicitly include ‘boys and young men’, because of concerns of underreporting.



**Changes in Greater Manchester Police post-Rochdale**

Project Phoenix was set up post-Rochdale to develop a cross-boundary multiagency response to child sexual exploitation across the whole of Greater Manchester, so child victims receive the same standard of response regardless of where they live.

There are 260 ongoing investigations into CSE, according to latest GMP figures up to June this year. Of those investigations, 174 are attached to a crime report and 10.34 per cent involved multiple perpetrators.

I am concerned that only a small number of sexual offences are being flagged as CSE and that this may indicate underidentification.

GMP figures on recorded sexual offences for under-18-year-olds between 1 June 2013 and 31 May 2014 show that only 111 cases out of 1,691 were ‘flagged’ on the police computer as CSE.

This highlights the need for better understanding of different forms of CSE and more training of police response officers in recognising CSE.

I was disappointed that only six out of the ten Local Safeguarding Children Boards responded to my question about the incidence and trends of CSE in their area. I understand the reluctance to discuss numbers publically because of the fear of reputational damage, but if the public are to be better informed and if attitudes are to change, we require a greater degree of openness.

It is also important that police and local safeguarding boards hold accurate data that gives a coherent and consistent understanding of the numbers of children at risk of CSE and children being sexually exploited.

There are now 39 dedicated specialist CSE police officers, which has risen from 12 since June 2013.

Each of the 11 police divisions now has its own specialist CSE team – an improvement from only two pre-Rochdale (Messenger in Oldham and Protect in Manchester). This enables better information sharing and early interventions, but there are wide variations in operations, funding and make-up of the teams.

Project Phoenix has made good progress. However, much more needs to be done to develop the sharing of resources and expertise across police and local authority boundaries if children at risk of CSE are not to be subject to a postcode lottery.

**Recommendations**

- All police response officers should receive CSE training, lifting it from 21 per cent to 100 per cent. It is vital that all officers have this training to improve the identification of CSE and improve the flagging system.
- All PCSOs should receive training in CSE and should become more actively involved in community engagement activity around CSE-related issues. The role of the integrated neighbourhood policing teams is integral to the fight against CSE.
- Formal talks in schools by police officers in uniform are important in giving children information about CSE. In addition, police should consider more innovative ways of connecting to children, such as speaking to small groups in a more informal way in civilian clothing. This must be a two-way process, not just the police ‘talking at’ the children, but a constructive dialogue in which young people feel they are being listened to.
- There should be one set of data giving information about children and young people assessed as being at risk of CSE agreed both by the police and the LCSBs.
- Schemes like Neighbourhood and Home Watch could be used to inform the wider community about CSE, along with the KIN initiative – the Key Individual Network – which is made up of people who have an interest in their local area and want to help make it safer.
- Police cadets and Specials need to be better informed of the issues around CSE.
- People who are victims should be used more in police training, either in person or on film. Their voices are powerful in helping the police and other agencies to understand what it feels like to be sexually abused.

Engaging communities

We all have a role in child protection. Communities are often the best source of information about children at risk of sexual exploitation. Local people hold vital pieces of intelligence, which, put together, form part of the whole jigsaw.

Working with and gaining the trust of all the different communities is vital for police to be able to protect children in socially advantaged, disadvantaged and disengaged white and ethnic minority communities.

There is a particular challenge where there is a culture of ‘not grassing people up’ and a hostility to police, schools and social workers.

Figures provided for this inquiry reveal that GMP have received 2,286 pieces of intelligence and tip-offs about child grooming and sexual exploitation in the ten months to January 2014.

This shows increased public awareness – a prerequisite for effective policing; but there is still a way to go to engage the public.

Many people told me that child sexual exploitation is a social norm in their particular neighbourhood.

I have been extremely impressed by a number of small local groups that are working hard to protect children from CSE in their particular areas, as well as the excellent work done by the big national charities. It is important that any new models of working include the voluntary sector, and that is why I am pleased that the newly formed Greater Manchester Consortium Against Child Sexual Exploitation (GMCASE) will bring everyone together for the first time.

Recommendations

- GMP, together with Local Safeguarding Children Boards, need to find more effective ways of engaging with all the different communities, including socially advantaged, disadvantaged and disengaged white and ethnic minority communities, if we are to deal with the problem of underreporting of CSE.
- More information about CSE should be given to the public generally and to those who are the ‘eyes and ears’ of the community, including pharmacists, school crossing patrol staff, school nurses, refuse collectors, bus drivers, park attendants, housing officers, and shopkeepers, as well as taxi drivers and hoteliers.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner should require the Greater Manchester LSCBs and the Phoenix group to collectively produce and publish an annual update on their work to tackle CSE. This should include a report from individual police divisions on the effectiveness of their community engagement, stating clearly what they have achieved and hope to achieve in working with the community to better protect children and young people from CSE. They should also demonstrate how they have proactively used social media, civic publications, and local newspapers, TV and radio to get messages across about CSE.
- The importance of small community groups in influencing local opinion should be recognised. Large charities should work with and mentor smaller groups to give them the confidence to work on preventing CSE in their local areas.
- Community groups should be encouraged to apply for any available local funding, including that available to ward councillors.

The role of schools

Schools are a universal provision and have a very important role in giving children and young people information about CSE.

Because personal, social, health and economic education (PSHE) is not compulsory, there is a piecemeal approach in Greater Manchester with a huge variation in the kind of information that individual schools are giving to children.

Some schools don’t teach about CSE for fear about reputational damage if they are seen to have a problem.

Many schools have used productions and videos, such as ‘Real Love Rocks’, ‘Somebody’s Sister, Somebody’s Daughter’ and ‘My Dangerous Loverboy’. Others are making their own innovative material.

Some schools have identified young people they fear are vulnerable to CSE and work with them in small groups, while other schools have stated that they do not have an issue with CSE.

I was shocked to speak to some schoolgirls who said they were regularly approached and touched by older men in the street who urged them to get into cars. But they did not report these incidents to the police because they thought the police looked down on them.

It is important to include primary schools in raising awareness of CSE. The increased sexualisation of children means that young children are a target for sexual offenders.

Peer mentoring is something that young people at risk of CSE greatly value and some schools use their Pupil Premium money to provide that help. Raising self-esteem and confidence makes young people resilient to exploitative relationships and also improves their education outcomes.

GMP is currently in the process of reviewing its Safer Schools Partnership, which provides an opportunity for these issues to be addressed.

Recommendations

- There needs to be a digital cloud storage resource in which material made by children and young people could be accessed directly by all young people and schools across the whole of Greater Manchester to use as part of their safeguarding. This could be developed alongside the young people’s digital network.
- We need to campaign for the Government to make PSHE compulsory so that all children in Greater Manchester schools are better safeguarded from CSE.
- Pupil Premium money could be used by schools singly or jointly to fund peer mentoring schemes for those identified at risk of CSE as part of a wider safeguarding approach.

Children who are missing from school

Children going missing from school can be a sign that they are at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Not all children attend school and some only attend part-time. In 2012/13 there were 4,955 primary school children and 9,135 secondary school children persistently absent from schools in Greater Manchester.

Concerns about the safety of children who are missing from school or only in part-time education have been raised with me.

A detached youth worker said: “If you only go to school between 9 and 12 and when you get home your parents are at work or do not give a monkey’s about you, then what do you do from 12 onwards?”

Ofsted have expressed concerns about the safeguarding of children who do not attend school full-time. These children may be vulnerable to becoming victims of crime, including CSE.

Recommendations

- Ofsted have expressed their intention to inspect equality of provision for children excluded from education and those who attend school part-time because of concerns about low aspirations and limited achievement for these children.
- Phoenix should do further research into how these most vulnerable and challenging of children, who are being failed by the system at the moment, can also be better safeguarded from child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester.

Children who are missing from home and care

One in five children and young people who goes missing from home or care is at risk of serious harm, including child sexual exploitation.

GMP, along with other police forces, introduced a new recording system in 2013. This means that when a call is made to the police to report a child missing, at that point they are assessed as either missing, or put in the new lower risk category of absent. Only those classed as ‘missing’ receive an immediate police response.

Fresh figures prepared for this inquiry by the GMP reveal that 3,242 children and young people under 18 went missing, generating 9,789 reports from January to 17 September 2014. Of those, 530 were children looked after by the local authority, which generated 4,520 reports – almost half of all incidents.

In addition, there were 4,923 episodes recorded as ‘absent’ that did not merit an immediate police response.

Absent and missing data collected centrally is reported to the local police divisions. We do not yet know if this new system is better at safeguarding children.

There must be concern about the high number of looked after children who continue to generate multiple missing reports, as these children are particularly vulnerable to CSE.

I have strong concerns that some of the independent private children’s homes in Greater Manchester are flaunting Government guidance, introduced on 27 January 2014, which says they have to notify the local authority when a child moves in from another area. GMP told me that seven children assessed at high risk of CSE were recently placed into two private children’s homes in one local authority area from a local authority in the Midlands.

The local authority, GMP and CSE teams were not informed of their arrival. The children came to notice because they went missing shortly after they arrived.

Another concern is that although children’s homes are subject to inspection by Ofsted, care provision for vulnerable 16 and 17-year-olds is not.

Recommendations

- Further research should be undertaken to see if the new police system of recording absent and missing is better safeguarding Greater Manchester children at risk of CSE.
- There should be spot checks on children’s homes to see if they are adhering to new Government guidance, which requires them to notify police and the local authority when a child moves into their home. This would be in addition to Ofsted inspections.
- Care provision for 16 and 17-year-olds should be registered and inspected by Ofsted.



Health

The impact of child sexual exploitation on children and young people’s physical and mental health is massive and can affect them for the rest of their lives.

The trauma caused can also lead to the victims offending in other areas, such as petty criminality, drug use, theft, criminal damage and assault.

I received a very moving letter from a man who joined the Survivors group in HMP Risley. He said:

*“I am a survivor of sexual abuse. It happened when I was 11 years old. It made me lash out – criminal damage, theft, and expulsion from school. I started carrying weapons for my protection. I turned to drugs to escape my low self-esteem and everyday problems of normal life. I have been an alcoholic and street homeless for many years.”*

Other evidence of the effect on victims’ lives can be seen in figures we obtained from Public Health England. These reveal that around one in ten young people under 18 being treated for drug and alcohol problems in three key Greater Manchester boroughs – Rochdale, Oldham and Stockport – has disclosed they have been sexually exploited.

Sexual health services play a key role in identifying children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation, and being able to share health information is critical to protecting children.

Recommendations

- CSE should be declared a priority public health issue, like smoking, obesity, alcohol and drug use, so that a more strategic approach can be developed.
- The Phoenix group should look into developing a digital storage system that allows all agencies, including health, the police and children’s services, to share information across the GM conurbation with appropriate safeguards.
- Further research should be done on the availability of counselling services, both for victims of CSE, and children and young people at risk of CSE.
- Greater Manchester prisons should consider taking part in Survivors-style and other support programmes for victims of sexual abuse.
- Joint commissioning arrangements for CSE, sexual assault, rape, and domestic abuse support services should be considered, which would include the Police Commissioner, local authorities, Public Health, and Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Justice

The criminal justice system alone cannot keep children safe. Only a small proportion of the cases reported actually get to court and only half of those end in convictions.

In Greater Manchester in the six years from 2008 to 2013 the total number of sexual offences, including rape, sexual assaults, gross indecency and grooming against children under 16, was 12,879. Yet only 2,341 defendants were proceeded against and of those only 1,078 were found guilty.

Originally, it had been decided not to prosecute in the Rochdale case because of concerns about the ‘credibility’ of the witnesses in court.

Despite new DPP guidelines designed to ensure that the justice system supports all children, including those who do not present as ‘classic’ victims, I have seen evidence that this is not always happening in the case of vulnerable witnesses in Greater Manchester.

It is clear from looking at some Greater Manchester case files that have been given a No Further Action status by the Crown Prosecution Service, that judgments are still being made about vulnerable children, including how they dress.

One file read:

*“The victim is known (as highlighted by social workers) to tend to wear sexualised clothes when she is out of school, such as cropped tops.”*

Another file said:

*“Because of her record and her unsettled background as set out above, she is far from an ideal victim.”*

Another read:

*“I note her father has referred to her to a social worker as being a ‘slag’, saying she is responsible for what has happened.”*

Once the case gets past the CPS hurdle, we should not forget how traumatic being cross-examined in court is for some of these young witnesses. One told me:

*“There is not a word to describe how bad it was. I have never experienced anything like that in my life, and I never want to experience anything like that ever again. I want to do anything I can to get the trials changed for others. It was like one attack after another.*

*“One of the barristers was not even asking me questions; he was just shouting at me, and the judge kept having to tell him to stop shouting and move on, and he kept asking me questions that he was not supposed to ask.”*

We also need to understand that without a better understanding among the public about the nature of CSE and its effects on victims, defence lawyers will continue to try and undermine witness evidence by attacking the character of the victim.

Recommendations

- The new Greater Manchester Rape Quality Assurance Group should review and analyse all the No Further Action cases the CPS have authorised across Greater Manchester over the past year to pick out any areas for learning and training.
- There should be further research into the disparity between the high number of recorded sexual offences against children and the number of actual prosecutions and convictions in Greater Manchester to establish the best ways to safeguard children in the future.
- The Crown Prosecution Service should be part of CSE multiagency teams.
- The CPS, together with the police and Local Safeguarding Children Boards, should engage the media in a more proactive way to raise awareness about CSE and the effect on victims.
- In the 800th anniversary year of the Magna Carta, court transcripts should be made more freely available on the internet. As well as providing transparency, this would also help to inform the wider public about CSE.
- To gain a better understanding of attitudes to CSE, research should be undertaken into Greater Manchester trends in respect of jury verdicts in sexual offence cases against children.
- There should be further research into the use of Registered Intermediaries by the CPS and the police, and the barriers to increasing their use, as well as an evaluation of their work.
- In view of the new CPS guidelines, there should be a review of the type of questioning and tone of cross-examinations used by defence barristers in child sexual abuse cases.

People who commit sexual offences

The number of registered sexual offenders in Greater Manchester has risen sharply in recent years: from 1,643 in 2006, to 2,317 in 2013 (an increase of just over 41%).

The term ‘sexual offender’ was once established in people’s minds as the dirty old man in a rain mac hiding in the park. But sexual offenders are in fact part of every community and class.

Often in the childhood of people who commit sexual offences there are shared environmental conditions with the victim, such as poor parenting, poor attachment, early physical, sexual and emotional abuse, sexualisation and neglect.

Many people who sexually offend are likely to have shown a sexual interest in children at an early age, and it is important for us to understand the warning signs and make appropriate early interventions with children who are at risk of developing sexually offending behaviour.

Not enough is known about the mindset of people who commit sexual offences. A better understanding of their motivations and how they see their victims is important in order to better inform young people about how to protect themselves. It pays to listen to what sex offenders say.

Recommendations

- In serious case reviews and other reviews we should look at what happened to the victim, but to help future prevention it would be instructive to look at the history of the abuser. This would provide a better understanding of the environmental conditions that have contributed to the offending behaviour and how interactions with agencies helped.
- Information about the behaviour of people who sexually offend should be incorporated into training and awareness-raising about CSE.
- The knowledge of offenders that is held by experts such as forensic psychologists and the police needs to be shared more broadly to help us all recognise risks and protect children.

**New ways of working**

Figures supplied by the ten Greater Manchester councils reveal that they have had to make savings in excess of £938million since 2010. More than 25 per cent of this has come from Children’s Services budgets, while GMP will need to find a further £56.4million savings next year.

There is a consensus that there need to be new models of working to respond to the challenge of protecting children from CSE at a time of austerity.

As these are being developed it is imperative that tackling child sexual exploitation remains a priority.

For a Greater Manchester response to ensure that children are not subject to a postcode lottery, those new models of working must not only be within a local authority and police division, but across them.

Phoenix has made good progress in the better sharing of information and procedures, but there needs to be a step-up, and more needs to be done to encourage local authorities and the police to share expertise and resources. Children at risk of CSE cross boundaries.

**Recommendations**

- There is a need for the appointment of a CSE Champion with a specific remit of developing new models of working across police and local authority boundaries in partnership with the voluntary sector, young people, communities and parent groups, to better protect young people at risk of CSE.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner should prioritise funding for CSE projects that support children who have been sexually exploited or who are at risk from sexual exploitation, as well as projects that build resilience against CSE in children and young people.
- There should be more pooling of individual budgets and more innovative use of existing budgets to better safeguard children at risk of CSE, eg. funding detached youth workers who can act as a bridge between the police, children’s services and disengaged young people. They can give valuable information about children at risk to those agencies, while at the same time giving young people better awareness of CSE, providing health advice and tests, and connecting them to services. One source of funding could be social housing providers or schools using their Pupil Premium Money.
- Ofsted inspections should include observations on innovative and creative cross-boundary working that demonstrates improved outcomes for children at risk of sexual abuse. That would be a lever for a change in approach.

“This man came up and got hold of my friend from behind and started stroking her hair, and said ‘nice hair’. It’s got to the point where men come and touch us and try and get us into cars. It’s too much.”

Greater Manchester schoolgirl



“They go for the girls with the rubbish family lives because they know they will get away with it.”

At-risk young person

## What is child sexual exploitation?

1. The exploitation of children for sex has been around for many years. It is not a new phenomenon.
2. What has changed though is the knowledge about CSE and a growing debate about its causes.
3. Most importantly, there has been a significant cultural shift away from talking about child prostitution to child protection.
4. Because it used to be seen as child prostitution, the children were not seen as victims and their sexual abuse was seen as self-inflicted. These attitudes were identified in the Rochdale Overview Report in December 2013.
5. Even as late as the interwar period, judges were commenting on the ‘wickedness’ of girls under 16 seducing men twice as old as themselves.
6. Figures provided by the House of Commons library show that between 1992 and 1996 there were 1,449 cautions – about 300 a year – for prostitution for under-18-year-olds and 976 court proceedings for common prostitute loitering, or soliciting for the purposes of prostitution (Street Offences Act 1959).
7. In the past four years between 2010 and 2013 there were 15 cautions issued to juveniles under the age of 18 and seven defendants under the age of 18 were proceeded against. Of those seven defendants, three were found guilty but none were imprisoned.
8. Although the figures show that attitudes are changing, we still have legislation relating to child prostitution on the statute books. The offence of ‘controlling a child prostitute or a child involved in pornography’ and the offence of loitering or soliciting for prostitution (contrary to section 1 of the Street Offences Act 1959, as amended by section 16 of the Policing and Crime Act 2009) can be committed by a child aged 10 or over.
9. As recently as June 2014, a Bolton man was charged by Greater Manchester Police and found guilty of ‘controlling a child prostitute for financial gain’.

### Problems with definition

10. Once we go beyond describing child sexual exploitation as the sexual abuse of girls by groups of men, which is easily understood, then it is very difficult to differentiate between sexual exploitation and sexual abuse of children.
11. If we look at the list of categories of sexual offences, for example, Sexual Assault on a Male Child under 13, and Rape of a Female Child under 16, the offences are easily understood but none of them encapsulate the concept of CSE. The exception to this is the criminal offence of sexual grooming, in which children are contacted online or in person and encouraged through bribes, promises of love and coercion to have sex.
12. There is no recognised category of abuse for child sexual exploitation in child protection procedures, a point made by Parents against Sexual Exploitation.
13. What is defined as child sexual exploitation is critical, because unless the agencies charged with the protection of our children from CSE can articulate



what CSE is and explain it, then the public will not understand either. The fundamental basis of any communication must be clarity of the message.

14. GMP figures on recorded sexual offences for under-18-year-olds between 1 June 2013 and 31 May 2014 show that only 111 cases out of 1,691 were 'flagged' on the police computer as child sexual exploitation. In my view this indicates an under identification of the extent of CSE.
15. This could be partly because GMP is still in the process of training and developing its officers' understanding of CSE.

## Child sexual exploitation

16. Police officers and practitioners across Greater Manchester describe many forms of child sexual exploitation: interfamilial; one-to-one; young people exploiting other young people; aiding perpetrators to recruit other young people, groups, gangs; online, which can include deceiving children into producing indecent images of themselves; and engaging in sexual chat or activity over a webcam. It can also lead to offline offending, such as meetings between an offender and a child for sexual purposes.
17. They also identify the commonly used 'boyfriend model', which tends to be the activity of an older man introducing a young girl to a 'party' lifestyle and sex, slowly pulling her away from positive influences, such as parents and teachers.
18. A similar model is commonly used to exploit boys and young men, although framed as a 'trusted friend' rather than 'boyfriend', recognising that the exploitation happens irrespective of sexual orientation of the male victim.
19. As Bury LSCB points out, it is important to recognise that the ways children and young people are being exploited is constantly evolving with changing patterns of grooming.
20. The most well-known model, because it tends to receive the most media coverage, is by organised gangs or groups. This is where abuse is carried out by more than one adult and can involve multiple victims.
21. High-profile cases, like Rochdale, have elevated CSE into the public consciousness, but at the same time there is often a perception that CSE is only about vulnerable white girls being exploited by gangs of Asian men. This isn't the case.
22. This model is associated with Rochdale, but the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Board told me in a letter: "Local audit has revealed that while there are significant issues re CSE in the borough, there was not a specific problem identified involving gangs and groups..."
23. On my visit to the Rochdale Sunrise CSE team, they told me that only 15 per cent of their cases involved gangs and groups, with the other 85 per cent being single offenders.
24. This is supported by figures given to us in June by GMP for all their police divisions, which reveal that 10.34 per cent of crimes currently being investigated involved multiple offenders, with the remaining being single perpetrators.
25. The level of abuse suffered by the girls exploited and trafficked for sex is horrific, but we also need to be clear that any exploitation of children for sex is abhorrent even if it takes place within a one-to-one relationship.
26. The GMP recently arrested 19 people in a crackdown on child sexual exploitation. Among the arrests were two men aged 37 and 38 on suspicion of rape of a 15-year-old girl. After an investigation into a 13-year-old being groomed online, a 19-year-old man was arrested on suspicion of causing or enticing a child to engage in sexual activity, and a 25-year-old woman was arrested in connection with a 15-year-old girl being trafficked to Derbyshire for the purposes of being sexually exploited.

27. This demonstrates the different forms child sexual exploitation can take and also some of the difficulties in identifying it as such.
28. The Association of Chief Police Officers definition of CSE says:

***"CSE is sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involving exploitative situations, context and relationships where the young person (or third persons) receives something (for example 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, cohesion 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."***

29. Another important part of any definition of child sexual exploitation is to inform children and young people so that they are better able to recognise an exploitative sexual relationship.
30. Project Phoenix has now adopted a definition of CSE developed by the Children's Society. It uses the words of young people, including victims of CSE. It says: "CSE is someone taking advantage of you sexually, for their own benefit, through threats, bribes, violence, humiliation, or by telling you that they love you, they will have the power to get you to do sexual things for their own or other people's benefit or enjoyment

(including touching or kissing private parts, sex and taking sexual photos)."

31. Survivors Manchester, a local third-sector agency working with males, defines CSE as "an activity involving the use of a child or young person to meet the sexual and/or sexual/emotional gratification of another(s) in lieu of meeting actual or perceived need(s) of the child or young person".

## Attitudes

32. There has been a significant cultural change in that what was previously seen as an issue of child prostitution is now seen as an issue of child protection, and underlying this change is the acknowledgement that the child cannot consent to exchanging sex for financial gain.
33. We should remember that the child, for these purposes, is a young person under 18.
34. Government guidance now makes clear that the primary law enforcement effort must be against the abuser and coercers who break the law, and they should be called to account for their abusive behaviour, not the children.
35. Much has been done in government guidance to take the word 'prostitution' out of the language, which is important because language shapes attitudes; however, it is still used in statute.
36. This change was first introduced in 2000 Department of Health Government Guidance entitled 'Safeguarding children involved in prostitution'.
37. This was reinforced in 2009, in guidance entitled Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, which said: 'Children who are sexually exploited are the victims of sexual abuse and should be safeguarded from further harm. Sexually exploited children should not be regarded as criminals and the primary law enforcement response must be directed at perpetrators who groom children for sexual exploitation.'

38. There has been a cultural change in attitudes by agencies driven by a series of high-profile court cases and reports about child sexual exploitation. These include Barnardo's Puppet on a String in January 2011; CEOP Out of Mind, Out of Sight, in June 2011 the Government's Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan, in November 2011; and more recently the report of the Children's Commissioner into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups in 2013.
39. Child prostitution is now seen as an issue of child protection, and underlying this change is the acknowledgement that the child cannot consent to exchanging sex for financial gain.
40. However, more progress needs to be made.
41. The Barnardo's Report published on 27 August 2014 'Hidden in Plain Sight', highlights the invisibility of boys and young men as victims of CSE and calls for more to be done to protect males. It says the problem is much bigger than previously thought and professionals interviewed reported that those dealing with children can be less protective of boys than girls, meaning opportunities to recognise boys being exploited can be missed.
42. In a report by Survivors Manchester, it highlights a case where a 13-year-old boy was engaged by their street-based outreach team and the GMP call handler referred to the child as a 'rent boy' (a term used for male prostitute).
43. From my conversations with practitioners across Greater Manchester it is clear to me that there is a struggle to arrive at a clear understanding of how exactly child sexual exploitation differs from child sexual abuse.
44. It is important that the statutory agencies arrive at a shared understanding of what CSE is, so that children can be better protected.
45. However, this in itself is not enough. The wider public also need to understand what is meant by child sexual exploitation. Most importantly, children and young people need to recognise when they are being exploited.
46. We all need to recognise that attitudes to child sexual exploitation are part of wider cultural attitudes to sexual behaviour and issues of consent, and that children and young people will only be better protected when we all take the responsibility for changing our attitudes.

### Recommendations

- All references to child prostitution in legislation should be removed.
- Focus groups should be commissioned with the public about their understanding of the nature of child sexual exploitation. This would underpin the ongoing communication strategy by the Phoenix group to improve wider understanding of this issue.
- I recommend that all strategic responses to CSE in Greater Manchester explicitly include 'boys and young men' in their literature.

"I watched my mum go through a lot. I thought it's not as bad as my mum suffered, so I must be doing ok."

Vulnerable young mum



“Both of us were stuck in the same flat in the same situation. With not just one man or two - there was three of them.”

Victim of child sexual exploitation

## Changes in Greater Manchester Police post-Rochdale

1. Greater Manchester Police and other agencies were criticised in the Rochdale Overview Report in December 2013 for shocking failures that allowed sex grooming gangs to flourish in Rochdale.
2. This resulted in an acknowledgement by Greater Manchester Police that the force had let down a number of vulnerable girls and that there may have been discriminatory attitudes among police officers towards them.
3. This chapter looks at what changes in attitudes and culture there have been in Greater Manchester Police since then and what more needs to be done.

### Current Greater Manchester Police picture

#### Police spending cuts

4. GMP have said they need to save £120.2million over the four years of the spending review between March 2011 and March 2015. They need to find savings of £13.6million in this current year and £56.4million in 2015/2016 (HMIC July 2014 Responding to Austerity).

#### Current CSE investigations

5. The GMP figures given to this inquiry in June this year show that at that time there were 260 current investigations (including recorded crimes) into child sexual exploitation. Of the 174 recorded crimes, 10.34 per cent involved multiple perpetrators – a total of 18 cases.

#### Flagging CSE

6. GMP figures on recorded sexual offences for under-18-year-olds between 1 June 2013 and 31 May 2014 show that only 111 cases out of 1,691 were “flagged” on the police computer as child sexual exploitation.
7. GMP say that what seems to be a low level of flagging could be because current and historical familial sexual abuse, crimes committed by strangers and peer-on-peer offences are not being flagged as CSE. It also may reflect that GMP are still in the process of training and developing officers’ understanding of CSE.
8. It is important to understand how these flags are being attached to cases.
9. Accurate data that properly identifies and flags cases of child sexual exploitation is also important in order to understand trends and future trends, so that we are better able to protect our children.

#### Intelligence figures

10. Other figures provided for this inquiry show that Greater Manchester Police received 2,286 pieces of intelligence, including tip-offs, about child grooming and sexual exploitation – a third of them in Rochdale – in the ten months to January 2014.
11. These are the first batch of intelligence figures since a new system to identify potential child sexual exploitation victims and perpetrators was introduced by GMP on their Command and Control system in May 2013 following the Rochdale scandal. The new system keeps track of every single piece of intelligence passed to the police relating to CSE.



12. The thousands of alerts included tip-offs from worried members of the public; observations of police officers on the streets; and children's services, schools' and other agencies' reports about suspected sexual exploitation.
13. Perhaps not surprisingly, almost one third of all the intelligence gathered was from the Rochdale division, where there were 693 reports. This may reflect an even higher level of public awareness in the town because of the high-profile court case, and the subsequent work done by the police, schools and other agencies to raise awareness in Rochdale since then.
14. The intelligence figures for the other Greater Manchester Police divisions were North Manchester 130, Bury 65, Wigan 151, South Manchester 269, Salford 75, Oldham 224, Stockport 191, Bolton 162, Trafford 115, and Tameside 210.
15. To me, this shows that the public now has its eyes and ears open. However, there is still a long way to go and many incidences will still be unreported.
19. However, as they point out, there needs to be more awareness of the sexual exploitation of boys, young men, lesbian, gay and transgendered children, and those with learning difficulties, who are underrepresented.
20. They also stress that the ways children and young people are exploited are constantly evolving, and having an up-to-date understanding of the pattern of child sexual exploitation in an area is vital in order to protect children.
21. **Tameside:** This LSCB said the main threat was from single perpetrators and isolated cases of abuse. They identified 48 children as currently being at risk. The number confirmed as being at risk has reduced over the past year, primarily as a result of better screening and risk assessment processes.

## Current localised picture

16. I wrote to the chairs of the Local Safeguarding Children Boards in February specifically asking about the incidence and trends of CSE in their areas. I was disappointed that only six of the ten LSCBs gave any figures and fewer than six responded to the question about trends in CSE in their area.

### **This is a summary of their replies.**

17. **Bury:** Referrals to Bury's Sexually Exploited and Missing Panel between December 2012 and November 2013 numbered 72, with nine repeat referrals. The number of alleged perpetrators was 43 with 17 criminal investigations.
18. The panel has identified that 14-year-old white females continued to be the most consistently recorded group of vulnerable young people at risk.
22. **Bolton:** In 2013/14 there were 91 cases referred to the team. There was a 21% increase in young people accessing Bolton's multiagency CSE team (Phoenix Exit) in the period March 2013 to March 2014.
23. Bolton reports that in terms of age ranges, 14–16 remains the key age band, accounting for 70% of CSE cases. Under-12s have remained constant at about 10%. The cohort is predominantly females, with only 3.2% of the cases managed by specialist CSE team Phoenix Exit being male.
24. The majority of young people receiving intervention from Phoenix Exit are living at home with their parents and being supported as 'children in need'. This is very much supported from similar reports from other authorities. There is a perception that children living in children's homes are the only children vulnerable to sexual abuse, and this is not helpful in developing a better understanding of child sexual abuse.
25. **Stockport:** In 2013/14 there were 129 children and young people at risk from CSE. They say that staff awareness in relation to CSE has risen and potential CSE is recognised sooner. They say the model most used is the 'boyfriend' model, and alcohol and drugs are the 'gifts' most frequently used.

26. **Rochdale:** It was reported that 45 children and young people had received a service from their specialist CSE team in 2013/14. Their local audit has revealed that whilst there were significant issues about CSE in the borough, there was not a specific problem identified involving gangs and groups.
27. **Manchester:** It was reported that the Protect Team support around 100 young people at any one time; referrals remain at around 10–15 per month and 50% of the work carried out by the Team is preventative. These figures are for young people known to Protect and do not reflect the valuable awareness work with young people carried out by the NSPCC, Children's Society and universal services.
28. These figures supplied by the LSCBs are for children who are known to specialist services. Police figures are different from these because they have different methods of recording.
29. Although I understand the reluctance to disclose figures to me, I think it would be helpful if these figures were better explained and put in the context of CSE trends. It would give the public a much better understanding and mean they were in a much better position to give those valuable intelligence reports to the police. If the police and other agencies value public involvement, they must better inform the public.
30. After the Rotherham scandal, the Greater Manchester safeguarding children's boards were asked by the media to give figures for the number of young people at risk of CSE who had come to the attention of specialist CSE services. They gave a figure of 246 (which was later revised to 230) for the whole of the ten councils, which appears less than the numbers given to me individually by six LSCBs earlier this year. Other figures given to Channel 4 news through a Freedom of Information request gave yet a different figure for Greater Manchester. This highlights the need for more work to be done on the collection of data.
31. The main problem of identifying children at risk is that the majority will be hidden from public view. As Bury pointed out: "Young people are groomed to be secretive about meetings, which are usually arranged over mobile phones or the internet so the activities are concealed from parents or carers. As sexual exploitation can be difficult to identify and services working with children and young people may be unaware of the indicators of sexual exploitation, it is difficult to quantify the number of children and young people who are abused in this way."
32. Bury also said that another problem in identifying the number of suspected CSE cases was that although information can be retrieved from the police IT system, it is very time-consuming and has to be undertaken manually.
33. This is currently such a sensitive area that the police and LSCBs need to have an accurate set of coherent and consistent data that gives us an understanding of the numbers of children at risk of CSE and being sexually exploited. Of course many more young people are potentially at risk than those referred to services.

## GMP post-Rochdale

34. Greater Manchester Police have highlighted safeguarding children from CSE as one of their priorities.

### **Project Phoenix**

35. As a result of police investigations in Rochdale, discussions began within the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership about how to create a mechanism through which all of Greater Manchester could learn the lessons from Rochdale. Project Phoenix was set up with the aim of developing a cross-boundary multiagency response to child sexual exploitation; it had its first meeting in November 2012.

36. It was felt to be important that children who have been victims should receive the same standard of response regardless of where they live in Greater Manchester and that they should not be subjected to a postcode lottery. A Greater Manchester-wide approach would provide opportunities to share better information and intelligence and pool limited resources to attain improved outcomes for children who have been victims.
37. However, it wasn't until January 2014 – over one year later – that a co-ordinator and a new governance board were appointed, and only then does the work appear to have gathered momentum.
38. Since then, Phoenix has made progress in a number of areas. A tool for measuring the level of risk to a young person of CSE has been developed and this is meant to be completed with the young person so that their views and needs influence the services they receive. It will be used by all specialist CSE teams in Greater Manchester, resulting in the consistent measurement of CSE across Greater Manchester.
39. An information-sharing protocol for use by specialist multiagency, co-located CSE teams is currently being developed.
40. Greater Manchester Police have also produced draft guidance for use by Community Safety Partnerships aimed at disrupting CSE by targeting business premises such as takeaways, shisha bars and off-licences.
41. In order for everybody to learn from successful initiatives and practice there is a CSE Operational Leads group chaired by the Project Phoenix manager Damian Dallimore, which meets regularly.
42. The latest Phoenix initiative in September was the launch of a new Its Not Okay campaign involving Greater Manchester Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, health services and ten local authorities.

43. It was complemented by a week of action to tackle child sexual exploitation, which included high-visibility police patrols, and raids in which 19 people were arrested, including two men arrested on suspicion of rape after they were found in a house with a missing 15-year-old. Police officers also went out onto the streets as part of the clampdown to look out for vulnerable children.

#### **Dedicated Divisional Multiagency CSE teams**

44. Under Project Phoenix, each of the 11 local police divisions now has a specialist CSE team, which enables better information-sharing and early interventions.
45. This is an improvement from only two CSE teams pre-Rochdale (Messenger in Oldham and Protect in Manchester).
46. There are wide variations in the make-up of these teams. Some, such as Protect in Manchester and Salford, and Sunrise in Rochdale, have a wide range of partner involvement, including ranging from health, social services, children's services and the voluntary sector.
47. These include organisations like the NSPCC, Barnardo's, and The Children's Society, which provide valuable early interventions in working with children at risk of CSE through funded projects; The Prince's Trust, which offers activities supported by volunteers; and Parents Against the Sexual Exploitation of Children (PACE), which provides valuable expertise. Of course, these voluntary organisations cannot provide resources for every CSE team.
48. Trafford, on the other hand, consists of only police officers.
49. The funding of the CSE teams can vary enormously. Some police officers working on the CSE teams are funded from the Public Protection Investigation Unit; others from divisional budgets, and in Tameside the manager of the CSE team, a police officer is paid for by the Council.

50. This makes funding very unstable because of other pressures on police resources, particularly at a divisional level.
51. Although each division is responsible for its own operational delivery, perhaps a strategic mandate would help to ensure a consistent approach across Greater Manchester.
52. A CSE Force Action plan has recently been developed. This includes a commitment to dedicated divisional multiagency teams, awareness training for all operational staff, CSE as a Senior Leadership Team priority, developing a CSE problem profile, clear disruption and offender management activity, and multiagency training.
53. I visited CSE teams covering north and south Manchester, Salford, Stockport, Tameside and Rochdale. I met some very dedicated people and an account of their observations is in an appendix at the end of this report.

#### **The flagging system**

54. In May 2013 a new flagging mechanism for CSE-related offences was introduced.
55. Police officers are able to identify how many CSE crimes there have been in each division, when they have occurred, the type of crime, and the kind of incident: rape, low-level sexual assault, or a person arranging to meet up with a victim.
56. In order to be coded as CSE on the system, the incident must fit specific criteria, which are outlined in the working together definition that Greater Manchester Police are currently using.
57. These will be used in conjunction with the Association of Chief Police Officers definition (see What is CSE chapter),
58. If an individual officer feels that an incident fits these criteria, they must allocate a CSE flag.

59. However, this is based on understanding the nature of an exploitative relationship and is therefore subject to individual judgement, with the added difficulty that young people and children may not see themselves as victims of exploitation.
60. This means that some cases of child sexual exploitation might not be flagged and may mean that the response that follows is inappropriate or lacking.
61. We are certainly not fully aware of the extent and forms of CSE in Greater Manchester, particularly in relation to the sexual exploitation of boys and young men.
62. As stated earlier, GMP figures on recorded sexual offences for under-18-year-olds show that only 111 out of 1,691 were flagged on the police computer as child exploitation.

#### **Rise in number of dedicated CSE officers**

63. Since June 2013, Greater Manchester Police have increased the number of specialist CSE police officers across the force from 19 to 39.
64. These 39 dedicated CSE officers are responsible for investigating the CSE flagged incidents. These officers have been resourced through negotiations with each division separately as opposed to a directive from the centre being made according to the extent of the CSE problem in each division.

#### **Police training**

65. In the Serious Case Review that followed Operation SPAN, the quality and consistency of police training was identified as an issue.
66. Since January 2014 a training package has been introduced consisting of definition of CSE, risk indicators, the grooming process, CSE flagging with OPUS, sexual offences and legislation, and an input from a Rochdale senior police officer involved in a CSE investigation outlining strengths and weaknesses of police work.



67. As part of this training package there is an opportunity for police officers to listen to a young woman who has been sexually exploited. This is very powerful in raising awareness among police officers and makes them more sensitive to how they respond. The feedback from police officers about this real-life input was very positive.
68. I met this young woman who felt that taking part was one way of getting on with the rest of her life and moving on from being a victim. She was also extremely positive about the police and said: “I have seen massive, massive change in the attitudes from the police.”
69. So far, this training package has reached 21% of response officers.
70. The awareness and training of response officers in CSE is very important. Their attitude will determine the initial confidence of the victim in the system and their willingness to disclose either then or at some point in the future. It is important that all response officers receive training in CSE and that they are able to spot the signs and behaviour that can result as a consequence.
71. Training will help to develop a consistent approach to CSE by police officers across Greater Manchester so there is confidence that the police flagging system is properly identifying cases of CSE.
72. Since June 2013 there has been a dedicated CSE co-ordinator who is responsible for the co-ordination of best practice and training across the force area. This is one police officer post.
73. Given that raising the level of awareness and understanding of CSE among police officers is so vital, consideration should be given to providing more resources to ensure that all officers are trained in CSE.

**PCSOs**

74. One glaring omission in police training is that Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs), who are very much walking their neighbourhood and on the ground, do not currently receive training in CSE.
75. PCSOs play a very important role. Like the detached youth workers, they ‘see’ the community (see Community Engagement chapter).
76. They also need to be trained.

**Police in schools**

77. There is a valuable role for the police to play in informing schools and the rest of the community about their work and helping educate children on how to keep safe. Officers in some police divisions go into schools, e.g. Tameside, but others do not, e.g. Stockport (see Schools chapter).
78. Some police officers themselves have developed ‘toolkits’, which are valuable resources.
79. For example, Derek Weaver, a retired Detective Inspector, has developed comprehensive training material that includes the history of CSE, signs of CSE, the different models, and the grooming process. His extensive experience in dealing with children and young women who have been sexually exploited means he can give real-life examples to help children recognise the danger signs.
80. The kind of information that police officers also have about online grooming in their area is also invaluable.

**Using community networks**

More than anyone else, the police understand the importance of working with the community. However, in relation to CSE there are existing networks they could use better.

**Recommendations**

- All police response officers should receive CSE training, lifting it from 21 per cent to 100 per cent. It is important that all officers have this training to improve the identification of CSE and improve the flagging system.
- All PCSOs should receive training in CSE and become more actively involved in community engagement activity around CSE-related issues. The role of the integrated neighbourhood policing teams is integral to the fight against CSE.
- Formal talks in schools by police officers in uniform are important to give children information about CSE. In addition, police should consider more innovative ways of connecting with children, such as speaking to small groups in a more informal way in civilian clothing. This must be a two-way process, not just the police ‘talking at’ the children, but a constructive dialogue in which young people feel they are being heard.
- There should be one set of data giving information about how many children are at risk of CSE, and this should be agreed by the police and the LSCBs.
- Schemes like Neighbourhood and Home Watch could be used to inform the wider community about CSE, along with the KIN initiative – Key Individual Network.
- Police cadets and Specials need to be better informed of the issues around CSE.
- People who are victims should be used more in police training, either in person or film. Their voices are powerful in helping the police and other agencies to understand what it feels like to be sexually abused.

“Community and voluntary groups are key to the fight against sexual exploitation because we are at grassroots level and have the ear of the community. Young people will talk to us and engage with us.”

Hayley - *Keeping Our Girls Safe*

## Community engagement

1. We all have a role in child protection. Communities in which children live are often the best source of intelligence and information about children at risk of sexual exploitation.
2. Local people hold vital pieces of information, which form part of the whole jigsaw when put together. The role of local people in keeping children safe will become even more vital with public sector cuts.
3. People – street cleaners, school crossing patrol staff, hotel workers, shop assistants, doctors, nurses, caretakers, estate officers, housing workers, refuse collectors, nursery nurses – see things. But often they don't really see or fully understand what is happening. So they need to really see because, ultimately, parents, neighbours, friends and communities will provide the strongest allies in protecting children from sexual exploitation.
4. People need to better understand what to look for in CSE in their neighbourhoods, and need a better understanding of what grooming is and how it operates.
5. If offenders are always portrayed in a particular way, e.g. Asian males, then the signs in people who don't look like offenders will be missed and with them opportunities to protect children.
6. That is why it is important to give communities information about the nature of CSE in their local areas so they can spot the signs at an early stage. In one area it might be street grooming in local hotspots, such as takeaways and parks, but in another it may be an older man, operating alone, grooming a young vulnerable girl. As Bury Safeguarding Children's

Board pointed out, the ways that children and young people are exploited are constantly evolving, so having an up-to-date understanding of the pattern of child sexual exploitation in an area is vital in order to protect children.

7. Communities need to be involved because they make up the juries in court cases. On a day-to-day level, local people express approval or disapproval of behaviour in their local areas. Public attitudes and how they are expressed within communities are critical.
8. Heightening public awareness has always been the key to effective policing. The need for community engagement by the police to safeguard children at risk of CSE is vital.
9. Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) emphasise the importance of community engagement in their current action plan.

### Heightened awareness

10. Greater Manchester Police received 2,286 pieces of intelligence relating to child sexual exploitation in the ten months between March 2013 and January 2014, which is evidence of a high level of awareness. The largest amount was from Rochdale (see Changes in Greater Manchester Police post-Rochdale).
11. Sharing information with the community will help prevent children from being groomed and coming to harm. If we stop sexual exploitation from happening in the first place, we will prevent years and years of distress and trauma for those involved.

## The role of the voluntary sector

12. The large children's charities, such as The Children's Society, Barnardo's and the NSPCC, are all doing excellent work with young people who are at risk of CSE, and I have visited projects run by all of them and met young people they have helped. The support they provide is clearly making a difference to the lives of those young people. These are great projects, but they only reach a limited number of young people.
13. These national organisations have lots of skill, knowledge and expertise in working with abused children, and they can access funding from sources like the lottery. They have connections with many young people who can articulate their experiences. Other national organisations, such as The Prince's Trust, PACE and Brook, also provide services and advice in Greater Manchester.
14. However, these organisations cannot stretch to having a presence on all LSCBs in all local areas. Like everybody else they are constrained by limited resources. Although small local groups have access to pockets of funding, such as You Say We Pay, community safety funds, small community grants, and ward budgets, they do not have the expertise or the confidence to raise awareness of CSE.
15. One way forward might be for larger experienced organisations to provide mentoring, information and materials to enable smaller groups to get the messages over to the public in small local areas.
17. KOGS raises awareness of grooming, exploitation and unhealthy relationships with young people and the community to challenge and change attitudes towards sexual exploitation. By using art, dance, drama, film and photography, KOGS allows young people to explore sensitive subjects such as grooming, exploitation, unhealthy relationships, domestic violence, self-awareness, self-esteem and confidence.
18. Hayley said: "I believe that community and voluntary groups are key to the fight against sexual exploitation in the future, because we are at grass-roots level and have the ear of the community. Young people will talk to us and engage with us. Many may have had previous negative experiences with other agencies and are reluctant to talk to them again."
19. The model of funding is very unusual. It was kick-started by cash from the allocated personal budget of some local councillors, including Councillor Kaiser Rehman. He said: "KOGS is a fantastic organisation helping young girls in my area. Sexual exploitation is immoral and is a real issue that I want to help tackle. If supporting KOGS can stop just one girl being exploited and suffering years of mental torment, then I will have done my job."
20. Councillors each have an allocated personal budget of £2,000, to which voluntary groups can apply directly for funding. The wards in Oldham are split into districts, each of which has its own budget. Applications can be made for funding direct to the district partnership where the councillors collectively decide which applications to fund. KOGS has received funding from both the district partnership and individual councillors.
21. Although there might be less funding available in the future for ward budgets because of the public spending cuts, projects like these are invaluable. They not only give help and support to the young people, giving them the confidence to say 'no' to peer pressure, risky behaviour and pressure from older men, but they also help spread an understanding of CSE in that local community.

## Local Manchester groups

### **Keeping Our Girls Safe**

16. I have met some of these impressive smaller local groups. Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGS) is an innovative project in Oldham, which has helped about 100 local girls this year alone. The project, which focuses on prevention, is run by sisters Hayley and Claire Harwood.

### **Survivors Manchester**

22. Another group is Survivors Manchester, which is led by Duncan Craig. This is the only organisation in Greater Manchester specifically supporting boys and men who have experienced sexual abuse, rape or sexual exploitation. It provides online self-help, email and telephone support, individual and group face-to-face support, specialist counselling, and psychotherapy services.
23. Duncan believes that the experiences of survivors are powerful in schools, Pupil Referral Units and prisons.
24. Survivors has done some excellent work in prisons and joined up with two other groups, The Men's Room and Mancunian Way, to conduct a Safer Streets outreach pilot between August 2013 and March 2014 around a section of the city centre that intersects with Manchester's Gay village, the Rochdale Canal and Piccadilly Gardens. This area has proved particularly problematic for the police over the past five decades due to the prevalence of prostitution, gang crime, offences of public decency, mugging and child sexual exploitation. The pilot led to more sexual offences being reported, positive relationships, and one young man entering The Prince's Trust.

### **Parents**

25. Parents also need to be engaged. Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE) is a valuable part of CSE teams in Rochdale, Manchester and Salford, but again it cannot have a presence everywhere. Again, sharing of knowledge and expertise would be invaluable for smaller community-based groups.
26. PACE published a report in May 2014 entitled The Relational Safeguarding Model, which says: "The myths around sexually exploited children are receding. Exploited children are now less likely to be seen as 'willingly taking part in sexual activities' or as 'non co-operating victims'. This is welcome and long overdue. But their parents and families continue to be judged and blamed for the abuse of their child.

27. "I know that families are often traumatised twice over – firstly, by the horror of witnessing their child suffer and the impact of that on themselves and their family, and secondly, by the way they can be treated by agencies who seek to safeguard the affected child.
28. "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."

### **Engaging different types of communities**

29. The difficulties of working in some communities cannot be underestimated. The increased sexualisation of children and young people involves an avalanche of explicit music videos, the normalisation of quasi-pornographic images, sexting, selfies, and Instagram. It has given rise to new social norms in changed expectations of sexual entitlement, and with it confused understanding of consent.

## Social norms and 'mopping up'

30. One professional, who works with young people on a deprived Greater Manchester estate, insists that child sexual exploitation is widespread in some areas and is the new social norm. She said children often do not disclose because they feel complicit or think it is normal.
31. She said that one of the problems was that many adults did not see any problem in having lots of young people in their house drinking, taking cannabis and going upstairs for sex.



32. “Some adults welcome young people into their house to drink, take weed and go upstairs for sex. This is how sexual exploitation can creep in. A girl might start to think I have been chilling here for weeks and they have given me drink and weed, and so and so went upstairs and had sex, so maybe I should. Often it is the young people who get the blame, not the adults who host the parties. Young people nowadays have lost a lot of trust in services. They are frightened of being seen as grasses or of being put in care. They do not realise there is a structure there to help them.
33. “Young women are spoken about as pieces of meat. The boys do this thing called ‘mopping up’ where they go round to vulnerable girls and women at night for sex, including those with learning disabilities.
34. “It is often not seen as sexual exploitation to young people. It’s a game and they jeer each other on. Boys will talk about it and say ‘let’s go round to so and so’s – she gives good blowjobs’. The girls sometimes do not see it as exploitation because they get attention, which is something they do not get on a daily basis.
35. “It is difficult to speak to parents about it when it happened to them all their lives, and their mums and dads condoned them having young men in the house at all hours. They just think it is normal behaviour.
36. “There is also a lot of swapping of partners among friends. How can they know what sexual abuse is when they do not even know what basic friendship is?”
37. Another young mum said: “There is no respect whatsoever from the boys on our estate. They are just obsessed with getting their leg over. There is no respect. They are all just out for a quick jump and that is it. It’s the culture. If you do go out, they think, I bought her a drink or something to eat and so I deserve her to sleep with me. If you don’t, they say that you have used them or call you a bitch. They expect it.”

### Grassing people up

38. Many of the most vulnerable children in our society present as difficult teenagers who hang around the streets and get involved in antisocial behaviour and petty criminality. Because of this they become even more vulnerable and hard to reach – their families do not look after and protect them and they do not trust the agencies and services that have the responsibility to protect them, such as the police and even schools.
39. We have to remember the context of the environment that these young people live in. There is a culture of ‘not grassing people up’ and a hostility to the police, schools and social workers.
40. The police have well-documented difficulties in working in such areas. In those areas it might be that an offender, of say antisocial behaviour or petty crime, might also be a sexual abuse victim. If the police have dealt with a child for antisocial behaviour and had an angry confrontation with them, it is difficult for that same child, who is a sexual abuse victim, to see the police as someone who is there to help them.
41. A young peer mentor from Manchester Active Voices told me: “The young people I work with do not trust anyone. There are big barriers – they are frightened of things being reported back. There is a big fear that if you say too much it will cause too many problems, which they will then have to deal with. They are frightened of being seen as a snitch or grassing someone up.”
42. This was also clear from conversations I had at a youth centre, where young people told me they would not go to teachers or the police. “They would just grass you up to your mums,” said one.
43. The value of detached youth workers and PCSOs cannot be overestimated, because they are the people on the streets who see exactly what is happening on the ground.

44. I was talking to a PCSO in my constituency who said a young boy had come up to him and asked: “Is it right for a 17-year-old boy to be having sex with my 13-year-old sister?” Because he had knowledge of the estate, the officer was aware that there was a group of boys hanging around together, racially abusing families and committing crimes involving drugs. He soon put two and two together and assessed that the girl was the victim of sexual exploitation by a group of boys, not just a 17-year-old boyfriend.
45. He thought that CSE was underreported because children were sometimes out all night and no one knew what they were getting up to. He thought young people would disclose to a third party but not the police because they did not trust them. They like the fun of confrontation with the police and felt that anyone who reported anything to the police was a grass.
46. If community policing is to work, then the police need to have partners on those estates who are trusted by young people.

### **Training the community**

47. Most of the public sector goes home at 5pm, yet often the risky connections are being made in the evenings, which is why involving takeaway food outlets, shops and hotels in raising awareness is important.
48. The National Working Group and Children’s Society campaign, Say Something If You See Something, aims to raise awareness among businesses such as hotels, leisure centres, taxi firms and takeaways about the signs of child sexual exploitation.
49. As well as training those groups to spot behaviour indicative of child sexual exploitation, I would like to see awareness-raising among other groups, such as pharmacists, refuse collectors, school crossing patrol staff and housing officers, as part of a wider community engagement strategy by the local safeguarding boards and police. Other ‘eyes and ears’ on the streets include bus drivers and railway station staff, who see children going on the bus or train into Manchester city centre.

50. Susan Ritchie, from Mutual Gain, which provides training for organisations like the police about how they engage with local residents, community organisations and special interest groups, also talked about the social norm of CSE in some communities. She said: “When you have new social norms you need to be good at building relationships with the public that are trusted, ongoing and helpful.”
51. Ms Ritchie says there can be a tendency to focus on quantity, e.g. the number of leaflets delivered, not the quality, of community engagement.
52. And then there is the challenge of engaging beyond the same three per cent of people. This is not only an issue for the police but for neighbourhood management teams, community development teams, the youth service and public health. Working with and gaining the trust of the community is vital for the police and other agencies to be able to protect vulnerable people.
53. There needs to be more work done to build trust across all different types of communities so that the people living in those communities can help to better protect children who are at risk of CSE.

### **Council of Mosques**

54. I visited the Council of Mosques in Rochdale in March 2014. They are concerned that, as a consequence of the media coverage, they are seen as part of the problem and not part of the solution. They are emphatic that the behaviour of the offenders was criminal not Asian, and are concerned that this distinction is not being made by the wider public.
55. They think that this leads to distrust and makes it more difficult to work as equal partners with the statutory agencies.

56. They believe that the mosques where children attend for religious education could provide a very good opportunity for raising awareness about CSE among children and young people. They are particularly concerned to make sure that young boys are not encouraged to be sexual groomers by older men. They think more outreach work by the statutory agencies should be done in the mosques.
57. Their concern that community resources are not being used effectively to raise awareness and knowledge of CSE has been echoed elsewhere in relation to other communities, and is part of a wider challenge the statutory agencies have in developing new models of working to combat sexual exploitation of children.
58. GMP and LSCBs need to find more effective ways of engaging with all the different types of communities, including the socially advantaged, disengaged and disadvantaged white and ethnic minority communities if we are to deal with the problem of underreporting of CSE.

### Prevention is the best cure

59. CSE is a priority for all Local Safeguarding Children Boards and they have a key role in co-ordinating training and awareness raising. Education and knowledge are essential parts of achieving wider culture change.
60. It appears that LSCBs' multiagency training and awareness raising is being undertaken, but I think everybody would agree that they would like to have the capacity to increase this. What is also not clear is how the impact of CSE training is monitored. There needs to be care taken that there is not a tick-box approach.
61. In looking at raising awareness in local areas there needs to be a recognition that there are many types of communities – older people and people at home, whose community is physical around post offices, shops, libraries and communities at work; and digital communities dominated by social media for young people. Organisations like the Rotary Club and the Women's Institute have local branches, and through them contacts with a network of local people and groups like these could also be used to raise awareness of CSE.
62. The internet has created a new community of young people linked not by place but online, and this is seen by many young people as the most important community of all and is where they receive most of their information from.
63. It is important to develop communications to reach the very different communities.
64. Attitudes get embedded and reinforced by everyday remarks in the community.
65. We have all seen the sea change in attitudes towards gay rights and we have to understand how those attitudes were changed. There was a strong message, reinforced in the media, relayed through culture and art and repeated again and again in communities.
66. This can be done again in changing attitudes to CSE. To prevent CSE we have to tackle the cultural attitudes that enable sex exploiters to get away with what they are doing.
67. We need a better understanding of consent and exploitative relationships so that the exploiters are targeted for criticism not the exploited.
68. LSCBs should always be mindful about how they ensure that the public is included in any awareness-raising events so they can play their part in protecting children.

### Phoenix Communications Strategy

69. On 19 September 2014, Project Phoenix launched a new communications strategy involving Greater Manchester Police, the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office, the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership, health services and ten local authorities. It was a great example of agencies working together to proactively highlight the problem of CSE and to give the victims 'back stories'.
70. The campaign had three main elements: a new website – [www.itsnotokay.co.uk](http://www.itsnotokay.co.uk) giving information about CSE and how to spot it and report it; a multiagency week of action, PR and marketing activity, including posters, and leaflets for parents, carers and professionals; and wristbands for young people with the website address and a video by Barnardo's.
71. An accompanying week of action included police patrols and raids in which 19 people were arrested and three warrants were executed. It also included school drama events across GM and school visits by police officers. GMP also did some live tweeting from a CSE patrol on 19 September.
72. Tony Lloyd, the Police and Crime Commissioner, wrote to every high school and college in Greater Manchester to make them aware of the campaign and to urge them to act if they are worried about a young person.
73. This was a good co-ordinated initiative aimed at engaging the public and was an indication of general direction of travel. But to be successful long term it cannot be a one-off week. It has to be a consistent and persistent message repeated on an ongoing basis week after week in schools, and community groups, involving such schemes as Neighbourhood and Home Watch and KIN. Models of sexual exploitation are constantly evolving and the public needs to be kept abreast of the changes.

### Use your local media

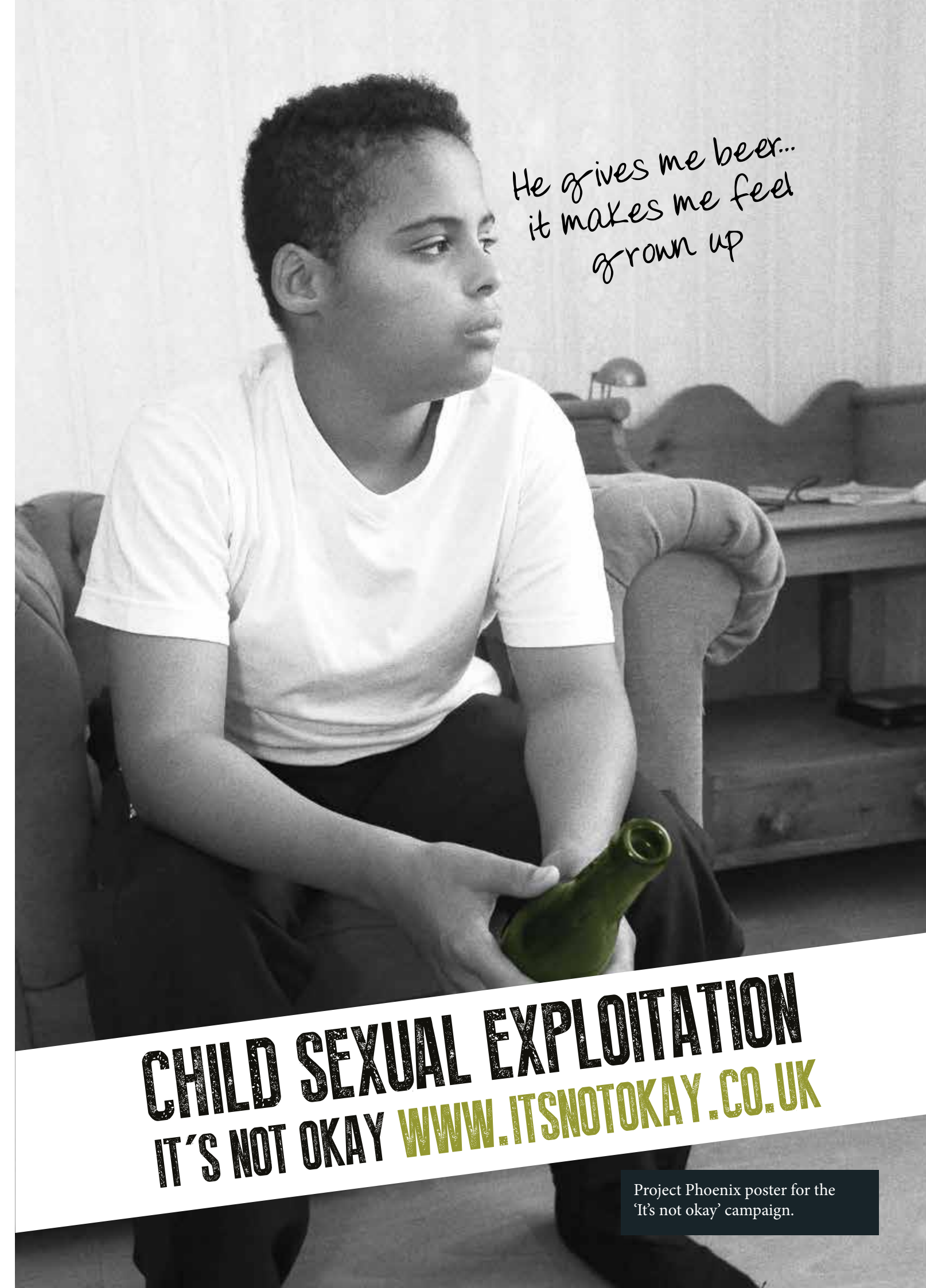
74. The media can be a great ally in the fight back against sexual exploitation in the community, helping to educate the public about victims and wider issues.
75. Ninety per cent of parents who had heard of child sexual exploitation reported that they had heard about it from the media and news coverage (YouGov Survey: Are Parents in the Picture?)
76. It is important that public agencies, such as the police, social services and CPS, work hard to engage and inform their local newspapers, radio, TV and social media.
77. Too often, all we get after a big court case is the men or women in suits talking defensively about the role of their own particular organisation, instead of working proactively with other agencies to get broader messages across.
78. We should remember that many children and young people have had to rely on good investigative journalism and whistle-blowers to expose abuse and protect them, as the agencies charged with looking after them have failed.
79. Local newspapers can also be effective in promoting child protection issues, and I have been particularly impressed with the Manchester Evening News, which in February 2011 launched a campaign on runaway and missing children. The paper devoted three pages to it, including highlighting the fact that nearly half the missing children had run away from care, and focusing on the dangers they faced. The paper also highlighted the Children Society project in Manchester, Safe in the City.



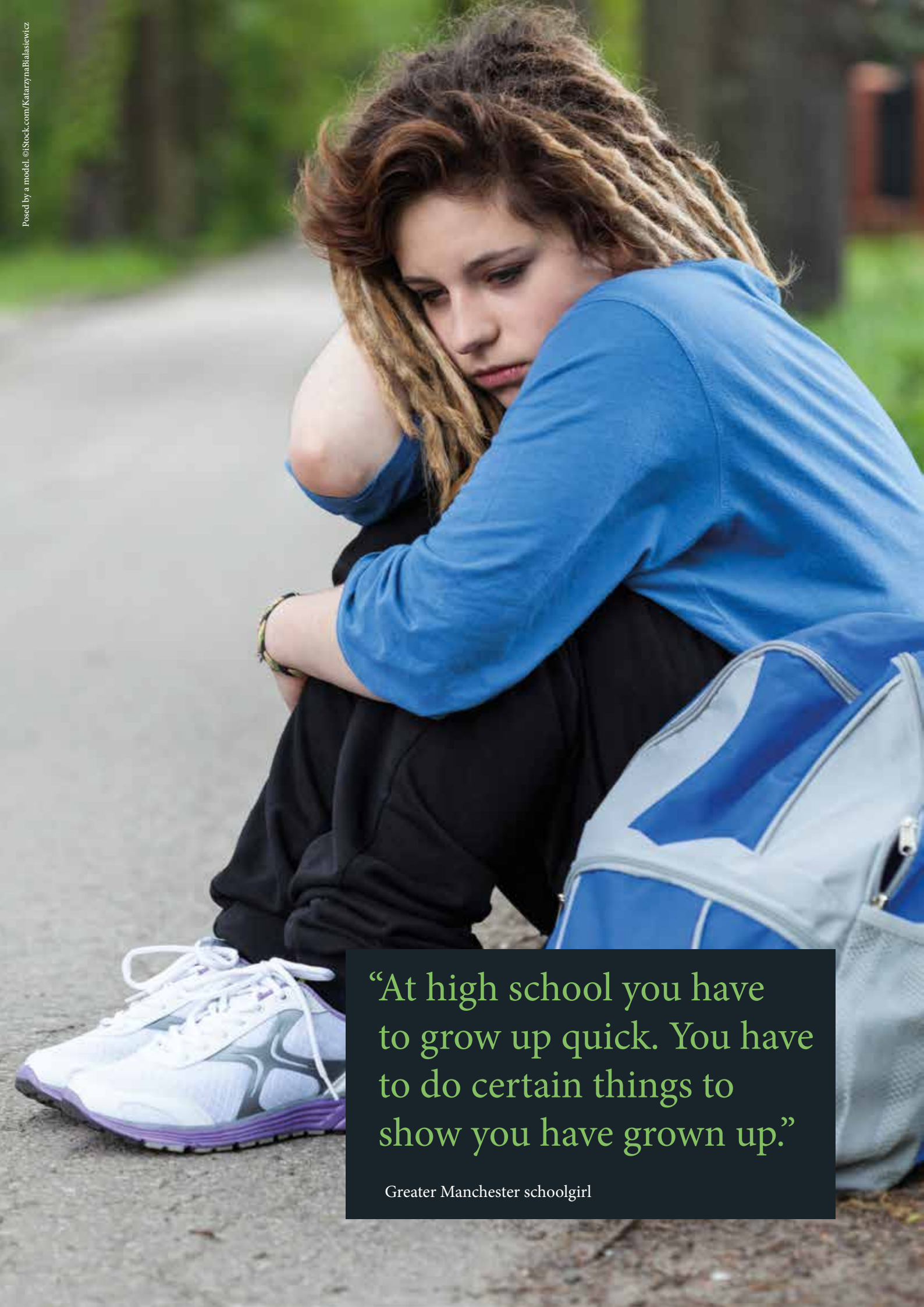
80. The paper and journalist Jennifer Williams won an award, and since then the MEN has continued to focus on child protection issues, including child sexual exploitation. The publicity the MEN and other local papers have given to these issues serves to impress on all agencies the importance of working together to protect children. Awareness of the problem is now very high thanks to such coverage. A committed, powerful, local media exposing issues is worth its weight in gold and is an integral part of the local community.
81. Local newspapers and media are more trusted by the public than national newspapers, and when presented with careful, well-evidenced information, they will give it coverage.
82. Because more people now get their news online or from radio and TV, newspaper journalists are hungrier than ever for 'back stories' and in-depth features that get behind the news and provide the public with extra valuable information.

### Conclusions and recommendations

- If we are to deal with the problem of underreporting of CSE, Greater Manchester Police, together with Local Safeguarding Children Boards, need to find more effective ways of engaging with all the different communities, including socially advantaged, disadvantaged and disengaged white and ethnic minority communities.
- More information about CSE should be given to the public, as well as those who are the 'eyes and ears' of the community. These include pharmacists, school crossing patrol staff, school nurses, refuse collectors, bus drivers, park attendants, housing officers, takeaway and other shopkeepers, as well as taxi drivers and hoteliers.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner should require the Greater Manchester LSCBs and the Phoenix Project to collectively produce and publish an annual update on their work to tackle CSE. This should include a report from individual police divisions on the effectiveness of their community engagement, stating clearly what they hope to achieve and what they have achieved in working with the community to better protect children and young people from CSE. They should also demonstrate how they have proactively used social media, civic publications, local newspapers, TV and radio to get messages across about CSE.
- The importance of small community groups in influencing local opinion should be recognised. Large charities should work with and mentor smaller groups to give them the confidence to work on preventing CSE in their local areas.
- Community groups should be encouraged to apply for any available local funding, including that available to ward councillors.







“At high school you have to grow up quick. You have to do certain things to show you have grown up.”

Greater Manchester schoolgirl

## The role of schools

1. Schools are a universal provision. According to figures provided by the House of Commons, in January 2014 there were 1,086 state-funded nursery, primary, secondary and special schools teaching a total of 414,000 pupils in Greater Manchester. There were also 22 sixth-form and general FE sector colleges in Greater Manchester, with about 58,600 students aged 16 to 19 in 2012/13.
2. This means that schools have a key role, not only in the early identification of concerns, but in early interventions in preventing CSE.
3. Potentially, of course, all schools and colleges could have issues with CSE, with the increase in young people sexually exploiting other young people, ‘sexting’ and pressure to post images.
4. According to Ofcom, all children and young people have access to the internet, with around 62% of 12-to-15-year-olds owning a smartphone and 26% a tablet computer. Social media is a very important influence in their lives.
5. Schools have a very important role in giving children and young people information so that they protect themselves from getting involved in harmful, abusive and inappropriate relationships.
6. All schools are inspected by Ofsted, which issued fresh statutory guidance for schools and colleges in April 2014, entitled Keeping Children Safe in Education. This emphasises the role staff have in identifying concerns they may have about children and providing help and support as part of a wider safeguarding system. It recommends the appointment of a Safeguarding Lead to provide support for staff.

### What is happening in Greater Manchester schools?

7. Personal, Social, Health and Economic Education (PSHE) is not compulsory in the national curriculum, which means it is left to individual schools to decide what opportunities they provide for children to learn about CSE.
8. This can lead to a piecemeal approach. There is a huge spectrum of schools in Greater Manchester, and therefore a huge variation in the kind of information given to children about child sexual exploitation or in learning about resilience. That reflects the priorities the school gives to tackling exploitation and may depend on how much of an issue they think it is for their students. It will depend on the local leadership and commitment of individual staff, and it will depend on what pressures are being put on schools to provide information.
9. We did a dip sample of secondary schools to see what approaches are being taken and found that it varied enormously, as did the material that was being used. Some schools are taking their pupils to see productions or have bought productions and videos, such as ‘Real Love Rocks’, ‘Somebody’s Sister, Somebody’s Daughter’ and ‘My Dangerous Loverboy’. These resources provide a starting point for constructive discussions among young people. Other schools are making their own material.
10. Some schools have identified young people who they fear are vulnerable to CSE and work with them in groups, while other schools have said they did not have an issue with CSE.

11. As part of our dip sample, we also came across a faith school that said they did not inform young people about CSE because they did not feel they had a problem, and in another school with children from different ethnic backgrounds the governors had been reluctant to authorise the teaching of sex and relationships.
12. Because the teaching of PSHE is not compulsory it might mean that discussion of the issues does not take place in some schools because 'it is too difficult to do'. This is a problem, as all children in Greater Manchester are at risk.
13. Clearly, some schools are concerned that being very proactive about CSE will cause them reputational damage, as they will be seen as a school with a problem. Although children attend particular schools, they mix with children from other schools. For there to be a proper awareness of CSE in our communities it needs to be on the curriculum in all schools.
14. The compulsory teaching of PSHE would go a long way to deal with those issues, though of course that would not in itself guarantee the quality of the information taught.
15. Some school staff expressed an interest in receiving any information and resources to support the work they do with children. This may suggest that some schools don't feel equipped to teach young people about CSE currently.
16. Although some schools have opted to train all staff, it seems that in most only the child protection pastoral care staff are trained. This means that other staff may then not feel equipped to cover CSE in lessons and they also miss signs of CSE.
17. In Rochdale, CSE awareness sessions have been undertaken with schools, colleges and youth centres for young people involving more than 9,000 pupils and 300 parents. Work has been done to embed CSE into the PSHE curriculum. This seems to have resulted in a higher level of awareness, which can be demonstrated by the high number of pieces of intelligence reported to the police in Rochdale.
18. The emphasis of this work in Rochdale has been to equip schools to deliver the inputs themselves rather than to rely on external agencies. However, the drama 'Somebody's sister, Somebody's daughter' has been performed in most Rochdale schools.
19. Stockport Safeguarding Managers produced a CSE preventative framework for high schools, academies, colleges and Pupil Referral Units in Stockport. It has been highlighted as an example of good practice on the LGA website and has been mentioned by the DFE. Stockport bought each of these schools the resource of 'My Dangerous Loverboy' video and education pack and the Barnardo's 'Be Wise' education pack on CSE and healthy relationships and gave clear guidance about how and when specific excerpts should be used in schools. All the high schools were also provided with a performance of the GW Theatre Company play 'Somebody's Sister, Somebody's Daughter' for their year 10 pupils, and the feedback from this was very positive. Proper training of staff is very important and an initial evaluation identified that some staff lacked confidence to deliver in this area and needed support.
20. In February 2013, Trafford Safeguarding Children's Board, in partnership with Trafford Rape Crisis, hosted a theatre company event that used a play to raise awareness of CSE in Trafford schools. And in November 2013, Trafford Youth Cabinet hosted a conference on risk for children and young people in Trafford, 'Let's Talk Youth Wellbeing', which was attended by 80 young people and their teachers. Ninety per cent agreed that every school in Trafford should teach sex and relationship education, and 90 per cent felt they would know if they were being sexually groomed. Also, 70 per cent felt they could not talk to their parents about sex, and 50 per cent said they felt pressurised to have sex.
21. In Tameside, work with schools has included presentations to head teachers, delivery of 'Train the Trainer' sessions to key staff in all primary and secondary schools across Tameside, development of a CSE awareness presentation for young people, and the

- roll out of 'Somebody's Sister, Somebody's Daughter', across all secondary schools by June.
22. The Manchester Safeguarding Children's Board focused on sexting as the theme for Safer Internet Day 2013 and held a summit on Online Risks and Sexting, the exchange of sexual messages or images through mobile phones or the internet. The idea was to raise awareness and start a discussion with young people in schools about sexting and what support they need.
23. They said that overall, young people appeared to have little understanding of the long-term consequences and permanence of the images being distributed, although they appreciated the direct repercussions, for example, being bullied or labelled 'easy'.
24. Some schools have developed their own material, e.g. Harrytown, a Stockport High School, made a video two years ago about the dangers of sexting, and a local youth group in my constituency has made a YouTube video on the dangers of internet grooming.
25. I am sure there is a lot more good material around Greater Manchester, informed and produced by children and young people themselves that very much gives their take and understanding of the pressures they face in their local area.

### The importance of primary schools

26. Sometimes in focusing on secondary schools, we forget the very important role of primary schools. Young people tell me that as soon as they go to secondary school they felt the pressure to grow up.
27. One schoolgirl told me: "At high school you feel you have to grow up quick. You feel you have to do certain things to show you have grown up."
28. Another said: "The biggest pressure is to fit in. You have to have a flat belly, big bum, big boobs and long curly hair. You have to look the piece, and if you don't, people don't talk to you and you get the mick taken out of you."

29. Clearly then, children need to be better prepared for that pressure. The preparation has to be in their primary schools. For those children who go on to form strong friendship groups, they will have that important peer group. Of course, that friendship group can also create pressure to conform as well as be a source of support. We also have to bear in mind that children who do not have strong friendship groups can be vulnerable and isolated. They need to be aware about the dangers of forming inappropriate relationships.
30. So the move from primary to secondary school is a big transition for children, particularly vulnerable children.
31. There is some very excellent work done in primary schools on bullying, and it would seem a logical extension to talk about sexual pressure both from adults and peers in that context.
32. Primary schools are very much part of their communities and are in an excellent place to help raise awareness among parents. This is because there is often more parental involvement in primary schools, and good primaries have strong links with their immediate communities.
33. The involvement of parents is critical but is not always easy. Some secondary schools that were very committed to safeguarding their young people from child sexual exploitation told me that parents evenings they had put on to raise awareness and share materials were very poorly attended.
34. Adswold Primary school, in my constituency, is outstanding. It is an area of high deprivation in which historically it has been very difficult to reach some families within the community. However, many parents have been encouraged to come into the school and volunteer, and some children who have gone on to secondary schools come back for work placements.



35. The Childline Schools Service model, demonstrated in Parliament in July 2014, shows the way that information can be given to primary school children, as well as ensuring that information is given to the wider community. The NSPCC trains volunteers to go into primary schools to work with children and teachers to recognise emotional, physical and sexual abuse and to talk about it. They use volunteers, which increases capacity and also increases awareness in the wider communities where the volunteers work and live, so that the community itself becomes more aware of what to look for in prevention of CSE.

Inspection

36. Of course, the Ofsted inspection and the grade they receive as a result of these inspections is very important to schools. Ofsted is a great lever for changing approaches to safeguarding in schools, but as long as PSHE is not compulsory there will be a limitation to how Ofsted inspections can use their lever of inspection.

37. The national emphasis is very much on outcomes in terms of educational achievement in schools. Although safeguarding is part of the school inspection, I think it can be safely said that it is not the major focus of the inspection. This is a pity because it is generally accepted that low self-esteem and poor self-confidence, which makes a child vulnerable to sexually exploitative relationships, also contributes to poor educational outcomes. Safeguarding and giving children skills and knowledge are not separate. An emotionally damaged child will only have a limited capacity to learn.

38. It is very welcome that a guidance document for head teachers and safeguarding leads in high schools across Greater Manchester is currently in development. The Phoenix Project is drawing on good practice locally and nationally, particularly highlighting the positive impact that adopting a whole-school approach can have in preventing, identifying and responding to the sexual exploitation of pupils.

School visits

39. I have a great deal of admiration for the commitment and passion shown by the members of staff for safeguarding children at the schools I visited.

40. It is disappointing to read Ofsted reports on schools that have a strong commitment to safeguarding and not see much acknowledgment or even description of that by inspectors. Schools can learn from the very different approaches each of them can take. Ofsted reports are a good source of information.

41. The challenge in Greater Manchester is again how innovative approaches by schools can be spread beyond not only the schools themselves and their own local authority boundaries, but across the conurbation as a whole.

42. Innovative approaches by schools are of course not only interesting for other schools to learn about, but also for all the community groups and projects in local areas, which may have small bits of funding and may be looking at how they can best use it. The Keeping Our Girls Safe group in Oldham, which works to prevent sexual exploitation, was recently contacted by Flixton High School to do some preventative workshops in the school after reading about the group on Twitter. KOGS is a very impressive group, which was started by cash from the personal budgets of local councillors (see Community Engagement chapter).

43. Where appropriate, the Pupil Premium should also be used to help children and young people who are vulnerable to sexual exploitation and who may already be identified as children in need or be on the child protection plan. It may be that this could be used more creatively to build self-confidence and at the same time improve educational attainment and make children more resilient to inappropriate sexual relationships.

44. There needs to be a sea change in attitudes so that we don't simply see child protection as an add-on but see it as fundamental to educational achievement.

Peer mentoring

45. The importance of peer mentors as a bridge between young people and agencies such as the police, social services and schools, has been highlighted to me frequently during the course of this inquiry. The development of peer mentoring is very much welcomed by young people.

Flixton High School

46. Flixton uses its Pupil Premium money to support girls identified at risk of CSE. Community Change Foundation provides one-to-one and group mentoring, and the school says this approach has been highly successful in keeping girls safe. The Flixton girls emphasised to me how valuable they found peer group mentoring:

47. One said: “ You have no-one to speak to if you are not from a stable home and you are also frightened of being judged.”

48. Another said: “You're more comfortable speaking to a mentor than a teacher because it happened to them – they have been there and they can guide you and give you advice.”

49. Many young people told me that peer mentors are more flexible than 9-to-5 social workers and often ring or text to see if they are okay in the evenings and at weekends.

50. The value of a continuous relationship with somebody they can trust because they feel that person understands is something that time and time again comes over when talking to young people. How that is achieved in a school environment is a challenge for schools, but it is clear that as young people move into their own independent space in secondary school they are less likely to share information even with trusted adults.

51. One girl said: “I get on really well with my mum. My mum says you can tell me everything, but I feel uncomfortable telling her everything. I don't like telling her about my business. I like the teacher but I do not feel comfortable telling her things either. It makes you feel awkward.”

52. A safeguarding culture at school works best when it involves all the children as well as the teachers. For example, in Flixton the school has an anonymous system where pupils can report anything that is worrying them. In Bury High School children report when other children are missing at lessons because they understand the significance and the dangers of children missing from school.

53. It is important that the idea of ‘safeguarding is everybody's responsibility’ should include children.

Recommendations

- The development of a digital cloud resource in which material made by children and young people could be accessed directly by all young people and schools across the whole of Greater Manchester to use as part of their safeguarding. This could be developed alongside the young people's digital network.
- Continue to campaign for the Government to make PSHE compulsory, so that all children in Greater Manchester schools are better safeguarded from CSE.
- As part of a wider safeguarding approach, Pupil Premium money could be used by schools singly or jointly to fund peer-mentoring schemes for those identified at risk of CSE.



“I would walk out of school where I was getting bullied and go to men’s flats and take drugs.”

Victim of child sexual exploitation

## Children who are missing from school

1. Children going missing from school can be a sign of child sexual exploitation.
2. Children being absent from school was raised as an issue in the Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Children Overview Report and there was particular concern about children being educated off-site. In a letter to this inquiry, Oldham LSCB identified that ‘Further work is required around schools and how we identify those at risk or those who are vulnerable, particularly those who are absent or go missing from school, and those who are home-schooled.’
3. According to the DFE, over six half-terms during 2012/13 there were 9,135 children persistently absent from secondary schools (missing over 15% of lessons) and 4,955 children persistently absent from primary schools in Greater Manchester.
4. These figures include authorised and unauthorised absences where children are missing without explanation.
5. In November 2013, the DFE issued new guidance on school attendance, which is contained in School attendance: Departmental advice for maintained schools, academies, independent schools and local authorities.
6. The school should follow up any absences to ascertain the reason and ensure that the proper safeguarding action is taken.
7. These absences, along with missing-from-home reports, are an indicator of risk of sexual exploitation.
8. In every local authority area there are children and young people who do not or cannot attend full-time school education in the usual way. Many of these children are not on a school roll and are considered to be the direct responsibility of the local authority.
9. We do not know how many children are in part-time education in Greater Manchester because local authorities have only recently been collecting that information at the request of Ofsted.
10. One youth worker I interviewed expressed concerns about children on part-time timetables.
11. She said: “A lot of young people are on part-time timetables at school. They are often vulnerable children, perhaps those on ASBOs and those known to the authorities as ‘little sh ---’.
12. “If you only go to school between 9 and 12 and when you get home your parents are at work, or do not give a monkey’s about you, then what do you do from 12 onwards?”
13. The 2010 Ofsted report, Children Missing from Education, warned that those who do not attend school or similar provision are at risk not only of social and educational failure but also, importantly, of physical, emotional and psychological harm. The vulnerability of these pupils was significantly increased because they were out of school unofficially and preventative agencies were not aware of their potentially increased exposure to drugs, alcohol misuse, crime, pregnancy and mental health problems. They can become invisible to the local authority.

14. In November 2013, Ofsted published a report entitled Pupils Missing Out of Education. Sir Michael Wilshaw said in his foreword:
15. “Up until now, Ofsted has not inspected what arrangements local authorities make for the education of these children and young people. It is a key recommendation of this report that this should change.
16. “If no-one in authority knows what education these children and young people receive each week, or whether they even attend, they not only miss out on education but can be vulnerable to abuse. Everyone must take greater responsibility for knowing where they are. As a result of this survey’s findings, Her Majesty’s inspectors will ask for detailed and specific data on school-aged children, for whom the authority is responsible but who are not in full-time education, as part of the new inspections of local authority children’s social care. These inspections will report robustly on whether local authorities are discharging their responsibilities well. I want us to be certain that local authorities are making proper educational provision for all children and young people, as well as actively safeguarding them.”
17. The long-term effects of missing education are reflected in the annual survey by the Department for Education based on the data returned by local authorities for November and December 2013 and January 2014. At the end of 2013 there were an estimated 5,210 16 to 18-year-olds not in education, employment or training (NEET) across Greater Manchester – equivalent to 5.5% of the 16–18 population.

Recommendation

- Ofsted has expressed its intention to inspect equality of provision for children in part-time education or those excluded from education because of concerns about low aspirations and limited achievement for these children.
- Project Phoenix should do further research into how these most vulnerable and challenging of children, who are being failed by the system at the moment, can be better safeguarded from child sexual exploitation.

“If you only go to school between 9 and 12 and when you get home your parents are at work, or do not give a monkey’s about you, then what do you do from 12 onwards?”

Youth worker



“Sometimes, it’s really hard. Like, if I go to a children’s home and there’s already children there that say, ‘oh yeah let’s go missing’. I go to me room take me jacket, take me stuff and then I’m gone.”

Girl in a secure unit

## Children who are missing from home and care

1. One in five children and young people who go missing from home or care are at risk of serious harm (Joint APPG Report on Children Missing from Care). There are major concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of child sexual exploitation. Missing children are also vulnerable to other forms of exploitation, violent crime, gang exploitation, and drug and alcohol misuse.
2. In 2013, the police introduced a new system of recording missing incidents, which classifies a child or young person as either ‘missing’ or puts them in a new lower-risk category of ‘absent’.
3. Fresh figures prepared for this inquiry by the GMP reveal that 3,242 children and young people under 18 went missing from January to 17 September 2014, generating 9,789 reports. Of those, 539 were children looked after by the local authority, generating 4,520 reports – almost half of all incidents.
4. In addition, there were 4,923 episodes recorded as absent since January. Absent reports do not trigger an immediate police response.
5. There has to be concern about the numbers of children, particularly those in care, who are going missing on a number of occasions.
6. Since 27 January 2014, changes to the Children’s Homes Regulations 2001 mean that children’s homes that accept young people from out of their borough are required to notify the local authority that a child has been admitted to or discharged from their home. However, I am concerned that this is not happening.
7. For example, a local authority from the Midlands recently placed seven children all assessed at high risk of CSE into two private children’s homes in Stockport.
8. In this case the Stockport children’s homes did not inform the local authority or the police. The first instance of them coming to notice was when they went missing shortly after they arrived in Stockport and the police were called.
9. When the police attended to take a Missing From Home Report, the home staff were not able to provide any information of value to assist, as the placing authority had not provided the home with the required information. Also, a local authority from London and one from Wales have also placed children into Stockport children’s homes recently with similar issues, and the local council and police were not notified.
10. This is a flagrant breach of the new government guidance and means very vulnerable children are falling off the radar. I would like to see Greater Manchester authorities do spot checks on children’s homes to see if they are adhering to the new guidance and notifying police and councils when a child moves in.
11. In 2012, two reports highlighted that many children missing from care were not being effectively safeguarded: the Joint All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry on Children Who Go Missing from Care, which I chaired; and the accelerated report of the Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s ongoing inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups.

12. The APPG inquiry was concerned about how information on missing children was collected and how it was assessed alongside information from other services to determine the risk of children coming to significant harm, including CSE when they went missing.

### New absent and missing system

13. The new system of recording absent and missing was introduced by the police because ACPO had been concerned that a lot of police time was being taken up with following through police procedures on missing reports, particularly from children's homes. However, there were concerns that the initial risk assessment by the call centre, which would determine whether there was an immediate police response, could mean that a child might be exposed to significant harm because the level of risk was not assessed properly and they were reported as absent rather missing. Only missing reports initiate an immediate police response.
14. GMP now have eight Missing From Home Co-ordinators, but they mainly deal with the high-risk missing reports. Since the start of the year, 37 people reported missing to GMP have been found dead, including two under 18.
15. GMP also have Madison police officers, who have additional training and work with the children's homes.
16. Both absent and missing information is passed to the senior management in the police divisions. From the responses to my request for information to the LSCBs it is clear that CSE teams deal with this information in different ways depending on their organisational structures. For example, Rochdale has a Missing Panel, and Trafford and Bury have a Sexual Exploitation and Missing Panel.
17. The absent and missing data collated from the call centres is sent to a senior person in the police divisions. It is clear from the responses that both

absent and missing data is considered alongside other information to assess the level of risk of children having been harmed during missing or absent episodes. So the categories are not in themselves an issue if data on absent and missing is shared locally.

18. However, Salford express concern about the new categorisations. They saw a significant rise in the number of missing-from-home episodes during 2013/14. They expressed concern that although they are able to gather absent data from the children's homes, GMP are not able to produce data for all absent episodes. They are concerned that new police categories have not strengthened safeguarding and the absent category appears to be a way of 'screening out' missing-from-home episodes. They point out that the categorisation is dependent on the reporter giving clear information and risk while the civilian receiving the call is then expected to categorise appropriately. The system, they say, is open to error.
19. There are currently some young people in the Salford area who have gone missing from their homes and care placements at least 100 times. The Home Office recently awarded £100,000 to Greater Manchester Police for a new centre in the Salford area that will give psychological support and mentoring to vulnerable young people who regularly go missing. The centre will be the first of its kind and aims to offer a safe retreat for young people 13 to 17 years old.
20. It will be open from 6pm to midnight seven nights a week and will be run by staff with a range of expertise, including police officers, children's services workers and health professionals. The young people will receive counselling and practical advice to break the running-away cycle that places them at great risk.
21. Stockport state that the number of children reported missing from family homes is larger than those missing from children's homes, partly as a result of police categorisation. They say: "This has highlighted that children missing from family homes is a considerable problem and belies the stereotypical view that it is children in care who go missing."

### Horrible risks faced by missing young people

22. The horrendous risks that missing children face were reinforced for me when I went to visit a 16-year-old girl in a secure unit, who I will call J.
23. J was sexually abused from an early age and started to regularly take drugs. This is the fourth time she has been placed in a secure unit because of going missing.
24. Listening to her, it was clear that there is a network among young people in care who try to help each other and pass on information about where to hide, such as quiet FE colleges in outlying districts.
25. J would go missing for a few hours, a few weeks, or a few months, and was in almost constant risk of harm.
26. She described two powerful examples about going missing and also about how girls try to help each other by putting phones on loudspeaker to alert each other of danger.
27. One night, J took a call from the phone of a girl who lived in another care home. She explained: "I answered but I didn't speak because I knew where she was. I was just listening. She had to lie to this lad and say that she was over 18 so she could hide away from her mum and the police and the other people looking for her. And then, I was still on the phone to her while he was saying to her, 'Oh yeah, you can stay here, we can have a drink, you can chill out here, you can have that room and I'll sleep in that room.' That didn't happen, what he said to her. So obviously she was saying, 'Oh yeah, thank you very much, I appreciate all this that you're doing.' Then I heard her screaming and she was saying, 'I don't want to have sex with you. You're older than me, go away, leave me alone.' And then, as I heard her saying that, I had to just cancel the phone call. I had to turn the phone off. I couldn't listen to that. I was mortified. I was scared. I told my carer that if I go missing, just to go and find my mate and help her. And then I went missing and I got involved in it. Then, it happened to me. So both of us

were stuck in the same flat in the same situation with not just one man or two – there was three of them."

28. She said she did not report what had happened to the police because the men threatened her and said they would attack her family.
29. "So I thought to myself, I'm not getting my family in this. I'm keeping my gob shut."
30. Another time she went missing she was approached by a man in the street who said she could go to his house and hide.
31. "I thought to myself, I can't stay in town – too many police about. Too many CID; if I get clocked, I'm in big trouble. So we went to his house and he got us wrapped round his little finger. Got us drunk and everything. And then I thought to myself I know what he's doing, he's trying to get me in bed. I went, 'I need to go home.' So I got my friend to ring me. So I've put the phone on loudspeaker and my mate went, 'Please can you come home?' I went, 'All right then, I'll be down in two minutes.' But he wouldn't let us go. So we has to break the window and jump out of the window."
32. During that episode, J crossed four police division boundaries. She went missing in one police division of Greater Manchester, and met the stranger who offered to hide her in another police division. He then sexually assaulted her in a different police division and then she ran away to hide in another 'quieter' part of Greater Manchester in another police division. This emphasises again the importance of a Greater Manchester response to CSE
33. My conversation with J made me understand even more how important it is to know where children are when they go missing, and it reinforced how high-quality care is vital in children's homes and secure units.



34. J remains a very vulnerable young woman, and because she is 16 the options for her care are becoming very limited. I am concerned about the safety and security of some of the accommodation that vulnerable 16 and 17-year-olds are placed in. An additional problem is that care provision for over-16-year-olds is not inspected by Ofsted, although in law young people under 18 are considered children.

Guidance

35. DFE guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care applies to all children, but stresses that children in residential care are at particular risk of going missing and vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation. The guidance says that Local Safeguarding Children Boards have an important role to play in monitoring and interrogating data on children who go missing.
36. It also stresses that children must be offered an independent return interview to try and find out the causes of the child going missing and the level of risk to which they may have been exposed.
37. There is a variation in how return interviews are conducted. In Rochdale, all missing children have a Safe and Well check carried out by the police, and looked after children have a return interview carried out by the Children's Society. In Bolton, all LAC have an independent return interview from Youth Services. All other young people are contacted by a local voluntary project. In Wigan, return interviews for children running away from family homes are conducted by workers from the Early Intervention Service. Return interviews for children in children's homes are conducted by their social worker. If a child is missing for more than 24 hours or for more than four times in a month, the return interview is conducted by the children's rights officer. In Stockport, all children reported missing are offered a return interview within 72 hours and a Safe and Well check by the police. All children missing from the

family home and where the child is not an open case to Children's Social Care are visited by an Assessment Co-ordinator from the MASH for the return interview. Trafford look at both absent and missing data from the police; assessment is done on a case-by-case basis to see if a return interview is warranted.

Looked after children

38. Looked after children living in children's homes are more vulnerable children and more susceptible to grooming by sexual predators. More than a third are likely to have special educational needs and they are six times more likely to have mental health problems (DFE Reform of Children's Residential Care, December 2012).
39. That same report said that the workforce was not sufficiently qualified and of too poor a quality to work with highly vulnerable children with special needs, and recognised the need for more specialised homes.
40. In March this year, Ofsted reported to me that 11% of inspections of children's homes in Greater Manchester were outstanding and 6% were judged inadequate. The remaining were either adequate or good.
41. In February 2014, there were 192 children's homes in Greater Manchester. Most of them were in Rochdale and Stockport. Like elsewhere, the biggest providers were the independent sector. However, the number of children's homes does not indicate in itself the number of children. In Rochdale, there is a high number of homes with a placement for only one child, while in Stockport, homes offered from three to six places, with a number of five and six-placement homes.
42. Both Rochdale and Stockport hold forums with their care providers. Since January this year, private and independent homes have had to have an independent visitor once a month who has to write a written report of the visit to Ofsted and to the authority with responsibility for the care of the child.

43. The other concern of the APPG inquiry was children being placed from outside their area. I have discussed how, since 27 January, children's homes have had to notify the authority where the children's home is registered when a child is placed and leaves a home. This is to deal with the concern that local authorities were failing to notify other authorities when they had placed a child in their area. This meant that local services including the police would be unaware of the risk to that child and other children.
44. As I describe in the introduction to this chapter, using Stockport examples, the police are still concerned that where there is a risk of child sexual exploitation, information is not always shared with them by children's homes where the child resides.

Recommendation

- Further research should be undertaken to see if the new police system of recording absent and missing is better at safeguarding Greater Manchester children at risk of CSE.
- In addition to Ofsted inspections, there should be spot checks on children's homes to see if they are adhering to new government guidance, which requires them to notify police and the local authority when a child moves into their home who is at risk of CSE.
- Care provision for 16 and 17-year-olds should be registered and inspected by Ofsted.

“Girls are told ‘you brought the rape upon yourself’. Many teenagers do not want to face their family and friends and are worried that people will think they are stupid. They feel shame.”

Sexual health volunteer

## Health

1. The impact of child sexual exploitation on children's and young people's physical and mental health is massive.
2. In future I would like to see child sexual exploitation designated as a public health priority in the same way as smoking, alcohol, drug use and obesity, so that there is a more strategic approach to CSE.
3. Sexual health services play a key role in identifying children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation. The Greater Manchester Screening Programme RUclear has helped to identify children and young people at risk.
4. This covers all ten Greater Manchester local authority areas and screens around 8,000 young people a month in some 1,400 screening sites.
5. The data enables the tracking of valuable information, such as who is bringing a girl into a sexual health clinic.
6. Repeat sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations can be a sign of CSE, and a standard CSE risk assessment tool has also been developed by Greater Manchester Sexual Health Network.
7. The value of a multiagency team is that information is then shared with other organisations, which may then identify other behaviour such as missing from home, school or care.
8. Sharing information has been a particular issue with health professionals because of the strong value of 'confidentiality'.
9. GMSHS is planning to improve information-sharing between health and other organisations by raising awareness of safeguarding issues.
10. One of the points made to me was that it is now possible to access health services online, ie. chlamydia testing, and that information will not therefore be available in risk assessment.
11. To enable better information-sharing across boundaries there was a proposal to put data on digital Cloud storage from all organisations, with appropriate safeguards. This seems to me to be good sense.
12. Brook provides sexual health services and education across Greater Manchester for young people under 25. They have a great deal of expertise in working with young volunteers to develop their services. I met with a group in London. Young people not being able to speak to authority and not feeling able to disclose to agencies that are there to protect them was a recurring theme. One volunteer said: "Girls are told 'You brought the rape upon yourself.' Many teenagers do not want to face their family and friends and are worried that people will think they are stupid. They feel shame."
13. This demonstrates the important role that voluntary organisations have in gaining the trust of young people and the value that they in turn can bring in giving their perspective on how services are perceived.
14. Because of the impact of CSE on mental health it is concerning to see how long children and young people have to wait for Children and Adolescent Mental Health Services.



15. I wrote to all the CAMHS services. In most of the areas in Greater Manchester there has been an increased demand for CAMHS services, although this varied considerably in 2013/14: from 2% (in Tameside) to 28% in Oldham.
16. In five of the local authority areas, average waiting times were up on the previous year; in three areas they were down, and in two areas they remained roughly the same. Reported average waiting times across Greater Manchester for initial Tier 3 CAMHS assessment ranged from 8 to 16 weeks, with the majority being less than 13 weeks, against a national target of 18 weeks from referral to treatment.

### The impact of CSE on victims' lives

17. I was interested in the impact of sexual abuse on children and young people and the effect it has on the rest of their lives, and particularly on offending in other areas, such as drug use, theft, criminal damage and assault.
18. I obtained some figures from Public Health England, which showed that around one in ten young people under 18 being treated for drug and alcohol problems in three key Greater Manchester boroughs has disclosed that they have been sexually exploited.
19. I believe the data is just the tip of the iceberg, because most children and teenagers are frightened to disclose they are sexual abuse victims.
20. Eleven per cent of young people receiving help for drink and drug problems in Stockport admitted they were victims of sexual abuse, with nine per cent in the two boroughs of Rochdale and Oldham.
21. These figures are up to two and a half times higher than the national average, which is just four per cent.
22. These are just for the young people who have dared to talk about their horrific experiences. We can only imagine how many other young people are suffering in silence.

23. Young people turn to drink and drugs to anaesthetise themselves from traumatic experiences of sexual exploitation. However, it just makes them more vulnerable to sexual abuse.
24. The Howard League for Penal Reform commissioned research into the policing and criminalisation of sexually exploited girls and young women. It said: "Often, girls and young women come to the attention of the authorities due to offences they have committed as a result of their sexual exploitation. Many girls use crime as a means to escape their exploiters or as a cry for help. Some use it as a way to express a sense of justice, as they feel excluded from traditional mechanisms of justice. These girls are criminalised when they should be recognised as victims."
25. I asked Greater Manchester Police for figures on offences committed by victims of child sexual exploitation. The findings were interesting and were based on a sample of 97 victims of CSE between February 2013 and February 2014.
26. They showed a connection between victims of CSE and the committing of secondary offences. So for example, violence-against-the-person offences were far more common among victims of CSE than the general population (46 per cent compared to just 16 per cent), perhaps reflecting what victims described to me as 'lashing out' at society. This shows the angry and volatile state an abused child carries throughout life.
27. Robbery and sexual offences were also more common (7 per cent and 5 per cent compared to just 2 per cent in the general population).

### Survivors Group HMP Risley

28. The connection between sexual abuse and offending is illustrated movingly in a report of HMP Risley's Survivors Group in which 11 medium to high-risk general offenders became the first-ever known male survivors of sexual abuse taking part in a peer-support group in a UK prison. It showed vividly the long-term effects of sexual abuse.

29. The group was started after a talk was given at the prison by Duncan Craig of the Survivors Manchester Group, who is a survivor of sexual abuse himself.
30. He founded the group in 2009 and it is the only organisation in Greater Manchester specifically supporting boys and men who have experienced sexual abuse, rape or sexual exploitation.
31. Duncan said of his talk at Risley: "I never thought for one second that a ten-minute talk to 20 or so prisoners in HMP Risley would result in such an incredible journey of the silence surrounding sexual abuse being broken."
32. Eleven men, whose offending behaviour ranged from drug and alcohol misuse and tertiary associated crimes, to violence and offences of a serious nature, agreed to take part in a 26-week course, which they all said had had a life-changing effect on their lives.
33. For the first time in their lives many talked about the abuse they suffered after years and in some cases decades of silence. Staff at the prison also talked about the noticeable positive change in the behaviour, demeanour and outlook of the men involved who had unburdened themselves.
34. I received a very moving letter from a man who had joined the Risley Survivors Group.
35. He told me: "I am a survivor of sexual abuse. It happened when I was 11 years old. It made me lash out – criminal damage, theft, and expulsion from school. I started carrying weapons for my protection. I turned to drugs to escape my low self-esteem and everyday problems of normal life. I have been an alcoholic and street-homeless for many years."
36. He said that taking part in the Survivors programme at Risley had helped him immeasurably and he felt he had his self-esteem and dignity back.
37. "It's like a ton weight has been lifted from my shoulders. I am making plans for the future, training and employment," he said.

38. "I believe Survivors should be implemented throughout the prison service because there are many men suffering in silence who have not had the help and support I have been so lucky to get at Risley," he added.

### Recommendations

- CSE to be declared a priority Public Health issue, like smoking, obesity, alcohol and drug use, so that a more strategic approach can be developed to CSE.
- The Phoenix Group should look at developing a digital storage system that allows all agencies – including health, police and children's services – to share information across the Greater Manchester conurbation with appropriate safeguards.
- Further research should be done on the availability of counselling services for victims of CSE and those children and young people at risk of CSE.
- Greater Manchester prisons should consider taking part in Survivors-style and other support programmes for victims of sexual abuse.
- Joint-commissioning arrangements for CSE, sexual assault, rape and domestic abuse support services should be considered, which would include the Police Commissioner, local authorities, public health and Clinical Commissioning Groups.



## Justice

### Conviction rates

1. I looked at the conviction rates in Greater Manchester for selected sexual offences involving a child under 16 for the six years from 2008 to 2013. These included rape, sexual assaults, gross indecency and sexual grooming.
2. Only a small proportion of offenders actually got to court, and of those only half were convicted.
3. The figures, compiled by the House of Commons library, show that over those six years the total recorded crime for nine sexual offences against children under 16 in Greater Manchester was 12,879, and yet only 2,341 defendants were proceeded against and of those only 1,078 were found guilty.
4. This seems to demonstrate that the criminal justice system alone cannot keep children safe.
5. However, this is a complex issue and merits further research and investigation in Greater Manchester. What it does demonstrate is the importance of early interventions and early help to protect children from sexual assault in the first place.

### Supporting vulnerable witnesses

6. It is important that criminals are brought to justice and every effort should be made to do so. An important part of that is the support given to vulnerable witnesses to give their evidence in court.
7. I welcome the Government's recent statement on 14 September 2014, on new measures to give extra support to victims in court, which is a victory for the NSPCC's Order in Court campaign.

8. The NSPCC says: "All too often children are facing brutal cross-examination during criminal trials and must give their evidence in an intimidating adult court environment, without appropriate communication support."
9. Among these new measures will be compulsory training for publicly funded barristers who take part in sexual cases; vulnerable witnesses can give their evidence in a location outside a court and there will be more opportunities for cross-examination of that evidence to be pre-recorded.
10. However, this is likely to take some time, and for the foreseeable future witnesses will have to continue to face the trauma of giving evidence in a criminal justice system that focuses on the credibility of the witness rather than the credibility of the crime having been committed.
11. The Criminal Cases Review Commission makes the following points about sexual offences cases: "The vast majority of sexual offences committed against children and young persons are committed by family members or by persons well known to the victim. Most of those who are convicted of sexual offences against children and young persons are convicted primarily because the jury believes the complainant's evidence and does not believe the defendant's denial. The defendant may allege that the abuse simply did not occur or that it was not the defendant who was responsible. Most offences are committed when the victim and offender are alone, and there is rarely any scientific or other corroborative evidence. It follows that a key issue in most applications to the Commission will be the complainant's credibility."

**"It was like one attack after another. The judge kept having to tell the barrister to stop shouting."**

Victim who gave evidence in court



12. This makes it clear that given the general lack of scientific or corroborative evidence the outcome will be very much dependent on who a jury believes and might explain the volatility in conviction rates in cases of sexual offences against children.
13. It goes without saying that the guilty deserve to be convicted and the innocent to walk free. To achieve this, cross-examination of evidence in court needs to be focused on forensically establishing the facts.

### No further action

14. The Crown Prosecution Service always has to be mindful about how witnesses will ‘perform’ in Court and whether they will get a conviction when deciding to go ahead with a case.
15. Originally, the CPS had decided not to prosecute in the Rochdale case because of concerns about the credibility of the witnesses in court. In the event, this was overturned, and there were successful convictions of the men involved in the sexual exploitation of young girls. This was a landmark case in that respect.
16. Announcing new guidelines for prosecutors in 2013, Keir Starmer, the former DPP, said: “For too long, child sexual abuse cases have been plagued by myths about how ‘real’ victims behave, which simply do not withstand scrutiny. The days of the model victim are over. From now on these cases will be investigated and prosecuted differently, whatever the vulnerabilities of the victim.”
17. In June 2014, the CPS and police published their joint-rape action plan under the new DPP, Alison Saunders. This built on the Keir Starmer guidelines and among other issues highlighted the need for a better understanding of consent. The action plan outlines the need for police and prosecutors to focus their cases on the behaviour of the accused and not the complainant, and identifies societal issues they believe feature generally in public attitudes to rape.

18. Announcing the new plans, Alison Saunders said: “Myths and stereotypes still pervade throughout society and have the potential to influence jurors too. We have a part to play in fighting any preconceptions through the way we handle and present our cases to those juries. Where cases turn on the issue of consent, prosecutors must focus on what steps a suspect has taken to seek consent from the complainant and the extent to which an alleged victim is capable of giving consent.”
19. However, I have seen evidence in Greater Manchester that would seem to suggest vulnerable witnesses are still being seen as unreliable and the CPS may not be understanding the issues of consent outlined by Alison Saunders; this is influencing decisions on whether to prosecute or not.
20. I have considered some Greater Manchester case files that have been given a No Further Action status by the CPS.
21. I am concerned about the language used to justify declaring cases unfit for further action by the CPS, which in one case included the fact that the girl wore cropped tops. “The victim is known (as highlighted by social workers) to tend to wear sexualised clothes when she is out of school, such as cropped tops.”
22. Other worrying examples of the rationale the CPS have used to justify an NFA decision in two further cases are outlined below :
23. In one case the file read: “Because of her record and her unsettled background as set out above, she is far from an ideal victim.”
24. In another: “I note her father has referred to her to a social worker as being a slag, saying she is responsible for what has happened.”
25. Regardless of whether the cases did have enough evidence to go to trial, the No Further Action justification, according to the guidelines that were published and the subsequent action plan in June, is very clear in that any justification for an NFA should be taken from the victim’s perspective and not that of the

defendant or anybody else. The examples highlighted demonstrate how this is clearly not always the case.

26. Bury Safeguarding Board said in its comments on the CPS for Justice document that they had identified an issue with the number of cases progressing to the CPS that are rejected prior to presentation in court.
27. Bury identified two recent cases that were rejected by the CPS due to the female victims being 16 and 17 respectively in spite of evidence of risk of CSE: “It is clearly stated in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 that a child is any young person under the age of 18. This does raise concerns about the number of cases that may not progress to court due to the age of the victim coupled with the length of time cases take to get to court.”
28. Bury added: “Young people often appear as unreliable witnesses within police investigations because of young people’s behaviour and this can lead to no further action being taken when often young people’s behaviour is due to the impacts of sexual exploitation.”
29. I know that some CSE teams within Greater Manchester have challenged No Further Action decisions.
30. At the moment the process appears to be unnecessarily bureaucratic. First, the police complete their investigations and then the file is sent to the CPS, which decides whether to prosecute. If it decides to take NFA, the police can appeal against the decision.
31. It would make much better sense for the CPS to be part of CSE teams, along with other agencies. This might improve both investigation and prosecution of sexual offences against children, and more informed decisions could be taken about the best way of safeguarding vulnerable children and young people using the full range of actions available to all the services, including early intervention.
32. At the moment defence lawyers use the victim’s ‘back stories’ to discredit and humiliate witnesses in front of juries, but more thought should be given about how the prosecution can use the witness’s ‘back story’ to explain their vulnerability.

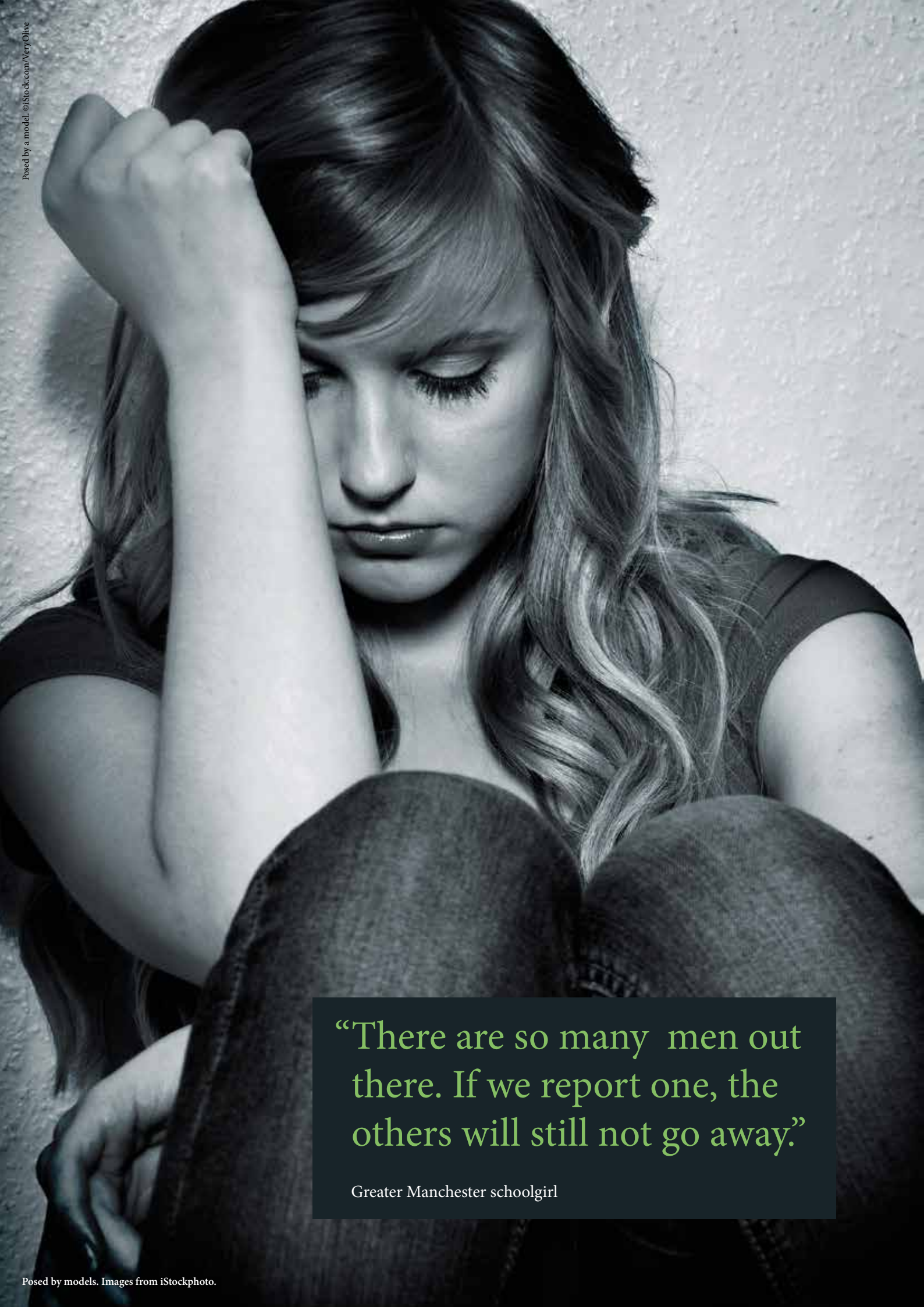
33. Once in court, children and young people are put through very hard questioning. It is the defence’s job to get their client off. That is why witnesses are put through a hammering in court, to raise doubts in the jurors’ minds about the character of the victim to establish reasonable doubt.
34. Unless we get to a wider understanding of what a vulnerable person is, how a vulnerable person may behave in circumstances in which they have been sexually abused, and how that exploitation is taking advantage of vulnerable young women and girls in those circumstances, then clearly some young people will not have the protection of the criminal justice system.
35. There is a public perception of a vulnerable child amplified by the media and conveyed in charity ads on posters. It shows small/crouched/wide-eyed/needy children. The reality may be children and young people exhibiting behaviour that reflects the abuse they are experiencing – perhaps being angry and violent. To alter perceptions, there needs to be a better understanding of how vulnerability is exhibited, and we all have a role in this.
36. In many of the cases the CPS may have decided not to prosecute, vulnerable young girls and boys have been in situations where they have been taken advantage of because of fear, shame or pressure, or because they just got in too deep. They have not been able to extricate themselves from bad situations. It would have been better if they had been able to see the potential danger they were placing themselves in and had been better prepared and informed about how to protect themselves.
37. There are long delays in getting cases to court, which can take up to two years from initial investigation to the court hearing itself. In addition, the cost to the witnesses is very high.



38. The police have told me that the time it takes to get CPS advice and a case to court is a key element in ensuring the maintained support of any victim and/or witnesses. Because cases are taking far too long it means the police lose support and credibility, and of course the perpetrator is still on most occasions free to continue to commit further offences.
39. One of the young people I spoke to, who I shall refer to as F, was raped and also sexually exploited and abused in other ways over a long period of time. She is the classic example of the vulnerable witness who does not present as a model witness. After a traumatic childhood, she began being groomed and abused at about 11 and passed around different men. She was being bullied in school and used to frequently run away.
40. However, despite having experienced years of abuse, she said one of the worst experiences of her life was the treatment she underwent in court, even though the men were eventually convicted.
41. She said she would do anything she could to get the way trials are conducted changed for others.
42. She said: “There is not a word to describe how bad it was. I have never experienced anything like that in my life, and I never want to experience anything like that ever again. I want to do anything I can to get the trials changed for others. It was like one attack after another.
43. “One of the barristers was not even asking me questions; he was just shouting at me, and the judge kept having to tell him to stop shouting and move on, and he kept asking me questions that he was not supposed to ask.”
44. I welcome the fact that many judges nationwide have now been on a special training programme on dealing with vulnerable witnesses so they can enforce appropriate behaviour by barristers. It might be worth considering punishments for those barristers who fail to comply.
45. It is also difficult to understand why, in this digital age and as we approach the 800th anniversary of the Magna Carta, court transcripts cannot be made readily available. This would enable the public to see what actually goes on in courtrooms. At the moment it is difficult to get transcripts and they have to be paid for.
46. Also, as we focus on the history of the Magna Carta, it would be a good opportunity for some research to be undertaken into trends in Greater Manchester into getting a better understanding of jury verdicts in sexual offence cases against children, and some of the underlying issues and trends.
47. If we are to take more prosecutions to court, witnesses must be supported to give the best evidence in their victim statements. I think it would be worth the police and CPS reviewing some of the underlying issues that have resulted in a decision to take No Further Action. It would be a more just way forward if, instead of making judgments about the reliability of vulnerable witnesses, we looked at ways of better supporting them to give evidence.
48. That would mean the wider use of Registered Intermediaries, who advise the court on how to get the best available evidence from each child.
49. Research by the NSPCC has shown that at least half of young witnesses (49 per cent) reported being unable to understand the questions they were asked in court and this escalates to 90 per cent for children under the age of 10. More than half of young witnesses (58 per cent) said the defendant’s lawyer tried to make them say something they did not mean or put words in their mouth.
50. The recent announcement by the Justice Secretary of using the Section 28 pilots, with vulnerable witnesses being able to give evidence and the cross-examination of that evidence to be prerecorded, is very welcome. The current pilots have not yet been evaluated, but if they do lead to a change in the way that witnesses are cross-examined (with much more emphasis on the credibility of the allegation rather than the credibility of the witness), this would be a huge step forward in enabling offences to be prosecuted that are not at the moment. This is because of concerns about how the witnesses’ accounts will be understood by juries, who by and large have very little understanding of the psychological implications of previous abuse or neglect on a child or young person’s behaviour.
51. A fundamental issue in current cross-examinations is making sure that the course of justice is not tainted by defence lawyers bullying vulnerable witnesses, who are so traumatised by that cross-examination that they are not able to give the best evidence.
52. I am pleased that St Mary’s Sexual Assault Referral Centre in Manchester has been chosen as a remote site for cross-examining witnesses, as it is a calm and reassuring environment.

## Recommendations

- The new Greater Manchester Rape Quality Assurance Group should review and analyse all the No Further Action cases the CPS have authorised across Greater Manchester over the past year, to pick out any areas for learning and training.
- There should be further research into the disparity between the high number of recorded sexual offences against children and the number of actual prosecutions and convictions in Greater Manchester, to establish the best ways to safeguard children in the future.
- The Crown Prosecution Service should be part of CSE multiagency teams.
- The CPS, together with the police and Local Safeguarding Children Boards, should engage the media in a more proactive way to raise awareness about CSE and its effect on victims.
- In the 800th anniversary year of the Magna Carta, court transcripts should be made more freely available on the internet. As well as providing transparency, this would also help to inform the wider public about CSE.
- To gain a better understanding of attitudes to CSE, research should be undertaken into trends in Greater Manchester jury verdicts in sexual offence cases against children.
- There should be further research into the use of Register Intermediaries by the CPS and the police, and the barriers to increasing their use, as well as an evaluation of their work.
- In view of the new CPS guidelines there should be a review of the type of questioning and tone of cross-examinations by defence barristers in child sexual abuse cases.



“There are so many men out there. If we report one, the others will still not go away.”

Greater Manchester schoolgirl

## People who commit sexual offences

1. The number of registered sexual offenders in Greater Manchester has risen in recent years, from 1,643 in 2006, to 2,317 in 2013 – an increase of just over 41%.
2. The term ‘sexual offender’ was once established in people’s minds as the dirty old man in a rain mac hiding in the park. However, many of the people who commit sexual offences are far more ordinary in appearance and are part of every community and class.
3. Often in the childhood of people who commit sexual offences there are shared environmental conditions with the victim such as poor parenting, poor attachment, early physical, sexual and emotional abuse, sexualisation and neglect.
4. Dr Joe Sullivan, a forensic psychologist who formerly worked for CEOP’s behaviour analysis unit, says that many people who sexually offend are likely to have shown an interest in children by the time they are 13. We need to understand the warning signs and make appropriate early interventions with children who are at risk of developing sexually offending behaviour.
5. There are many pathways to sexual offending and we need to know more about them. We also need to integrate the body of understanding about the behaviour of children who sexually offend with the understanding of the vulnerability of victims into one body of common knowledge.
6. Not enough is known about people who sexually offend, and it was interesting that only three per cent of cases notified to the Office of Children’s Commissioner in her final report on gangs and groups in November 2013 contained full details of offenders. She said that agencies rarely record data about people who sexually exploit children, and that the information they do record is often incomplete or inconsistent.
7. Child sexual exploitation by groups of men is a small proportion of CSE in Rochdale and elsewhere. In Rochdale, the Sunrise CSE Team told me that only 15 per cent of their cases are groups of men, and the other 85 per cent are single offenders, including peer on peer.
8. The majority are single offenders. The sad fact is that children are the victims of sexual exploitation and grooming from individuals, gangs and groups from all sections of the community.
9. In Rochdale, the nine men convicted of grooming girls with alcohol, drugs and gifts and then passing them round multiple men for sex were predominantly British/Pakistani.
10. Sian Griffiths, the author of the Rochdale overview report, published on 20 December 2013, noted that the lack of information about the men offered limited opportunities to reflect on their attitudes. She said: “Being Asian is not an explanation of the motivation for the offending behaviour. There needs to be an understanding of the combination of personal, cultural and opportunistic factors that created the conditions for sex offending.”



11. A small minority of British Pakistani men are criminal sex offenders as in other communities. So it is important to understand why those particular men became criminal sex offenders. The assertion that it was a racial crime in that the girls were targeted because they were white is undermined by the fact that one of the men in the Rochdale case was also convicted of a serious sexual offence on a British/Pakistani girl. We do not know whether these men also abused other British/Pakistani girls.

12. One British/Pakistani woman who I talked to was concerned about an underreporting of sexual assaults in the community because of the shame it is felt to bring on the victim and the victim's family.

13. In Serious Case and other reviews in child sexual exploitation cases it might be instructive not only to look at the history of the victim's interactions with agencies, but also those of the abuser.
- grooming process of the parents. That was the explicit part of the grooming process. Sex offenders can groom whole communities.

16. There is a pathway from a predisposition to offend to actually offending, and the offender has to find his way over barriers So in grooming he already believes that there are signs of consent and he is looking for collusion with his ideas.

17. Understanding that can be important in helping children to protect themselves.

18. It would also help communities and families to better recognise when they were being groomed into accepting situations and behaviour that should, in retrospect, have caused them concern.

19. The key message of the training day for me was that it pays to listen to what sex offenders say, as it helps us to understand their motivations, understand context, and better protect children.

People who sexually offend against children

14. I spent a very interesting day at a training event in Manchester run by Forensic Psychologist Joe Sullivan, who had completed a number of interviews with offenders.

15. I was particularly struck by one account from an uncle of a 12-year-old girl. He had abused this girl over a period of time. He did not see himself as a paedophile, as he said he wasn't interested in children. He said he just happened to fall in love with this girl, who was his niece. He saw her as returning his affection. He would take her out and touch her inappropriately and then phone her the next day and ask if what had happened the day before was alright. In his view she would respond positively, so on the next outing he would go further, again always checking with her. It was an interesting insight into how his mindset worked. He also phoned the parents presenting himself as a very caring relative, so in effect there was a parallel

Recommendations

- In Serious Case Reviews and other reviews we should look at what happened to the child, but in terms of future prevention it might also be instructive to look at the history of the abuser. This would help to better understand the environmental conditions that contributed to that offending behaviour and how interactions with agencies helped.
- Incorporate information about the behaviour of people who sexually offend into training and awareness-raising about CSE.
- Knowledge we have about offenders held by experts such as forensic psychologists and the police needs sharing more broadly to help us all recognise risks and help us protect children.

“The boys do this thing called ‘mopping up’ where they go round to vulnerable girls and women at night for sex, including those with learning disabilities.”

A professional who works with young people on a deprived Greater Manchester estate.

# New ways of working

1. Local authorities and the police are operating in a daunting financial climate. This is a time of significant spending cuts in police and children's services budgets at a time when the level of need is high.
2. In my conversations a lot of concern has been expressed about the impact of these cuts on services to children and the ability of the statutory services to do preventative work while at the same time supporting children and families in high-risk situations.
3. The recent Ofsted Reports on Child Protection in Bolton and Manchester have increased the level of anxiety.
4. In many of my discussions I have found a welcome consensus that at such a time we need different models of approach and new ways of working across Greater Manchester boundaries in the fight against CSE, involving the wider community, parents, and young people themselves.
5. However, I am concerned that there might not be enough time to develop new models of working before public spending cuts take their toll.
6. New models of working need to be thought through very carefully to ensure changes will better protect vulnerable children from CSE. Cuts in services provided by one organisation can increase demand in services from another organisation. So all partners need to work together to shape their new models of working within the Greater Manchester context.

## Spending cuts in Children's Services

7. Figures supplied by the ten Greater Manchester councils indicate that they have had to make savings in excess of £983million since 2010, of which more than 25 per cent has come from Children's Services budgets.
8. Greater Manchester Police has said it needs to save £120.2million over the four years of the spending review between March 2011 and March 2015. It needs to find savings of £13.6million in this current year and £56.4million in 2015/2016 (HMIC July 2014 Responding to Austerity).
9. According to the Department for Education, on 31 March 2013 there were 19,641 children in need in Greater Manchester (excluding Oldham) and the primary need of 10,856 of them was identified as 'abuse or neglect'. A third of the cases were open for two years or more.
10. Non-statutory services, including youth services, have been cut hard, with much of the remaining provision focused on those in most need. This has corresponded with a reduction in universal provision, including youth centres and advice services, due to a reduction in resources from local authorities.
11. Other savings have been realised by integrating youth service provision with other services to young people, and through joint work with schools and the voluntary sector organisations, such as Redeeming our Communities, which is church-based and has projects working directly with young people across Greater Manchester.

## The Wider Public Sector Reform Agenda

12. In March 2014, in her evaluation of the first 11 Ofsted inspections under the new framework, Professor Eileen Munro cautioned inspectors to be more realistic about what the child protection system can achieve and urged inspectors to talk about reducing risk rather than eliminating it.
13. "It is only then, with such a dialogue, that the public will better understand what they can do to better protect children and young people," she said.]
14. Councils across Greater Manchester have been developing a more intelligence-led allocation of resources in response to public spending cuts, and a wider public sector reform agenda has developed within all services, including children's services, which seeks to put the child at the centre of the child protection system.
15. So, for example, the request from a family for help or a complaint against the family will be shared in a multiagency team, so that pieces of information can be put in the context of other known information about the family.
16. The Government's Troubled Families programme, launched in 2011, is also having an impact on how agencies have traditionally worked with the most 'hard to reach' families.
17. In Greater Manchester, 8,090 troubled families have been identified.
18. The behavioural problems resulting from growing up in dysfunctional families mean those children are at risk of being excluded from school and the opportunities of work. The problems are multiple with many layers: unemployment, offending behaviour, domestic violence, drug and alcohol abuse, as well as mental and physical health problems, and they are intergenerational, with children repeating the pattern of the dysfunctional relationship of their own parents.

19. The aim is to 'get through the front doors of these families' with early interventions from a number of agencies at an early stage to stop the cycle of intergenerational dysfunctional behaviour.
20. Individual problems in the family are not isolated from each other. Each member of the family is influencing the behaviour of other members, so being able to make early interventions into that family from a number of agencies will help changes in behaviour that not only improve outcomes for the individual member but for other members of the family.
21. Although there have been questions raised about the sustainability of outcomes achieved, the model of early multiple interventions led by a key worker fits in well with the wider public sector reform agenda in Greater Manchester.
22. Many more than the nationally identified 8,090 families in Greater Manchester are benefiting from the early intervention using the multiple agencies approach.
23. In an evaluation of support for victims of CSE by Barnardo's, they identified that in 49% of cases, domestic abuse had been a factor for the child while growing up.
24. Tony Lloyd, the Police and Crime Commissioner, recognises that children and young people who may be vulnerable to CSE live in families with multiple problems. He has invested in the Public Sector Reform work, at a Greater Manchester level, focusing specifically on domestic abuse. He has invited bids from the local authorities for early intervention projects in relation to domestic abuse, recognising the link between domestic violence in families and vulnerability to child sexual exploitation.
25. It is reassuring to note that the PCC has acknowledged this connection to vulnerability and has been prepared to invest. It is tremendously important that while services are commissioned, vulnerability is considered holistically, as in the Troubled Families model.



**Example of the benefits of this approach**

- 26. Stockport, which is in the top ten of national results for improving outcomes for Troubled Families, gave a presentation to the APPG for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults in July this year. Missing from home can be an indicator of risk of CSE and we were interested in how missing children could be prevented from coming to harm.
- 27. A 12-year-old boy went missing from his family home for the first time. He was missing all night and returned the morning after. He was offered a return interview. He was seen alone and was initially reluctant to discuss the incident, but disclosed he was walking around Manchester town centre all night. He later discussed several issues that were affecting him, one of which was bereavement. Within five days of the return interview he was offered counselling support and a Family Support Worker was linked to the family to deal with some of the ongoing issues.
- 28. Previously, this help would not have been offered, as neither the boy nor the family would have met the criterion of ‘significant harm’ for intervention by children’s services.
- 29. If he had not been given help at such an early stage, he might have continued to go missing and come to significant harm, which would have ultimately been costly to the public services, possibly for the rest of the boy’s life.
- 30. Running away and being missing is often a presenting symptom of multiple problems within the family. Going missing from family homes is underreported. Some Troubled Families programmes have identifying children who are missing and preventing repeat episodes as one of their outcomes. In Stockport this approach has influenced the wider approach to multiagency working and early interventions as it has done across Greater Manchester.
- 31. One of the added advantages of this programme is that it acts as a co-ordinating mechanism across Greater Manchester, with project leaders meeting regularly.

**Tackling CSE**

- 32. To try and get an overview of what is happening to tackle CSE across Greater Manchester, I sent a letter to all the chairs of the Local Children’s Safeguarding Boards asking for information about their response to CSE, and I have attached their replies to this report. Some are more informative than others and they do demonstrate the variety of organisational response within each local authority area. They also show that there are some very good and interesting initiatives happening in local areas.
- 33. From my personal experience this is an example of an initiative in my own constituency. Stockport Homes is a social housing provider which commissions a detached youth worker from Targeted Youth Engagement Services, Michelle Scanlan, to work with young people locally. Tenants complain about the antisocial behaviour of these young people, some of whom are identified as being at risk of CSE. I have spent some time with Michelle and the young people. Walking the streets with her and the young people in the evening, in the course of conversation there was a lot of information exchanged about what was happening, who was staying with who, and what incidents had happened the week before. These young people do not trust the agencies but trust Michelle to use information in their best interests. She therefore acts as a bridge between young people and the police.

**Cross-boundary working**

- 34. In the LSCB’s answers there was no indication of cross-boundary working in the commissioning or sharing of expertise or resources, except for Salford and Manchester, which have a joint specialist CSE team.
- 35. The shortcoming with the Greater Manchester response is that it is ten localised responses. It relies on local funding and so results in patchy provision and a postcode lottery for children.

- 36. Having said that, the strength of localised responses is the ability to develop services that fit in with local need. The challenge is to use that local innovation and evidence about what works to achieve better outcomes for children across the whole of Greater Manchester. As moving into multiagency teams locally has proved effective in breaking down barriers between the agencies, we need to look at how working together across local authority boundaries might also achieve similar outcomes.

**The barriers to cross-boundary working and resource sharing**

- 37. We have tried to understand from all our discussions with professionals and practitioners in Greater Manchester what the barriers are to greater sharing of resources across police divisions and local authority boundaries. This is more challenging than getting agreement to common procedures and protocols, although these are important in ensuring a consistent approach.
- 38. Both Phoenix and the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership are essentially advisory bodies, because the executive decisions are made within the local authorities. There is no elected Greater Manchester forum.
- 39. Councillors, the locally elected representatives, are accountable to local people and therefore their primary concern is the provision of local services in their areas.
- 40. Another perceived barrier to cross-boundary working is that Ofsted inspections of child protection services are at a local authority level.

- 41. Also, recent changes in organisations that span Greater Manchester have added to the difficulties. Before the recent changes to the NHS, the old strategic health authority would ensure that all local health partners were on the same page in Greater Manchester. But there is no one NHS authority to speak out or make decisions for the NHS at Greater Manchester level. NHS England have a Greater Manchester team, but their authority mandate is very different compared to the strategic health authority, and power now lies with the 12 clinical commissioning groups in Greater Manchester.
- 42. The police, like other agencies, have been experiencing ongoing change and consequent staff turnover change in response to public sector cuts, and there have been three Assistant Chief Constable leads for CSE in two years.
- 43. These are considerable barriers to be overcome. However, local councils are facing not only more cuts in the short term but a situation where public funding is unlikely to return to the levels of the past. In developing new models of working it makes sense that the Greater Manchester response to CSE should look at how existing resources – people, buildings and expertise – could be shared across local authority boundaries. Otherwise, we will be facing a situation where services are unsustainable as every council in Greater Manchester and every police division cuts services.
- 44. While this is being undertaken to some extent through Phoenix, with more budget cuts to come, the likelihood is that local authorities – understandably – will become more parochial in their approach to change, in order to protect services for the people in their own communities. This would be short-sighted.

## Recommendations

- The appointment of a CSE Champion with a specific remit of developing new models of working across police and local authority boundaries in partnership with the voluntary sector, young people, communities and parent groups to better protect young people at risk of CSE.
- The Police and Crime Commissioner should prioritise funding for CSE projects that support children who have been or who are at risk of being sexually exploited, and projects that build resilience against CSE in children and young people.
- More pooling of individual budgets and more innovative use of existing budgets to better safeguard children at risk of CSE. For example, detached youth workers being a bridge between the police, children's services and disengaged young people. They can give valuable information about children at risk to those agencies, while at the same time giving young people better awareness of CSE, providing health advice and tests, and connecting them to services. A source of funding could be social housing providers or schools using their Pupil Premium money.
- Ofsted inspections should include observations on innovative and creative cross-boundary working that demonstrates improved outcomes for children at risk of sexual abuse. That would be a lever for a change in approach.

“The victim tends to wear sexualised clothes when she is out of school, such as cropped tops.”

Written on a Greater Manchester case file given No Further Action Status by the Crown Prosecution Service.



## Visits to CSE teams

1. I wanted to get the views of people who work for the CSE teams and so I made a number of visits. I met some very passionate and committed police officers and other professionals. The following are my personal observations from some of the conversations I had with those who work in this very difficult area.
2. **Protect CSE Team** was set up in 2007 and covers both North and South Manchester divisions and Salford. It is co-located with the Excalibur team that manages gang issues in Manchester. Alongside Tameside, it is managed by the Public Protection Division. The team has a strong partnership with the voluntary sector and is made up of children's services, police, health, Barnardo's and the NSPCC.
3. They believe there is a massive underreporting of CSE because of the lack of awareness amongst the community and the professionals and that people do not understand the significance of what they see.
4. And, of course, that is obvious, because CSE is often not a crime at a particular point but may be an observation of behaviour that gives rise to concern. If people do not understand the significance of what they see then they will not involve other agencies.
5. The team also think that PCSOs, who are familiar with people and the area, could be used more effectively to prevent CSE and gather information. (see Training recommendation)
6. Part of the problem is that people think of CSE as the Rochdale model of predominately Asian men sexually exploiting white girls so there is a poor understanding of the broader picture.
7. The team felt we need to change attitudes and we need dialogue with the community. They said there is a big gap in services providing support for peer on peer pressure. For example, parties "shout out" over BBM and everybody flocks to them. Alcohol and drugs are freely available and young people are put under pressure to do things. They might return because they have had fun and then peer pressure escalates further.
8. Working with parents is an issue which goes across all classes and communities. There are a variety of reasons for this. It can either be that parents do not want the police on their doorsteps or because parents can find it difficult to get agencies to respond to their concerns.
9. **Stockport CSE Team** see CSE as a very broad spectrum, including online, peer on peer and single offenders. A lot of what they deal with is single offenders and issues about online grooming. They do not believe they have an organized group and gang problem in Stockport but recognise that often children from Stockport travel across boundary into Manchester city centre where they may get into risky situations.
10. Stockport are very concerned about the sharing of indecent images by children and young people but did not quite see how the police could address that.
11. They believe schools should have a bigger role to play in safeguarding from year six in primary schools. They think more should be done to inform children at school, but they feel they have not got the time to do it.
12. The school contact at Stockport is with the PSCOs who are all assigned a school, but they will not be necessarily pass on information about CSE.
13. They say that most victims and families are already known to children's services, however they see CSE as not just a vulnerable family problem as sexual exploitation takes many forms.
14. They do not get much information from other police forces about children being placed in Stockport. This is of particular concern in authorities, like Stockport, that have high numbers of private and independent homes.
15. GMP say they always phone a receiving care home for Stockport children. They believe that joint training with children's homes has made a difference. They say a similar process in sharing information is needed to the MARAC model, where receiving forces are always made aware of a domestic violence victim moving into the area.
16. They are concerned about not getting proper information about the vulnerability of children placed in foster care, with the move nationally to develop specialist foster placements for children rather than placing them in children's homes,
17. **Sunrise CSE Team** in Rochdale agreed with Protect that there is a massive underreporting of children missing from home and school. Rochdale is characterized as being identified with the particular form of child exploitation of groups of predominantly Asian men abusing white girls as a result of widespread media coverage of recent trials. However they report that 85 per cent of the cases they manage are single offenders, many peer on peer.
18. Rochdale has a high number of children's homes, like Stockport, and placements of children from outside the borough. They have a continuing high level of prosecutions; Rochdale like Stockport has a monthly care provider's forum.
19. Online Protect receives a significant number of reports from the public, and these resulted in two investigations last year. This is to be expected giving the very high profile of Rochdale and sexual grooming cases.
20. There is the suggestion in the group that because of this grooming is probably well understood in the Rochdale community.
21. They report a good public response and better community intelligence as a result of their efforts to raise awareness about CSE.
22. Because of the complex nature of investigations, a lot of support is given to the victim. In one case, it took twelve months to gain the trust of the victim.
23. Clearly, a Rochdale witness I spoke to, said she very much valued the ongoing support from the police officer that she had received, but she was not so positive about her relationship with children's services. A factor in this was that she had had a continuing and positive relationship with a police officer but a number of different social workers.
24. Rochdale do a lot of work in schools with awareness and prevention briefings for governors, head teachers and school crossing patrols. They make use of all available materials and there is training for elected members, health training of school nurses, staff, and pharmacists.
25. All training is delivered by the Sunrise team, who also provide E training. They have done a CSE audit and had a workshop to share experiences with other authorities.
26. The team also emphasised the point made to me on a number of occasions that you cannot do a one-off input to raise awareness of CSE no matter how good the material. There needs to be ongoing, constant and persistent messages.
27. Sunrise team is heavily resourced from the council, health and police to provide training and awareness raising, early interventions and to support vulnerable

- witnesses going to court in complex cases. There is some concern about the sustainability of that level of resourcing.
28. **Tameside CSE Team** was set up as a response to concern about the fragmented response to children at risk of CSE, which very much depended on who was on duty. They have a dedicated social worker for CSE cases and missing children. They believed that safeguarding children and using child abduction notices was not enough to deal with the offender who can just move on to the next child.
29. I talked to the team about the definition of CSE which we all agreed was to do with power and vulnerability. By using age it can sometimes be clear but not as the age gap becomes closer. For example, the relationship with a fourteen year old girl and a nineteen year old boy becomes less clear, even if that girl may have mental health issues or learning disability issues. Often, the inappropriateness is reported by parents or another person. The victim does not see herself as a victim, which makes the situation more complicated.
30. We talked about the abuser model being very similar to domestic violence. This team are passionate advocates of training in schools and believe that a fundamental part of their job is to inform young people about the law. For example, they said that many young people do not know that forced oral sex is rape.
31. They were also concerned about sexualisation and normalization of images and about peer on peer abuse. They believed some schools do not think they had a problem and others were worried about the stigma of having a “CSE” problem. This has been anecdotally reported to me elsewhere.
32. Historically child sexual abuse was primarily dealt with by children’s services using children’s legislation while child sexual exploitation has been seen as sexual abuse outside the family and primarily the responsibility of the police and the criminal justice system.
33. This has been a historical division of responsibility and it will therefore be interesting to see how that approach changes over the next few years as children’s services staff and police work more closely together as part of multi-agency teams.
34. Like other teams most are single offenders. They also collect information about premises and do some mapping. They say they can do this because they are not dealing with complex group CSE cases.
35. I have met very dedicated and committed professionals and practitioners and there is little doubt that understanding and awareness of child sexual exploitation has increased since Rochdale amongst the statutory agencies. Public sector reforms and austerity are making for closer working between agencies with better information sharing. There has been progress with understanding that there needs to be a Greater Manchester response to child sexual abuse.

## Contacting Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCBs)

### Letter to LSCBs

**Letter sent out at the start of the inquiry, in February 2014.**

Dear Colleague,

I am the Member of Parliament for Stockport and the Chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults.

Tony Lloyd, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester, has asked me to do some work in Greater Manchester looking at what has changed in GMP and other partner agencies since the Rochdale child sexual exploitation victims first came forward.

I am enclosing a copy of a press release I sent out last week, which shows the areas that I am hoping to focus on.

I am keen to talk to as many people as possible and I am interested in hearing any views you have or any examples of good practice in protecting children from sexual exploitation in your area, particularly in early intervention.

I would also be interested in your views about how any MASH’s in your area are working.

One of the issues raised in many reports about Rochdale was that the victims and their families did not feel that they were listened to. The girls were not seen as victims but as having made a “lifestyle choice” and because of that they were not offered the protection that they should have expected from the police and other agencies with a responsibility to safeguard them.

I am very interested to hear if you think attitudes have changed and if so what has changed those attitudes and if you think there is more work to be done.

As I say in the press release, one of the issues is how we get the experiences of victims, of other young people, parents and the wider community, fed into the system in order to make it more responsive in the future to those in need.

I am also interested in any work you have done within schools and the wider community to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.

Other specific questions I have are:

- Does your LSCB have a CSE sub group and how does it work?
- What are the general trends in CSE that you have noticed in your area since the Rochdale case? ie have the numbers gone up or down or the models changed?
- How many children do you think are at risk of CSE in your area – how are your figures obtained?
- How many children are placed from “out of borough” in your area and how many local children?
- What is the latest information on missing and absent episodes and do you think the new police categories are working in terms of safeguarding children?
- Do you do return interviews after a missing or absent child returns and how do you decide who conducts the interviews?

Please reply to me at coffeya@parliament.uk or write to me at House of Commons, London SW1A 0AA.

Thank you for your help,

Best wishes

Ann Coffey MP

**Press release from Ann Coffey MP**

**Public must engage in battle against child sexual exploitation**  
**5 February 2014**

Ann Coffey MP today urged young people, victims, their families and the whole community to give her their views about what more can be done to prevent child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester.

Ms Coffey has been asked by Tony Lloyd, the Police and Crime Commissioner for Greater Manchester, to conduct an inquiry into responses to child sexual exploitation following the shocking Rochdale sexual grooming case.

Tony Lloyd urged people to give Ms Coffey their views.

Mr Lloyd said:

“This is one of the most important issues that face our communities and I really hope that people will come forward to Ann with their experiences. We’ve got a real chance here to make a difference to children’s lives not just in Greater Manchester but across the country.”

“This inquiry will, of course, look at the mistakes of the past but it will also look at the changes that have been made and what more can be done to keep our children safe. I urge people to give their views to this important inquiry.”

“I am grateful that Ann Coffey has agreed to carry out this inquiry as she has considerable expertise in the field.

Today, Ms Coffey launched the Terms of Reference of her inquiry, which said:

“This inquiry will focus on what changes have been made in safeguarding children from sexual exploitation by Greater Manchester Police and partner agencies since the Rochdale sexual grooming case and at what more needs to be done in the future.

“One of the key issues in the Rochdale case was the failure of police and partner agencies to listen properly to young victims and their families and to adequately respond to them.

“It is clear that victims in Rochdale and elsewhere were not identified or taken seriously because of negative and discriminatory attitudes of the police and other partner agencies towards them. Their behaviour was seen as a life style choice and because of that they were not seen as vulnerable children and were not given the protection they should have expected from organisations with a responsibility to safeguard them.

“I will be focusing on how far these attitudes and cultures within organisations have changed and at what barriers still remain to be overcome. How much better are the police and other agencies at identifying risk of child sexual exploitation at an early stage and preventing harm coming to children, particularly when they runaway or go missing?

“The police and other agencies cannot protect children without the support of the wider community so I want to explore how we can engage communities in the fight against CSE in Greater Manchester.

“What has changed in terms of involving schools in informing young people about the risk of child sexual exploitation and educating boys to understand issues of consent?

“I want to hear from victims, their families and the public and will be consulting widely and I would like people to contact me and let me know their views. I want to know what motivates the offenders and brings groups together to exploit children.

“At the end I would like to have recommendations that build on what we have learnt from the past and will improve awareness and understanding of CSE across Greater Manchester.”

Ms Coffey, who is the chair of the All Party Parliamentary Group for Runaway and Missing Children and Adults, said:

“We need to make sure the whole community is engaged in this fight against child sexual exploitation and that the experience of victims and their families are taken seriously so that we can develop a proper response to child sexual exploitation in our community.”

**Responses from Local Safeguarding Children Boards**

**Bolton**

Dear Ms Coffey MP

Firstly an apology for the delay in responding as our data is collected annually and we wished to give an accurate ‘as is’ picture. Below is a response to the queries you have regarding how Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is managed and responded to in local areas.

For your information Bolton has a dedicated CSE team, Phoenix Exit. This is now fully multiagency with police, health and childrens social care. These arrangements are working well to improve outcomes for this group of vulnerable children. In particular in ensuring swift action that can target offenders.

**Does your LSCB have a CSE sub group and how does it work?**

Bolton Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has a CSE steering group that meets quarterly. This is a multi-agency group with representation from a range of partners including housing, police, childrens social care, probation, health and education. The group works to a three year strategy and action plan with a focus on three key areas, with specific task underpinning each priority:-

- Preventing and raising awareness of CSE to reduce the likelihood of young people becoming involved or a victim of CSE
- Intervening and supporting victims to exit from CSE
- Disrupt and prosecute offenders

**What are the general trends in CSE that you have noticed in your area since the Rochdale case? i.e. have the numbers gone up or down or the models changed?**

There has been a 21% increase in young people accessing Bolton’s multi-agency CSE team (Phoenix Exit) in the period March 2013 to March 2014. This is not linked necessarily to Rochdale case as Bolton has recognised CSE as an issue from 2000 onwards. Locally this has also been an ongoing priority area for BSCB and we have worked with partners via the Phoenix Exit team to promote awareness with a host of agencies including licensing, trading standards, CPS, local judges, housing providers etc. BSCB have also worked with childrens social care to further develop their pathways and responses to CSE.

In terms of age ranges 14-16 remains the key age band accounting for 70% of CSE cases. Under 12’s have remained constant at about 10%. Therefore we are not seeing any particular increases in any age band. The cohort is predominately females with only 3.2% of the cases managed by Phoenix Exit being male. The majority of young people receiving intervention from Phoenix Exit are living at home with their parents and being supported as ‘children in need’.

In addition to the Phoenix Exit team a multi-agency Sexual Exploitation and Missing (SEAM) group has been developed. The group meets fortnightly to implement a multi-agency approach and co-ordinate action plans for children and young people who are at risk of sexual exploitation and/or go missing from home, from school and from the looked after system. The group reports progress to the Safeguarding Board.



**How many children do you think are at risk of CSE in your area – how are your figures obtained?**

In 2013-2014 91 cases were referred to the team. Figures are provided by Phoenix Exit and relate to those children who are actively receiving an intervention from the team.

**How many children are placed from “out of borough” in your area and how many local children?**

Current data indicates there are 177 children living in Bolton who have been placed here by other local authorities; the vast majority of these are living either in Independent Fostering Agency placements or with family and friends as Bolton does not have a significant amount of private residential units. However notification by other local authority areas is inconsistent both in terms of new placements in the area and when those placements end.

In Bolton we have had to undertake an intensive manual review to ensure our records are as accurate as possible. Bolton has 121 children placed in other local authority areas, again the vast majority with friends or family, foster care or residential provision. Phoenix Exit will support children and young people living in Bolton who are looked after by another Local Authority and ensure this work contributes to their care plan.

Overall in Bolton there are 71600 children, aged 0-19.

**What is the latest information on missing and absent episodes and do you think the new police categories are working in terms of safeguarding children?**

- In the year from April 2013 – March 2014, we received notification of 788 individual missing episodes.
- 360 individual children and young people have had one or more episodes of missing. Of these, 263 children and young people had a single missing episode throughout the year.
- The remaining 97 young people had 2 or more missing episodes

**Do you do return interviews after a missing or absent child returns and how do you decide who conducts the interviews?**

All Looked After young people are offered an interview by an independent person whose substantive post is with targeted Youth Services.

All other young people are contacted and offered support by a local voluntary project that is commissioned by the Local Authority when they return.

Relevant information from return interviews is shared with those working with the child and may result in additional interventions or plans being changed to reduce/prevent further missing episodes.

I hope this helps and if you require anything further please do not hesitate to contact me directly.

Yours sincerely

Mike Tarver

Independent Chair, Bolton Safeguarding Children Board

**Bury**

**1 What changes have been made in safeguarding children from sexual exploitation by Greater Manchester Police and partner agencies since the Rochdale sexual grooming case and at what more needs to be done in the future.**

- 1.1 Bury response to child sexual exploitation has been a restructure of front line and a development of specialist services. The current legislation, guidance and government recommendations that address the identification and protection of children/young people from CSE and pertaining to the prosecution of perpetrators is significant. Tackling the growing issue of Child Sexual Exploitation has been a priority area for the BSCB in the past twelve months. The stated common aim within the procedures is ‘to work together to raise awareness

of sexual exploitation and where individual cases are identified to intervene to protect children from harm, manage risk and disrupt the activity of the perpetrators (BSCB ‘Safeguarding Children at risk of Sexual Exploitation’) February 2013

**2 Awareness Raising**

- 2.1 There has been a program of awareness raising/education undertaken with all partner agencies. A Task and Finish group was set up to address the role out of awareness raising of service delivery. The Task & Finish group was inclusive of a multiagency panel to deliver the message of CSE. Throughout February and March 2013 the members of the CSE Task and Finish group delivered a series of 10 awareness raising events to over 240 professionals in the Bury area.
- 2.2 All the private residential children’s homes in Bury have received individual visits appraising them of the SEAM panel service which was to commence to identify and discuss specific cases of concern and develop appropriate response to ensure safeguarding.
- 2.3 The Executive Lead, the Named Doctor and the Designated Professionals lead a program of training for all GPs including in the last year basic recognition and response training, workshops on recognition of neglect and its’ impact on children, and recognition of the risk factors for child sexual exploitation.
- 2.4 The Lead Officer for Safeguarding in Schools has delivered single agency safeguarding training to a local Islamic School. This work will continue over the course of the coming year.
- 2.5 The annual BSCB training program will continue to offer a two day course twice a year, which covers the legal framework, local procedures, signs and impact on young people and strategies to engage young people in the prevention of CSE.

- 2.6 Training for Teachers will be provided and at least one place will be offered to every high school to assist them in delivering CSE awareness within the curriculum.
- 2.7 Leaflets and electronic information have been made available to all young people, which provide written information about CSE and keeping themselves safe.

**3 Implementation of Early Help services**

- 3.1 A review of service in May 2013 has resulted in the creation of a new Early Help Service that will engage with children and their families offering support packages at an early stage of intervention.
- 3.2 Early Help services need to be robust & effective to enable preventative rather than reactive work. In the short term, however, the bulk of work will be reacting to existing cases but this should work in parallel to delivering preventative services.
- 3.3 The Early Help Team undertake all return interviews for young people that have been reported as missing from home. Having a designated resource has increased the opportunity for the identification of patterns of behaviour, risk factors and individuals posing a risk to children. It also offers a consistent response and develops the expertise of the staff undertaking the interviews. Children’s Rights service undertake the return interviews for children who are looked after by Bury, an initial visit is also offered to placing Authorities for their children placed in the Bury area. For all children in receipt of services and who have an allocated social worker a save and well check is also undertaken for missing young people on their return by allocated social workers.
- 3.4 An essential tool that Local Authorities have to protect young people who have run away from sexual exploitation is to understand the patterns of running away in their area. Understanding

how many young people in their area run away, and being able to break this down by their age and gender is an important first step. Ideally Early Help staff will also be able to identify where missing young people are frequently located, and therefore consider what draws young people to that location.

- 3.5 There is a need to ensure that the links between children and young people going missing and/or running away and sexual exploitation are addressed and made explicit in responses to CSE. However, it is also important to note that not all children and young people who experience sexual exploitation go missing or run away as, for example, perpetrators can be aware of missing procedures and ensure a child or young person is returned before a missing person (MISPER) report is made. It is also important to note that not all children and young people who go missing or run away are subjected to sexual exploitation.

- 3.6 Within Bury the police undertake a risk assessment of all young people who are reported missing. The standard questions were developed and agreed at the Greater Manchester Missing from Home & Care partnership working group which Bury was represented on in the development of the services across the GM area. The questions asked by the police are; where did they go? Who with? Are they likely to go MFH again? What would stop them from going MFH again what are the young person's feelings about the situation

- 3.7 The return interview is a key component in assessing the level of risk and is far more likely to identify risk of sexual exploitation than the categories if missing/absent used by the police.

#### 4 Development of MASH

- 4.1 In early 2013 a review of Safeguarding and Early Help services in Bury indicated the need for a

more systematic and co-ordinated multi-agency response to children in need, children in need of protection and children and families who required Early Help.

- 4.2 In October 2013 a Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) became a reality. The vision achieved through the shared vision, commitment, resource allocation and hard work of a wide range of partner agencies.
- 4.3 The co-located multi-agency team currently includes personnel from Health, Children's Social Care, Police, Education, Housing and Probation with a virtual link to CAMHS and Early Break (substance misuse).
- 4.4 The central purpose of the Bury MASH was conceived to be the provision of a 'centre of excellence' by way of a single integrated gateway for safeguarding and community safeguarding referrals, which efficiently shared information (within agreed protocols) to protect and safeguard the most vulnerable.
- 4.5 The Bury MASH is not 'virtual'. The enhanced communication in the physically multi-agency environment has supported the early identification of risk, harm and need and also the timely, co-ordinated and proportionate interventions consistent with the provision of Early Help. The Operating Principles and Memorandum of Understanding that have been formulated by the partner agencies of Bury MASH provide a framework and clarity around information sharing in a secure, confidential and protected environment.
- 4.6 The MASH team holds daily meetings to discuss and review all high and medium risk referrals received that day. All referrals are RAG (Red - High, Amber - Medium/Complex, Green - Low to Vulnerable) rated. Parental consent for the referral to be made and information to be shared is secured at the point of contact.

- 4.7 Multi agency decisions are made as to the most appropriate response having considered all relevant information held by partner agencies. This process ensures that all agencies are actively involved in and own the decision making in respect of ensuring the future safety and wellbeing of children/families.

- 4.8 In critical situations where there is an immediate safeguarding concern identified the team are able to coordinate a rapid response. Urgent joint visits between front line staff are arranged by the MASH Team.

- 4.9 All initial strategy meetings are held within the MASH and in most cases take place within twenty four hours of referral. The MASH team ensure that children and families receive a timely response which targets their identified needs.

- 4.10 In instances where the threshold for Social Care intervention is not met, the MASH team work closely with schools, children's centres and other universal services as well as with targeted services to ensure that Early Help is put in place to reduce the risk of a crisis requiring statutory intervention.

- 4.11 The MASH is the portal for referrals to the multi-agency Early Help Panel and the Early Help Team. This process supports monitoring of need and demand for Early Help services; and ensures a systematic and co-ordinated multi-agency response to those children and families in need of Early Help.

- 4.12 It is well evidenced that a MASH improves response times to contacts and referrals to Children's Social Care at all levels of risk. This has happened in Bury and is placing considerable pressure on other service areas.

- 4.13 The indications in respect of the Bury MASH in short time are that professionals/partner agencies consider that the MASH has made a positive difference in terms of consistency of response and decision making.

- 4.14 The key to the Bury MASH is that it is 'real' not 'virtual' and that it does not operate in isolation. Its 'real' links to universal and targeted services are as significant and critical to outcomes for children as its links to statutory services.

- 4.15 The Bury MASH is in its infancy. Evaluation of its impact on the experience and progress of children in need of Early Help and in need of Safeguarding and Protection will continue to be monitored.

#### 5 Change in attitudes towards CSE and Practice Development with police services

- 5.1 The PPI recording system breaks down child abuse investigations into categories. A PPI is created in every case; some will require more investigation and lead to complex abuse enquiries and partnership work. Some of the child sexual assault PPI's may be as a result of sexual exploitation, though this may not have come out until an investigation is under way. It is hoped that a more cohesive approach will better inform this dataset for the future. Additionally some of the investigations will have more than one victim and may go across boundaries. GMP are working on a profile but the information is difficult to extrapolate at this stage.

- 5.2 In consultation with PPIU staff it has been identified that there are a number of issues that make identification of the number of suspected CSE cases resulting in a conviction difficult to determine. The issues identified include;

- The absence of a designated CSE team which results in concerns being addressed by different sections of the police force which may not link up with each other potentially leading to a loss of information.
- The absence of any clear management reporting system that tracks each case to conclusion. The information can be retrieved from the police IT system but this is very

- time consuming and has to be undertaken manually.
- The length of time that cases take to get to court
  - The decision making of CPS in progressing cases to court
  - The time that it takes to progress cases to court both in terms of gathering evidence and the timetabling of cases.
  - Young people often appear as unreliable witnesses within police investigations because of young people's behaviour and this can lead to no further action being taken when often young people's behaviour is due to the impacts of sexual exploitation.
- 5.3 A further issue identified has been the number of cases that progress to CPS and are rejected prior to presentation in court. In consultation with PPIU staff it has been identified that two recent cases were rejected by CPS due to both the female victims being sixteen and seventeen respectively in spite of evidence of risk of CSE. It is clearly stated in the Sexual Offences Act 2003 that a child is any young person under the age of eighteen. This does raise concerns about the number of cases that may not progress to court due to the age of the victim coupled with the length of time cases take to progress to the court arena.
- 5.4 The issue of Bury not having a designated CSE team has been addressed. In September an Options Appraisal to address CSE in Bury was written at the request of the BSCB Executive Group which at its meeting on 30th September 2013 considered the report of the CSE & Missing Sub Group, the Governments response to the Home Affairs Committee Session (HACS) recommendations and the role Bury might play in the development of Project Phoenix across the Local Authorities served by the Greater Manchester Police Service.
- 5.5 Funding has been granted for an in-house multi-agency dedicated CSE service to be located within the MASH team. The posts required for this model are a Core team of an Assistant Team Manager (part time) who will be responsible for the development & delivery of a relevant quality service and to monitor, audit and report to the BSCB on performance, relevance, effectiveness & the statistical information. The posts for this team are currently in advert stage.
- 5.6 The social worker will be responsible for risk assessments, sign posting to the right level of services dependant on identified needs & risks, the provision of consultation to child care professionals, the general public and family members and for the coordination of services from a virtual multi-agency team.
- 5.7 Two family support workers will be responsible for the delivery of some of the direct work, these posts will be deployed between the teams; one within the Early Help Team & the other within the Statutory Teams. They would undertake joint work with partners from the virtual team as each case required.
- 5.8 A Police Officer post has been commissioned and funded to work within the proposed team. The Police Officer will investigate where required, case hold from a police perspective, feed into the SEAM process, build the police intelligence and update the mapping system now in place. This officer is now in post.
- 5.9 A multi-agency virtual team which will consist of a nominated Youth Service Worker, Early Break worker, Specialist Sexual Health advisor and the Safeguarding lead officer for schools, is being developed.
- 6 Raised Awareness of the impact of CSE on victims and their family's**
- 6.1 It is important to recognise that the ways in which children and young people are exploited is constantly evolving. Practitioners should ensure that they have an up-to-date understanding of the pattern of sexual exploitation in their area.
- 6.2 Professionals and agencies involved in working with young people should continually assess how young people are being groomed for sexual exploitation and make enquiries about the other routes into sexual exploitation taking place. Intervention approaches need to take account of new knowledge as the models of exploitation change over time.
- 6.3 The majority of sexually exploited children and young people will be hidden from public view. Young people are groomed to be secretive about their meetings, which are usually arranged over mobile phones or the Internet, so the activities are concealed from parents or carers. As sexual exploitation can be difficult to identify, and services working with children and young people may be unaware of the indicators of sexual exploitation, it is difficult to quantify the number of children and young people who are abused in this way. Further legislation is unlikely to effect change in respect of this matter.
- 6.4 Because of the grooming methods used by their abusers, it is very common for children and young people who are sexually exploited not to recognise that they are being abused. The needs of children and particularly of young people aged 16 and 17 years are likely to be overlooked for this reason. Although faced with limited choice, they may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily. An example of peer on peer abuse within a 'girlfriend/boyfriend' situation and therefore it may take many weeks or months for practitioners who work with young people to build up their trust, help them to recognise that they are being sexually exploited by challenging their perceptions with factual information, and overcome their resistance to interventions.
- 6.5 There also needs to be more awareness of the sexual exploitation of: boys and young men; lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgendered children and young people; black and minority ethnic children and young people; and those with learning difficulties. There is under-representation of these children and young people in work to address sexual exploitation because their sexual exploitation is often confused with other factors which doesn't allow their picture to be seen so clearly. Because boys and young men are not viewed in the same way as girls and young women, experiences and indicators that would highlight sexual exploitation in cases relating to girls and young women have historically not received the same response when linked to boys and young men.
- 7 Awareness Raising within the community**
- 7.1 One of the central functions of the newly designated CSE team in Bury will be to promote awareness raising within the community and the identification of CSE, process for referral into the appropriate service and support for victims and families.
- 7.2 A primary role of the CSE team will be to ensure that there is a robust support package around young people who are involved in giving evidence as witnesses to CSE before, during and after their time in court.
- 8 Example of good practice - SEAM (Sexual Exploitation and Missing)**
- 8.1 Bury's response to the 2009 guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' is the development and implementation of the Sexual Exploitation and Missing (SEAM) panel meetings, which commenced in December 2012.
- 8.2 The SEAM panel meets every second Friday of the month between 9 – 1, at Bury Police station. The panel consists of multi agency management



representatives across Childrens services and is chaired by the manager of the Safeguarding Unit. Case referrals are presented by the worker/agency and discussions undertaken to ensure relevant information is shared. All police intelligence is logged, ongoing investigation updates shared and recommendations are made with actions for service implementation. Panel actions are assigned to agency leads to disseminate to relevant worker within their service to ensure a safety plan is developed and appropriate safeguarding implemented. Each case is reviewed the following month to ensure actions are completed; any ongoing issues are further addressed. Multi agency involvement continues to increase the awareness and referrals within partner agencies.

8.3 Data is collated and quarterly reports summarise key performance information relating to statistics gathered within this process inclusive of areas of concern, outcome of intervention and impact of service delivery. The report is provided to the Executive Group, Bury Safeguarding Children Board & the Children's Social Care management team. The reports are completed by the chair; and information including impact of service intervention is provided by panel members on respective services to inform the report.

8.4 Referrals made to SEAM from December 12 to November 13, were 72. Repeat referrals (9) are recorded to look for similarities of re-referrals. Numbers of alleged perpetrators (43), criminal investigations (17) are discussed & agency involvements (referrals receive single or multi-agency intervention) including conference requests (6) are recorded. The impact from the panels' intervention is recorded to monitor the success of safeguarding strategies.

8.5 The monitoring process identifies more accurate information on the numbers and legal status of Bury's children and children placed in bury

by another Authority. Age ranges, gender and ethnicity of young people is collated to give a clearer picture of where reactive services are required and where best to implement preventative work with young people and either their parents / carers and professionals. The panel has identified 14 year old White British females continue to be the most consistently recorded group of vulnerable young people at risk, these numbers remain the highest. In acknowledgement of this, work within schools is to be undertaken to assist in reducing the risks around this age group and awareness raising to be targeted at 12/13 year olds, mainly females for preventative intervention.

8.6 The panel has developed a profile mapping system which records hot spot areas, details of alleged & convicted perpetrators and known victims which are linked together. This is updated at each meeting to form intelligence for service intervention and is more recently used for joint work with Early Break outreach service and the Police to undertake weekend 'sweeps' to hot spot areas where young people are suspected to be most at risk, direct intervention is completed during this heightening the risks.

**9 Awareness and Understanding of CSE across Greater Manchester**

9.1 There are some very robust forums within Bury inc; SEAM, MASH, MARAC and MAPPA in which information sharing and identification of CSE is being carried out effectively by local agencies.

9.2 Within the GMP an approach to CSE is being established that is cross-boundary and the Police look to Local Authorities to have a system in place that can link to and operate within this approach. This is being branded as The Phoenix Project and is supported by all Greater Manchester authorities and the Independent Safeguarding Board Chairs.

9.3 Since the set up of the SEAM process, the awareness raising events and BSCB training for child care professionals on CSE, there has been a good response to the request to share concerns about young people and information about potential perpetrators. Social workers in particular are better equipped to identify potential CSE situations and to intervene at the appropriate level i.e. Early Help, Child in Need or Child Protection. However those working with children who have come through the SEAM process have identified a need for a package of specialist, individual and sustained support to children and their families and for specialist support and consultation for them in assessing and managing high risk cases.

9.4 When young people go missing across boarder areas, Bury continues to identify and access services within other Authorities, joint working to identify and locate young people is coordinated in attempts to safeguard missing young people.

**10 Recommendations identified for the continuous service improvement in Bury:**

- Reduce the risk of young people becoming victims of sexual exploitation through:
  - reducing their vulnerability
  - improving their resilience
  - disrupting and preventing the activities of perpetrators and
  - reducing tolerance of exploitative behaviour.
- Awareness raising for all young people to help them to develop the knowledge and skills they will need to make healthy choices, and targeted prevention work for groups of children known to be more vulnerable to exploitation.

- Continue to build on the multi agency approach to sharing information and joint risk assessment to identify and reduce vulnerability.
- When developing local and national strategies to address CSE, there is need to ensure the participation of children and young people and parents/carers affected by CSE.
- A rolling program of awareness raising and training to continue to be implemented by BCSB.
- The development of a national database providing information on the nature and prevalence of sexual exploitation should be maintained and monitored.
- Continued identification, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators is key to protecting children and young people.
- Continue to contribute to the development of the cross boarder GMP Project Phoenix in tackling CSE and sharing examples of good practice.
- Provision of flexible packages of support for victims of CSE. The importance of regular contact and long term flexible therapeutic intervention for victims of CSE.
- Continued development of the cross-boundary interventions that are currently in place via the project phoenix.

Lisa Bell  
Interim service Manager  
Safeguarding Unit  
Bury Childrens Services

Dorcas Taylor  
Team Manager  
MASH  
Bury Childrens Services

**Manchester**

**Children and Families Directorate**

Dear Anne

Thank you for your letter.

Child sexual exploitation is a priority area of business for Manchester City Council and we welcome the opportunity to feed into your report.

As you are aware in Manchester we have the multi agency Child Sexual Exploitation team Protect which works with a number of partners including GMP, Barnados, Health and the NSPCC. Protect is the flag ship for the GM response to CSE. In addition Operation Phoenix works cross border with Salford City Council as we recognise that local authority boundaries do not stop offenders or young people becoming victims of CSE. Protect has also been recognised as a model of good practice by the home office for provision of services on Gang Related Exploitation due to the co-location with the Integrated Gang Management Unit and the joint management arrangements.

Protect was established in 2006 prior to the events in Rochdale but as a council we have ensured that the learning from these events and recommendations from the reports have been embedded throughout our services.

A substantial amount of training and awareness work takes place across Manchester through the Protect team in partnership with the MSCB and the impact of this is evident in the attitudes and responses of our staff and partners who present as victim focused and do not perceive this to be a ‘lifestyle choice’.

The learning from the Rochdale Report is shared throughout our training events and the increased demand for this demonstrates the appetite of Manchester staff and residents to be part of the solution to supporting young people and families affected by this issue.

MCC in partnership with the MSCB hold a quarterly CSE sub group meeting with partners from the voluntary and statutory sectors. Some of the attendees include

Protect, health, education, GMP, The Men’s Room, MASH, Manchester Active Voices (MAV), Connexions, YOS, Licensing, Healthy Schools and the Children’s Society with many more.

One of the key priorities of this group is to ensure that we work closely with our partners to develop Early Help services for young people at risk of CSE. Schools and health are being supported to develop early help risk assessments and interventions to be delivered as part of their universal service provision.

We also recognise the importance of the community in responding to this issue and where appropriate we commission community based projects to work with young people and families. One example of this is the use of MAV mentors to deliver some bespoke group work for young people which includes work around Self esteem and healthy relationships.

With our colleagues in GMP, licensing, UK Borders and environmental health we look at alternative methods to targeting offenders where there is no criminal offence as we know that disruption of these offenders is critical and we must get involved at a much earlier stage.

The CSE subgroup reports into our Vulnerable Persons Group which provides governance to other areas of business which present similar challenges. The joint governance arrangements for CSE, MFH and Trafficking ensures we provide a consistent approach to tackling these issues while recognising they do not always occur in isolation from each other.

In Manchester we are currently in the process of developing our MASH arrangements with an implementation date of the 1st December 2014. We have already implemented our Domestic Violence Triage with GMP and Health which is focused on providing appropriate support at the earliest opportunity. The results so far have been successful with some early identification of exploitation.

Moving forward we aim to expand on our work in this area by supporting our partners and communities in developing resources that are young person focused.

The launch of the Phoenix campaign is only the beginning of this and Manchester will continue to build on this to ensure CSE remains a priority for our staff, partners and residence.

Yours Sincerely

Russell Pilling  
Interim Head of Safeguarding  
Children & Families Directorate  
Manchester City Council

**Manchester Safeguarding Children Board**

Dear Ann

Thank you for your emails regarding the letter you sent to Ian Rush the MSCB Chair in February 2014. I understand that you met with Ian as part of a visit that also included conversations with Kerry Metha, Mark Barratt and Mike Livingstone Director of Children’s Services; and that Mike wrote to you in April with some follow up information from the visit. I can only surmise that Ian believed the queries in your letter had been covered by that visit and apologise if this was not the case.

The MSCB works very closely with colleagues across the partnership to tackle the issue of CSE. The MSCB CSE Sub Group (CSE SG) is very active and membership is drawn from across the partnership. Each agency has nominated a lead professional to act as the single point of contact for all matters relating to child sexual exploitation and also be responsible for providing advice and support to their agencies workers. The Group is well attended by a range of partners – from statutory authorities through to voluntary organisations such as the Men’s Room. As the regional centre we are also fortunate to have excellent links with the St. Mary’s SARC.

The CSE SG meets six times per year and the meetings include a combination of discussion and debate around emerging issues; development of task and finish groups to achieve agreed outcomes; sharing information and best practice; and sharing emerging information from local

and national sources. The Protect Team ensure partners have access to up to date data on the work of the Team and through discussions we are able to consider CSE in its widest sense and look for solutions and outcomes which might not occur otherwise. An example would be the work with Roma Community boys which has recently been carried out in a Manchester park. The Sub Group has developed the MSCB CSE Strategy which is regularly reviewed and updated in line with current research and collective knowledge, likewise the CSE Action Plan; both documents have been published on our website at [www.manchesterscb.org.uk/cse](http://www.manchesterscb.org.uk/cse) . Audits have been carried out by the Group and the results used to inform practice; further audits are planned.

The MSCB has been working very closely with the Protect Team (the multi-agency CSE team for Manchester) to support the roll out of training and awareness raising across the partnership and ultimately into the wider community. This work has fostered close and effective working links with the multi agency enforcement team – the link to licensing and taxis being key. The MSCB has also ensured Manchester has played a part in the development of the Project Phoenix communications strategy and its implementation. We have continued to develop and publish resources to support the CSE work across the partnership.

Through the Sub Group we have developed strong links with the Healthy Schools Partnerships and are working with our Education colleagues to implement a training plan which will ensure all primary schools have access to appropriate training. Information regarding the MSCB Summit on Online Risks and Sexting was sent to you by Mike Livingstone but I have attached this again for information and as an example of work we have done within schools and the wider community to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.

The evidence seen by the CSE Sub Group is that attitudes of professionals in Manchester are not that girls are making a “lifestyle choice” and therefore denied the right protection as a result. However, there remains much more work to be done across the wider workforce,

in communities and in all sectors of society to ensure that this attitude does not prevail and that everyone, everywhere understands that CSE is not acceptable. The public campaign being initiated by Project Phoenix will be the start of a long and sustained education and information effort to make that change.

With regard to the more specific questions contained in your original letter I will answer them as listed:

**What are the general trends in CSE that you have noticed in your area since the Rochdale case? I.e. have the numbers gone up or down or the models changed?**

When the Rochdale case became public the Protect Team was already established but it has continued to grow and develop in effectiveness since then. Numbers of referrals have risen as awareness of CSE has grown and the Team has developed to meet this increasing demand but also to ensure that all the needs of children and young people are met. The delivery model has been revised to meet demands for the therapeutic element of work and to enable the best use of resources and outcomes for the Team. Our new delivery model also includes colleagues from Salford – demonstrating our awareness that that both perpetrators and victims are not deterred or protected by constitutional boundaries.

**How many children do you think are at risk of CSE in your area – how are your figures obtained?**

The Protect Team support circa 100 young people at any one time; referrals remain at around 10-15 per month and 50% of the work carried out by the Team is preventative. Reporting and monitoring of the cases within Protect is facilitated by the team. These figures are the young people known to Protect and do not reflect the valuable awareness work with young people carried out by the NSPCC, Children's Society and universal services.

However, work is now underway to develop a multi agency model for mapping and identification of levels of CSE, victims, offenders, locations and circumstances to form a local profile. This will also inform the development of the GM Performance Management Framework being implemented by Manchester.

**How many children are placed from “out of borough” in your area and how many local children?**

In common with most LSCBs the Board has recognised the need to improve its information around Out of Area Placements both for our own children and those placed in Manchester. We are in the process of adopting the new GM data analysis tools which will in future provide improved information on this and many other pertinent issues. I am also aware of an ongoing project in the local authority aimed at mapping the location of Out of Area Placements and improving the information sharing process.

**What is the latest information on missing and absent episodes and do you think the new police categories are working in terms of safeguarding children?**

Earlier this year the local authority and Greater Manchester Police carried out a data matching exercise with regard to information held on missing and absent episodes. This analysis has enabled improved recording and reporting in relation to MFH and will enable the identification of themes and patterns. Again this exercise will feed into the performance management framework arising out of the development of the GM data analysis tools.

**Do you do return interviews after a missing or absent child returns and how do you decide who conducts the interviews?**

It has recently been agreed that the Children's Rights officers will do the return interviews for CP and LAC young people if the YP chooses to take up the offer. We are looking at our commissioning arrangements with the Children's Society for the provision of return interviews for the cohort of young people who do not require social care intervention after a missing episode.

Preventative work around MFH would also be undertaken by the Children's Society, Safe and the City service which MCC commission. Protect also discuss MFH episodes with young people when they undertake direct work.

Once again please accept my apologies for the delayed response to you original letter.

Yours sincerely,

Jane Booth  
Interim Chair MSCB

**Oldham**

Oldham LSCB has a CSE sub group, which is also linked with missing from home. It was established in September 2011, and was chaired by The Children's Society. When the chair stepped down in September 2013 the chair was taken over by the Police Supt from Oldham Police. The group meet Bi Monthly and feed into the LSCB. The purpose of this meeting is to ensure that Oldham is in a position to provide the support and multiagency response required to identify, prevent and protect those who are vulnerable and at risk of Missing from Home (MFH) and Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). We believe that CSE is a local and national priority that requires all those involved in safeguarding to be responsible and accountable for dealing with that risk. The group works towards an action plan, which was recently reviewed and updated. It aims to address and tackle the issues under three specific themes:

- Prevention
- Safeguarding
- Bringing offender's to justice

The action plan is a standing item on every agenda to be reviewed ensuring a clear direction and vision in how we identify and tackle MFH and CSE across the borough of Oldham.

**There have been a number of successful and positive outcomes from the group, these are:**

- Drawing together all the work streams that are being conducted by different partners and agencies to avoid duplication of effort and a better understanding of where our gaps are and forthcoming challenges.

- There has been a significant amount of success in some of our prevention measures such as increased awareness. One such success is the roll out of the GW Theatre production Somebody's Sister Somebody's Daughter, which has been developed to dramatise key elements of CSE to improve awareness, understanding and challenge perceptions and attitudes. It was developed for young people age 14 upwards and delivers a very powerful message. This has been shown in all the secondary schools in Oldham and the wider communities. The company are working on a similar production in 2014 for children age 6 upwards.

- Training to various bodies has been completed and also a gap analysis identified where training would be beneficial, however one such gap for us is identifying specific numbers for single agency training, this is a piece of work the group are looking to develop so that it is satisfied we can monitor and evaluate both multi-agency and single agency training and attendance. GM are to pilot a training matrix, which is to be completed by all partner agencies.

- A service directory for preventative services has been developed by the group, which once complete will be published and assist in helping to signpost victims and agencies as a preventative measure.

- As part of the action plan the subgroup is monitoring the development and implementation of MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and ROSE (Risk of Sexual Exploitation) which will assist in intervention and identification of victims who are considered low risk in terms of not meeting the threshold for social care or Phoenix Messenger (Dedicated Police CSE Team working with Barnardos and Social Services), this provides a much more holistic approach where we can ensure intervention at an early stage is a key part of our approach in tackling CSE.

- Funding has been provided to commission an independent person to conduct return to home interviews with MFH's. This will hopefully provide better information and intelligence about why and where young people in Oldham are going missing.



They will be co-located within Oldham Police Station to make best use of intelligence sharing and will start at the beginning of April 2014

- Operation Madison is in place in Oldham, which identifies two PCSOs to consistently engage with those missing from care homes in an effort to forge closer liaison with the homes and provide better intelligence and opportunities to assist those most vulnerable.
- Reports for MFH and CSE are obtained in order for the group to understand the numbers and intelligence profile around the risk but this is also a gap we are working on to obtain better data.
- Keeping Our Girls Safe (KOGS) a charity based group that work on early intervention with young people who present low risk behaviours for CSE.
- Let children be children work undertaken in Oldham looking at the hyper sexualisation of children and commercialisation.

**The group have identified a number of gaps and challenges that we are working towards, these include:**

- Intelligence picture around MFH & CSE and how this is shared with all partner agencies.
- Further work is required around schools and how we identify those at risk or those who are vulnerable particularly those who are absent or go missing from school or those who are home schooled.
- Young males at risk of CSE, we need to understand the picture at Oldham and the extent of this risk for young boys and men.
- Young Asian girls and women, do we have an issue with under reporting are we satisfied we are aware of the extent of the risk.

**Future plans are within the Strategy and Action plan.**

- Further work is going to be undertaken in relation to: If only someone had listened – OCC Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups: to ensure that the work had been undertaken stipulated in the recommendations:-

**Recommendations**

- Every Local Safeguarding Children Board should take all necessary steps to ensure they are fully compliant with the current Working Together guidance on CSE (DCSF, 2009).
- Every Local Safeguarding Children Board should review their strategic and operational plans and procedures against the seven principles, nine foundations and See Me, Hear Me Framework in this report, ensuring they are meeting their obligations to children and young people and the professionals who work with them. Gaps should be identified and plans developed for delivering effective practice in accordance with the evidence. The effectiveness of plans, procedures and practice should be subject to an on-going evaluation and review cycle.
- There need to be nationally and locally agreed information-sharing protocols that specify every agencies' and professional's responsibilities and duties for sharing information about children who are or may be in need of protection. At the national level, this should be lead and coordinated by the Home Office through the Sexual Violence Against Children and Vulnerable People National Group. At the local level, this must be led by LSCBs. All member agencies at both levels must be signatories and compliance rigorously monitored.
- Problem-profiling of victims, offenders, gangs, gang-associated girls, high risk businesses and neighbourhoods and other relevant factors must take place at both national and local levels.
- The Home Office, through the Sexual Violence Against Children and Vulnerable People National Group, should lead and coordinate the development of a national profile. Local Safeguarding Children Boards should do the equivalent at the local level.
- Every local authority must ensure that its Joint Strategic Needs Assessment includes evidence about the prevalence of CSE, identification and needs of high risk groups, local gangs, and their membership

and associated females. This should determine commissioning decisions and priorities.

- Relationships and sex education must be provided by trained practitioners in every educational setting for all children. This must be part of a holistic/whole-school approach to child protection that includes internet safety and all forms of bullying and harassment and the getting and giving of consent.
- Through the Sexual Violence against Children and Vulnerable People National Group, the Government should undertake a review of the various initiatives being funded by the Home Office, Department for Education, Department of Health and any others as relevant, in order to ensure services are not duplicated and that programmes are complementary, coordinated and adequately funded. All initiatives should be cross-checked to ensure that they are effectively linked into child protection procedures and local safeguarding arrangements.
- Work undertaken with year 5-6 regarding CSE

## Rochdale

The RBSCB has a CSE subgroup Chaired by the DCS RMBC. The Board has a fully developed CSE strategy and action plan. The CSE strategic priorities are:

- Prevention
- Protection
- Prosecution
- Public & Professional Confidence

Progress against action plan objectives are reported quarterly to the RBSCB

The LA is fully engaged in the GM Project Phoenix - a regional CSE project. The DCS sits on the executive board, Head of Service for MASS and Sunrise sits on the operational group. Undertaking a regional approach to this area of work has been cost effective and created

shared learning and resources – examples - shared approach to developing a single risk assessment tool, single communications strategy across 10 areas, single approach to training key members of the community, shared approach to developing a whole school strategy to improve awareness raising. The RBSCB has undertaken a multi agency case file audit which had a CSE focus and also CSE incidence and assessment numbers form part of the RBSCB performance indicator reports (Quarterly). During 2013 -2014 45 YP's had received a service from the specialist team. The figures are supplied by CSC to the Quality Assurance and Performance Improvement subgroup of the Board. The Board and its partners have not experienced barriers in developing and implementing its CSE strategy.

Local audit has revealed that whilst there are significant issues re CSE in the Borough there was not a specific problem identified involving gangs and groups but it is a significant risk that we keep under close monitoring

Improvements noted:

- Strategy development and strategic ownership
- Specialist CSE team development
- Training and awareness raising strategy – Professionals, Children and their families
- Clear pathways, policies and procedures
- Identification of YP's at risk and case intervention at lower levels of need
- Preventative work in all schools
- Effective partnership working and shared ownership
- Opportunities for cost effectiveness through cross regional working and shared learning.
- Preventative work with communities eg taxi drivers and takeaway owners.

Currently there are 28 children are placed from “out of borough” in Rochdale.

The RBSCB has developed a missing strategy action plan. The group is Chaired by the Head of Service SCU RMBC and reports to the Excellence in Practice Subgroup of the Board. There is an action plan and outcomes are monitored. A weekly missing panel is held in the Borough which:

- A missing panel (MP) is to be established that will provide scrutiny that missing children across the spectrum of need are being managed through appropriate frameworks, procedures and processes.
- Panel to meet weekly to oversee all children reported missing that week and to ensure procedures have been followed
- To triangulate data with children missing from education to ensure there is an appropriate single response
- To report progress into the missing strategic group
- To escalate concerns in line with RBSCB escalation policies to the appropriate agency where procedures have not been followed

All missing children have a safe and well check carried out by the police and all LAC have a return interview carried out by the Children's society.

Missing data reported to the Board

April 2013 – 56

May 2013 - 56

Tony Philbin  
RBSCB  
Business Manager

Salford

**One of the issues raised in many reports about Rochdale was that the victims and their families did not feel that they were listened to. The girls were not seen as victims but as having made a “lifestyle choice” and because of that they were not offered the protection that they should have expected from the police and other agencies with a responsibility to safeguard them.**

**I am very interested to hear if you think attitudes have changed and if so what has changed those attitudes and if you think there is more work to be done.**

Salford have worked hard over many years to engage professionals in understanding that children and young people do not make choices over being sexually abused and this is abuse of a child by an adult and must be seen as such. We as a learning organisation have provided staff across the city with the tools to both identify and report any concerns they may have. It has been noticeable that organisations that may not have seen themselves as a safeguarding service have been eager to work with the board in stopping this abuse. Public Health, licensing, trading standards and hotels have all undertaken levels of work around this agenda.

**As I say in the press release, one of the issues is how we get the experiences of victims, of other young people, parents and the wider community, fed into the system in order to make it more responsive in the future to those in need.**

**I am also interested in any work you have done within schools and the wider community to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation.**

Salford have recently appointed a CSE and Domestic Violence coordinator to work with schools and the voluntary sector to highlight the dangers of CSE. This is not a stand alone post but is integrated within the strategic training of the safeguarding board and with the PROTECT team.

**Other specific questions I have are:**

**Does your LSCB have a CSE sub group and how does it work?**

Salford has a strategic child sexual exploitation sub group of the safeguarding board. This group meet on a bi-monthly basis. They have produced a strategy and action plan using the select home affairs committee and national SCR's. The group is a well attended dynamic group with a wide ranging membership. The group reports to the safeguarding board executive bi-monthly and produces an annual report for the safeguarding board.

Salford and Manchester have a joint specialist CSE team and there are PROTECT board meetings held quarterly where there is a strategic overview of the work of the team

**What are the general trends in CSE that you have noticed in your area since the Rochdale case? ie have the numbers gone up or down or the models changed?**

There has not been a noticeable change in the numbers or the intelligence the City has collected. The model over the last 18 months has changed due to Manchester and Salford joining as one non geographical specialist team.

**How many children do you think are at risk of CSE in your area – how are your figures obtained?**

Salford have one system now of collating the data around children coming through the front door with an underlying risk factor of CSE. This is not perfect as it may be that as practitioners work with young people CSE becomes an issue. Salford in the last 12 months have changed the way we refer to the specialist team all referrals come through the MASH, this allows us to understand the data. At this time 20 children are being worked with within the PROTECT team. However a great deal of work has been undertaken by the team in going to all our childrens homes and schools to provide a more universal message but targeting where we know vulnerable children are.

**How many children are placed from “out of borough” in your area and how many local children?**

The 20 children being worked with are all local children. There are 154 children placed in salford, a large proportion of these children are placed with family members or placed with adopters. Where there issues with young people missing from home and CSE they are discussed at the weekly meeting and the placing LA is asked to provide the meeting with how they are dealing with the issue. PROTECT have visited independent providers to discuss any issues and undertake universal work with residents.

**What is the latest information on missing and absent episodes and do you think the new police categories are working in terms of safeguarding children?**

In Salford we have seen a significant rise in the number of missing from home episodes during 2013/14, compared to 2012/13. This increase has been discussed at the very highest levels of Children's Services and Salford Police and a number of strategic meetings have introduced additional focus on the most prolific “missings.”

Whilst we are able to gather “absent” data from the Children's homes in the city, GMP have not been able to produce data for all “absent” episodes.

A successful bid to the Police Innovation Fund has secured funding for an 18 months missing from home project, involving Police, Children's Services and Health. The project will operate 6pm – midnight, seven nights a week and will look to target the most prolific “missings,” with entrenched behaviours, by developing innovative strategies of engagement, diversion and joint working, supported by an advising psychologist, to reduce risk taking behaviours amongst this vulnerable group of young people.

The new Police categories have not strengthened safeguarding and the “absent” category appears to be a way of “screening out” missing from home episodes.

The categorisation given to each individual episode is dependent on the reporter giving clear information and risk, whilst the civilian receiving the call is then expected to categorise appropriately. This system is open to error.

**Do you do return interviews after a missing or absent child returns and how do you decide who conducts the interviews?**

In Salford we have a team of people who carry out return interviews, comprising of youth workers, YOS, health and the Children's Society (who have a contract with the local authority)

Officers are allocated the return interview on the basis of who is assessed as being the most appropriate and likely to engage the young person.

We do not carry out return interviews of those classified as “absent.”

## Stockport

Stockport Safeguarding Children Board  
Response to Ann Coffey's letter to LSCB's

**I would be interested in your views about how any MASH's in your area are working.**

The MASH in Stockport is under development and is progressing well. To date has colleagues from Children Social Care, Adult Social Care Police, Health are co located at the Contact Centre ( referral point for the Authority) where they are able to offer a speedy response to the flow of concerns coming in. This development will have a positive impact on understanding and responding to safeguarding issues through enhanced collaboration between agencies.

Following on from Operation Windermere, which led to the successful conviction of offenders involved in child sexual exploitation, a review was held to consider lessons learned and review the CSE team structure and working arrangements. A number of recommendations were made around strengthening partnership working and response and from this a proposal was drawn up to remodel CSE practice and the processes supporting this alongside work in the key area of domestic abuse.

As of the 1st July 2014 Stockport has a Domestic Abuse and Child Exploitation (DACSE) team. This team strengthens our multi-agency response to incidents of domestic abuse and CSE by bringing together key professionals from the Police, Children's Social Care, and YOS and other colleagues co-located within Stockport's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). A Senior Practitioner from Children's Social Care will be sat with Police colleagues from the Public Protection Unit and CSE team in the MASH and this will enable them to screen referrals as they come through the front door and ensure that those cases where there are concerns and evident risks around CSE are responded to quickly and appropriately, strategy meetings and joint visits can be done immediately, and advice and consultation can be provided to both LA partners and colleagues within CSC to ensure that children at risk are intervened with at the earliest opportunity.

The Senior Practitioner will also support the MASE (Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation) forum where agencies refer CSE cases for discussion and partnership planning and ensure actions agreed at this meeting are delivered and completed.

The new model of delivery will need time to bed in and the practice processes will be continued to develop over the next 6 months as practitioners spend time co-located and build on the benefits of sharing information, and pooling of skills and expertise.

Each of the SSCB partner agencies has a named lead person for CSE, and the information networks are now well established.

**One of the issues raised in many reports about Rochdale was that the victims and their families did not feel that they were listened to. The girls were not seen as victims but as having made a “lifestyle choice” and because of that they were not offered the protection that they should have expected from the police and other agencies with a responsibility to safeguard them.**

**I am very interested to hear if you think attitudes have changed and if so what has changed those attitudes and if you think there is more work to be done.**

**I am also interested in any work you have done within schools and the wider community to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation. (Ann, you have already had most of this section)**

There has been a lot of initiative shown by Stockport to grasp this area and provide a lead but we are less able to show impact than I would like and we didn't get the systems for implementation quite right as you will see

- The CSE Framework for schools was developed and launched in November 2011. All Stockport secondary schools and colleges have attended at least one training session since then to understand the framework and how it applies within their schools. There was an initial evaluation that identified that staff felt they lacked confidence to deliver in this area and there were discussions with the CSE Team about providing support but I am not sure that schools ever took advantage of this offer. Some schools have had assemblies modelled for them and again there has been an offer of support with assemblies in this area but I am not aware of this being taken up either. There are certainly pockets of activity but capacity issues impact on monitoring.
- We also identified in the MASE evaluation that schools needed to be asked to provide information on what work they had done within the CSE Framework when a child came to MASE.
- The CSE Schools framework needs to be refreshed and updated and re-launched over the summer to take account of the new resources that have been produced since our initial version and it may be appropriate to link in with the new DA/CSE post around this too. We will link this to the Love Rocks resources as well. This also links to the development of a framework for primary schools around sexting and risky online behaviour. So we do have a lot of work in the pipeline – the problem as ever is capacity on our part!
- The framework has been identified nationally as an example of good innovative practice. Staff delivered two sessions for the LGA about the framework that were very well received and have generated some interest.



- All the high schools were provided with a performance of the GW Theatre company play ‘Somebody’s Sister, Somebody’s Daughter’ for their Year 10 pupils and the feedback from this was very positive.
- The SRE curriculum seeks to address relationship issues with young people. I am aware that Stockport Without Abuse go into schools and work with pupils about relationships. I am also aware that the YOS have had Barnardos (love rocks) working with their young girls group and the feedback from this was very positive. There are also healthy evenings for parents that address online safety, sex, and substance use that are very well received. We are also encouraging primary schools to have a session for their Y5/Y6 pupils from the NSPCC about keeping safe and good relationships (which also assists them with their teaching children about safeguarding in the new Keeping Children Safe in Education guidance).
- However our overall view is that the majority of these issues are crammed into the PHSE curriculum and this is not a statutory requirement for schools. One of the most helpful recommendations in our view would be that PHSE becomes a mandatory part of the national curriculum. It may also be worth mentioning that there is an on-going parliamentary inquiry about relationships & sex education in schools and the recommendations from this will have an impact on the SRE provision schools are asked to make.

**In addition:**

The CSE Forum produced leaflets and posters both for those at risk and for families to highlight risk factors and avenues for help. Stockport will adopt the new posters coming via Project Phoenix and has eagerly awaited the communication on a Greater Manchester footprint to the wider public.

**Other specific questions I have are:**

**Does your LSCB have a CSE sub group and how does it work?**

SSCB has had a Sub Group on CSE since June 2011. It has been chaired by the Operational Safeguarding manager/ Interim Head of Safeguarding and the SSCB Business manager. It has been made up of a large membership at operational manager level. The Sub Group is due for a review with a plan that it becomes a more strategic in nature.

The sub group has been responsible for the CSE Strategy and Action Plan. The CSE Action Plan is due for a refresh and will take account of the See Me Hear Me principles outlined in the Children Commissioners report and the new developments in Greater Manchester re Project Phoenix.

**What are the general trends in CSE that you have noticed in your area since the Rochdale case? ie have the numbers gone up or down or the models changed?**

We don’t think the numbers at risk of CSE have gone up since Rochdale but the staff awareness in relation to CSE has risen and potential CSE is recognised sooner. It still seems the model most often is the ‘boyfriend’ model and alcohol and drugs are the ‘gifts’ most frequently used.

**How many children do you think are at risk of CSE in your area – how are your figures obtained?**

We introduced monthly Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) meetings in Stockport in order to share information and offer a coordinated approach to young people at risk, where a Plan to address the risks are formulated. Through this, we have a better picture of the young people at risk, and have established a database for reference. We identified 129 young people at risk from CSE in 2013-14.

**How many children are placed from “out of borough” in your area and how many local children?**

Most of Stockport’s 305 LAC are placed within the Greater Manchester radius.

I don’t know the answer to the out of Borough children. We have a large number of private children’s home in Stockport. I have asked colleagues for this information and will forward it to you when I get it.

**What is the latest information on missing and absent episodes and do you think the new police categories are working in terms of safeguarding children?**

In Stockport the number of children reported missing from family home is bigger than those missing from Children’s Homes partly as a result of Police categorisation. This has highlighted that children missing from family homes is a considerable problem and belies the stereotypical view that it is children in Care who go missing. Going missing from home can be symptomatic of other issues occurring in school or within the family and that going missing creates additional vulnerability for children and young people.

Information on children reported Missing from the Family Home (MFFH) and absent from the Family Home (AFFH) is extracted on a daily basis at the Contact Centre and submitted to the Supporting Families Pathway.

112 young people (triggering 177 incidents) of Missing or Absent from the family home were submitted to the Supporting Families Pathway (SFP) in 2013/14.

This reflects that absent classifications seem to be working as there are less absents for earlier help cases than there are missing classifications. This reflects that issues are out of character and problems beginning to emerge.

The concern initially was that many children would slip the net by being recorded as absent though this doesn’t appear to have transpired. That said, in Stockport because we identify and respond to all cases, whether missing or absent, this isn’t an issue we need to be as concerned with as those Local Authorities that receive data only on missing classifications.

The early identification of young people missing from the family home has been improved considerably as a result of the co-location of police officers in the MASH. This process enables support to be offered to the family much earlier in the development of a problem, which will subsequently impact in terms of reduction in demand/ cost across the public sector as well as achieving more sustainable, positive outcomes for children and their families.

**Do you do return interviews after a missing or absent child returns and how do you decide who conducts the interviews?**

All children who are reported missing are offered an independent return interview within 72 hours of notification that the child has returned home. The purpose of the return interview is to give the child the opportunity to talk about why they ran away and to ascertain if additional support is needed for the child/family/carer. The return interview is additional to safe and well checks carried out by the police.

Where children have been reported missing from their family home and the child is not an open case to Children’s Social Care, the return interview is offered by an Assessment Coordinator based in the MASH and conducted within 72 hours as appropriate.

As well as important return interviews, Stockport ensures that quality assessment, planning and intervention support the child and family so that issues don’t escalate and problems become worse.

The voice of the child is crucial in planning future service delivery and we will collate thematic information gathered from return interviews to inform future provision.

Embedded is Stockport’s missing from home and care protocol.

Response compiled on 15.7.2014 by:  
Una Hagan, Performance and Development Manager  
Stockport Safeguarding Children Board 0161 474 5657

**Tameside**

Dear Ms Coffey,

Thank you for your recent letter about work that you are leading across Greater Manchester to find out what has changed since the Rochdale child sexual exploitation victims first came forward.

On behalf of the Tameside Safeguarding Children Board I would like to say how much your attention to the issue of CSE is welcomed, reinforcing as it does the importance of a robust and effective response to this abuse of children and young people.

**Tameside CSE Group**

Tameside Safeguarding Children Board has a CSE sub group in place since 2010 to co-ordinate responses to the issue locally had and in partnership across the region. The sub group meets quarterly, is chaired by the Assistant Executive Director of Children's Services and reports directly to the TSCB Strategic Board.

Initial scoping work to determine the extent and nature of CSE in Tameside led to the development of multi-agency training in CSE, practice guidelines for staff and publication of a TSCB Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy in 2012. In 2012/13 the CSE sub group worked with other partnerships to reach agreement on the set up of a specialist CSE team for Tameside. The development of the team was also informed by the views of young people through consultation work commissioned from Barnardo's and a focus group held with young victims of CSE.

Due to the connection between CSE and missing children, the CSE group now incorporates missing children in its remit and collates data on both groups of children. Return interviews are completed by a child's social worker for those known to Children's Social Care which, in turn, follows the 'safe and well' check completed by the Police. However, the CSE group is exploring the possibility of commissioning an independent children's advocacy provider to undertake return interviews instead of the social worker in the future.

In view of the heightened concern regarding CSE Tameside Safeguarding Children Board conducted a Thematic Review of CSE cases in March/April 2013 which provide useful learning for agencies locally. Since that time, agencies have responded to the Board to identify areas for improvement. Work continues within the Board and sub group to evidence the impact of these changes and to seek ongoing assurance that CSE remains a priority and is being addressed robustly.

**Tameside CSE Team/Processes**

The Phoenix Tameside, multi-agency, co-located team, has been operating in Tameside since September 2013. The Manager's post is currently funded by TSCB, a position which is currently filled by a Detective Inspector from Greater Manchester Police Public Protection Division. The team, based at Ashton-Under-Lyne police station, consists of a full time Social Worker, a Support Worker, Safeguarding Nurse, Detective Sergeant, two Detective Constables and a part time missing person's safeguarding officer. The Team manager sits on the TSCB CSE sub group.

Tameside has had a Safeguarding Hub arrangement in place since October 2013. Any case referred to the Hub of a child aged 10 years or over is now screened for CSE risk factors. The Phoenix team social worker is co-located at regular periods in the Hub and with strong links to the children's social work team is able to provide expert advice and support to staff.

The TSCB Performance report incorporates data on known CSE risk factors including the numbers of children missing from home and care. The Phoenix team provides data on the numbers of children and young people referred to the team when CSE risk has been identified. It is recognised that current performance indicators relate mostly to activity rather than the quality and impact of safeguarding arrangements and the Board is involved in work to develop a new regional data set and Performance Framework for LSCBs that will address this issue.

Work with schools has included presentations to head teachers; delivery of "Train the Trainer" sessions to key staff in all Primary and Secondary schools across Tameside; development of a CSE awareness presentation for young people and the roll out of a theatre production, "Somebody's sister, somebody's daughter", across secondary schools, to all secondary school by June.

**Tameside CSE profile**

At present, the profile of CSE in Tameside is one of single perpetrators and isolated cases of abuse. The Board recognises the ongoing risk of gang or group abuse and regularly requests assurances regarding the nature, prevalence and response to CSE. The CSE Team Manager attended the last TSCB meeting to provide an overview of recent cases and effective interventions

48 children are currently deemed to be at risk of CSE in Tameside and are being supported by staff in the Phoenix team. The number confirmed as being at risk has reduced over the last year, primarily as a consequence of better screening and risk assessment processes.

There are 60 known looked after children placed in Tameside by other local authorities. 2 of these children are working with the Phoenix team on CSE related issues. 4 of the 48 children open to the CSE team are looked after by Tameside.

**Summary**

In Tameside, the Board continues to prioritise CSE as a key business plan objective. This has led to the development of a CSE strategy overseen by the CSE sub group, the creation of a new CSE multi-agency team initially funded by TSCB monies, and a regular reporting schedule to the Board on CSE related issues. Combined with an ongoing training programme in schools aimed at disseminating key messages to frontline staff and children, and the roll out of awareness-raising sessions to other practitioners, the change in attitude is much more evident than it was. Practitioners are concerned, open to learning and increasingly responsive to the signs and symptoms of CSE. Key to this has been the development of a positive relationship between the CSE team and other partners, where consultation is encouraged and support is offered in a responsive and effective manner.

I understand that you have visited Tameside, following an invite from Liz Hopkinson, the manager of our dedicated CSE team. I hope you enjoyed this visit and saw, at first hand, the nature of the work being undertaken in Tameside. I would also welcome the opportunity to meet

with you on behalf of the Board if you felt this would be helpful.

Yours sincerely

Mike Tarver  
Tameside Safeguarding Children's Board Chair

**Trafford**

Dear Ms Coffey

Sorry for the delay in responding to your letter. The following is an overview of the approach to CSE that Trafford Safeguarding Children Board (TSCB) has taken.

The Sexually Exploited and Missing (SEAM) process is Trafford Safeguarding Children Board's response to CSE. It meets on a monthly basis and focuses on multi-agency response to victims. The forum also gathers intelligence on perpetrators, hot spots, and problem premises. The police attend SEAM and act on the intelligence, linking in with the Greater Manchester Police intelligence hub. In February 2014 the police carried out a weekend operation, informed by intelligence from SEAM, visiting and following all potential victims, perpetrators and hotspots. SEAM reports to the Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group (see below) and from there to the TSCB Board.

SEAM considers cases across the risk matrix, including cases below the social care threshold, and the aim is to ensure all children and young people at risk have access to a professional who they can talk to. This includes a mentoring service which provides 6 hours a week minimum intervention in recognition of the importance of building relationships where young people feel safe and able to disclose. Referrals to SEAM were 49 in 2012/13 and 44 in 2013-14 (10 months). Thus there was no obvious impact from the Rochdale cases.

Other services provided to children and young people through the SEAM process include, Talk shop, a youth service provision which has access to sexual health services and provides a bespoke response to young people according to their need. A young woman's advocate,

shared with Manchester's protect CSE team, provides additional support to girls affected by CSE and gang association.

Phoenix Futures, a young person's alcohol project, also provides a service to those young people who are affected by CSE and struggling with addiction issues, which is often a factor in their lives.

SEAM considers boys at risk of CSE, as well as girls and eight boys were considered by SEAM this year. Trafford's Safeguarding Board CSE training courses also cover risk to boys and ensure practitioners are aware of the vulnerability factors in relation to boys.

The definition of absence adopted by the police is reasonable and workable but on occasions absences can be an indication of risk. Children do not need to go missing for long periods of time or overnight to be at risk of sexual exploitation. It is Trafford's approach to consider risk even for short repeated absences. In Trafford the police advise us of absent and missing children and an assessment is done on a case by case basis to establish if a return interview is warranted, this is to ensure that absents are risk assessed as well as missings. April 2013 to February 2014 there were 133 young people missing and 275 missing episodes in Trafford.

The Youth Service is engaged in a pilot to provide missing interviews to children and young people who are missing or absent more than twice in a month or for one overnight. The interview is to assess for risk; initiate a CAF if appropriate, offer a youth service if appropriate, sign post to other services and collect intelligence to inform service development.

The missing interviews are conducted through a pilot by the Youth Service who will ensure that young people who go missing do not slip through the net and are responded to with an appropriate assessment and service.

Wize Up is a 10 week group work programme run by YOS for girls at risk of CSE through gang/group activity. It is based on a model of peer support and mentoring and relies on past members to support current programmes.

Operation Stay Safe is a Youth Offending Service initiative designed to keep young people safe. CSE has been the theme in the past and remains as one of the risks to inform the operation.

Barnardo's carried out a scoping exercise of CSE in Trafford in April 2013 (Are We missing a Trick?) and produced a report, which outlined the problem in Trafford and made a series of recommendations. These recommendations have been incorporated into the Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan which is overseen by the Child Sexual Exploitation Working Group and incorporated into the TSCB Business Plan.

MARAT is a long established multi-agency team comprising of children's social care, police, education, health and an early help co-ordinator. Currently the focus of MARAT is children's social care referrals and sign posting to appropriate services for those cases that are below the threshold of social care. The early help co-ordinator is developing a more cohesive early help pathway so CAF and co-ordinated early help services can be monitored and audited, this will include CSE cases.

From May 1st this year two dedicated CSE police officers will join MARAT to increase capacity in responding to potential CSE perpetrators and improve the development of CSE intelligence within the Trafford partnership and across Greater Manchester. This will contribute to disruption activity, the building of criminal cases against perpetrators and safeguarding children and young people.

SEAM will continue to be the process for assessing individuals at risk of CSE and signposting to appropriate support and/or treatment. CSE is an issue where the views of Children and Young People seem often to have been overlooked. A strong emphasis on the participation of Children and Young People is a feature of Children's Services in Trafford and the TSCB is fully involved in this. Every effort has been made to maintain this commitment to the involvement of Children and Young People in the Trafford approach to CSE.

The Barnardo's scoping exercise (April 2013) included focus groups of young people whose views were

fundamental to the recommendations of the report. 29 young people, aged between 14 and 18 (9 boys and 20 girls) were involved. They were asked to comment on two scenarios, asked a number of questions around the situation and then asked to talk about what was happening in Trafford. This exercise very much influenced the view that the boyfriend model of CSE is the dominant form of CSE in Trafford; Barnardo's described this as peer based and opportunistic abuse.

In February 2013 TSCB, in partnership with Trafford Rape Crisis, hosted a theatre company event which used a play to raise awareness of CSE to schools in Trafford.

In November 2013 Trafford Youth Cabinet hosted a conference on risk for children and young people in Trafford, 'Let's Talk Youth Wellbeing'. 80 young people attended with their teachers. The conference explored young people's perception of risk, including CSE:

- 90% said they would know if they were being groomed for CSE
- 90% agreed that every school in Trafford should teach sex and relationship.
- 70% said they could not talk to their parents about sex
- 50% said they felt pressurised to have sex.

A written report has now been produced from this conference and the TSCB will be responding to this and including actions from it in the TSCB Business Plan.

Flixton Girls School is leading the way in raising awareness of CSE in the school community.

They co-hosted a CSE awareness session for teachers, with the TSCB, who accompanied young people to the Young Person's Risk Conference in November. Further work is being undertaken to develop CSE resources for schools to use to raise awareness amongst young people and staff. The work done by Flixton Girls School, in Trafford in identifying risk of CSE at school and responding to it has been recognised nationally as pathfinder work and was highlighted in the recent Children's Commissioners' Report, 'If Only Someone had Listened'.

There is a school representative on SEAM and the head teacher of Flixton Girls School is a member of the TSCB CSE working group. She is the link for schools and is active in ensuring that schools are aware of the referral process to SEAM and training available.

TSCB CSE Working Group is a multi-agency group, chaired by the Head of Youth Service. The Working Group has responsibility for the strategic development of CSE in line with national and regional developments, the implementation of procedures, raising awareness, training and supporting staff and ensuring the TSCB are fully informed with regards to Trafford's approach to CSE. The group report to the Policy and Practice Committee which is chaired by the Joint Director, Children and Young People's Services (Social Care), who reports directly to the TSCB.

An action plan is developed and agreed by the TSCB on an annual basis. There are regular development sessions to ensure members are up to date with national and local findings. The action plan is presented at each meeting and leads in particular areas update the group. The plan is updated appropriately and is responsive to new developments. The Plan is divided into four areas: data collection; managing individual cases, communication and awareness raising, and disrupting tactics. The agenda includes information from Project Phoenix (Greater Manchester).

I hope this summary gives you a good overview of the TSCB approach to CSE and provides information which is helpful to your review. Needless to say if you feel there is anything that is missing or that there is any aspect that about which you would like further detail I would be delighted to provide this.

Yours sincerely

Dr R Postlethwaite  
Independent Chair  
Trafford Safeguarding Children Board

cc: Chief Supt Mary Doyle  
Trafford Safeguarding Children Board



Wigan

Dear Ms Coffey

In response to your CSE inquiry letter to LSCBs Wigan Children Safeguarding Board have put together the following have response.

WSCB , have as part of their structure have a Vulnerable Young Persons subgroup of which Children at risk of and suffering from Sexual Exploitation is a priority ,alongside children missing and being trafficked .

Collation of data and figures around CSE activity are collected at each SEAM meeting and are presented on a quarterly basis to our Board . There has been an increase in our victim figures in the last twelve months ,however this is felt to be a result of better awreneess of the issues by professionals .As part of the collection of information we have noted that, at this present time ,we have two children placed within Wigan who are at risk form CSE .

In terms of victim led support Wigan LSCB via the SEAM (Sexual Exploitation and Missing ) process offer both Direct response from our high level Barnardos team middle and low level response from an alternative Barnardos team. Victim support packages are also provided when prosecutions take place.

In terms of consultation the LSCB via the SEAM process offer

- Advocacy service via Wigan Family Welfare. Prior to a SEAM meeting.
- Young people are forwarded a consultation form to enable the young person to understand CSE and to feed their views into the process .
- For those children who are reported missing from home/care our early intervention team or children’s rights officer undertake return interviews.
- A person centered audit on our CSE cases is shortly taking place to which will have at the centre the voice of the child within SEAM process

To engage the community the LSCB proactively raise awareness of the issue of CSE via

- CSE conference which members of the public alongside professionals were invited to attend.
- Lowton Girls Group who raise awareness of CSE amongst young people.
- Two of the LSCB apprentices have developed a presentation regarding keeping safe online from
- CSE by young people for young people.
- The LSCB offer parents free E learning on the signs of CSE and what to look out for .
- The LSCB are currently undertaking a campaign to raise awareness with hospitality staff/taxi drivers.
- Wigan Youth Zone – asked young people to develop a DVD to raise awareness re CSE
- Car stickers have been developed and handed out amongst members of the public highlighting contact numbers for CSE concerns .

A return interview is conducted with all young people who have been reported missing from home/care for 24 hours or more on twice in 28 days. Copy attached below.

We feel by working closely with GMP we are able to overcome any potential problems that the could arise from the categorization of children either being classes as missing or absent and with the development of Operation Madison ,here in Wigan ,this will further assist in managing .the difficult issue of children going missing from care.

“One man tapped me on the shoulder and said: ‘How old are you?’. I said 15 and he grabbed my arm and said come into the shop. He was about 40. I said do not come near me, get off me, you are old enough to be my dad.”

Greater Manchester schoolgirl

# Acknowledgements

My special thanks to Joy Copley without whose help this report would not have been written and to Bridget Dunbar in my constituency office for her tireless support. Also to Laura Mercer, office of the Greater Manchester Police and Crime Commissioner, for her valuable advice. In addition a big thank you to the children and young people who did not wish to be identified but whose voices have greatly influenced my recommendations.

Thank you also to the following people who in their own way contributed to this report:

- Nazir Afzal OBE, Chief Crown Prosecutor for the North West
- Gemma Aitchison, Yes Matters
- Ansar Ali and his colleagues from Together Against Grooming, Bradford
- DCI Graham Atherton, DS Kirsty Simcox and Sunrise partners Julie Daniels and Martin Murphy, from the Multi-Agency Screening Service, Greater Manchester Police Rochdale
- Dave Bagley and his team at the RUNA project, Urban Outreach, Bolton
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- Sue Berelowitz, Deputy Children's Commissioner
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Notices

- All the images in this document feature models.
- All the quotes used are real.



