



TACKLING CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION TOGETHER

COMMUNICATION STRATEGY

2014-2017

INTRODUCTION

Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) is committed to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) as reflected in its CSE Strategy 2014 – 2017.

CSE is defined nationally in the Statutory Guidance, Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (2009), as the:

‘sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can be via the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability’. Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (2009)

SSCB is pivotal in ensuring all partners work together effectively to achieve the shared key strategic priorities in this area for 2014 – 2017, which are;

- **PREVENT** children becoming victims of CSE through education and awareness raising and assuring local communities that agencies take the issue seriously.
- **PROTECT** children and safeguard them from risk of harm from CSE.
- **PURSUE** the perpetrators of CSE and ensure appropriate multi-agency plans are in place to support victims and to enable them to safely disclose the abuse and provide the evidence to prosecute offenders.
- **PARTNERSHIP** a commitment to work in partnership with all agencies to tackle CSE

These are the same priorities identified within the Northumbria Police CSE Strategy. SSCB has established a multi-agency strategic Sub-Committee responsible for ensuring these strategic priorities are met, monitored and reported upon to the Board. This Sub-Committee has representation from the Safer Sunderland Partnership and the Sunderland Safeguarding Adults Board to ensure resources are used effectively and efficiently to support the 4 priorities.

The CSE Strategy and the SSCB CSE action plan will ensure that there is a clear vision and strong focus shared by all agencies on CSE.

This SSCB Communication Strategy sets out how this will be achieved.

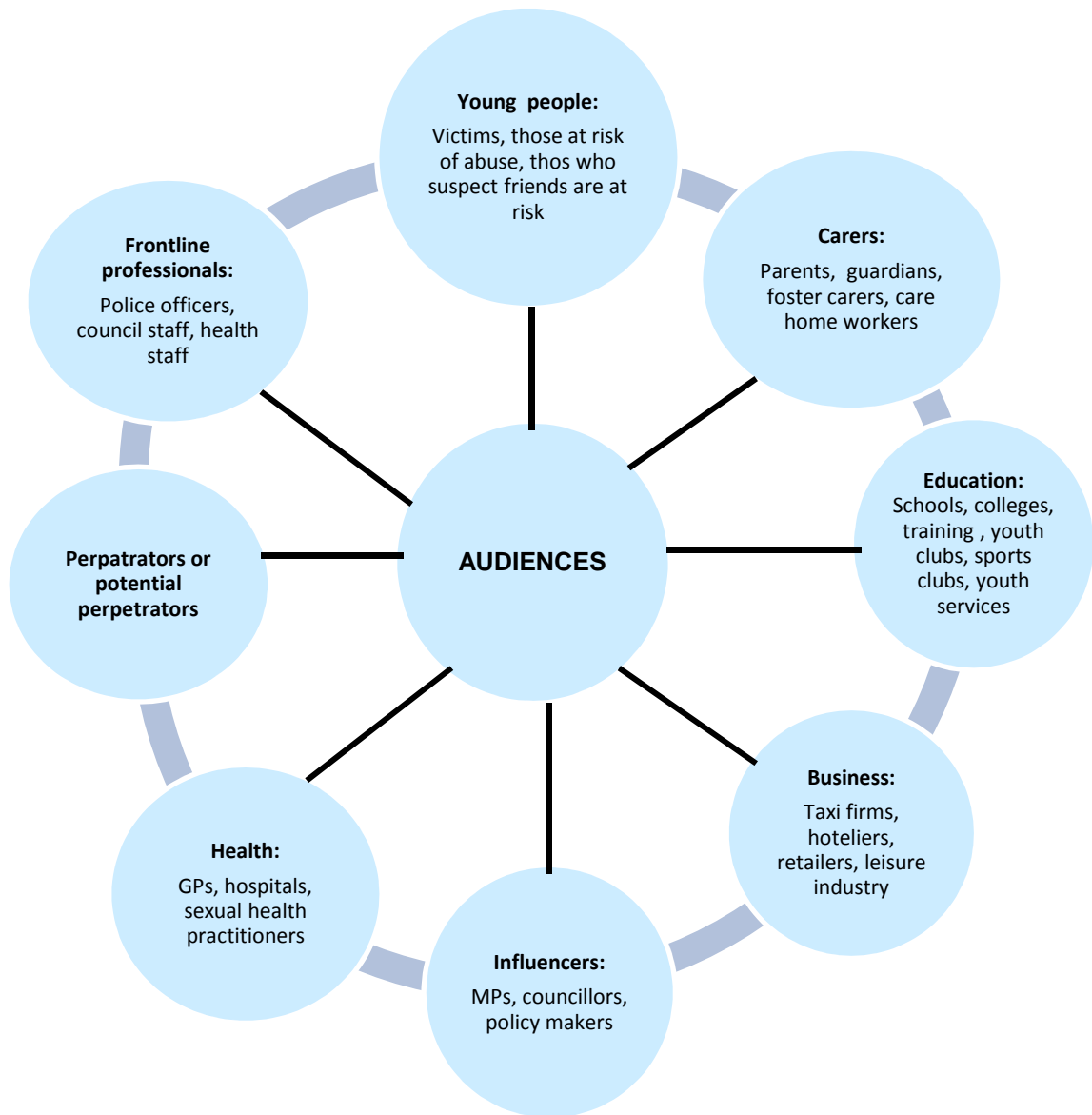
Purpose of this Communications Strategy

Effective communication with the public and professionals regarding the problem of child sexual exploitation is a crucial strand to the SSCB. In particular, a key element of the Board is to raise awareness of the warning signs of child sexual exploitation, how to report concerns and the type of response you can expect to receive. Secondly, SSCB wants businesses to take responsibility for

managing the risk of child sexual exploitation on their premises and report it in accordance with the SSCB Multi-Agency Safeguarding Children Procedures:

<http://sunderlandscb.com>. Most importantly we want to education children and young people about the various ways in which perpetrators operate so that they can make better, more informed decisions in order to protect themselves from being sexually exploited.

TARGET AUDIENCES



COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

The organisations subscribing to this communications strategy will adhere to the following tenets of approach in all their individual and joint communications activity:

- **We WILL be proactive, positive, transparent and, where necessary, robust.**
- **We WILL NOT be defensive.**
- **We WILL challenge inaccurate and/or misleading public comment and media articles/broadcasts.**
- **We WILL have a consistent and co-ordinated approach between partner agencies to all communications activities.**

STAKEHOLDERS

SSCB will ensure ownership of this Strategy across all of its partner members as outlined in the SSCB Constitution. It will also support and inform activity around sexual exploitation by the Safer Sunderland Partnership and the Sunderland Safeguarding Adult Board.

KEY MESSAGES

The following list comprises some generic messages all partners should seek opportunities to disseminate both internally within their own organisations and externally. Because of the broad nature of the issue, which key messages are used is dependent on the context of what type of communication is being done – **it's not intended that all key messages appear in all communication activity.**

- CSE is a national problem, not confined to Sunderland
- CSE is a form of child abuse where the victim is given something - food, money, drugs, alcohol, gifts - in exchange for sexual activity with the perpetrator . Perpetrators target vulnerable young people and use their power - physical, financial, emotional etc. - over the child to sexually abuse them
- Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child 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. This means that they are unlikely to report the abuse so we must all be alert to the signs of CSE and report concerns to the authorities
- CSE 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
- Following high profile CSE cases in recent years, we have all learnt much more about child sexual exploitation. As a society, we have a greater understanding of CSE and a growing intolerance of it
- There is not one type of victim or perpetrator of CSE. CSE can take many forms in many settings. If we look at just one model, such as boyfriend, group or gang CSE,

we risk missing other victims who do not fall into that category. There is also a risk that victims don't recognise their abuse as CSE because it doesn't fit a particular model

- Police and the Crown Prosecution Service can charge perpetrators with rape and other sexual offences as well as abduction, kidnapping and trafficking
- CSE is a priority for the Sunderland Safeguarding Children Board and all key partners are working collectively to tackle CSE in a consistent, joined-up approach.

Young people

- You could be at risk of sexual exploitation – know the signs
- It might seem harmless to get drawn into relationships with older people (even if you class them as your “boyfriend” or “girlfriend”), you may be treated well, have a laugh or get given gifts
- But these gifts are often bribes to gain your trust, and make you feel you have to give something back in return
- That might involve sexual acts. You might not feel you're being forced into it, and think you owe the older person something. In reality – it's sexual exploitation
- You may be pressured into keeping things secret – but there are people out there to help you
- You may not be facing these pressures – but a friend may be. You can get them help.
- If this describes you, or a friend, visit our website for more information about what you can do and where you'll find helpful suggestions on how to keep yourself safe
- It's not your fault that this has happened to you. Perpetrators are very clever in the way they manipulate young people
- It's your body. You have the right to say 'no' to sex whatever the circumstances.

Carers

- Young people can sometimes be drawn into sexual exploitation, which means they may be rewarded for performing sex acts
- Perpetrators who do this are skilled at “grooming” young people. They could offer drugs or alcohol, and then draw them into a sexual relationship
- It could be that you have identified the risks before any damage has been done. We can provide support and help for you and your child to avoid dangerous, controlling and coercive relationships
- There is help out there – agencies including the police, NHS and your local council are committed to combating this form of child abuse, and help you
- Visit our website for more information and to recognise the signs <http://sunderlandscb.com>
- Try to maintain good relations with your child. A perpetrator will try to isolate your child from their usual support network
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their day to day experiences. Talk through strategies to help them protect themselves if they find themselves in difficult situations.

Education

- Look for the indicators that young people are being drawn into abusive relationships – questions to consider are: are they missing school, are they regularly tired, are they receiving gifts that are not accounted for, do they lack self-esteem, are they using drugs or alcohol, are they known to be hanging around with older adults?
- Gathering information and intelligence to assist police can disrupt these perpetrators and help the child and others
- If you think there are signs that a young person you work with is at risk, visit the SSCB website for help and advice
- Educate your pupils about healthy relationships.

Perpetrators/Potential Perpetrators

- If you are involved in child sexual exploitation you will be caught
- CSE is child abuse and you could be looking at a sentence of up to 14 years imprisonment and to go on the sex offenders register
- Age does not matter. Sexual intercourse with a child under the age of 16 is against the law.

Licensed Premises and Services

- Under the Licensing Act 2003 your premises licence may be at risk if you do not take action to protect children
- Under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 license holders and delegated managers have a legal responsibility to make sure those under 18 are protected from 'physical, psychological and moral harm'
- If you can demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to manage the risk (i.e. you have shown due diligence) then this could protect your business
- Information is contained on the website about what to do if you have concerns about a child or young person.

Professionals

- Be aware of what CSE is, how it can affect boys as well as girls and what the warning signs are
- Ensure you know who the child protection/safeguarding lead in your agency is and be aware of the procedure to follow if you have concerns about a young person
- Stay alert to changes in behaviour of young people or any physical signs of abuse. Be professionally curious and investigate further
- Think about ways that you might be able to better support and help young people to share information if they are worried about their own or another young person's situation.

COMMUNICATION METHODS

To deliver the aims of this communications strategy, a suite of tactics will be used by partner organisations. The tactics have been developed by SSCB.

The following methods will be used:

- Update the SSCB website to ensure provision of information and support to children, young people, carers and professionals
- Creation of marketing materials, both generic and adaptable
- Social media
- Targeted public relations
- Criminal convictions.

A campaign will be launched in February 2015 to deliver key messages and publicise the website.

INTERNAL

All stakeholders should ensure that frontline staff are aware of the issue of child sexual exploitation.

A range of communications methods should be employed including briefing to staff through the internal channels available. This could include intranet messages, articles in newsletters, verbal briefings in team meetings and targeted messages to specific units.

LSCB trainers should have information about the campaign so they can incorporate into any training and awareness-raising sessions they run.

As some frontline staff do not have regular access to the SSCB website, targeted posters will also be designed to be put in staff areas in police stations, council buildings, schools etc.

CRIMINAL INQUIRIES

In collaboration with Northumbria Police, positive media coverage to highlight the work being done to protect the public from known perpetrators will be arranged.

As well as promoting these prevention and protection messages and methods, Northumbria Police will aim to maximise 'pursue and prosecute' publicity surrounding the action taken against those investigated, prosecuted and convicted of CSE related offences in order to demonstrate the firm and positive action being taken against perpetrators.

Northumbria Police will take responsibility for proactive communications activity to publicise criminal investigations and successful prosecutions.

The force will also seek appropriate opportunities to maximise publicity surrounding the recall to prison of those CSE related perpetrators who breach the conditions of their licence.

In the context of criminal investigations and prosecutions, the Police Communications Team will ensure they maintain a current and shared knowledge of all CSE investigations with the appropriate partner agencies such as the CPS, with the Strategic Lead within Northumbria Police providing regular updates to the SSCB appropriately. SSCB, via its sub-committee functions will use a range of communications devices to engage media interest/coverage, including, where appropriate:

- Pre-trial Briefings
- Background interviews
- Features and statements on websites and via social media
- Post plea/guilty conviction media interviews and statements by prosecuting authorities and partners (where appropriate).

The communications officers for those other partner agencies directly or indirectly involved in specific criminal enquiries will be alerted to their association in the case and will be guided with their own communications messaging where appropriate.

Northumbria Police will announce all arrests relating to CSE operational activity upon arrest, unless there is a good reason not to. Each press release will be circulated to all partner agencies for update purposes, and there will be an agreed statement attached to each press release that emphasizes partnership approach to deal with CSE.

Appendix 1: The Communication Plan The aim of this plan is to run an awareness campaign aimed at the target audiences and using the key messages listed in this strategy. The plan is as follows:

WHAT	WHY	DATE	COST
Review the SSCB website	Directing people to the website will be the main call to action on all communication activities. It will contain relevant information for young people, carers and professionals		
Bus advertising	If used during the summer, young people are likely to see ads on bus shelters		
Billboards	Where there is billboard availability and space within each local authority area this can be a cost-effective way of getting the message out		
Posters toolkit	Create a suite of materials for local authorities for local information to be included		
Leaflet toolkit			
Social media platforms	Use social media influencers to get messages out		
Industry materials	For hotels, retail and taxis building on the work already done elsewhere		
Radio campaign	Radio can be used effectively to target parents and carers. Partnership would include ads, web coverage and editorial coverage		
PR campaign	Runs side by side with marketing materials. Develop local and regional stories to generate media interest in the campaign		