

Report

WithScotland and CELCIS
supported by Police Scotland and Social Work Scotland

Child Sexual Exploitation Conference:
Implications from Rotherham for Scotland

6th November 2014

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Introduction

WithScotland and CELCIS (Centre for Excellence for Looked After Children in Scotland), supported by Police Scotland and Social Work Scotland, hosted a conference on Child Sexual Exploitation on Thursday 6th November 2014. The event gave delegates the opportunity to:

- hear and reflect on the findings from the Rotherham Inquiry
- explore possible implications in the context of policy and practice developments underway in Scotland; and
- hear about the work of Child Protection Committees and examples of current good practice, with opportunities for discussion which will inform future activities and information sharing.

The conference aimed to provide a safe space for strategic and operational level discussion among agencies and an opportunity to shape the future of child protection in Scotland.

Presentation synopses

Welcome

Beth Smith

Director, WithScotland

Beth Smith welcomed all and commented that the event was being hosted in response to requests from the field to give delegates the opportunity to hear and reflect on the findings emerging from the Rotherham Inquiry; explore possible implications in the context of policy and practice developments underway in Scotland; and to see if there are developments we could take forward nationally.

There is agreement throughout the UK that child sexual exploitation is child abuse (CSE), and that any child or young person, regardless of gender, ethnicity, family background or sexual orientation, may experience this kind of exploitation. Work has been underway to understand more about the nature and prevalence of CSE and recent activity in Scotland has included:

- exploring the scope and nature of CSE in Scotland (University of Bedfordshire) 2012
- Short Life Ministerial Working Group, established April 2013 and reported to Scottish Government in December 2013
- Public Petitions Committee report in 2014
- refresh of the National CP Guidance published 2014

The issue of child sexual exploitation is recognised within a range of guidance relating to the protection of children and young people, however, the Public Petitions Committee and the Ministerial Working Group have both recognised that there needs to be greater alignment through a national strategy. The report from Rotherham and the report published by Ann Coffey MP (2014), *Child Sexual Exploitation in Manchester*, provides the opportunity to reflect on progress in Scotland and reflect on what we can do collectively to tackle the challenges raised by child sexual exploitation.

It is also important that policy and practice developments on child sexual exploitation should be linked with Scottish Government policy in related areas. For example, *Equally Safe* is Scotland's strategy to tackle all forms of violence against women and girls: domestic abuse, rape and sexual assault; sexual harassment and intimidation at work and in public; stalking; commercial sexual exploitation such as prostitution, pornography and human trafficking; dowry-related violence; female genital mutilation (FGM); forced marriage; and so-called 'honour' based violence.

Although child sexual exploitation brings with it certain challenges, it will be important for colleagues to work together locally and strategically to protect these young people.

Child Sexual Exploitation: Implications from Rotherham for Scotland

Professor Alexis Jay

Independent Chair, CELCIS

Alexis Jay spoke on her experience and findings of the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 - 2013). She explained how the inquiry was commissioned and why, and provided a definition of 'child sexual exploitation' for Scotland. Alexis also gave an overview of the victims, the lessons learned and key themes, and the role and impact of protocols and practice, governance and social media.

Other key points in Alexis' presentation included:

- Child sexual exploitation is part of the continuum of child sexual abuse, however, there is a knowledge base and skill set that are needed by frontline practice – practitioners need to be equipped to be alert to early warning signs and also how the support systems operate.

- Youth services are a vital strand of engagement and need to be available on the streets as children and young people can be difficult to engage. It is perhaps for child protection committees to consider as Rotherham had brought the outreach work into a more centralised child protection model and lost the successful engagement of children and young people.
- Important role of schools as often schools hold the evidence or knowledge of activity; for example, the frequency of taxis taking girls to and from school during lunchtimes.
- Importance of youth services and schools to work together to bring the knowledge each holds.
- Leadership across all organisations is crucial to ensure that there is an understanding of the issues and that processes or protocols are in place, such as, missing children protocols.
- Develop an understanding of the issues across elected members.
- Sharing of skills; for example, police colleagues worked with the youth services project with Rotherham, Risky Business, to assist in how intelligence is gathered which helped to bring alleged offenders to court.
- The traditional routes into different ethnic and minority communities were engaged, however, thought should be given about how to engage with other parts of the community such as women's groups with minority communities. Often women would not speak in front of men or Imams, but had relevant information.
- The need for risk assessments with the context of aiding professional judgement. Risk assessments were often missing or had not been completed.

Scottish Government's commitment to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation

Cat Duggan

Head of Child Protection Policy, Scottish Government

Cat Duggan discussed Scottish Government's commitment to tackling child sexual exploitation, the ongoing work of the Ministerial Working Group on child sexual exploitation, and future developments. In particular, Cat informed delegates that, Mike Russell, Cabinet Secretary for Education and Lifelong Learning, would be making a statement to Parliament on child protection on Tuesday 11th November. This statement would launch, among other things, the Government's action plan on child sexual exploitation and a public awareness campaign.

Other key points in Cat's presentation included:

- Policy in the area of child sexual exploitation should not be developed in isolation of other policy areas.
- Principles underpinning the child sexual exploitation action plan include that CSE should not be seen in isolation of other abuses and that the plan should engender culture change throughout organisations. The key focus of the plan is on prevention, and on disruption and prosecution of offenders. The plan will be reviewed within a year and reviews will be informed by the work of the National Working Group on CSE.

Child Sexual Exploitation: A policing perspective

Malcolm Graham

Assistant Chief Constable, Police Scotland

Malcolm Graham provided a Police Scotland response to the Rotherham report, and discussed the current role of the police, wider perceptions and inter-agency working. Malcolm also outlined future plans in progress and the longer-term developments, which included the development of the new Police Scotland National Child Abuse Investigation Unit, to further improve the coordination and intelligence gathering around child sexual exploitation.

Other key points in Malcolm's presentation included:

- Commitment that child sexual exploitation is a priority for Police Scotland; the extent of the problem may not yet be known but commitment remains. Information is being gathered to help develop a more coherent picture: Police Scotland has completed a strategic assessment on child sexual exploitation as asked for by the Parliamentary Petitions Committee; Police Scotland has noted an increase in the number of rapes reported which may be result of an increased focus on domestic abuse and increased focus on the victim and support provided, and of 1,500 reports about 25% were children and young people. CSE is part of this picture.
- Senior leadership needs to listen to their own and partner organisations. There are no easy answers to tackling the issue of child sexual exploitation, but we need to develop an evidence base through understanding what we have done and how we can improve, which may lead to changes in culture and technology. A more coordinated and systematic approach across communities as well as across agencies may also be required.
- Police Scotland is also actively tackling online sexual activity. The increasing access of internet in developing countries and the fast pace of technological development is leading to new developments. It will be important to look at the most effective mechanism for identifying those perpetrators whose viewing and sharing of online images leads to contact.

Child Sexual Exploitation: Practice developments from across Scotland

Moira McKinnon, Chair, National Working Group on CSE and Chair, Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee
Catriona Laird, National Child Protection Committees Coordinator, WithScotland
Daljeet Dagon, Children's Service Manager, Barnardo's Scotland

Moira McKinnon introduced the National Working Group for Child Sexual Exploitation and explained its origins. This had emerged through the agreed national priorities of the Scottish Child Protection Chairs' Forum and would be one of the key groups to take forward the Government's action plan on child sexual exploitation. The Working Group was set up in response to emerging critical issues and it was subsequently agreed to conduct a short mapping exercise of child sexual exploitation resources and services in Scotland. Moira outlined the four key priorities for the working group: prevention; intervention; recovery; and disruption and prosecution.

Catriona Laird explored in more detail the content of the mapping exercise, which brought together information about the resources and services available across Scotland to ensure sharing of good practice across child protection committees (CPCs) and the development of new activity to meet the challenges this work presents.

Daljeet Dagon focused on Barnardo's pioneering initiative – Safer Choices Missing Service - being taken forward by Barnardo's in partnership with Police Scotland and Renfrewshire Council. The service had been established to identify, protect and support children and young people under the age of 18 who have been missing from, and to support those missing from their home. Nationally runaway children are a prime target for sexual predators. They are also much more likely to suffer physical abuse, become a victim of crime or get involved with drink or drug abuse. Some runaway children turn to crime to survive on the streets. This project was about protecting vulnerable children by identifying why they run away, where they go to and with whom they associate while they are missing.

The service utilises the Barnardo's sexual exploitation risk assessment framework to assess the child / young person's vulnerability to CSE.

In addition to return interviews, this tri-partnership service collaborates with other partners and discusses issues in relation to children and young people, persons of concern and locations, at its operational group to consider how we can together provide a more robust package of support to children and young people as well as intervene in perpetrator activity to disrupt CSE.

Looked After Children: Data, vulnerabilities and the importance of relationship

Jennifer Davidson
Director, CELCIS

Jennifer Davidson spoke about the CELCIS report 'The Sexual Exploitation of Looked After Children in Scotland: A scoping study to inform methodology for inspection'. The research was commissioned by the Care Inspectorate in 2012 and related in particular to children in Scottish care services for which the Inspectorate has responsibility. This report drew together research related to sexual exploitation of looked after children in Scotland. Jennifer also shared her overview of children's rights and how this can be misunderstood to the detriment of the child. Although speaking as Director of CELCIS, Jennifer did not speak from a purely looked after children's perspective, but did acknowledge that those children who are looked after face unique challenges and may be more vulnerable.

Social Work Reflection on Rotherham

Mike Burns
Head of Social Work Services, Glasgow City Council

Mike Burns reflected on the issues raised by Rotherham for Scotland, the attributes required from frontline staff and frontline leaders for working in this challenging area, and the learning outcomes from this and other enquiries. Mike outlined some of the wider policy landscape such as GIRFEC, the increase in numbers of children who may be experiencing neglect, the need for continued self-evaluation and review balanced with delivering good practice and key services. Mike also commented on the need for practitioners to have courage and have the skills for courageous conversations. He also commented on the need for key attributes such as resilience, tenacity and hardiness for the continued efforts that are often needed to engage with children, young people and their families combined with mindfulness – Mike summarised this as the art of helping.

Panel discussion: what next?

Facilitated by Beth Smith, Director, WithScotland

Throughout the day, delegates were asked to post questions, comments or suggestions for the final panel discussion on how we can work as partners to tackle child sexual exploitation. Delegates were asked to think of questions or suggestions in terms of:



what are we doing that isn't working – something we should stop?



what can we put in place to improve our partnership working – something we should start?



what is working well – something we should continue?



what is working to some extent but would be benefit for some change?

Below are some of the messages to emerge or the questions raised:



- Do not over-focus on child sexual exploitation at the expense of other abuses children and young people experience. Response to CSE needs to be proportionate. Some delegates asked whether child sexual exploitation was sufficiently distinct or isolated from other types of abuses to warrant a new approach?
- Training to avoid duplication



- Capture the good work already underway in Scotland. We have mapped some of the services offered locally, but need to capture the views and voices of children and young people, and staff in residential units, schools and youth services.
- Ensure we have trusted services through mainstream youth groups to allow young people not directly affected by child sexual exploitation to share information or concerns they may have about CSE.
- Use potential of community planning partnerships to develop targeted supportive action around children and young peoples' residential homes
- Should scrutiny and inspection bodies incorporate explicit reference to child sexual exploitation with an emphasis on best practice?
- What efforts are being made to link with initiatives focussing on gender based violence?



- Continue to see this as a multi-agency issue and not focus only on police and social work.
- Continue to make links with appropriate national groups such as the Scottish Child Protection Committee Chairs' Forum, and national network of CPC Lead Officers.
- Continue the regulation of taxis and private hire vehicles
- Learn from experience to develop effective intelligence sharing processes between the police and third sector agencies
- Continue to develop services for the most vulnerable which are based on consistent and trusting relationships with staff who care, and flexibility and persistence



- Do we need to question whether generic residential units are the best placements for young people involved in child sexual exploitation?

Beth Smith concluded that all the issues and questions raised would be captured in a short report from the conference to inform the work of the National Working Group on Child Sexual Exploitation chaired by Moira McKinnon.

Child sexual exploitation requires a coordinated multi-agency response and that child protection committees, universal, specialist and voluntary services all have a role to play.

Research undertaken by Brodie and Pearce in 2012 to explore the scale and nature of CSE in Scotland identified that:

- Effective practice is located within existing child protection procedures
- GIRFEC provides a good framework for developing good practice in Scotland
- Local child protection committees are key to the development of good practice

There is work underway across Scotland tackling child sexual exploitation, but it is crucial not to be complacent and for agencies to continue to tackle this issue collectively and share learning. We need to use both tried and tested systems for child protection, and to explore innovative approaches in the protection of children and young people.



Child Sexual Exploitation Conference: Implications from Rotherham for Scotland

Thursday 6 November 2014

Scottish Police College, Tulliallan Castle, Kincardine, FK10 4BE

Programme

09.00	Registration	
09.40	Housekeeping	
09.45	Welcome	<i>Beth Smith Director, WithScotland</i>
10.00	Child Sexual Exploitation: Implications from Rotherham for Scotland	<i>Professor Alexis Jay Independent Chair, CELCIS</i>
11.00	Questions and answers	
11.15	Tea and coffee break	
11.45	Scottish Government's commitment to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation	<i>Cat Duggan Head of Child Protection Policy, Scottish Government</i>
12.15	Child Sexual Exploitation: A policing perspective	<i>Malcolm Graham Assistant Chief Constable, Police Scotland</i>
12.45	Questions and answers	
13.00	Lunch	
13.45	Welcome to afternoon session	
13.50	Child Sexual Exploitation: Practice developments from across Scotland	<i>Moira McKinnon - Chair, Argyll and Bute Child Protection Committee Catriona Laird - National Child Protection Committees Coordinator, WithScotland Daljeet Dagon - Children's Service Manager, Barnardo's Scotland</i>
14.30	Looked After Children: Data, vulnerabilities and the importance of relationship	<i>Jennifer Davidson Director, CELCIS</i>
14.50	Social Work Reflection on Rotherham	<i>Mike Burns, Convenor, Children and Families Standing Committee, Social Work Scotland and Head of Service, North West, Glasgow City Council</i>
15.10	Discussion: what next?	<i>Facilitated by Beth Smith, WithScotland</i>
15.30	Closing remarks	
15.40	Conference close	

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