LSCB Business Plan Priority 1: Reduce the harm from child sexual exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-2017
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SAFE Children, SUPPORTED Families, TRANSFORMED Lives

1.1 Reducing the harm from child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a priority for the North Lincolnshire Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB). Child Sexual Exploitation is a devastating form of abuse that can affect children, young people and their families. The report by the office of the Children’s Commissioner "If only someone had listened" describes young people affected by CSE as ‘silent victims’, who slip through the net because of a lack of understanding and recognition of this type of abuse.

1.2 The Office of Children’s Commissioner’s inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups interim report (November 2012) highlighted the fact that any child or young person may be at risk of sexual exploitation, regardless of their gender, family background or other circumstances. Sexual exploitation of children and young people under the age of eighteen involves, power, control, coercion, and intimidation, and may result in children and young people suffering significant damage to their physical and mental health. It can also have far reaching and damaging consequences for families; parents, carers and siblings who often feel powerless and traumatised, and may feel angry, scared, confused, whilst also suffering threats of, or experience of abuse and assault from individuals or groups who sexually exploit.

1.3 When referring to Child Sexual exploitation the LSCB has adopted the following definition:

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 occur through 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.

1.4 Sexual exploitation of children and young people is child abuse and tackling child sexual exploitation is one of the most important current challenges for the LSCB. It is the responsibility of all partner agencies to identify all children and young people at risk of exploitation, in order to prevent them from becoming victims, and it is the responsibility of all partner agencies to protect and safeguard all children and young people who are experiencing exploitation from further harm. In order to meet this challenge, a shared understanding of the problem and a shared responsibility to proactively address all areas of sexual exploitation is required. This will be achieved by efficient working partnerships between agencies with active coordination by the LSCB, in recognition that the most effective way to tackle this form of child abuse is via a committed coordinated multi-agency approach, in partnership with children, young people, families and communities.
1.5 In doing so partner agencies should focus on the child’s needs and recognise the fact that children are not always aware, recognise or acknowledge that they may be in an exploitative or abusive situation. Whilst also incorporating a needs led, child and family centred approach; a focused approach towards prevention, early identification and intervention and proactively targeting, disrupting and prosecuting individuals or groups who seek to exploit children.

1.6 Children and young people describe how difficult it is for them to talk about what has/is happening to them because they do not understand CSE as abuse. They may believe that the perpetrator loved them and they may not know how to talk about the abuse or they may feel fearful of the repercussion. They may also feel ashamed about their abuse, which prevents them from talking about it. Research and information from children and young people whom we have consulted with locally tell us that trust is very important to them and this is something professionals must cultivate. We are committed to listening to and responding to children and young people recognizing they need help even when they do not have the words to tell us about what is happening to them but their behavior indicates that they need help and support.

1.7 There are strong links between children being at risk of sexual exploitation and other behaviours, in particular missing from home or care. Significant evidence highlights that children and young people who go missing from home or care are at increased risk of being at risk of, or experiencing sexual exploitation. It is therefore essential that all partner agencies act rigorously to reduce incidents of children/young people going missing. In addition, robust efforts to locate a child or young person if known to be missing is required, and once located, agencies must ensure that they have processes in place to assess why a child/young person went missing, what they experienced whilst missing and how any future risk of that child/young person going missing could be reduced.

1.8 There is also a recognised shared responsibility to engage with communities; to inform them about sexual exploitation and agency responsibilities to protect children, whilst also providing reassurance regarding the intention to effectively tackle sexual exploitation, including the targeting, disruption and prosecution of individuals and groups whose intention it is to exploit children.

1.9 Current statutory guidance Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation 2009, sets out key principles which inform effective practice in working with children and young people who are at risk or are suffering sexual exploitation:

- A child centred approach. Action should be focused on child’s needs, including consideration of children with particular needs or sensitivities, and that children and young people do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative and/or abusive situation
- Taking a proactive approach focused on prevention, early identification and intervention as well as disrupting activity and prosecuting perpetrators.
- Parenting, family life and services. Taking account of family circumstances in deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- The rights of children and young people. Children and young people are entitled to be safeguarded from sexual exploitation, just as agencies have duties in respect of safeguarding and promoting their welfare.
- Responsibility for criminal acts. Sexual exploitation of children and young people should not be regarded as criminal behaviour on the part of the child or young person, but as child sexual abuse.
- An integrated approach. Working Together (2015) sets out the requirement for agencies to work effectively to meet the needs of children who may benefit from early help services, to share information with other professionals to support early identification and assessment, to identify the triggers for abuse and neglect and to make a referral were they have concerns about a child’s welfare. Sexual exploitation requires a multi pronged approach tackling prevention, protection and prosecution.
- A shared responsibility. The need for effective joint working between different agencies and professionals, underpinned by a strong commitment from managers, a shared understanding of the problem and effective coordination by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
2 Our Strategy

2.1 This strategy supports the strategic priority set within the Children and Young People’s Plan: *Children and Young People Feel Safe and Are Safe* — so that North Lincolnshire is a place where every child and young person feels safe and is safe wherever they are and whatever they do.

2.2 North Lincolnshire’s strategy for tackling CSE sits under the auspices of the LSCB and is jointly owned by the Safer Neighbourhoods Board. The accountability framework for the strategy group can be seen in Appendix 1.

2.3 One of the priorities of North Lincolnshire LSCB’s business plan 2015-17 is to reduce the harm from Child Sexual Exploitation. To do this, the LSCB will:

- Implement the CSE Strategy and action plan
- Evaluate quality of assessments, plans, review and impact

2.4 The LSCB will know if it is making a difference if:

- The children subject to Multi Agency Child Exploitation show reduced levels of risk
- Offenders discussed at Multi Agency Child Exploitation are disrupted and prosecuted
- Children and Young People say they know how to and have access to help and protection

2.5 The LSCB has a key role in leading, coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of the work of its members in respect of tackling CSE. The requirements and functions of the Board are:

- Ensuring that the needs of children and young people who have been or who may be sexually exploited and their families, have been considered in the planning and commissioning of local services and that this form of abuse is addressed in the Board’s operational planning and reporting mechanisms as necessary in the Children and Young People’s Plan.
- Ensure that there are specific policies in place covering the sexual exploitation of children and young people, that sets out respective roles and responsibilities of all agencies and professionals and reflect the strong association between sexual exploitation, running away from home, child trafficking and substance misuse.
- To continually assess the level of CSE, grooming mechanisms, routes into sexual exploitation taking place in the area, so that intervention approaches can take into account new knowledge as the models of exploitation change over time.
- Ensure that there is training in place to enable professionals to identify the warning signs of and vulnerability to sexual exploitation.
- Communicate and raise awareness of CSE, offering guidance for the community that identifies sources of help for victims, how and where to report concerns about victims or offenders
- Monitor and evaluate case work as part of the learning and improvement framework for the Board
- Establish a CSE strategic group to lead and monitor the effectiveness of our local approach to tackling CSE
- Identify key CSE leads in the area that offer a source of guidance and advice for professionals
- Cooperate with neighbouring authorities where there are believed to be links in respect of CSE.

2.6 The four components of this strategy are:

A. Prevention
B. Protection
C. Prosecution
D. Recovery
A. Prevention
We believe that tackling child sexual exploitation starts from a preventative level:
• Children and young people should be taught about healthy relationships
• Be supported regarding their emotional development and building of positive self esteem
• Be informed about what their rights are as individuals and citizens
• Be informed about how to keep themselves safe in various social situations including online
• Know what abuse is, know how to recognise it and where to get help.

We are going to achieve this by:
• Engaging with schools and other venues where children and young people go, to promote positive views of children and young people and demystify some of the gender stereotypes that permeate the media and can perpetuate negative self beliefs.
• Raising awareness with parents and carers. We know from research at a national and local level, that parents feel it is very important that their children are taught about healthy relationships, keeping themselves safe on line and sex and relationships. Parents are often the first to know when something is wrong, they may not think ‘child sexual exploitation’ but they recognise the changes in their son/daughter’s appearance and behaviour, know something is wrong and they need to know what they can do when they are worried that their child is at risk from CSE.

B. Protection
A key finding from the OCC final report (2013) was the importance of engaging with young people and agencies and services overcoming the barriers to effective engagement with children and young people. Effective intervention requires agencies to ensure that as well as intervening early with children and young people who may be affected by CSE, services are in place to support those children who are at risk or have been identified as suffering CSE. An important strand of the strategy is ensuring that there is a matrix of support in place for children and young people and that decisive, effective intervention is in place for those children who are in need, or in need of protection.

We are going to achieve this by:
• Ensuring that staff are appropriately trained and skilled to work with children and young people. We want to ensure that tailored support is available and that services involved with children and young people demonstrate persistence, commitment and patience to support building trusting relationships where young people can feel safe to talk about issues. Professionals need to be able to recognise the diverse entry routes into CSE and the ‘models’ applied, so that services can offer as much diversity in how they recognise and respond to children and young people who they come into contact with, who are affected by CSE. Multi agency co operation, and ensuring that organisational roles and boundaries do not limit support to children and young people is a key element of the strategy.
• Enhancing the framework of support around children and young people affected by CSE at the time when they will feel isolated and alone, by developing peer support networks. The organisation Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE) emphasises the importance of partnership working with parents whose children are being affected by CSE and building support networks for parents and carers is an important part of what we want to achieve.

She (social worker) stuck with her, even when she was being rude and dismissive, she turned up with a positive attitude - that made a big difference.

She was just getting worse and worse and I thought; something isn’t right here.

Learning from national research and serious case reviews, highlights the importance of ensuring that professionals across all agencies that work with children, young people and their families know how to recognise the signs of possible child sexual exploitation, so that they can intervene early. Statutory guidance sets out clearly the responsibilities everyone has to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Effective safeguarding needs multi agency commitment and partnership working. Research demonstrates the importance of professionals recognising the ways in which children and young people can demonstrate their distress even when they are not articulating it, this means looking beyond presenting behaviours and recognising the associated problems with CSE in order to be proactive in assessing and intervening with them.
For a parent that’s going through it, everyday is like a nightmare.

- Building knowledge of CSE in the community and what the community can do to protect and support children and young people. The community can provide essential information to statutory agencies such as the police, when there are concerns or suspicions about an individual’s activity that could indicate they are grooming/exploiting a child/young person.

- Ensuring that for those young people who have suffered this type of abuse, specialist support is available for them to help them rebuild their lives. We recognise that this can take time and services need to ensure that they work at the child/young person’s pace.

C. Prosecution

Cooperation and information sharing are fundamental components of effective interagency work in respect of CSE, this includes cooperation with other authorities, recognising that children and young people can be trafficked across to other authorities.

We are going to achieve this by:

- Ensuring we work in partnership with neighbouring authorities to share and maximise resources to tackle CSE.

- Cooperating and working across authority boundaries to bring individuals who are abusing children to justice.

- Working with other organisations who can intervene statutorily with individuals and establishments where children are being exploited to disrupt activity and networks.

- Ensuring we gather and use information intelligently to ensure that our strategic and operational approaches are responsive and effective.

D. Recovery

Victims of child sexual exploitation can experience severe consequences on their physical and mental health. All children interviewed as part of the CSEGG Inquiry reported experiencing physical violence. 48% of them had injuries that required visits to A&E. In addition, 41% had drug and alcohol problems as a result of sexual exploitation and 39% identified a negative impact on their sexual health. Professionals in the CSEGG Inquiry reported concerns regarding pregnancy, miscarriages, terminations, sexually transmitted infections.

There is reliable evidence that being a victim of sexual violence or abuse is a risk factor for the development of mental health problems and disorders. Studies have demonstrated that prior to treatment 73% of sexual abuse victims suffered Post Traumatic Stress Disorder, 57% suffered major depression, 37% suffered generalised anxiety disorder. In the CSEGG report identified that 85% of sexually exploited children who were interviewed had either self harmed or attempted suicide as a result of sexual exploitation.

There is good information from the NSPCC on the need for therapeutic services for sexually abused/exploited children. Locally we have in place services that can support recovery from child sexual abuse which include drugs services, CAMHS, Action4Children, sexual health services, child witness service, social work services, family support services.

We are going to achieve this by:

- Ensuring that through review and commissioning we will continue to ensure that services can offer evidence based support to aid recovery from child sexual exploitation.

2.7 The LSCB has taken a number of actions to support the translation of this strategy into action:

- In 2014 the LSCB undertook a comprehensive evaluation of the local strategic and operational work done in respect of tackling CSE. This evaluation outlined the key achievements made locally and the ongoing areas of priority. These areas have been incorporated into this strategy.

- In 2014 the People Scrutiny Panel considered the work undertaken in respect of tackling CSE. The report outlines the progress made in respect of tackling CSE, but also identifies further areas of action and makes recommendations for the LSCB and agencies to respond to and report progress against. These recommendations have been incorporated into this strategy and will be managed and overseen by the CSE Strategic Group.

- As part of the LSCB’s statutory function to monitor and oversee work to safeguard children and young people the LSCB will keep the implementation of this strategy and action plan under review. The LSCB Child Exploitation Strategic Group, will monitor the effectiveness of interagency work in respect of safeguarding children and young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation or who have suffered harm as a result of this type of abuse. The CSE operational group will continue to develop local practice and approaches in respect of tackling child sexual exploitation. The weekly operational meetings will gather and use intelligence to intervene with children and young people and take action against alleged perpetrators.
• All agencies have a responsibility to audit their practice and ensure the effectiveness of their arrangements in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in respect of tackling CSE. The LSCB will monitor compliance through section 11 challenge events, LSCB audits, performance management information and most importantly talking to children and young people about their experiences with services.

2.8 The progress of this strategy will be reported to the LSCB every 3 months by the chair of the CSE Strategic Group.

2.9 The Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group will work on behalf of the LSCB and function under the direction of the governmental supplementary guidance ‘Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation’ (2009) which is supplementary to Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015. The group also takes into account other associated national reports in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation.

2.10 The CSE Strategy Group leads on the strategic direction for identifying, responding to and tackling the issue of sexual exploitation, to drive work forward and ensure effective cooperation between agencies and professionals.

2.11 It is responsible for the effective strategic leadership of the multi-agency response to CSE that identifies prevalence, trends, themes, patterns and secures improved outcomes for children and young people.

2.12 It is tasked with developing and ensuring the implementation of the strategy, action plan, policy and procedures relating to sexual exploitation.

2.13 In all its work, the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group will acknowledge and consider the association between different forms of sexual exploitation; running away from home; child trafficking; substance misuse; e-safety and anti-bullying.

2.14 The group also takes the responsibility for implementing the recommendations for LSCB’s from the Ofsted thematic review into CSE which are:

• ensure that the local authority and its partners have a comprehensive action plan in place to tackle child sexual exploitation

• hold partners to account for the urgency and priority they give to their collective and individual contribution to the child sexual exploitation action plan

• critically evaluate how effective the activity and progress of each of the LSCB members is against the action plan and publish these findings in the LSCB annual report

• ensure that partners evaluate and ensure that they have sufficient resources to manage CSE, missing, child trafficking and the links to Harmful Sexual Behaviour, MAPPA and other abuse.

• ensure that an appropriate level of child sexual exploitation training is available to all professionals in the local area who require it; specialist training should be targeted on those working with children and young people at risk of or suffering from child sexual exploitation; attendance for both should be monitored with follow-up action taken where professionals fail to attend

• evaluate the impact of training with a focus on how it makes a positive difference to keeping children and young people safer

• include information relating to child sexual exploitation activity in their performance framework - this should enable a clear understanding of how prevalent child sexual exploitation is in their area and how effectively agencies are responding.

• analyse trends and profiles to inform practice development.

2.15 The strategy will be subject to an annual review.
Appendix 1

Accountability Framework for CSE

Tackling CSE in North Lincolnshire
North Lincolnshire has a Strategy for tackling CSE, the Strategy sits under the auspice of the LSCB and is jointly owned by the Safer Neighbourhoods Board. This supplementary guidance describes the accountability framework of the strategy group, referred to as the: Accountability Framework - Strategy, shown in diagram 1. The strategy and action plan sets out how we are going to tackle CSE at a population level.

In addition to this strategy children and young people who are at risk of or experiencing CSE WILL be managed through the established Early Help, Child in Need and Child in Need of Protection system governed by Working Together 2015, this identification and statutory framework will be enhanced by the MACE process – this is referred to as the Accountability Framework – Case Specific, shown in diagram 2.

All agencies have a statutory role to: use the statutory framework as described in Working Together 2015 and within North Lincolnshire LSCB procedures to identify, assess, offer early help and make a referral to social work services if they believe a child is in need and or in need of protection. This is further described within the Early Help Strategy and threshold document – if a child is at risk of or suffered harm refer to social work services and or the police in an emergency.

The introduction of the MACE supports and adds value to the above process and provides oversight by gaining a collective understanding in terms of children at risk and perpetrators, it does not detract from the need to follow Working Together 2015 and compliments this process and the Complex Child Abuse arrangements.

Local Profiles, trends, resource and performance data from the MACE – case specific accountability framework will be reported to the Strategy Group to shape and influence strategy development.

Groups, core attendance and brief TOR.

Strategic & Case Specific
Chief Officer Group (GOLD group)– Chief Constable/Local Authority CX/ Director for Children (People)/LSCB Chair/Identified Partners – Both Accountable & Case Specific (meets annually or as required to receive an overview and recommendations for commissioning, policy change and or allocation of resources. It can be called to review and prioritise and resource specific activity with regard both case specific and strategy).

Strategy
Lead Officer Group – Designated Agency Lead Officers on behalf of NL LSCB Partners – Accountable for the CSE Strategy and delivery of the action plan on behalf of the LSCB (meets bi-monthly).

Operational Reference Group – operational managers and lead practitioners – Accountable to CSE Strategy group, shares best practice, provides operational overview of practice, training, workforce, links with other thematic groups and can recommend developments to the Strategic Group (meets bi-monthly).

Case Specific
Senior Officer Group – Lead Investigation Officer’s/Superintendent/Assistant Directors/Identified Partners – to ascertain whether there are sufficient resources and policy direction to enable the operational lead investigators to undertake the necessary work to protect children at risk, victims and prosecute offenders. Responsible for recommending action across agencies to maximise the impact of work relating to complex cases. – Accountable to Chief Officer Group (as required) Complex Cases – are cases that cannot be managed within the scope of current procedures and resources and or involve multiple victims and or offenders and are such that they require higher level decisions in relation to the case(s).

MACE Risk Management (bronze) – Case Managers/Service Managers Children Services/Polic CSE and PVP officers/Education Officers/Health Workers-Safeguarding Leads share information and risk analysis on identified cases to identify connectivity, themes and trends to enable the group to identify further action that could be undertaken. This should not replace the role of the case conference or core group process and procedure, it can add value and make recommendation for consideration and if urgent – Accountable to Senior Officers and will escalate issues to Senior Officers as relevant.
Operational Management Group – Lead managers across agencies – Linked to the Senior Officer Group/Lead Officer group as required (meets monthly).

Missing Tracking Group – case specific named professionals/lead managers – Accountable to operational Management Group (meets monthly).

Harmful Sexual Behaviour – case specific. Agencies are working together to provide a specialist service to children and young people who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviour (HSB). The service consists of a ‘virtual team’ of multi-agency practitioners who have been trained in the issues surrounding HSB, and in specialist assessment, using the AIMS methodology – Accountable to the LSCB (The Panel meets every month at minimum).
Diagram 1
CSE – North Lincolnshire Accountability Framework/Strategy

- **CSE Chief Officer Group**
  - Annually – As required, Chair Simon Driver CX NLC
  - Annual Report

- **Cabinet/Scrutiny Committee**
  - Annual Report

- **Local Safeguarding Children Board**
  - Independent Chair Edwina Harrison

- **Safer Neighbourhood Board**
  - Annual Report

- **CSE Lead Officer Group**
  - Bi-monthly, Chair CSE for Local Authority

- **Safeguarding Operational Managers Group**
  - Monthly, Chair Nikki Alcock, Independent Review Manager
  - Work from the Missing, Child Trafficking and Prevent will feed into this framework as appropriate.
Diagram 2
CSE – North Lincolnshire Accountability Framework - Case Specific

CSE Chief Officer Group
(Annually – As required, Chair Simon Driver CX NLC)

CSE Senior Officer Group
(Monthly – As required, Chair Police Superintendent/Assistant Director Children Services)

BRONZE MACE
CSE Risk Management
Monthly, Chair Detective Sergeant

Case specific - Early Help/CIN/CP/LAC Working Together 2015 Compliant

Missing Operational & Tracking Groups, Child Trafficking/HSB/FGM Monthly

S.P.O.C Box – soft intel Risk Management
The following offers guidance on the use of the risk analysis tools, none of these should detract from working within the statutory framework specified in Working Together 2015 and the LSCB procedures. The tools include:

- Warning Signs & Vulnerabilities Checklist (WS&V)
- Risk Analysis Framework
- MACE Risk Assessment

The tools should be used to enhance and complement the Working Together 2015 and LSCB procedures and should be used by practitioners and managers employing evidenced based interventions and practice wisdom but not as a tick box.

Risk in relation to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in North Lincolnshire is identified, assessed/analysed and managed at varying levels dependent upon the individual context of each case:

- Identification & emerging needs - vulnerability factors in relation to CSE (Warning Signs and Vulnerabilities checklist)
- Indicators of possible Sexual Exploitation
- Assessment and use of Risk Analysis Framework (RAF), including consideration of the vulnerabilities, signs or behaviours from the WS & V checklist and the indicators of possible Sexual Exploitation; which are set under the assessment framework (supplementary guidance) are considered in the RAF. This can be within an Early Help Assessment or a Children Services Assessment.
- Multi agency management oversight of CSE through the MACE risk assessment and management meetings.

Identifying Emerging Needs and Vulnerabilities:

The CSE Warning Signs and Vulnerabilities checklist and the indicators of possible Sexual Exploitation should be used to identify children who are or at risk of experiencing CSE.

If a professional has information that indicates a child is possibly or at risk of CSE then the CSE Warning Signs and Vulnerabilities checklist should be considered to inform what needs to happen next. The checklist is to assist professionals in having regard to these signs and behaviours.

The WS&V checklist covers the following areas (which are typical vulnerabilities in children prior to abuse):

- Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household (including parental substance use, domestic violence, parental mental health issues, parental criminality).
- History of abuse (including familial child sexual abuse, risk of forced marriage, risk of ‘honour’-based violence, physical and emotional abuse and neglect).
- Recent bereavement or loss.
- Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships (in cases of gang associated CSE only).
- Attending school with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Learning disabilities.
- Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families.
- Friends with young people who are sexually exploited.
- Homeless.
- Lacking friends from the same age group.
- Living in a gang neighbourhood.
- Living in residential care.
- Living in hostel, bed and breakfast accommodation or a foyer.
- Low self-esteem or self-confidence.
- Young carer.
The following signs and behaviour are generally seen in children who are already being sexually exploited:

- Missing from home or care.
- Physical injuries.
- Drug or alcohol misuse.
- Involvement in offending.
- Repeat sexually-transmitted infections, pregnancy and terminations.
- Absent from school.
- Change in physical appearance.
- Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites.
- Estranged from their family.
- Receipt of gifts from unknown sources.
- Recruiting others into exploitative situations.
- Poor mental health.
- Self-harm.
- Thoughts of or attempts at suicide.

Evidence shows that any child displaying several vulnerabilities from the above lists should be considered to be at high risk of sexual exploitation. Professionals should immediately start to gather further information from those involved with the child and determine the level of vulnerability or risk, along with providing the preventative services required.

If the child is at risk of or experiencing CSE a referral should be made to Children’s Social Work Services or the Police if the child is in immediate danger.

It is important to note that children without pre-existing vulnerabilities can still be sexually exploited. Therefore, any child showing risk indicators in the second list, but none of the vulnerabilities in the first, should also be considered as a potential victim, with appropriate assessment and action put in place as required.

Having considered the checklist and if the child is not believed to be at risk of CSE there may still be other needs that could be responded to by completing an Early Help Assessment.

Children in Need

If the child is determined to be in need but not at risk of CSE a Children Services Assessment should commence.

Children at risk of or experiencing significant harm

If there are indications that the child is at risk of or experiencing CSE a referral should be made and a multi-agency strategy meeting held in accordance with the LSCB procedures and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015 to determine the next course of action.

Risk Analysis Framework:

Any assessment and intervention by Children’s Services due to ongoing concern or significant harm is underpinned by the North Lincolnshire Risk Analysis Framework (RAF).

The risk analysis process acknowledges that it is never possible to remove all risk from a child’s life. The experience of assessing, understanding and mitigating risk within a consistent framework is essential in balancing the needs of a child or young person within the wider family and environmental factors that impact on them.

Managing and mitigating risk is essential in engaging with children and young people to understand what factors indicate usual adolescent development; Recognising what risks exist in a child’s life; what level of threat the risks present to the child’s wellbeing; and how well these can be managed so that in turn the level of threat is reduced and safely managed.

Within North Lincolnshire there is a well-embedded RAF which is utilised when working with babies, children and young people. This provides a consistent model for the assessment, analysis and management of risk.

The RAF may be used to underpin Early Help Plans where risk and protective factors should be considered. It is integral to individual plans for children and young people where there is statutory involvement due to child concern and child protection. This includes cases that are:

- Child in Need, (including disabled children);
- Child Protection;
- Looked After Children;
- Care Leavers;
- Young Offenders; and
- Older Young People

The analysis of risk also takes place within the three domains of the National Assessment Framework: child’s developmental needs, parental capacity to meet those needs, and family and environmental factors that support or hinder. It focuses on two key aspects: what factors are there in the child’s life that present a risk to their wellbeing (risk factors), and what factors guard against risk (protective factors).

Having determined what risk and protective factors exist, the process is then to judge the balance of those factors, particularly whether there are sufficient
protective factors in place to balance out the risk factors. The next stage is to judge what meaning the level of risk has for and the impact on the child / young person. This will be on a continuum from no significant risk to severe risk.

Finally, the worker must determine what needs to change in order to reduce risk and devise a plan to deliver that change.

The risk analysis is repeated at milestones such as reviews of the child’s plan, and at times when significant change occurs in the child’s circumstances, e.g. episodes of the child going missing, change in family circumstances, new and emerging evidence etc.

**Multi agency management oversight through the MACE meeting:**

**MACE risk assessment**

Where a child is deemed to be at risk of or experiencing CSE the MACE risk assessment tool will be used to complement the Risk Analysis Framework and be presented for discussion at the Multi-agency Child Exploitation meeting (MACE). This enables a specific focus on the risk factors in relation to CSE at a management level allowing for added value. For example intelligence on connections between children and young people, perpetrators, locations and premises.

The MACE risk assessment tool can be utilised at the point in which a child is deemed at risk of CSE.

The MACE risk assessment tool should run parallel to any statutory plan, therefore all children and young people on the MACE agenda should have already been referred through to Children's Services and be subject to a Child in Need, Child Protection plan or be Looked After. Given the role of the MACE in making connections and associations between young people and perpetrators there may be some young people whom may not be subject to a statutory plan. However, through the process of discussion at the MACE they may be at risk of CSE. In these circumstances an immediate referral to Children’s Services should be made.

The risk assessment tool aims to identify all areas of vulnerability and risk related to CSE and outlines specific tasks to manage and reduce risk in relation to CSE. The tool enables a focus on CSE and connectivity between children and perpetrators. It also enables groups of children’s risk assessments to be viewed collectively thus enabling a focus on cross referencing groups of children/perpetrators, utilising intelligence and identifying emerging themes and hot spots. All of the tools should be based upon professional practice and a qualitative analysis of the factors evident in the case.
The connectivity of risk assessment tools when assessing the risk of Child Sexual Exploitation

**Risk Analysis Framework**
Holistic analysis of the child’s needs; risk/protective factors and outcomes required.

**Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) risk assessment tool.**
Focuses on specific risk of CSE. Weighted in professional judgement.

**Warning signs and vulnerabilities checklist.**
Indicators and warning signs to CSE.

Identifying children vulnerable to/at risk of/experiencing CSE.