

Slides not to be reproduced without permission of the author

## Child Sexual Exploitation

Examining the national crisis and improving prevention & detection

Dr Helen Beckett  
Joint Director, The International Centre  
@uniofbedsCSE  
helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk

The International Centre:  
Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



- What do we mean by CSE?
- Examining the national crisis
- Improving prevention, detection & response

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



### Child sexual exploitation

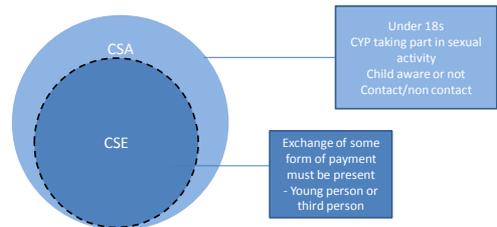
- Form of child sexual abuse (CSA)
- Under 18s
- Exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities
- Those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources
- Child/young person has limited choice due to vulnerability (social, economic and/or emotional)
- Violence, coercion and intimidation are common

(DCSF 2009)

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



### What delineates CSE from other forms of CSA?



*Just because a young person receives something they need or desire does not mean they are not being abused. Taking advantage of this need or desire, and making the young person think they are in control because they are getting something in return, is part of the abusive process (CSE KTP 2014)*

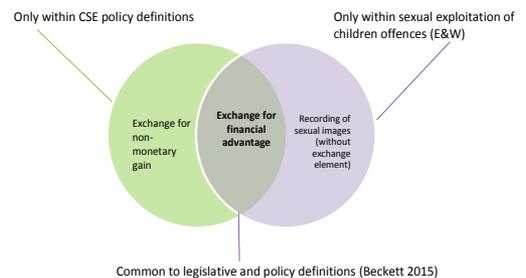
### Serious Crime Act 2015

- Amends Sexual offences Act 2003 to remove references to child prostitution and pornography
- The sexual exploitation of a child is defined with reference to these offences as:
  - the offer or provision of sexual services to another person in return for payment or a promise of payment to the child or a third person OR
  - the recording of an indecent image of the child.
- Payment is defined, as per the original 2003 text as "any financial advantage, including the discharge of an obligation to pay or the provision of goods or services (including sexual services) gratuitously or at a discount, although interestingly is not a requirement with reference to the recording of indecent images of a child.

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



### CSE: Offence .v. Policy Definition



The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



## Child sexual abuse

- A form of **significant harm**
- Involves **forcing or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities**, not necessarily involving a high level of violence, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening.
- **May involve physical contact**, including assault by penetration (for example rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside of clothing.
- **May also include non-contact activities**, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, sexual images, watching sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways, or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the Internet).
- Sexual abuse is not solely perpetrated by adult males. Women can also commit acts of sexual abuse, as can other children

(Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015)

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



## A national crisis?

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



### Oxford gang found guilty of grooming and sexually exploiting girls (The Guardian, May 2013)

#### Rochdale grooming: 'Shocking' failure over sex abuse (BBC, Dec 2013)

#### Rotherham: 1,400 children subjected to 'appalling' sexual exploitation over 16 years (The Independent, Sept 2014)

#### Aylesbury child sex ring jailed for 82 years after grooming vulnerable girls for the price of a McDonalds (Mirror, Sept 2015)

#### School sex crime reports in UK top 5,500 in three years (BBC, Sept 2015)

#### Girls are being sexually exploited while police don't do enough to protect them, says watchdog (Plymouth Herald, Sept 2015)

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



## What is the extent of CSE?

- **We don't know!**
- Prevalence data difficult to capture:
  - 34% of young people who experience contact sexual abuse by adult did not tell anyone – rises to 83% when abuse is by peer (Radford et al 2011)
- No baseline data to compare rates with previous eras
- Existing (partial) counts of CSE:
  - 1875 cases localised grooming (CEOP 2011)
  - CSE issue of concern for 1 in 7 young people known to social services in N.Ireland; 1 in 5 at significant risk (Beckett 2011)
  - 1400 children thought to be sexually exploited in Rotherham over 16 year period (Jay 2014)
  - 70 LSCBs identified 2092 known victims; 79 identified 5669 at risk (OCC 2015)

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



## What do we know?

- Many different models:
  - 'Abuse through prostitution/paying for the sexual services of a child' involving third party gain (Sexual Offences Act 2003) – language changed to CSE but only re financial gain.
  - Other 'abuse through prostitution' (no 3<sup>rd</sup> party gain)
  - 'Party house model'
  - Inappropriate/sexually exploitative relationships
  - Internet exploitation
  - Child abuse images
  - Trafficking for sexual exploitation (Beckett 2011)
- Always learning about new manifestations
- Merging of online and offline worlds

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



## What do we know?

- No one is immune
- Average age when concerns are **first identified**: 13-15 years
- Services working with cases as young as 8 or 10
- More females than males – issue of identification as well as prevalence
- Perpetrated by both genders; all ethnicities; adults and peers; individual and group

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



## What do we know?

- No matter how we 'label' it, our young people are experiencing significant levels of sexual violence and abuse:
  - 1 in 9 young adults experienced s/abuse in childhood (NSPCC 2013)
  - 1 in 9 sixteen year olds reported experience of adult trying to groom them when under 16 (Beckett and Schubotz 2014)
  - 1 in 3 girls and 1 in 6 boys (12-17 years) report sexual partner violence (Barter et al 2009)
  - 29% of girls have been subjected to unwanted sexual touching at school (YouGov Survey 2010)
- Risks in adolescence differ from those in younger childhood & require a different response

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking 

## Why have we failed to detect it?

- Most YP will not report their experiences to us:
  - Do not realise they have anything to report
  - Fear/threats
  - Guilt/shame
  - Loyalty to perpetrator
  - Abuse goes hand in hand with gain
  - 'Rational decision' for some – constrained choice
  - Lack of confidence in our reaction/responses
- Professionals can fail to identify:
  - Inadequate understanding
  - Busy caseloads
  - Focus on presenting issues
  - Accept situations at face value – don't exercise 'professional curiosity'
  - See 'troublesome' teenager not a child in need
  - Uncomfortable talking about sex/sexuality

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking 

## So what should we do?

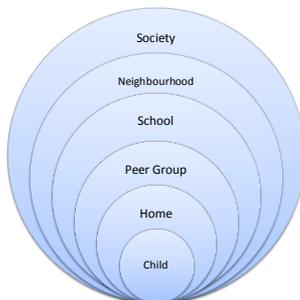
The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking 

## Prevention

- Whole population approach (community safety/public health) & targeted work
- Professionals – knowledge and attitudes – professional curiosity & tenacity
- Children and young people – starting early in an age-appropriate manner – risk to self and risk to others; resilience; help seeking behaviours
- Parents and carers – how to protect & how to support
- Wider communities – somebody always lives next door
- Need to be culturally sensitive but not culturally bound
- Consistent accessible messaging – counteract unhelpful messages

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking 

## Move beyond individuals: address contexts of risk



Firmin (2014)

## Working with (potential) victims

- Create opportunities for disclosure; recognise non-verbal expressions of distress
- Don't expect them to act/react as we do as adults
- Exercise 'professional curiosity'/don't inadvertently collude
- Be aware of language, inadvertent consequences & replicating abusive patterns
- Recognise complexity of situation (push and pull factors) and young people's feelings around this
- Achieving gradual change through relationship & partnership – offering choice in who this is
- Parents as safeguarding partners
- Access to intensive long-term specialist support
- Provision of valid alternatives

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking 

### Concurrent focus on perpetrators: disruption

- Attention on suspected perpetrators – tax evasion; drugs etc
- Civil remedies:
  - Child Abduction Notices – under 16/18 if LAC
  - Sexual Harm Prevention Orders – post conviction
  - Sexual Risk Orders – no conviction required; sexual act/sexual intent
- Use of NRM – if movement for trafficking
- Hotel notices – required to disclose info if intelligence around CSE
- Critical role of disruption, but never in lieu of prosecution

Not to be reproduced without  
permission from the author

### Concurrent focus on perpetrators: disruption

- A young person's vulnerability is only an issue because someone is ready to exploit it – need concurrent focus on perpetrators
- Some successful cases but overall limited prosecutions
- Co-operation amongst professionals – how to help each other
- Requires proactive investigation; not reliant on young person's complaint
- Young people's negative experiences of the criminal justice system need addressed

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking



**Email:** [Helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk](mailto:Helen.beckett@beds.ac.uk)

**Web:** [www.beds.ac.uk/ic](http://www.beds.ac.uk/ic)

**Twitter:** [@uniofbedsCSE](https://twitter.com/uniofbedsCSE) / [@helenlbeckett](https://twitter.com/helenlbeckett)

The International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence, and trafficking

