

Child Sexual Exploitation

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Policy Statement

Summary

West Yorkshire Police (WYP) is committed to protecting children from harm and prosecuting those who commit sexual crimes against them. It will do this by:

- Raising public awareness of child sexual exploitation (CSE);
- Training our staff to recognise signs that children are being exploited;
- Identifying children at risk of sexual exploitation; and
- Working with partners to intervene with children and families to safeguard those at risk of exploitation and adopt proactive problem-solving measures to identify, disrupt and prosecute those seeking to sexually exploit children.

This policy explains the responsibilities of officers and staff, including what to do when it is suspected that a child is at risk of being sexually exploited, and also how as a Force we will work in partnership with other agencies sharing information where required in order to help and support the child.

Scope

This policy applies to all police officers and police staff.

Definitions

National definition for CSE

- West Yorkshire Police (WYP) will adopt the national definition of child sexual exploitation (CSE):
“Child sexual exploitation is a form of Child Sexual Abuse. It occurs when an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.”
- West Yorkshire exemptions include:
 - Offences within an intra-familial or domestic setting and there is nothing to suggest a wider organisation and/or a commercial purpose;
 - Sexual experimentation between children aged under 18, where the relationship is age appropriate and there are no identified exploitative concerns; or
 - Youth Produced Sexual Imagery - an exchange of images of a sexual nature via use of technology between children under 18, where the relationship is age appropriate and there are no exploitative concerns.

- Where the victim is offered, promised or given something that they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (money, drugs, alcohol) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or the perceived receipt of love and affection).
 - If sexual gratification or exercise of power and control is the only gain for the perpetrator (and there is no gain for the child/young person) this would not normally constitute child sexual exploitation.
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Child

- A child is anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. The terms 'child' and 'children' are used throughout to refer to those who have not yet reached the age of 18. They are still defined as children under the Children Acts of 1989 and 2004 and can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation.
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Principles

General

West Yorkshire Police will:

- Ensure that those children most at risk of harm, and potential suspects most likely to cause harm, are identified and prioritised for investigation and specialist Safeguarding Team staff adhere to the CSE minimum standards of recording for children at risk and suspects. Where risk is initially recorded, it must be re-visited at least every six months. Any changes in risk must be reviewed as a partnership process and not made on a single agency basis.
 - Work in partnership with other agencies in line with the agreed joint working arrangements contained in the West Yorkshire Consortium Procedures Manual.
 - Share information with partners in line with Working Together to Safeguard Children (2018).
 - Participate in locally agreed information sharing and case management processes under the leadership of the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships. These bodies do not replace existing statutory child protection procedures and formal referral to Child Social Services (CSC) will take place whenever there is concern that a child has suffered or is likely to suffer significant harm.
 - Where child victims and witnesses seek therapy or counselling etc., manage each case on its own merits but, if it is in the child's best interests, therapy will be pursued even if that creates an issue for a pending criminal trial. The fact that a child has had therapy must be disclosed to the CPS. See the Home Office's Provision of therapy for child witnesses prior to a criminal trial – practice guidance.
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CSE minimum standards of recording for children at risk and suspects

- Officers and staff must refer to the below when dealing with CSE cases.
 - Children at Risk
 - Suspects
 - Prioritisation Matrix

Creating flags and warning markers for children at risk and suspects

Safeguarding staff must ensure the correct flags and warning markers are placed on force systems:

- **Niche**
 - Create Niche CSE Child at Risk Management occurrences and Niche CSE Suspect Management occurrences.
 - CSE Location of interest flag. Create appropriate Niche warning flags for:
 - Child at risk; and
 - Suspects.
- **PNC**
 - Warning marker – Child at risk of CSE: N24 CSE Marker
 - CSE suspects – Circulation guidance.

Responsibilities

All Individuals

Responsibilities

Individuals are responsible for:

- Having an awareness of locations where children may be approached by potential groomers;
- Proactively intervening when children are believed to be at risk and consider using powers of police protection to remove the child if it is not safe to leave them;
- Using disruption tactics when suspected perpetrators are identified;
- Obtaining antecedent information from communications operators, e.g. whether any suspect is subject to a previous Child Abduction Warning Notice which may give grounds for arrest for child abduction;
- Considering contacting parents or carers to establish any potential risks;
- Having an awareness that an offence may have occurred even if the child does not report it and protecting any scenes and securing/preserving any evidence;
- Ensuring that after encountering a child or suspect who is flagged, they submit a full intelligence report of the circumstances and make any necessary child protection referrals to the district SGU and to CSC or the emergency duty team (EDT), if out of hours;
- If they believe the child requires referral:
 - Forwarding the completed form to their child sexual exploitation team;
 - Following up with a phone call to a unit supervisor to discuss;

- Personally referring the child to their Children Social Care (CSC) or Emergency Duty Team (EDT). Individuals must not leave this for the SGU to do; and
 - Recording the fact this referral has been made on the relevant Niche entry/Storm log;
 - Speaking to a CSC team staff member for guidance and support if they have any questions or are uncertain about their assessment;
 - Where a Strategy Discussion is held, selecting the option 'strategy meeting – child' from the F3 drop downs on the front screen of the occurrence. Officers must document this on both the relevant crime occurrence and the CSE Management Occurrence. This must be documented on the OEL using the F3 drop down option 'Multi-Agency Strategy Discussion' and any minutes must also be attached;
 - When a child returns from being missing, conducting return home interviews:
 - Assessing if the child is at increased risk of, or is currently subject to, sexual exploitation. If an allegation is made or it is believed that an offence has taken place, officers must consider the seizure of evidence at the earliest opportunity;
 - Obtaining as much information as possible re the child's whereabouts while they were missing;
 - Questioning parents and carers as important sources of information;
 - Recording, at the time, any injuries they observe on the child; and
 - Recording any information relating to vehicles, premises and individuals in searchable form, i.e. as linked items on Niche. For more information, refer to the Missing Persons policy; and
 - Providing each suspect with information about where they can receive support and guidance using a Child Sexual Investigation Form 330 or, where applicable, to any appropriate adult using a Form 330a, keeping a signed copy of the form with the case papers and scanning it onto the relevant Niche Occurrence.
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Safeguarding Unit (SGU) Staff

- Responsibilities** The Safeguarding Unit are responsible for:
- Adhering to the CSE minimum standards of recording for children at risk and suspects and Prioritisation Scoring Matrix;
 - Creating flags on Niche for both children at risk and suspects;
 - Creating warning markers about potential children at risk and suspects on PNC;
 - Considering if a case of human trafficking also exists and, if so, investigating this matter and referring the case to the UK Human Trafficking Centre within the National Crime Agency via their email address. (The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) form is available on the Force Human Trafficking intranet site);

- Receiving information from agencies using the Child Sexual Exploitation Information Report which partner agencies will forward to district SGUs; and
 - Creating, for all children at risk of CSE, a bespoke missing from home plan. Those at high risk must have a missing from home 'trigger plan'.
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Detective Inspectors

- Responsibilities** Detective inspectors are responsible for:
- Having operational oversight and management of CSE issues in their district, ensuring that measures are taken locally to address CSE offending;
 - Participating in local multi-agency safeguarding arrangements in respect of CSE and sharing information with external agencies;
 - Ensuring Child Sexual Exploitation Child at Risk Management and Child Sexual Exploitation Suspect Management Niche occurrences are created and endorsed with a management action plan;
 - Ensuring any warning markers about children at risk of CSE and CSE suspects are added onto police systems, e.g. Niche and PNC;
 - Collating, analysing and actioning intelligence about children at risk and suspects;
 - Investigating specific allegations of offences using the Serious Sexual Offences policy;
 - Coordinating police resources to ensure that suspects are disrupted by using various tactical options; and
 - Briefing other police officers and staff in respect of current intelligence.
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Additional Information

Compliance

This policy complies with the following legislation, policy and guidance:

- Sexual Offences Act 2003 (as amended)
- Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Data Protection Act 1998
- Children Act 1989
- Working together to safeguard children – A guide to inter-agency working
- Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation - Supplementary guidance
- Definition and guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from CSE
- Home Office's Provision of therapy for child witnesses prior to a criminal trial – practice guidance
- West Yorkshire Police will work in partnership with other agencies to protect children and young people in accordance with the West Yorkshire Consortium (of safeguarding children boards) Procedures Manual
- APP Intelligence management
- APP Investigation
- APP Major investigation and public protection and the sections on Investigating child abuse and safeguarding children and Responding to child sexual exploitation
- Operation Stovewood Witness & Victim Strategy, known as 'Survivor Pathway'
- Home Office Circular 006/2010
- Child Abduction Warning Notice policy
- Missing Persons policy
- Safeguarding Children and Young People policy
- Serious Sexual Offences policy
- Mental Ill Health and Learning Disabilities policy
- Custody and Detention policy

Supporting Information

The supporting information for this policy can be accessed online.
