

Redbridge Local Safeguarding
Children Board (LSCB)

**Child Sexual
Exploitation (CSE)
Prevention and
Intervention Strategy**

2nd Edition

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Redbridge LSCB

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Prevention and Intervention Strategy

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Prevention and Intervention Strategy sets out the commitment of the Redbridge Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) to safeguard and protect children from CSE. Addressing the exploitation of children is a priority for the LSCB ([LSCB Business Plan 2017 – 2018](#), Priority 2) and it is committed to continuing to implement a strategy which takes a proactive, coordinated, broad multi-agency approach to addressing CSE.
- 1.2 This 2nd Edition of the Strategy, published in January 2018, is an update of the original 1st Edition of the Strategy published in October 2014.
- 1.3 To ensure best practice and consistency across London Boroughs, this strategy is informed by the [London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol, 3rd Edition, June 2017](#).
- 1.4 CSE **cannot** be addressed by one agency alone or in isolation from other related safeguarding issues – particularly other forms of exploitation and going missing. The LSCB has a strategic role in addressing CSE and in ensuring that the CSE work of all agencies is coordinated, confirming unique and shared roles and functions to ensure that children and young people are protected from CSE and that victims receive the support necessary. It is essential that multi-agency working is informed by effective practice and professionals exerting their professional curiosity. This strategy sets out the shared and coordinated approach to tackling CSE in Redbridge.

2. Aims

2.1 The aims of the Strategy are as follows:

IDENTIFY	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Identify the children at risk of CSE• Understand the scale of the problem in Redbridge and continue to refine and improve a coordinated multi-agency response
PREVENT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Raise awareness of CSE through education and training and provide early help to prevent exploitation
SUPPORT & PROTECT	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Work collaboratively to ensure that children at risk of CSE are safeguarded and mitigate the impact of CSE among victims
INTERVENE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Use intelligence from data to disrupt patterns of exploitation
PROSECUTE	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people by prosecuting perpetrators

3. Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation

3.1 The Redbridge LSCB has adopted the nationally agreed definition of CSE, from the DfE publication [Child Sexual Exploitation – Definition and guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation](#), published in February 2017 which is as follows:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

4. Types of Child Sexual Exploitation

4.1 There are many different types of CSE and the methods that perpetrators use to sexually exploit children and young people do change and do not always neatly fit into the types or ‘models’ outlined below, sometimes overlapping. However, it is helpful to have examples and descriptions for guidance and to gain an improved understanding of the challenge young people face and the way in which offenders operate.

4.2 Cases of CSE in Redbridge are categorised in accordance with these definitions (taken from the [London CSE Operating Protocol, 3rd Edition, June 2017](#)), enabling the LSCB and partner agencies to better understand the nature of CSE in Redbridge. The descriptions have been summarised – the full details can be viewed on pages 9 – 13 of the [Protocol](#).

Type of CSE	Description
Peer-on-Peer Exploitation	Young people can be sexually exploited by people of a similar age as well as adults. This can happen in a number of ways. In some cases, young women and young men who have been exploited themselves, by adults or peers, will recruit other young people to be abused. In other instances, sexual bullying in schools and other social settings can result in the sexual exploitation of young people by their peers. Sexual exploitation also occurs within and between street gangs, where sex is used in exchange for safety, protection, drugs and simply belonging. For 16 and 17-year-olds that are in abusive relationships, what may appear to be a case of domestic abuse may also involve sexual exploitation. In all cases of peer-on-peer exploitation, a power imbalance will still inform the relationship, but this inequality will not necessarily be the result of an age gap between the abuser and the abused.
Relationship model	Here the offender befriends and grooms a young person into a ‘relationship’ and then coerces or forces them to have sex with friends or associates. The abuser may be significantly older than the victim, but not

	always.
On-line CSE	<p>These offences include deceiving children into producing indecent images of themselves and engaging in sexual chat online or sexual activity over a webcam. Children and young people at risk of harm online may not have any previous vulnerabilities that are often associated with being victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. This means that they are less likely to be identified as they might not be previously known to different agencies. The anonymous nature of the internet allows perpetrators to adopt false personas and build trust via online conversations. Children and young people can fail to realise that they lose control of uploaded images. This can lead to risks of blackmail and coercion against the child. Additionally, the Global Positioning System (GPS) coordinates of where a digital image was created can be identified using free-to-download software packages, potentially physically leading a perpetrator to a child. These factors can lead the following safeguarding risks: online grooming and child abuse; access to age-inappropriate content; bullying and cyberbullying; personal information being obtained by perpetrators; and talking to strangers or people who misrepresent themselves.</p>
Youth-produced sexual imagery identified in schools	<p>Young people do create and share sexual imagery of themselves, exposing them to risks, particularly if the images are shared further, including anxiety, bullying, increased vulnerability to sexual exploitation and even suicide. If a young person has shared imagery consensually, such as when in a romantic relationship or as a joke, or there is no intended malice, it is usually appropriate for the school to manage the incident internally. In contrast, any incident with aggravating factors, such as a young person sharing someone else's imagery without consent and with malicious intent, should generally be referred to the police. The College of Policing published in November 2016 a Briefing Note on police action in relation to youth-produced sexual imagery ('sexting'). This guidance seeks to support law enforcement professionals to respond in a proportionate way to reports of children (under 18-year-olds) possessing, sharing or generating indecent imagery of themselves or other children. Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, HM Government, September 2016, provides further guidance to schools.</p>
Gangs and Groups	<p>Young people associated with gangs are at a high risk of sexual exploitation. Sexual violence among peers is commonplace and it is used as a means of power and control over others, most commonly young women. Young people affected by, or associated with, gangs are at high risk of sexual exploitation and violence, and require safeguarding. The Office of the Children's Commissioner defined CSE in gangs and groups in its 2013 report – "If only someone had listened".</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Gangs – mainly comprising men and boys aged 13 to 25, who take part in many forms of criminal activity (e.g. knife crime or robbery) who can engage in violence against other gangs, and who have identifiable markers, e.g. a territory, a name, or (sometimes) clothing. Sexual exploitation is used in gangs to exert power and control over members; initiate young people into the gang; exchange sexual activity for status or protection; entrap rival gang members by exploiting girls and young women; and inflicting sexual assault as a weapon in conflict. • Groups – involves people who come together in person or online

	for the purpose of setting up, coordinating and/or taking part in the sexual exploitation of children in either an organised or opportunistic way.
County Lines	County lines typically involve an inner-city criminal gang travelling to smaller locations to sell drugs. The group will use a single telephone number for customers ordering drugs, operated from outside the area, which becomes their 'brand'. Unlike other criminal activities where telephone numbers are changed on a regular basis, these telephone numbers have value so are maintained and protected. The gangs tend to use a local property, generally belonging to a vulnerable person, as a base for their activities. This is often taken over by force or coercion, and in some instances victims have left their homes in fear of violence. Perpetrators employ various tactics to evade detection, including rotating gang members between locations so they are not identified by law enforcement or competitors, and using children to transport drugs in the belief that they are less likely to be stopped and searched. CSE can also be seen in these types of cases and every effort should be taken to identify those young people that are also being sexually exploited as well as being coerced into other criminal behaviour. This could constitute an offence of trafficking either for sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation, and a crime report and National Referral Mechanism (NRM) referral should be made and investigated. These situations will often become apparent to professionals when young people are located after missing episodes outside the London area, where there is no apparent reason for them being in that location and having no apparent means to have travelled there.
Organised/net worked sexual exploitation or trafficking	Young people (often connected) are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities, where they may be forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'parties' and young people who are involved may recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve 'buying and selling' of young people by offenders. Children are known to be trafficked for sexual exploitation, and this can occur across and within local authority boundaries, regions within the UK and across international borders.
Familial	Children can be exploited by their parents and/or other family members. Parents or other family members may also arrange the abuse of the child and/ or control and facilitate exploitation. Where one child is being exploited, siblings or other child relatives are at increased risk of suffering exploitation.
Opportunistic	This may occur quickly and without any form of grooming. Typically, older males identify vulnerable young people who may already have been groomed or sexually abused. The perpetrator will offer a young person a 'reward' or payment in exchange for sexual acts. The perpetrator is often linked with a network of abusive adults.

5. Identifying CSE

- 5.1 Safeguarding children from CSE is a shared responsibility across the LSCB partnership and beyond. A key element of this is ensuring that all staff and volunteers working within agencies that have contact with children and young people have the knowledge and tools necessary to identify those at risk of being exploited and if they have concerns regarding a child who they believe may be at risk of, or experiencing CSE, they know how to report these concerns.
- 5.2 To enable the identification of CSE, a number of actions have been implemented:
- Provision of various training courses, briefings, presentations and elearning on CSE available via the [LSCB Multi-Agency Training Programme](#) or through individual partner agency training programmes
 - Publicity through social media and the LSCB website
 - Sharing of various national, regional and guidance documents
- 5.3 Staff and volunteers that have concerns that a child or young person may be at risk of or a victim of CSE, should make a referral to Children's Social Care via CPAT.Referrals@redbridge.gov.uk or on 020 8708 3885(Monday to Friday, 09:00 to 17:00) or 020 8708 5897(evenings and weekends). Information should be completed on a [Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#).
- 5.4 The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) plays a key role in identifying children at risk of CSE. The MASH reviews all contacts and MERLINS (police referrals) where a child or young person is thought to be at risk of CSE. The MASH also receives contacts where, as part of the screening process, a risk of CSE is identified. In processing these cases, the MASH uses the [Redbridge Child Sexual Exploitation screening threshold table](#)
- 5.5 Any case open to a Social Worker, (for example, within the Looked After Children (LAC) or Community Social Work (CSW) Services) where there are concerns about CSE or a risk of CSE is uncovered or disclosed, a strategy meeting will be held. The meeting is convened by the Social Worker allocated to that child. Where CSE is identified within the work of the Early Intervention Team, the case is referred into the MASH for screening.
- 5.6 The link between children and young people who go missing and their vulnerability to CSE has been well established. Redbridge has established a robust process for carrying out interviews with children who return from a missing episode. Where a link to CSE has been identified, in an open case, the allocated social worker will arrange a strategy meeting. Where a case is not open, a referral will be made to the MASH.
- 5.7 The MASE supports co-ordination of intelligence about victims, offenders, locations and themes of CSE within Redbridge. The MASE is a forum for partners in Redbridge to allow regular information sharing and action planning to tackle CSE. The Redbridge MASE meets monthly with representation from Children's services, the police, Health, Education Welfare, the Youth Service, Victim Support and YOS. The purpose of MASE is not case management but a strategic overview of cases and operates in line with the [London CSE Operating Protocol, June 2017](#)
- 5.8 CSE crosses boundaries of culture, disability, social class, sexuality and gender. Until the MASE was set up, there was no profile of victims of CSE in Redbridge even though it

is known that many victims will have additional vulnerabilities such as problems in their home life, friends who have been exploited, or links to gangs. There is an overlap with other areas of need such as young people going missing, those involved in offending behavior, and those in local authority care. The LSCB receives a comprehensive annual report on CSE, which includes information from the MASE. The MASE is developing a profile of the victims of CSE in Redbridge, the 'type' of CSE taking place in Redbridge, where perpetrators operate and how successful the police and partners are in disrupting CSE activity.

6. Preventing CSE

- 6.1 In Redbridge, preventative work is focused on reducing the risk that children and young people will become victims of CSE through education and training to raise awareness and reduce vulnerability. Preventative work undertaken focuses on children who are known to be vulnerable to CSE e.g. those that are Looked After Children (LAC), children with disabilities, children who go missing or have other safeguarding concerns and those attending Redbridge schools.
- 6.2 Children in care, especially those placed out of the local authority area, are particularly vulnerable to CSE. In Redbridge, the Looked After Children (LAC) team are aware of the importance of their role in maintaining regular, effective contact with children regardless of where they are placed, mindful of their increased risk of CSE.
- 6.3 Redbridge Children's Services and the Met Police East Area Basic Command Unit (BCU) work with residential children's homes and semi-independent units in the borough to address the high levels of missing from care and advising on better management of missing and absence. They also provide on-going CSE awareness raising training to foster carers and care providers.
- 6.4 The link between children and young people who go missing and vulnerability to CSE has been well established. Redbridge Children's Services fulfils its statutory duty in offering independent missing return interviews to all Redbridge children who go missing regardless of where they are living. The purpose of the missing return interview is to hear the voice of the child and understand why they went missing, where to, what happened, who they were with, any risks that occurred and what the 'push' and 'pull' factors relating to the missing episode were in order to try and prevent or minimise the likelihood of further episodes, and to address any safety concerns relating to the child. Support can be provided either via a referral to the Young Person's Group, to the Early Intervention Panel for a bespoke multi-agency support package or through provision of contact number that children can use if considering going missing again.
- 6.5 Where a missing from home return interview reveals that a child is at risk of or involved in CSE, these concerns are escalated quickly through the appropriate referral routes by contacting the allocated Social Worker with any concerns that emerge in the interview. As well as discussing the missing episode, the interviews with the children and young people also highlight the risks they could be exposed to when they go missing (including CSE) and talk about 'safe running'.
- 6.6 One key area of prevention of CSE is education. Partners are committed to enabling schools and other education providers to raise awareness of CSE, including early identification of risk, and a number of different project strands and communication routes are now in place with Redbridge schools.

7. Supporting and Protecting Victims of CSE

7.1 In Redbridge, in all cases where CSE is suspected a multi-agency strategy meeting is convened. Prior to the strategy meeting, the allocated Social Worker will use the [Redbridge CSE Screening Tool](#) to analyse the nature, extent and severity of the CSE being discussed. The strategy meeting discusses the child's case in detail and agrees the input required from each agency to support the child. Decisions taken will depend on the type of CSE and the category of risk. The meeting agrees a set of actions to address the concerns raised by the case. Most of these actions will relate to services to support the child/young person which will be reflected in their care plan. However, the meeting also discusses actions that should be taken in relation to the perpetrators involving the police and other agencies. At the strategy meeting a data collection is undertaken. The information gathered is used to inform the MASE of Redbridge's victim data profile so that a strategic response can be developed.

7.2 The victim may be referred to one of the services managed and commissioned within the Edge of Care Team and or referred to the Early Intervention Service. The services provided include:

- One to one advocacy to support the young person through their experience and to develop an understanding of what constitutes a healthy relationship
- A family support work to work with the family
- A gangs worker to support young people not to join or to leave a gang
- Independent return home interview if the young person has been missing
- Small package of support following missing episode/s
- Young Person's Support Group

8. Intervention

8.1 The strategic overview of CSE being developed by MASE is starting to identify concerns about particular localities, addresses, businesses and professions. In Redbridge, [Operation Makesafe](#), led by the Police, with key input from LBR Community Safety, is the key programme to address many of these concerns. Particular activities underway include:

- Street operations and visible policing
- Engagement with taxi cabs, mini cab companies, hotels, guest houses and licensed premises regarding CSE, encouraging vigilance and advising how to report using the strapline '*say something if you see something*'.
- Use of specific Orders and Notices
- Use of licensing laws and powers

9. Prosecution

9.1 As CSE is a criminal act, it is important that suspected perpetrators are investigated and where appropriate, prosecuted. The approach to tackling CSE perpetrators in Redbridge is proactive and joined-up. The aim is to target known perpetrators, disrupt their activities and increase the number of prosecutions, not only to protect children but also to dissuade further criminal activity.

- 9.2 While safeguarding children is the guiding principle, historically many responses to CSE focus solely on children. Sometimes the victim is supported without addressing the behaviour of abusers who may go on to exploit other children. While prosecutions can be difficult, particularly because of the positions of power that perpetrators tend to have over their victims, the Met Police Service East Area BCU and their colleagues in the Sexual Exploitation Team (SET) will seek a prosecution for CSE wherever evidence supports this approach, with multi-agency support. Young people are more likely to trust and confide in adults working for agencies they feel comfortable with and this may not always include the police. Staff undertaking direct work with a child have to be able to balance the need to support and reassure children with an awareness of how to assist in gathering evidence in an effective way. In Redbridge the MASE plays a key role in facilitating this.
- 9.3 Where a prosecution is not possible, the police will use other legislation available to them to disrupt the activities of perpetrators such as Child Abduction Warning Notices (CAWNs). In cases where the perpetrator is a child, traditional policing methods in handling sexual exploitation by adults are unlikely to work. In such cases, Children's Services aim to safeguard both victim and perpetrator, while ensuring that the exploitation ends. At the same time, where it is clear that a crime has been committed, for example in peer-on-peer gang related abuse, Redbridge is committed to ensuring a response using criminal justice systems if appropriate.

10. Links to Information, Guidance, Resources and Training

National Guidance

- [Child sexual exploitation – Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation, Department for Education, February 2017](#)
- [Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation – Progress Report, HM Government, February 2017](#)
- [Working together to safeguard children, HM Government, March 2015](#) (revised guidance anticipated in Spring 2018)
- [What to do if you're worried a child is being abuse – Advice for practitioners, HM Government, March 2015](#)
- [Keeping children safe in education – Statutory guidance for schools and colleges, DfE, September 2016](#)

Regional Guidance

- [The London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol, 3rd Edition, London Safeguarding Children Board, June 2017](#)
- [Safeguarding Children from Sexual Exploitation, London Child Protection Procedures, 5th Edition, London Safeguarding Children Board, 2017](#)

Local Information

- [Redbridge Local Safeguarding Children Board \(LSCB\) – CSE information and resources for professionals](#)
- [Are you worried about a child? How to access early help, and thresholds for referral to children's social care, Redbridge LSCB, June 2016](#)
- [Redbridge Multi-Agency Referral Form \(MARF\)](#)
- [LSCB CSE Briefing for Professionals Flyer](#)
- [LSCB CSE Training Course for Practitioners Training Flyer](#)

Contacts

LB Redbridge Strategic Lead on CSE – Head of CP&EI Service Tel: 020 8708 3902

LB Redbridge CSE & Missing Co-ordinator Tel: 020 8708 3883

LSCB Manager – Tel: 020 8708 5282 LSCB@redbridge.gov.uk