

WESTERN ISLES COMMUNITY PLANNING PARTNERSHIP Joint Inspection of Services for Children and Young People

POSITION STATEMENT: CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Overview

The Outer Hebrides Community Planning Partnership and the Outer Hebrides Child Protection Committee recognise absolutely the importance of wellbeing and the need to keep our children safe from harm or abuse. In 2010, the (HMIE) report of the Joint Inspection of Services to Protect Children and Young People in the Western Isles evaluated the key quality indicators specifically; *children are helped to keep safe* as “**Good**” and *response to immediate concerns* was described “**Very Good**”

All partners in the Western Isles have embraced the wellbeing framework (safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included) to measure progress in achieving improved outcomes for children and young people. OHPC is fully committed to the GIRFEC approach. Supported by a clear framework provided by Scottish Government and reinforced by helpful, supportive contribution and direction from WithScotland, we wish to maintain and indeed strengthen our position in keeping our children and young people safe and protect them from the increasingly recognised risk of sexual exploitation

We have remained alert to developing issues in the domain of Child Protection and in respect of our focus on 'safe' have taken a very proactive approach to the issue of CSE in its various guises. We fully accept that CSE is an area of high risk for children and young in all of our communities and very much aware of the damaging effect of CSE on children, young people, their families and local communities.

This risk is faced by boys and young men as well as girls and young women. However, some groups are particularly vulnerable. These include children and young people who have a history of running away or of going missing from home; those with additional support needs; those in and leaving residential and foster care; migrant children, and unaccompanied asylum seeking children; children who have disengaged from education; children who are abusing drugs and alcohol; and children involved in gangs.

We know and strive to alert as wide an audience as possible that sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, intimidation or enticement, including unwanted pressure from peers to have sex or participate in viewing or being involved in the production of indecent imagery, sexual bullying (including cyber bullying) and grooming for sexual activity.

What our services have done together to improve the outcomes for children and young people who may be affected by Child Sexual Exploitation.

The OHPC, as concerns surrounding this topic grew nationally, reacted swiftly to advise all our practitioners, managers and multi-agency partners that we needed to work together to effectively protect children and young persons. We linked with our partners both nationally and locally to secure the resources and information we needed. One particularly effective example of this is in the creation of a [Western Isles Under-Age Sex protocol](#) which is frequently used by practitioners from all disciplines to contextualise any given circumstances that are presented to them. The Protocol offers guidance and a clear reporting procedure for staff who are engaging with young people in such sensitive matters. This facility enables them to identify exploitation where it exists.

We used the following national publications and resources to inform our workforce and they remain accessible via our web pages:

[Real Love Rocks](#), [My Dangerous Lover Boy](#), and [Blast](#) Video, DVD and media presentations

[Safeguarding E Academy E Learning Module – Keep Them Safe – Protecting Children from Sexual Exploitation](#)

[Exploring the Scale and Nature of Child Sexual Exploitation in Scotland \(2012\)](#)

[I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world \(2012\)](#)

[Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation \(2009\)](#)

[Safeguarding Children in Scotland who may have been Trafficked \(2010\).](#)

During 2013/14 The OHPC brought to the attention of partners the emerging issue of CSE and signposted training, learning and development opportunities. We have added information to our website, supported local and national activity and utilised the previously listed specialist resources.

OHPC advised partners, attendees at training events and delegates at conference that the perpetrators of sexual exploitation are often well organised and deploy often sophisticated and subtle tactics. The Co-ordinator and Development Officer who delivers multi agency training at both general workforce and specific workforce level devoted and still devotes a specific slot in the Child Protection training programme to the topic and encourages debate after presenting the CEOP “*jigsaw*” and “*consequences*” thought provoking videos. Over 500 practitioners to date, have an enhanced awareness as a consequence.

OHPC have shared essential information with parents and carers via a joint letter from Police and Education Services composed and despatched by the C.P.C. Co-ordinator advising of the serious consequences of thoughtless “sexting”. Attached was a very detailed list of proactive web sites which could aid understanding for parents and carers and their school aged children and provide specialist expertise. This letter was circulated to all parents of school age children across the local authority in 2012.

Representatives from Community Safety Partnership, Rape Crisis, NHS and C.P.C. also attended the **Walking the Tightrope** Conference in Glasgow in November 2013. Materials were obtained from various stalls at this CSE oriented event and are available for use from the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

OHPC also work in harmony with our vibrant and active Community Safety Partnership and regularly collaborate with Linda Thomson and colleagues at the Women's Support Project in Glasgow. A Conference took place in Stornoway organised by the Domestic Abuse Forum with Linda as key note speaker in summer of 2013 to raise local awareness across agencies and practitioners of sexual exploitation and violence against women. A roadshow took place in 2014 planned through this Forum for 'Screen Machine' (a mobile cinema) to be deployed throughout remote areas of Western isles offering access to CSE related films and other materials.

We have worked hard to ensure that our children and young people are becoming more aware of the risks of CSE. The C.P.C. in collaboration with the Sexual Health Promotions Officer from Western isles NHS and strongly supported by the Community Safety Partnership organised a major initiative whereby all secondary school age children from S2 upwards attended drama presentations and workshops from The Baldy Bane Theatre group between February and June 2014. This dramatisation depicted various scenarios which involved sexual exploitation of teenage girls and teen bullying in a production known as "**Crush**". A representative from Rape Crisis working in combination with the Sexual Health Promotions Officer undertook some preparatory work with the young audiences before the drama enactments to provide appropriate scene setting. This initiative is to be revitalised and a further opportunity for age appropriate younger children to attend. Evaluation of the initiative suggested that S2 pupils would be the most receptive cohort of young people to target specifically.

A keynote speaker at our Annual Conference in September 2014 presenting on a theme of **From Childhood to Adulthood** was Mr Jim Gamble ex CEO of CEOP who delivered an exceptionally well received two hour long presentation on internet technology and methods to combat child sexual exploitation both on line and offline to an audience of over 120 practitioners and managers from across the Western Isles. The feedback derived from attendees at this conference was very positive indeed. Both the local Children's Panel members training officer and the Sexual Health Promotions Officer are separately making contact with Mr Gamble to forge links and develop individual work streams.

Catriona Laird, National Co-ordinator for Child Protection Committees attended the C.P.C. business meeting of 26th March 2015 to deliver a contemporary view of CSE at a national level and her presentation was instrumental in driving forward our CSE action plan as an identified priority, set within our Joint Agency Improvement Plan.

Four representatives from the C.P.C and partners are attending the CEOP ambassadors training course on June 18th 2015 in order to increase their knowledge base and better equip them thereafter to cascade this learning and development to others.

The OHPC operates within the context of the National Guidance on CSE which were included within the May 2014 update of National Guidelines for Child Protection in Scotland. This helpful guidance has also been incorporated within the refreshed local inter-agency child protection procedures which were approved in November 2014. These procedures are well embedded into local practice and are readily available on the OHPC web pages for reference. Also available as Information for Practitioners, Information for Parents and Carers and also for Children and Young people is a suite of child protection leaflets, many of which relate to internet safety, surfing the web, mobile phone use and exploitation issues.

The Comhairle has also endorsed the **360 degree** safe schools self-review online tool which provides a user friendly and interactive means for schools to review their E-Safety provision and to develop an action plan to bring about improvements. It provides a protective facility and identifies designated individuals in all schools to act as a single point of contact. This initiative was jointly funded in partnership with NHS Western isles. It will be implemented across all schools later this year. Education and Children Services also set in place a Western Isles wide **Policy on e-safety and acceptable use of Communication Technology in Schools**.

All multi- agency staff have been given the opportunity to further enhance their knowledge base and were introduced to The Safeguarding E Academy division of the VIRTUAL COLLEGE who provided an electronic learning tool to Western Isles. The Co-ordinator and Development Officer assessed the 40 minute interactive training facility as fit for purpose for a Scottish context with the usual caveats concerning English legislation and terminology and circulated it to all C.P.C. members urging their engagement with this excellent learning device. A record of those who complete the course including mandatory training to be completed by all social workers, key health staff and police officers is being collated by C.P.C. admin support. A CPD certificate is awarded at the successful completion of the course.

The Co-ordinator and Development Officer also provided two half day training sessions in the Education and Children's Services Inset Development days in 2014 on the specific topic of "Sexting" to multi agency audiences at both the Lionacleit and Nicolson Schools.

Foster Careers, who are acknowledged to be a particularly important recipient of enhanced awareness raising, have been recently provided with bespoke internet safety training and have direct access to sustained support from dedicated I.T. staff in Education and Children's services. They are now familiar with the K9 internet safety facility and the parental control features which are so important.

We are confident that the guidance, training material and resources that have been made available to staff will allow them to quickly identify circumstances where children and young people may be susceptible to child sexual exploitation here in the Western isles.

What the impact has been on children, young people and families.

We have had examples in the Western Isles over the past five years where young girls in particular have been sexually exploited by older males including adults. This has resulted in a number of successful prosecutions with those responsible being charged with crimes and offences and subsequently convicted. These children/young women were predominately looked after and accommodated young people residing in a local residential unit or alternatively have been subsequently become looked after and accommodated at home. A number of children placed outwith the region are also believed to have been at increased risk of CSE as a consequence of being so far away from home. We also intend to conduct a review of all young people currently in looked after or accommodated care or who are experiencing homelessness to assess their vulnerability to CSE.

What we need to do next.

Our immediate response to CSE was to ensure that we raised awareness across our partners; offered practitioners and managers in all services the support they needed in understanding the associated risks; identified children and young people most at risk of CSE; and acted promptly to make them safe or safer. As part of continuous improvement, we have acknowledged that we need to do more and we have identified key areas for improvement. We shall keep CSE high profile in our area as part of our model of continuous improvement in the protection of children and young people. Through the CPC, we shall regularly review our processes and practices in CSE. To support this, we shall consider the Bedfordshire Model of self-evaluation in CSE as part of the still to be agreed OHPC Joint Self-Evaluation Strategy and Activity Programme (2015- 2018). By continuing our specific targeted work with Young Persons Services and schools we shall improve the ways we educate children and young people about the risks associated with CSE.

Furthermore we shall listen to what children and young people tell us and strengthen our practice as a result. We shall also consider carefully the findings of the CELCIS report on the [Child Sexual Exploitation of Looked After Children \(2014\)](#) and take appropriate and effective action.

By consulting directly with children and young people, we shall seek further evidence in our outcomes that we are keeping them safe from CSE. The CPC will also carefully take account of the findings of the recently published 'Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013' by Professor Alexis Jay, and The Brock Report published November 2014 to inform strategic developments to address CSE.

Finally, we shall enhance current systems to evidence the impact of our intervention for children and young people to protect them against the potential for harm through discouraging wherever possible CSE activity here in the Western Isles or elsewhere which has an impact locally. To that end a SLWG has been set up under the chairmanship of Inspector Roddy MacKay Police Scotland to consider how best to effectively deliver an action plan to address this important issue. Representation from NHS Sexual health, Community Safety Partnership, Police Scotland, Education and Children's Services and the C.P.C. are present on this group and a strong drive to involve students to contribute a young people's perspective is ongoing by the C.P.C. in collaboration with school staff at The Nicolson Institute.

Any Additional Comments

A particularly welcome development arising from the Annual Conference of 2014 - From Childhood to Adulthood, was the involvement of 20 young people in the upper school of The Nicolson Institute, Stornoway. Invites to attend had been offered to the school and a group of students who were studying courses in which children and internet safety were relevant, listened to the advice and guidance of the keynote speaker Jim Gamble ex CEO of CEOP.

The feedback from this group was extremely positive and as a consequence, key education staff, in collaboration with the Co-ordinator and Development Officer, believed there was an opportunity to further involve young people in the development of strategy in respect of Internet safety and Child Sexual Exploitation in particular.

The C.P.C. Co-ordinator arranged, through the school, to have informal meeting with key students in the school councils in year S5 and S6 and also the four school captains. These meetings were followed up to gauge interest amongst the pupils to become involved with the SLWG on CSE. Three girls in S5 expressed an interest in becoming involved. This will be carefully nurtured.

Senior staff at the Sir E Scott school in Tarbert has also expressed an interest in this initiative and are confident, given the same approach, they too could provide a small group of senior students who are generally protective of the younger pupils in the school. They could also become peer mentors or offer a similar perspective to the SLWG. Arrangements are ongoing to explore this potential.