



**MULTI-AGENCY STRATEGY**

**and**

**EXTENDED GUIDE  
for  
PRACTITIONERS**

**CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE  
AT RISK OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

## DOCUMENT INFORMATION

Author	Child Sexual Exploitation Sub Group
Governance	Aberdeen City Child Protection Committee
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## CONTENTS

CONTENTS	PAGE NUMBER
DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	3
DEFINITION OF CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON	4
PART A ZERO TOLERANCE STRATEGY	5 - 6
PART B EXTENDED GUIDE TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION	7 - 26
1. Who does this document apply to?	7
2. What is the purpose of this document?	7
3. Prevention of child sexual exploitation	8
4. Disruption and Prosecution of child sexual exploitation	9
5. Support and Recovery from child sexual exploitation	10
6. Vulnerability and Risk Indicators of CSE	11 – 15
7. Responding to CSE: 7.1 Assess the Risk 7.2 What to do Next	16 – 17
8. Multi-agency Intervention and Planning	18
9. Information Sharing	20
10. Notes for Single Agencies 10.1 All Agencies 10.2 NHS Grampian 10.3 Education 10.4 Police Scotland 10.5 Children's Social Work 10.6 3 <sup>rd</sup> Sector	20 - 26
11. Zero Tolerance : Our Strategy in Action	27
KEY MATERIALS	28

## DEFINITION OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

For the purposes of this document, child sexual exploitation (CSE) is as defined in the Scottish Government publication October 2016. The definition and summary can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/10/6376> and a helpful Practitioner Briefing Paper can be found at <http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/10/8235>.

### Definition

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse in which a person(s), of any age takes advantage of a power imbalance to force or entice a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something received by the child and/or those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. As with other forms of child sexual abuse, the presence of perceived consent does not undermine the abusive nature of the act.

### Applying the definition

If someone takes advantage of an imbalance of power to get a child/ young person to engage in sexual activity, it is CSE if:

1. The child/young person receives, or believes they will receive, something they need or want (tangible or intangible gain or the avoidance of harm) in exchange for the sexual activity and/or
2. The perpetrator/facilitator gains financial advantage or enhanced status or power from the abuse.

Where it is the victim who is offered, promised or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (money, drugs or alcohol, for example) and intangible rewards (status, protection or perceived receipt of love or affection, for example). It is critical to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a child/young person does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a child who engages in sexual activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Where the gain is solely on the part of the perpetrator/facilitator, it must be something more than sexual gratification to constitute CSE (as opposed to another form of sexual abuse). This could be money, other financial advantage (reduced cost drugs/alcohol or discharge of a debt for example), status or power.

## Summary of CSE (from Scottish Government publication 2016/10/6376)

CSE can take a variety of different forms (see examples in Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Practitioner Briefing Paper). It can take place in person or online and involve both contact and non-contact sexual activities. Although CSE is not a specific criminal offence in itself, it does encompass a range of sexual offences and other forms of serious criminal misconduct that can be used to disrupt and prosecute this form of abuse.

Any child under the age of eighteen, male or female, can be a victim of CSE, including those who can legally consent to have sex. The abuse most frequently impacts upon those of a post-primary age and can be perpetrated by adults or peers, on an individual or group basis.

CSE can be difficult to identify. Many children and young people – and professionals – can misinterpret such experiences as consensual and fail to recognise the exploitation involved. This can contribute to misplaced feelings of loyalty or shame on the part of victims (many of whom will consequently not self-disclose) and a potential failure to identify abusive situations on the part of professionals. However, the fact that all such scenarios are typified by a power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse and/or some form of vulnerability or limited availability of choice on the part of the young person clearly delineates/distinguishes the experiences as abusive.

It is recognised that the definition of CSE continues to be refined and future versions of this document will reflect that.

### DEFINITION OF CHILD OR YOUNG PERSON

In relation to CSE and for the purposes of this document, references to a 'child', 'children' and/or 'young people' includes all those under **18 years** of age.

## PART A

### ZERO TOLERANCE STRATEGY TOWARDS CSE

Our strategy is endorsed by all agencies and services in Aberdeen City and is one of Zero Tolerance towards Child Sexual Exploitation.

#### **Why is this important?**

It is recognised that, historically, the nature and extent of CSE has not been fully understood and the term has even been subject to different terminology and interpretations. In the past it has been described as 'child prostitution' or 'teenage prostitution' and responses have often been set in the context of youth justice rather than child protection, which had the potential to attribute blame to the actions of the victim.

However, it is now well accepted that CSE is sexual abuse and is a child protection concern. It is also understood that CSE is often hidden and difficult to identify, particularly where it involves the use of the internet. Like all matters concerning child protection, victims are often reluctant to disclose and the children and young people involved in CSE may also perceive themselves to be involved in a healthy sexual relationship in which they have control. Children and young people are often unlikely to recognise their own exploitation relying on adults/professionals to make the assessment. As a result of this, it is difficult to establish the full nature and scale of CSE but we do recognise the value of agencies working together in order to identify and address the issue.

It is a tragedy for any child to be sexually exploited. It exposes them to abuse and assaults and may even threaten their lives. They can be robbed of their childhood, self esteem, and opportunities for good health, education and training. These are the reason why we endorse a zero tolerance approach to CSE.

#### **What results do we want?**

In partnership Aberdeen City Council, Police Scotland, NHS Grampian and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector in Aberdeen aim to provide a caring appropriate and timely response to children and young people who have been, or are at risk of being, sexually abused and exploited.

We aim to increase knowledge of CSE across the professional workforce, among communities, families and young people. This will be achieved through education, training and updates. This will assist in increasing awareness of CSE and enable responses to be appropriate and timely.

We aim to decrease the incidence of CSE. This will be achieved through improved understanding, prevention of CSE in the first place, confident reporting, successful disruption and prosecution of offenders.

We aim to provide support for potential victims and survivors of CSE and to protect young people from further abuse.

### **What will the benefits be?**

Aberdeen will be safer for our children and young people. We aim for Aberdeen City to be the best place in Scotland to grow up and for every child and young person in Aberdeen to enjoy being young and feel safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included.

We will prevent the short and longer term trauma for children and young people exposed to CSE. CSE has the potential to impact upon a young person throughout their life in relation to their relationships, mental and physical health, education and future prospects.

### **What principles apply here?**

This strategy fits with the national drive to address CSE. We have adhered to National Child Protection Guidance and the National CSE Action Plan. There is local determination to address this issue from Aberdeen Community Planning Partnership, the Child Protection Committee and single agencies. Zero tolerance is the key principle.

### **How will we make sure this works?**

The strategy and the improvement work flowing from it will be subject to the governance and scrutiny of the Community Planning Partnership, and the Child Protection Committee.

Cases of CSE will be recorded, monitored and reviewed by agencies through, as appropriate, the Child Protection Register, CareFirst recording, Child Protection Case Conferences, Looked After Children Reviews, strategy meetings, multi agency meetings, care and risk management meetings, staff supervision, and the Community Safety hub.

We will assess the quality of the results through case file auditing, quality assurance, scrutiny of performance information and feedback from service users.

### **Our strategic goals**

Aberdeen City is serious about meeting the challenge of CSE. It promotes zero tolerance to CSE across the City. It has a workforce equipped to identify and respond to CSE. Communities, families and young people are aware of the signs of CSE and know what to do about it. Together we will - Prevent, Disrupt and Support.

We have an action plan to achieve this. This document forms part of that. The following extended guide for practitioners is relevant across all agencies for those working with young people, all of whom may be at risk of CSE.

## **PART B**

### **EXTENDED GUIDE TO CSE FOR PRACTITIONERS**

#### **1. Who does this document apply to?**

This document applies to all professionals in the multi agency children's service workforce. It sets out the overarching roles and responsibilities of the police, relevant local authority services within Aberdeen City Council, NHS Grampian and the 3<sup>rd</sup> Sector working with children and young people who may be at risk of child sexual exploitation.

This document is in addition to (and not a substitute for) child protection procedures already in place. It is informed and should be read in conjunction with all agencies own child protection guidelines, as well as multi-agency agreed guidance for child protection. All child protection guidelines are expected to adhere to National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014.

The procedures and guidelines stated within this document are compatible with the national guidance published by the Scottish Government, including 'Scotland's National Action Plan to Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation' 2014.

All children and young people are susceptible to CSE. The sexual exploitation of children and young people is a problem that has been recognised throughout the UK and worldwide, in rural and urban settings, in deprived and affluent areas, and affects boys and girls. All children are vulnerable to the grooming process. It is a crime that can be perpetrated by individuals from all sections of society and often goes unnoticed.

However, it is known that some young people are more vulnerable than others including those where there is existing abuse, neglect, domestic violence and parental difficulties. The risks are increased by factors such as going missing, placement breakdown, disengagement from education, drug/alcohol misuse, homelessness, peer involvement in prostitution and association with 'risky' adults.

#### **2. What is the purpose of this document?**

Scotland's National Action Plan has been developed with specific areas of focus for tackling Child Sexual Exploitation. These have been adopted by Aberdeen City and incorporated into a plan of action. This document sets out the roles and responsibilities of agencies in working towards the:

- Prevention of abuse (with specific measures for dealing with particularly vulnerable children).
- Disruption and prosecution of offenders through legislation; and
- Supporting children and young people affected by CSE.



### 3. Prevention of child sexual exploitation

In order to prevent children and young people being sexually exploited, all agencies can:

- Gather data and information in order to understand as much about CSE in our area as possible; the scale, nature, locus, victims and perpetrators.
- Ensure that above information is shared with other agencies as appropriate, in line with information sharing protocol.
- Challenge and change negative perceptions of children and young people who are sexually exploited, which may be held by the media, the general public and agencies collectively, in order to pursue cultural change and safeguard children and young people.
- Identify and consolidate best practice already in operation, and build on it.
- Work with all young people to help them identify and report grooming, abusive and exploitative behaviours and challenge peer-on-peer exploitation.
- Recognise that some children and young people are more vulnerable to CSE than others such as those who are looked after and accommodated, and those with disabilities.
- Recognise that young people sometimes participate in the exchange of sexual images/videos for reasons of conformity and the pressures of living within a society which is becoming increasingly sexualised.
- Recognise that timely and effective online safety education with children, young people, and their families will aid in us shaping a society with a zero tolerance to CSE.
- Involve the young person wherever possible and consult them on their views.
- Intervene as early as is needed to ensure a proactive service.
- Refer young people, families and others to on line supports.

These resources may be useful:

**CSE pages of the Child Protection Committee website**

[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/social\\_care\\_health/social\\_work/childrens\\_services/chi\\_Child\\_Sexual\\_Exploitation.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/social_care_health/social_work/childrens_services/chi_Child_Sexual_Exploitation.asp)

(continued on p9)

### **Practitioner's Guide to information Sharing Confidentiality and Consent**

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=60088&SID=25673>

### **Abby's Room**

To book Abby's Room, contact [KincorthLibrary@aberdeencity.gov.uk](mailto:KincorthLibrary@aberdeencity.gov.uk) or 01224 872572. The resource can be collected and returned by borrowers to Kincorth Customer Access Point and Library, Provost Watt Drive, Kincorth, Aberdeen, AB12 5NA.

### **Short Guide for Practitioners : Identifying CSE**

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=67308&SID=27845>

### **Unprotected, Overprotected**

Report in relation to CSE and children and young people with learning disabilities  
<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=68722&SID=27845>

[www.csethesigns.scot](http://www.csethesigns.scot)

[www.thinkuknow.co.uk](http://www.thinkuknow.co.uk)

[www.young.scot/choices-for-life](http://www.young.scot/choices-for-life)

Remember: If you are worried that a child is at risk of CSE, follow your child protection procedures.

## **4. Disruption and Prosecution of CSE**

All agencies and services have a role to play in disrupting and achieving the prosecution of those offenders who sexually exploit children and young people:

- Inter-agency working and planning is a necessary component of any intervention. This must be constituted at the earliest opportunity and reviewed regularly throughout. It is essential in providing positive outcomes for children and young people involved in sexual exploitation.
- Commitment to appropriate and proportionate sharing of information across agencies is needed to protect children at risk.
- Collaboration between agencies to clarify and determine whether a police statement or joint investigative interview (JII) is the most appropriate means of gathering information from children and young people as well as the most child centred timeframe for this. For key professionals, the National Guidance on JIIs will apply here.

- Commitment to collaboration between key professionals who are working with victims of CSE and the Crown Office Procurator Fiscal Service regarding the timescales of cases coming to trial.
- Robust risk assessment must highlight a safe care plan for any child or young person who has disclosed or is deemed to be at risk of sexual exploitation.
- Maximise the specialist skills and expertise that the police and other agencies, nationally and locally, have in protecting children across Scotland and in our area.
- Contribute to the co-ordination and intelligence gathering around CSE.

**Police Scotland** – report a crime  
Telephone 101 or [www.scotland.police.uk](http://www.scotland.police.uk)

**Crimestoppers**  
[www.crimestoppers-uk.org](http://www.crimestoppers-uk.org)

**Joint Child Protection Team**  
01224 306877

## 5. Support and Recovery from CSE

There is a range of services available to support and encourage a child/young person's recovery from sexual exploitation and to offer protection from further abuse.

- Agencies and services require to be aware of these, signpost and support them, and to work with them where appropriate.
- Work together to improve services for children affected by CSE.
- The CSE Adviser alongside partners will ensure that local services work better together to plan and monitor the delivery of services to tackle prevention, early intervention and support for potential and actual victims of child sexual exploitation.

Professionals and young people may contact NHS, Education or Children's Social Work who may provide initial support.

Referrals may be made, on a case dependent basis, to local 3<sup>rd</sup> sector provision.

Examples of services in Aberdeen City include:

- Barnardo's "Connect" provides a service to young people that run away from home and assess for CSE.
- Drugs Action "Green Light", is a specialist service for anyone under the age of 25 in Aberdeen city or Aberdeenshire on any issue relating to sexual exploitation.
- Penumbra - Offers a range of services to improve health and wellbeing that provide practical, emotional and social support.
- Children 1st- Provide an abuse and trauma recovery service (Corrieneuchin) for individual and family support to children and families who have been affected by CSE.
- Children 1<sup>st</sup> - schools based service called 'Transitions' which delivers sessions for primary 6 and 7 focussing on healthy relationships
- SACRO- providing a direct service (including self-referral) to young persons, both victims and perpetrators of harm, who are required to be involved in the Court process.
- Grampian Women's Aid offers a service to women who have experienced domestic abuse.
- Rape Crisis Scotland are working with partner agencies to develop a resource to support schools to address gender based violence.
- NHS CAMHS services

## **6. Vulnerability and Risk Indicators of CSE**

Adults should be aware that children or young people vulnerable to, and involved in, sexual exploitation, may be unable to comprehend the extent to which they have become involved or are at risk of harm. They can present to agencies or be described as 'streetwise' or as 'problematic' rather than in need of support. The list of vulnerability and risk indicators below are not conclusive, nor should one or more indicator be taken as proof of the risk of sexual exploitation.

The worker should gather as much information as possible to help them to consider all the risks and vulnerabilities for each individual child or young person. The following List of Indicators may be helpful:

## List of Indicators

The following list is not exhaustive but highlights indicators of risk and vulnerabilities associated with sexual exploitation.

<b>Health</b>	<b>Present</b>
Physical injuries such as bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault	Yes / No / Possibly
A sexually transmitted infection, particularly if it is recurring or there are multiple STIs	Yes / No / Possibly
Pregnancy / abortion / miscarriage	Yes / No / Possibly
Sexually risky behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Self-harming	Yes / No / Possibly
Thoughts of or attempted suicide	Yes / No / Possibly
Eating disorder	Yes / No / Possibly
Change in appearance including losing weight, putting on weight	Yes / No / Possibly
Evidence of misuse of drugs/alcohol, including associated health problems	Yes / No / Possibly
Learning disability	Yes / No / Possibly

<b>Behaviour</b>	<b>Present</b>
Sexually offending behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Truancy/disengagement with education, or considerable change in performance at school	Yes / No / Possibly
Volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or abusive language which is unusual for the child	Yes / No / Possibly
Aggressive or violent, including to pets/animals	Yes / No / Possibly
Becoming angry, hostile if any suspicions or concerns about their activities are expressed	Yes / No / Possibly
Physical aggression towards parents, siblings, pets, teachers or peers	Yes / No / Possibly
Detachment from age-appropriate activities	Yes / No / Possibly

Secretive behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Known to be sexually active	Yes / No / Possibly
Low self-image, low self-esteem	Yes / No / Possibly
Young offender or anti-social behaviour	Yes / No / Possibly
Sexualised language	Yes / No / Possibly
Hostility in relationship with parents / carers and other family members	Yes / No / Possibly
Getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting or stealing	Yes / No / Possibly

<b>Family and Social</b>	<b>Present</b>
A family member or known associate working in the adult sex trade	Yes / No / Possibly
Unsure about their sexual orientation, or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their family	Yes / No / Possibly
History of physical, sexual and / or emotional abuse; neglect	Yes / No / Possibly
Witness to or involved in domestic violence at home	Yes / No / Possibly
Parental difficulties; drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems, physical or learning difficulty. Being a young carer	Yes / No / Possibly
Pattern of street homelessness or sofa surfing	Yes / No / Possibly
Living in hostel or B & B accommodation	Yes / No / Possibly
Conflict at home around boundaries, including staying out late	Yes / No / Possibly
Recent bereavement or loss	Yes / No / Possibly
Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships	Yes / No / Possibly
Lacking friends their own age	Yes / No / Possibly
Living in a gang neighbourhood	Yes / No / Possibly

<b>Grooming</b>	<b>Present</b>
Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults	Yes / No / Possibly
Inappropriate use of the Internet and forming relationships, particularly with adults, via the Internet. Note adults may pose as peers to entrap the child	Yes / No / Possibly
Mobile phone being answered by unknown adult	Yes / No / Possibly

<b>Grooming</b>	<b>Present</b>
Accounts of social activities with no plausible explanation of the source of necessary funding	Yes / No / Possibly
Having keys to premises other than those they should have	Yes / No / Possibly
Possession of money with no plausible explanation	Yes / No / Possibly
Acquisition of expensive or sexual clothes, mobile phone or other possession without plausible explanation	Yes / No / Possibly
Having new mobile phone, several mobile phones, especially Blackberry or I phone – (because messages cannot be traced)	Yes / No / Possibly
Always have credit on their mobile phones, despite having no access to money or having no credit so phone can only be used for incoming calls	Yes / No / Possibly
Excessive use of mobile phones including receiving calls late at night	Yes / No / Possibly
Reports that the child / young person has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation	Yes / No / Possibly
Unexplained relationships with older adults	Yes / No / Possibly
Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited, including in school	Yes / No / Possibly
Sexual relationship with a significantly older person	Yes / No / Possibly
Phone call, texts or letters from unknown adults	Yes / No / Possibly
Recruiting others into sexual exploitation	Yes / No / Possibly
Seen at public toilets known for cottaging or adult venues (pubs and clubs)	Yes / No / Possibly
Adults loitering outside the child/young person's usual place of residence or school	Yes / No / Possibly
Leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people)	Yes / No / Possibly
Wearing an unusual amount of clothing (due to hiding more sexualised clothing underneath or hiding their body)	Yes / No / Possibly
Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation	Yes / No / Possibly
Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base	Yes / No / Possibly
Returning after having been missing looking dirty, dishevelled, tired, hungry, thirsty	Yes / No / Possibly
Missing for long periods, with no known home base and/or homeless	Yes / No / Possibly
Possession of excessive numbers of condoms	Yes / No / Possibly
New contacts with people outside of town	Yes / No / Possibly

<b>Looked after children</b>	<b>Present</b>
Living in residential care	Yes / No / Possibly
Frequently missing from placement	Yes / No / Possibly
Multiple Placement breakdown	Yes / No / Possibly
Going missing with other children	Yes / No / Possibly

<b>E-safety</b>	<b>Present</b>
Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through internet or social networking sites	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that inappropriate images of a young person are being circulated via the internet/phones	Yes / No / Possibly
Exchanging inappropriate images for cash, credits or other items	Yes / No / Possibly
Receiving gifts through the post from someone the young person does not know	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that a young person is being coerced to provide sexually explicit images	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that a young person is being bribed by someone because of their inappropriate online activity	Yes / No / Possibly
Concern that a young person is selling sexual services via the Internet	Yes / No / Possibly
Accessing dating agencies via mobile phones (for example - 2 flirt line)	Yes / No / Possibly
Unexplained increased mobile phone / gaming credits	Yes / No / Possibly



## 7. Responding to CSE

### 7.1 Assess the Risk

Staff are expected to use their professional judgement, alongside their knowledge of the vulnerability and risk factors, to assess the risk in relation to a child or young person. The simple risk assessment framework on page 15 provides a useful starting point for all agencies and the usual SHANARRI indicators (Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Responsible, Respected, Included) should also be assessed. Other tools such as those contained in the National Risk Framework or FRAME may also be utilised.

Remember to bear these things in mind about CSE

CSE is a form of sexual abuse and is therefore a child protection issue.

Children and young people are the victims of CSE.

Children and young people cannot 'consent' to their own abuse and exploitation.

All children are at risk of CSE. Some children are more vulnerable than others.

The views of children and young people are relevant, should be ascertained and taken into account. These views require to be balanced with the duty to take positive action to ensure safety and welfare.

Protection should not depend on disclosure. Disclosure of this form of abuse is rare. Young people are often not able to recognise the exploitative situations they are in, and/or may be threatened with violence if they were to disclose.

## What can you do?

Use this risk assessment framework to help you assess the risk of child sexual exploitation.

<b>NO/LOW RISK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ 1 or 2 problems where they live</li><li>○ Mostly attend education</li><li>○ Rarely or never takes drugs/alcohol</li><li>○ Never or very occasionally going missing</li><li>○ Close to &amp; get on well with family/caregivers</li><li>○ Don't have sex/or age appropriate sexual behaviour</li></ul>
<b>MODERATE RISK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Unhappy in home environment</li><li>○ Attend alternative school placement</li><li>○ Sometimes use drugs/alcohol; becoming a problem</li><li>○ Regularly going missing - overnight</li><li>○ Lots of arguments with family/caregivers – but they care for me</li><li>○ Have sex when under influence of drugs/alcohol</li></ul>
<b>HIGH/ VERY HIGH RISK</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ No stable base – c/o friend's house, sleeping rough</li><li>○ Does not regularly attend school</li><li>○ Regularly take drugs alcohol – in risky situations</li><li>○ Frequently going missing for longer periods</li><li>○ Involved with one or a number of abusive relationships</li><li>○ Peers involved in sexual exploitation/associates with risky adults</li></ul>

Adapted from Barnardo's Cymru

## 7.2 What to do next?

This will depend on your role. More agency specific details can be found at **paragraph 10**. However the same general principles apply across all agencies and services.

### What to do next?

Follow your usual child protection procedures:

\* Your response to a disclosure.

- Be calm
- Tell the young person they have done the right thing by talking to you
- Do not make any promises to keep a secret
- Tell them that help is available

\* If you think a young person is a risk of CSE, write down

- What you have seen
- What your concerns are and/or
- What the young person has told you

\* Report your concerns. These people know what to do next

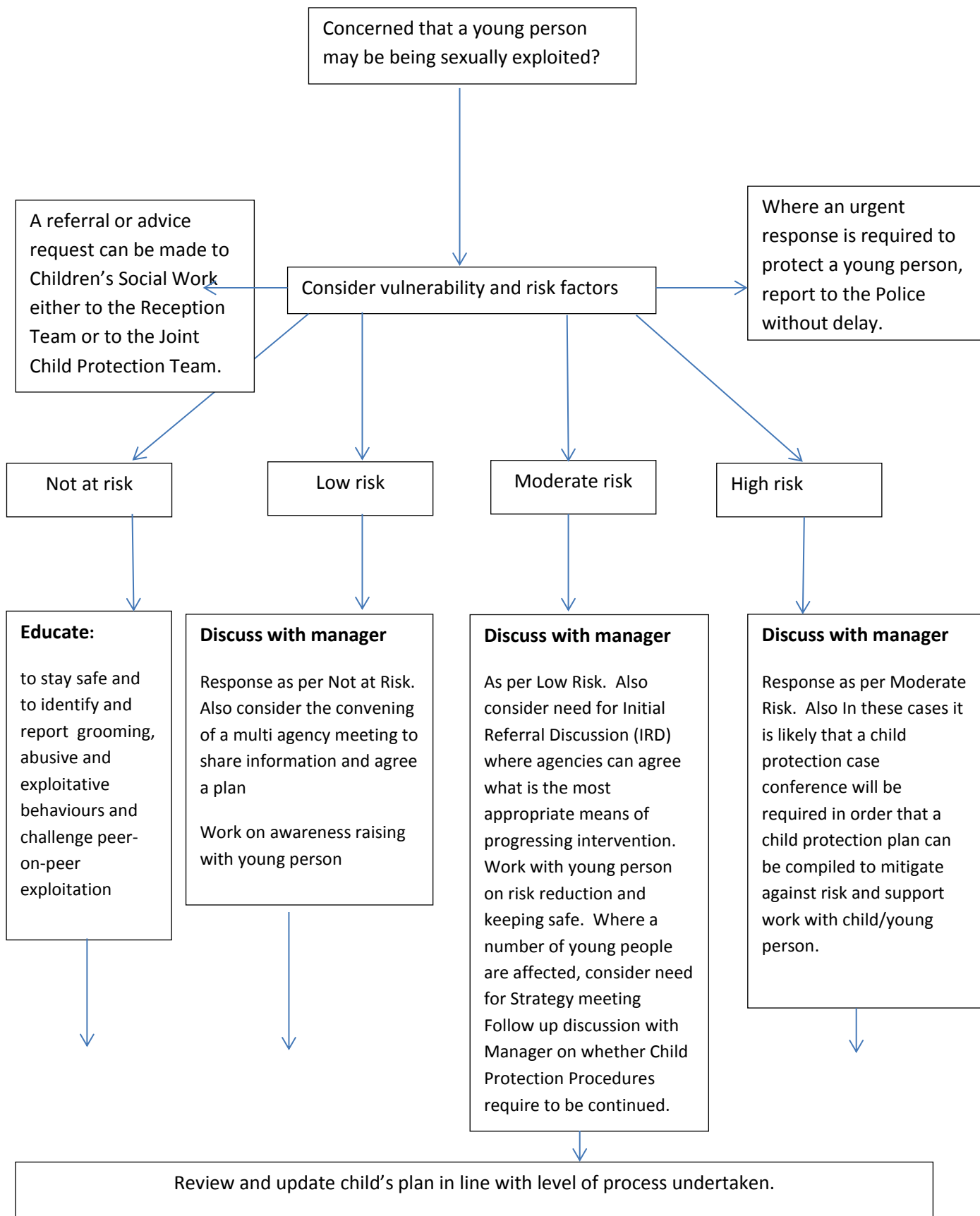
- Your child protection co-ordinator or line manager
- The child's named person (Headteacher or Health Visitor)
- Joint Child Protection Unit 01224 306877
- Emergency Out of Hours Social Work 01224 693936
- Police 101

## **8. Multi-agency Intervention and Planning**

Interventions with individual children and young people should be aimed at addressing specific areas causing concern, beginning with the most risky or dangerous as well as areas identified by the child or young person as those where they are willing to work on making changes. This supports reduction of risks and progresses cases to positive outcomes.

Generally there is a role for a multi-agency meeting to be held where there are concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of CSE. The principles of GIRFEC provide the framework for identifying a child or young person's needs and should help to focus intervention and support required for individual children.

Where there is concern that a child may be at risk of CSE, as with any child abuse allegation, consideration should be given to whether it is appropriate to make a referral to the social work service. Where the concern relates to a child or young person who is already open to the social work service, referrals should be directed to the allocated social worker or Unit. They will liaise with police and other agencies regarding the need for an IRD (Initial Referral Discussion) to inform planning and subsequent action.



## 9. Information Sharing

The key to good multi-agency working is information sharing. Information sharing will be central to any multi-agency meetings, however formatted; successful exchange of information supports both the identification of victims, the development of appropriate responses and the identification of persons who are deemed to pose risk to children.

Within the Scottish Government's National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014) the concept of 'significant harm' is shown to be complex and subject to professional judgement based on a multi-agency assessment of the circumstances of the child and their family. If there are concerns about wellbeing, harm, abuse or neglect, these must be shared with the relevant agencies so that they can decide together whether the harm is, or is likely to be, significant. It is essential that, when considering the presence or likelihood of significant harm, the impact (or potential impact) on the child takes priority and not simply the alleged abusive behaviour.

The terms of the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 provide a wide definition and threshold for information sharing. It states that information ought to be provided if the likely benefit to the wellbeing of the child or young person outweighs any likely adverse effect.

The local Practitioners Guide to Information Sharing Confidentiality and Consent reflects the statutory position. Use this link

<http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/nmsruntime/saveasdialog.asp?IID=60088&SID=25673>

Where there are child care and protection concerns, professionals can and should share information together, coordinated by the named person or lead professional if there is one already identified, in order to ensure coordinated and comprehensive support for the child. Staff should not feel constrained when seeking to share information which ensures we are robust in our responses in protecting children and young people.

We aim to ensure that Aberdeen city is both a hostile environment for potential perpetrators and fundamentally safe for children and young people. Consideration should be given to sharing unsubstantiated intelligence with the Police around possible perpetrators, hot spots or developing trends.

## 10. Notes for single agencies

### 10.1 All agencies

All agencies can engage with parents, carers, community, and young people to look out for and raise awareness of CSE. **All have responsibility to promote our zero tolerance approach to CSE.**

## 10.2 NHS Grampian

Children and young people for whom there are child protection concerns may come to the attention of a wide number of health professionals, including general practitioners, family planning, sexual health, genito-urinary medicine, obstetrics and gynaecology, midwifery, health visiting, school nursing, accident and emergency, child and family psychiatry, child protection services and community child health.

Raising awareness of child protection is a key component of workforce development and is undertaken through a programme of child protection training and education for all staff working with children and families. Specific CSE training is targeted to key staff groups and is available to all relevant NHS employees. A key practice message to professionals working with the child or young person is that they should continue to provide appropriate health interventions to the child and maintain established trusting and respectful relationships where ever possible.

CSE is child abuse and health professionals are expected to refer suspected incidents of CSE to social work and or police for investigation in keeping with national and local child protection guidance. The child or young person will have access to specialist medical examination as required.

The Specialist Child Protection Team is available to advise and assist any health practitioner make a referral.

## 10.3 Education

Education staff can respond in a variety of ways to the issue of children and young people involved in sexual exploitation. Most commonly this would be in terms of Prevention, Recognition, Referral and Post Referral.

- **Prevention:** A long term strategy which would seek to change attitudes and raise awareness. Abuse prevention programmes would go some way in achieving this aim, alongside the issue based work already being done in Personal and Social Development.
- **Providing intelligence**
- **Raising awareness among staff, young people, parents and carers**
- **Recognition:** Daily contact with children and young people allows teachers to recognise concerning behaviour and respond. Every school has a trained Child Protection Officer who provides support/advice to school staff.
- **Referral:** Concerns about a child or young person's involvement in sexual exploitation will be reported to the Designated Child Protection Officer who will follow the Education Department's Child Protection Guidelines. For children who are not open cases to social work, this will involve liaising with Children's Social Work Reception Team or the Joint Child Protection Team, in order to ascertain the best course of action for

the young person involved. For children who are open cases to social work, the allocated worker will most commonly be the Lead professional and concerns should be discussed with the Lead professional. Most children suspected of being involved in Child Sexual Exploitation will be of school age and the Education Department will provide the Named Person service for these children. As Named Person(NP), education staff should be involved in IRDs and other multi agency planning meetings. Arrangements should be made to ensure that the Named Person is represented during school holidays, through attendance of SCSS, who will feedback to school staff.

- Post Referral: Education should remain a priority for children and young people involved in sexual exploitation and education staff should be closely involved with any Child Protection Plan/ Assessment.

#### **10.4 Police Scotland**

Children and young people who are being sexually exploited will be treated as victims and local child protection procedures will be followed. All efforts will be made to identify who is coercing the child/young person into that situation and the circumstances will be fully investigated. Details of the vulnerable child or young person will be recorded on the Vulnerable Persons Database and shared with the named person and/or lead professional.

A full criminal investigation will be conducted in respect of sexual offences committed against any young child, described as under 13 in the Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2009. In respect of older children and young people, a full criminal investigation will be conducted where force, abuse or exploitative behaviour is identified, the perpetrator is in a position of trust or that older child is likely to be at risk of harm. In these circumstances and where sufficiency of evidence exists, the circumstances will always be reported to the Crown Office and Procurator Fiscal Service. The child/young person may be required as a witness and support through the criminal justice process will be considered at all times.

Where intelligence is received about perpetrator activity Police will consider preventative activity and disruption using partner agencies where necessary via the Multi-Agency Operational Group. Police also retain responsibility for monitoring referrals which present via 999 calls, calls to 101 or Crimestoppers as well as for the gathering of intelligence about perpetrators or victims.

All children and young people who have been reported missing will be subject of a return home interview. This will not always be by Police Officers and the most appropriate professional to undertake this process will be identified. Whilst such an interview is voluntary it provides an important opportunity to discuss the activities of the child or young person during their period of absence and assess factors which led them to go missing as well as identifying any further risk of harm. Suggestions

of sexual abuse will be dealt with through Child Protection procedures. Children and young people identified as regularly going missing will be considered by the Divisional Missing Persons Tactical Group and where that child is looked after a joint response will be agreed with the local authority.

## **10.5 Children's Social Work**

The Eligibility Criteria sets out the circumstances in which children and young people may be entitled to a service from Children's Social Work. The Guide to tiered intervention including current eligibility criteria and the five tier model is available at:

<http://www.aberdeengettingitright.org.uk/docs/OperationalGuidance/Staged%20Intervention%20Process.pdf>

Specialist social work services are may be appropriate for children who require support within level 3 (targeted), and will certainly be appropriate for children within level 4 (specialist) or level 5 (acute).

Where the referral relates to a child or young person who is not already open to the social work service, the entry point to the social work service will be within the Intake Services, in the case of CSE being either the Joint Child Protection Team (JCPT), or the Reception Team (RT.)

The threshold for receiving a specialist social work service is consistent across all teams and Units and therefore is the same in both the JCPT and the Reception Team. The remit for the respective teams is divided with the JCPT focusing on referrals where a joint Police/social work response is deemed likely, and the Reception Team on all other cases where child care and protection concerns are indicated. As you might expect, there is fluidity between the two teams and anyone unsure about what team to refer to, should speak with the duty social worker in either team to discuss further. Where a child/family has previously been open to a social work unit or team within the previous 3 months, then in the spirit of offering some consistency for children and their families, the previous case holding unit/team may be best placed to pick up the new referral. A flexible child centred approach will be adopted across children's social work in line with best practice.

Children's Social Work has particular duties and responsibilities in relation to young people who may have been or who may be at risk of sexual exploitation. These include a duty and responsibility:



- To give paramount consideration to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of such children and young people.
- To inquire into the circumstances when information is received suggesting that the child or young person may be at risk of being subject to sexual abuse.
- To properly consider how best to intervene in the life of the child or young person and his or her family.
- To seek the views of the child or young person and take account of these.
- To inform and involve parents/guardians/those caring for children and young people.
- To refer a child or young person to the Reporter if he or she may be in need of compulsory measures of supervision.
- To develop and implement, along with other agencies, a child protection plan for those young people deemed to be at risk of significant harm. This plan to include references to how a sexually exploited young person should be helped to recover from sexual exploitation.
- To recognise that children and young people looked after away from home require advice on sexual health and to work with other agencies towards providing that.

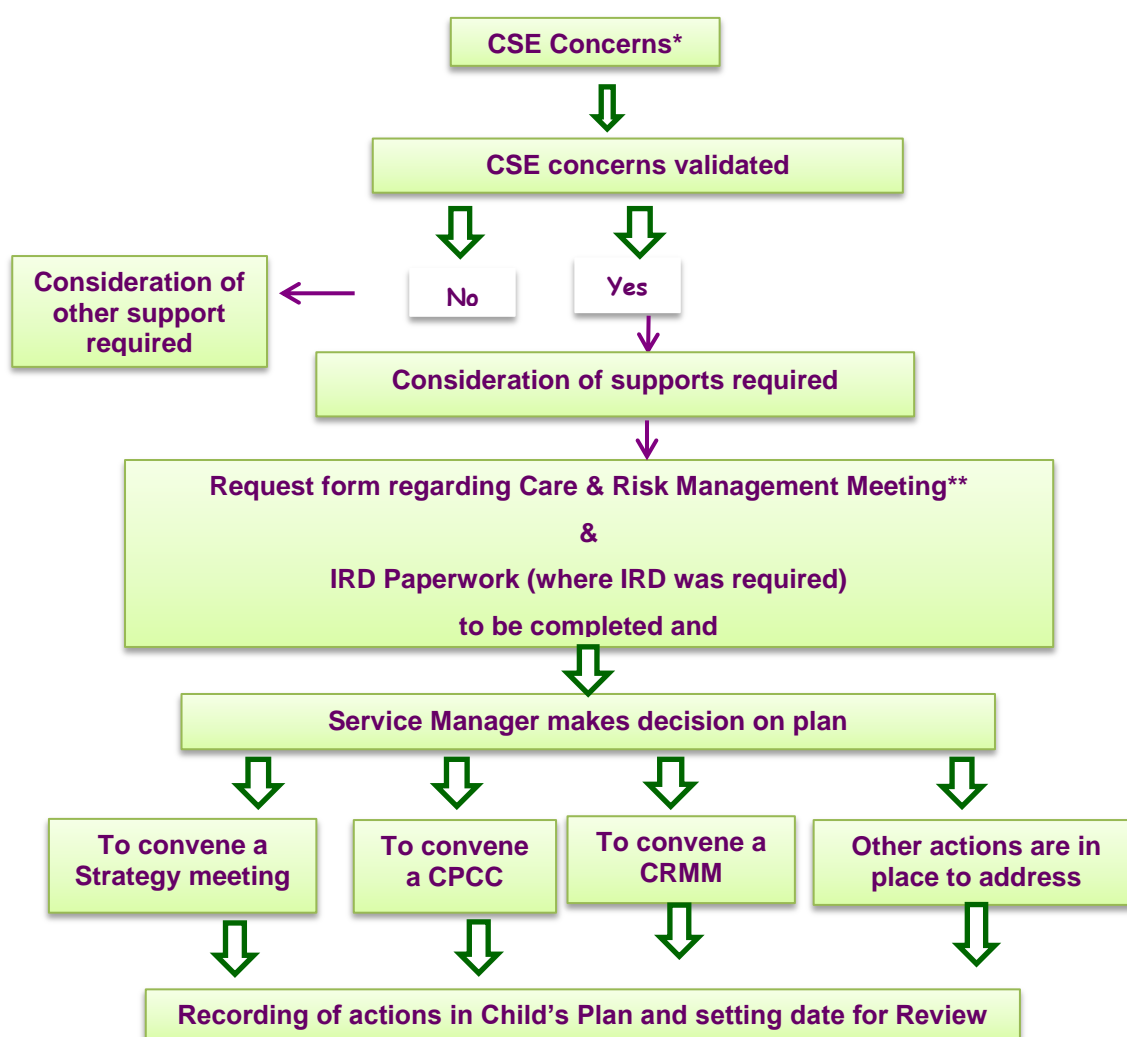
The first priority will be the safety of the child. If assessed to be unsafe, appropriate interventions will be taken immediately. When the safety of the child has been considered and addressed, then a fuller assessment of the child's circumstances and the risks to the child will proceed. Liaison with other agencies will be instigated at an early stage and arrangements will be made for the staff involved to maintain contact with each other throughout the joint investigation. Staff will utilise the tools for working with CSE to progress their assessment. Use the risk assessment tool and list of vulnerabilities

Following the initial inquiry phase of the work, where concerns regarding child sexual exploitation are validated, the involved social worker will follow Children's Social Work's scheme of response to CSE. The flowchart outlined below highlights the stages of the planning process, which culminates in a Children's Services Manager endorsing the action which is felt to be most appropriate and proportionate to safeguard the wellbeing of the child or young person. This is likely to be in the form of a child protection case conference, a care and risk management meeting, or another appropriate multi-agency planning forum. Such meetings will be arranged

to share information, consider the circumstances, establish an intervention plan and to consider whether it is necessary to make a referral to the Reporter.

Where the concerns relate to more than one child, and there is a need to share information and formulate a strategic plan of intervention and response, it may initially be most appropriate for a **strategy meeting** to be convened. Strategy meetings are deemed appropriate where information relating to individual children requires to be explored together in order to understand the potential for risk of harm to any or all of the children or young people. By nature, strategy meetings do not involve the child or their family hence it may be necessary for these to be followed up by another forum such as a care and risk management meeting or a child protection case conference to be held for individual children and their families.

### CHILDREN'S SOCIAL WORK SCHEME OF RESPONSE TO CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION



On a child or young person's return after being missing or having absconded, every effort will be made to talk to the child to ensure that they are physically safe and well and to establish whether any harm has occurred to them during their absence. The medical condition of the child will be discussed immediately and an offer made to arrange medical attention if necessary.

## **10.6 Third Sector**

- The third sector is diverse. The approaches taken will also be diverse. Voluntary and statutory sector agencies are committed to working together within a framework which respects each agency's role and remit and confidentiality policy.
- The voluntary sector has a significant part to play in identifying and working with children and young people who are involved in sexual exploitation. As a result of their lifestyle and past family experiences many children and young people are reticent to engage with statutory services and find voluntary agencies more approachable sources of help. By working in partnership with statutory bodies voluntary agencies are able to offer support and services to reduce the harm to children and young people and in helping protect them from sexual exploitation.

## 11. Zero Tolerance : Our Strategy in Action

We treat CSE seriously. We aim to identify and respond to CSE as fast as we can and to prosecute those responsible. We endeavour to support survivors of CSE through our recovery services. We are all aware of our ongoing obligation to support this ZeroTolerance strategy.

### Recovery Services

- **Green Light Project**
  - [Website](#)
  - Helpline: 01224 594700
- **Children 1<sup>st</sup>**
  - Corrieneuchin service: [website](#) and contact number: 01224 251150
- **Penumbra**
  - [Website](#) and contact number: 01224 621266
- **Barnardo's Connect**
  - [Website](#)
  - Contact number: 01224 624090
- **Women's Aid**
  - [Website](#) and contact number: 01224 593381
- **Rape Crisis Scotland**
  - [Aberdeen website](#) and contact number: 01224 590932
  - Helpline: 01224 591342
- **Sacro**
  - [Aberdeen service website](#) and contact number: 01224 560550

## KEY MATERIALS

### **CSE pages of the Child Protection Committee website**

[http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/social\\_care\\_health/social\\_work/childrens\\_services/child\\_Sexual\\_Exploitation.asp](http://www.aberdeencity.gov.uk/social_care_health/social_work/childrens_services/child_Sexual_Exploitation.asp)

### **Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Practitioner Briefing Paper**

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/10/8235>

### **Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and Summary**

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2016/10/6376>

### **National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation**

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0049/00497283.pdf>

### **Safeguarding Scotland's vulnerable children from child abuse - A review of the Scottish system Children in Scotland 2014**

<http://www.gov.scot/Resource/0046/00463125.pdf>

### **National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland, 2014**

<http://www.gov.scot/Publications/2014/05/3052>

### **Independent inquiry into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham: 1997 – 2013**

<https://library.nspcc.org.uk/HeritageScripts/Hapi.dll/search2?searchterm=Alexis%20Jay&Fields=%40&Media=%23&Bool=AND>

### **Barnardo's Guidance on Child Sexual Exploitation February 2014**

<http://www.cne-siar.gov.uk/childProtectionCommittee/documents/guidance%20on%20child%20sexual%20exploitation.pdf>