Milton Keynes Safeguarding Children Board

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) - Guidance for Professionals

(Revised: February 2016)

Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation is Child Abuse. High profile cases across the United Kingdom have focussed the attention of the public and public service organisations on the prevalence and devastating impact of CSE. It is expected that all areas have multi-agency arrangements in place to identify and respond to those at risk of, or who have become victims of CSE. Local Safeguarding Children Boards provide local oversight of these arrangements as part of a comprehensive CSE strategy that includes actions to disrupt CSE activity and deal effectively with potential and actual offenders as appropriate.

This document sets out the local arrangements for Milton Keynes including the use of a straightforward screening tool to assist professionals to identify children at risk of or involved in CSE. The flow chart and guidelines below describe what action professionals should take if they are concerned and sets out how cases will be assessed and if appropriate referred to the monthly Multi-agency Risk Management Meeting (MARRM).

Child Sexual Exploitation - Definition

“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 performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no 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 a 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.”

(CSE) INITIAL SCREENING TOOL

The initial screening tool is intended to provide any professional who may be concerned that a child or children are at risk of, or potentially subject to, sexual exploitation. This tool provides a straightforward way of testing your concerns against some of the key risk factors associated with CSE. The process outlined in the attached flow chart illustrates the actions that can be taken as a response to those concerns.

The initial screening tool should not be considered a full assessment of CSE and should be seen as one aspect of a wider assessment of concerns.

This screening tool does not replace established child protection procedures as set out in the MKSCB Procedures. Professionals should be alert to the fact that concerns which start out as CSE may indicate other child protection concerns.

Referring professionals are not expected to determine if CSE is taking place. That is a matter for Thames Valley Police, the referring agency and Milton Keynes Children’s Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) to assess under the auspices of ‘Working Together 2015’ and MKSCB guidance. Information and reasons provided by referrers will be very helpful in ensuring that the correct decisions are made regarding further action. When completing the screening tool, please use the Notes/Reasons section to record your observations, opinions and the factors that you have taken into account. Where possible, please provide dates, times and location of any specific ‘incidents’ that have worried you.

Low Risk: It will not be necessary in every case to refer on. Providing advice and guidance to a child, young person and/or family to help them stay safe may be adequate in some cases. If there are wider concerns, consider the need for multi-agency planning and intervention and use the normal referral pathways. Maintain ongoing review of risk and re-screen if necessary.
However, if in doubt about CSE, refer using the process outlined on the flow chart (page 8 of Screening Tool)¹

No child under 13 should be categorised as LOW RISK.

No child with a learning disability should be categorised as LOW RISK.

NO Looked After Child should be considered LOW RISK

Some Low Risk situations may be considered at the Multi-Agency Risk Management Meeting (MARMM) which is held monthly.

Medium Risk: A child/young person assessed as Medium Risk should be regarded as a Child In Need² and should be referred to Milton Keynes Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH). If confirmed, the case is likely to be considered at the MARMM. Multi-agency planning to address risk is also likely to take place. The referrer should always be included in this. The multi-agency work will include regular contact until the child/young person is no longer at medium risk of CSE.

If Medium Risk of CSE is not confirmed, consider providing the child with support/intervention using the usual pathways to address any broader concerns.

High Risk: Where screening indicates High Risk, referral must be made without delay as immediate Police and Social Care joint investigation will be required if HIGH Risk is confirmed. If thresholds are met a Strategy discussion/meeting will be held and a multi-agency intervention to address risk and ensure the immediate and longer term safety of those involved will be pursued. This may take place in tandem with police investigation into potential criminal offences. All High Risk case will be discussed at the MARMM, although this will not delay immediate protective action if required.

¹ NB – If you are working within MK MASH completing the screening tool please liaise directly with your manager on completion

² Section 17 Children Act 2004
If High Risk of CSE is not confirmed, consider providing the child with support/intervention using the usual pathways to address any broader concerns.

**Joint Assessment**

If having completed the screening tool CSE concerns remain, a referral should be made to Thames Valley Police using the non-emergency 101 telephone number. It should be made clear during the call that the concerns relate to CSE and that you are concerned about a child resident in Milton Keynes. The information will be passed on to the Child Abuse Investigation Unit.

Referrals should be made even if the case is currently open to a professional agency but in those cases the referrer should be the relevant agency (e.g. children’s social care, YOT, CFP etc.) Please attach your completed screening tool to the agency you are referring to in addition to their regular referral processes.

A police officer will make contact with the referrer and gain more information and will then liaise with the MASH where necessary to jointly agree what, if any further action is required. Where it is agreed that there are CSE concerns that require further action the case will be assigned a category by the police (known as a SERAC level) of 1, 2 or 3, with 1 being Low Risk and 3 being High Risk. Feedback will be provided to the referrer including if no further action is being taken which may be accompanied by further advice on handling concerns or making other referrals.

The police and other agencies will then investigate further according to the level of risk and other information emerging from their enquiries.

**Referral to MARMM**

In addition to any investigation as outlined above cases assigned a SERAC level will be referred by Thames Valley Police to the monthly MARMM. At those meetings a range of social care, police, health and voluntary sector professionals will scrutinise the plans and actions in place to protect the child, disrupt any CSE activity and deal with potential and actual perpetrators. The MARMM will help to coordinate multi agency activity and hold partners to account for delivery of agreed actions. The MARMM also brings together information and intelligence to assist in building and maintaining a picture of CSE in Milton Keynes.
The MARMM cannot accept direct referral outside of the process described above and illustrated on the attached flow chart. However, if professionals are aware that a child they are working with is a current case on the MARMM list they can provide updated information to the MARMM Chair (via e-mail: MARMM@milton-keynes.gov.uk). If you are not sure if the case is current you can seek clarification via the same e-mail address.

If the case is not current and you have concerns please follow the referral process outlined above in all cases.

**CSE Interventions**

1. **FAST/ESWT - CSE response**

Referrals to the FAST Specialised CSE Project will be made via the MARMM who will refer cases to the team. The Specialised CSE Project is made up of a senior practitioner, CSE social worker and 2 part-time family support workers.

The CSE team will work with the young person initially for an eight-week period on an intensive basis; this will involve 3-4 visits a week. The work completed by the team will be child-focused and the intervention will vary from case to case. However general areas of work carried out with the young person include: exploring issues around consent, key indicators of an abusive relationship and relationship history. The CSE social worker will compile an analytical report on each case referred that will look at the risk indicators from the screening tool against the chronology of concerning behaviours, which will form the social worker’s assessment. The assessment will establish if the child is being exploited and how vulnerable they are to further exploitation. Following the initial eight-week intervention, the Specialised CSE Project will meet with the young person’s allocated social worker to discuss concerns and recommendations for further work that the allocated social worker can carry out with the young person. If it is assessed that the child is being sexually exploited then the team will stay involved and support the child with a package of intervention.

The senior practitioner and the CSE social worker in the team will work with schools, health and partner agencies to offer specific training sessions on working with sexual exploitation. Children and Families social workers will also be offered support to develop effective Signs of Safety safety plans which are specific to the identified CSE.
2. YOT - CSE Response

For cases open to Milton Keynes Youth Offending Team (MK YOT) a response aligned to the FAST - CSE intervention will be available including to those who are subject to out of court disposals. MARMM can identify suitable cases for the YOT intervention but most will be identified through the youth justice process.