

Young Inspectors REPORT 2015

Young inspectors report on child sexual exploitation

This report is a summary of the findings by the Young Inspectors Team

1. Who are the Young Inspectors?

The Young Inspectors is a group of young people aged 16-21 who are known to the service and who undertake yearly research into the views of other service users and professionals about the services provided by the Council's family services and social work department (FSSW).

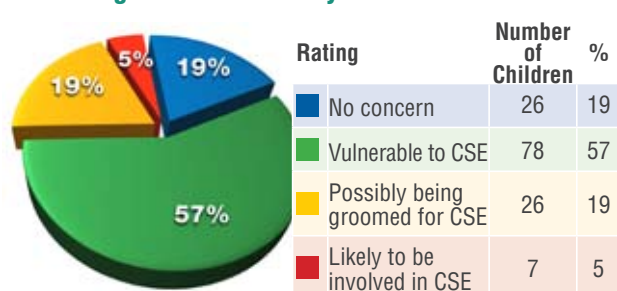
Young Inspectors are selected through an interview process and are involved in designing and conducting each inspection. Their strength lies in the fact that they can apply their own experience and knowledge of the service to the inspection programme.

2. Why did the Young Inspectors inspect child sexual exploitation?

FSSW is concerned about the safety of young people age 12-17 who are at risk of child sexual exploitation and wishes to ensure that all possible measures are undertaken to keep these young people safe.

The total number of children who were CSE risk assessed from April 2014 to March 2015 were 137. Of all children assessed, seven children were identified as likely to be involved in CSE.

Risk ratings for children likely to be involved in CSE



3. How did Young Inspectors gather the information?

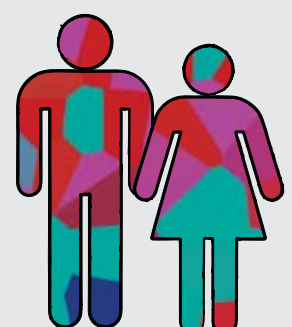
Information gathering and research consisted of four main parts:

- Reading documents and researching information on websites
- Interviewing professionals from the Children's Society and from Camden Children, Schools and Families services
- Holding a focus group for young people and for social workers
- Consultations (questionnaires completed by young people and social work staff).

4. What training and support did Young Inspectors receive?

Young inspectors were supported with their work on an ongoing basis by the programme manager. The support was tailored to meet individual needs and to enable young people to gain skills and confidence to carry out the inspection successfully. The specific training included: training about CSE provided by Safer London, workshop on facilitating focus groups, analysis of data and use of Excel.

The importance of maintaining confidentiality was emphasised throughout the programme and applied to all aspects of work.



YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

CSE is a form of abuse in which you can be tricked or pressured into taking part in sexual activity, in return for something – like attention, love, food, shelter, cigarettes, drugs, alcohol, gifts or money.

You may think that you are in a boyfriend/girlfriend relationship but the relationship involves control and manipulation by the perpetrator without you realising, and you can become isolated from your friends and family. Sometimes the perpetrator will use intimidation, physical or verbal threats or violence to get you to do what they want.

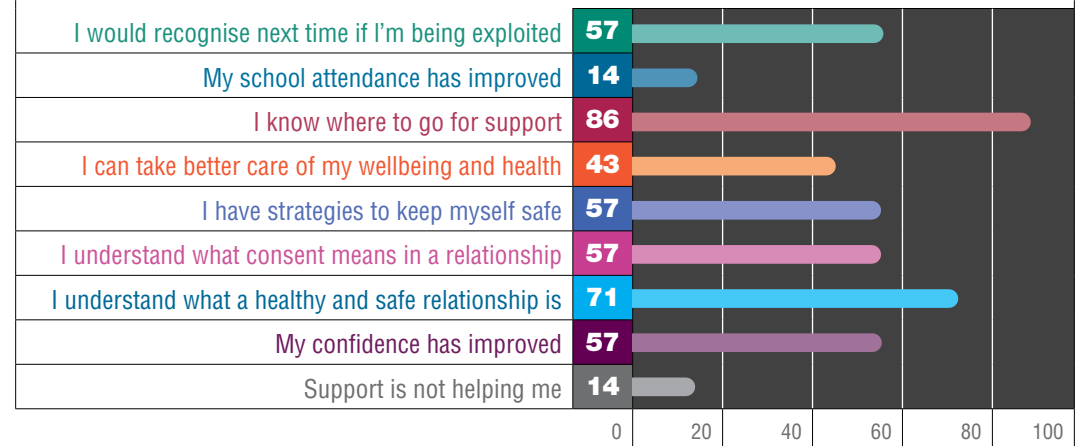
Young people agree with the description of CSE presented in the questionnaire. All responses can be put into three groups:

- 1** Recognising their relationship as exploitative.. e.g. "he hit me and called me names", I knew we were not boyfriend/girlfriend.
- 2** Failing to recognise their relationship as exploitative and describing themselves as being loved 'not for selfish reasons'.
- 3** Not knowing they have been assessed as being at risk of CSE and finding the description of perpetrator behaviours distressing.

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

How the support you are receiving is helping you

Percentage of positive responses



■ People have helped me and explained about safety and I know who to go to for help. I feel more confident to ask for help in these situations now ■ I know where to go for support ■ It is helpful having a mentor at school ■ I learnt from my mistake not to engage in a conversation when approached by a stranger ■ I keep myself safe, including going to the GP to get condoms and going on the pill ■ I could not have done it without the support of my social worker ■ I talk more now about feelings to my social worker ■

YOUNG PEOPLE'S OWN DESCRIPTIONS OF CSE INCLUDE THE FOLLOWING:

"IT DESCRIBES MY CASE AND SITUATION I WAS IN."

"CSE IS WHEN YOU ARE MANIPULATED INTO SEXUAL ACTIVITY UNKNOWNLY."

"I THINK THAT CSE IS WHEN SOMEONE GROOMS ANOTHER PERSON - FOR EXAMPLE GIVES THEM GIFTS AND BRIBES THEM TO EVENTUALLY GET SEX."

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

YOUNG PEOPLE'S VIEWS

PLEASE SAY WHAT YOUR WORKER DID OR IS CURRENTLY DOING THAT HAS MADE THE MOST IMPORTANT DIFFERENCE TO YOU.

I CAN BE
OPEN WITH
MY SOCIAL
WORKER.

BEING
FRIENDLY
AND NON-
JUDGMENTAL.

MY SOCIAL
WORKER
HELPED ME
TO BE SAFE –
SHE MOVED
ME OUT
OF LONDON.

HAVING A GOOD
RELATIONSHIP
WITH THE
SOCIAL WORKER
– WE WENT ON
A CHARITY WALK
AND HAD TIME
TO TALK.

IF YOU FEEL
VULNERABLE, IT IS
IMPORTANT TO
GET HELP EARLY
SO THE SITUATION
DOES NOT GET
WORSE.

LEAVING MATTERS BE AND
ALLOWING TEENAGERS
TO MAKE THEIR OWN LIFE
CHOICES AND DECISIONS.

SHE CREATED
AN UNDERSTANDING
OF WHAT CSE IS...

AND THE SUPPORT
AVAILABLE IF I EVER
NEEDED IT.

SOCIAL WORKERS' VIEWS

Key
consultation
responses

Young Inspectors

EVALUATION OF THE INSPECTION

1 Do young people at risk of sexual exploitation understand why social services are being involved?

"To some extent, but some young people do not recognise when they are at risk of CSE."

"No, quite often young people at risk of CSE are very loyal to the perpetrator and think that they are keeping themselves safe. It is our job to help the young person to understand their situation and the risks that they are being exposed to."

"The young person does not always want to accept that this is the situation. They may feel that the rewards they are receiving knowingly provide them with a level of control."

"Sometimes they feel social workers are intruding into their privacy."

"If you have never had social services involvement this could be quite bewildering."

2 How could parents be helped to protect their children from sexual exploitation?

"Parents need help to be clear on consent issues and risks from peers."

"Use of PACE* to help parents. It is important for social workers not to take over from the parent but support parents in an enabling way so they can protect their child."

"Having increased awareness of children's friendship groups and being vigilant to notice changes in behaviour."

"By helping children learn what a healthy relationship is, how to keep safe and knowing when to say no."

"Parents need to understand that sexual exploitation comes in all forms and in most cases, those exploiting young people have power over them by virtue of age, gender, intellect, finances and at times physically."

*Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation.
A charity which works with parents and carers.
Website: paceuk.info

"PARENTS NEED TO HAVE A GOOD KNOWLEDGE OF SOCIAL MEDIA USED BY YOUNG PEOPLE, SIGNS AND INDICATORS OF CSE."



Meron (Lead inspector)

I learnt and developed further skills such as research, interviewing, time management, communication, listening and leadership.

Doing this project made me realise how serious CSE is. It also made me think how I should be involved in any campaign to raise awareness and to be able to help and support young people.

The most valuable thing about this project is that it gives young people like me the opportunity to learn about new things and to be able to do something important and help Camden's social care service to make changes or improvements to the service.

Jenny (Inspector)

Working with everyone and having discussions was fun. Thinking about what questions to ask was difficult. We needed to ask good questions in order to get information needed for the research.

I found the things that should change in agencies very valuable (e.g. what we should do to make people more aware of CSE). More people should know the signs of CSE and what they can do to help CSE victims.

John (Inspector)

I enjoyed the project and it inspired me to help people and to try to stop CSE for good. It also made me pass on my knowledge of CSE to my friends as I think it is vital for young people to know about CSE for everyday life.

The Young Inspectors project has also improved my confidence. I found this project valuable and it has inspired me to try to help stop CSE and try to support the victims.

Lewis (Inspector)

Overall the young inspector's project was a huge success. Social workers do their best to help but sometimes, it is better to get someone independent as it can be easier to build a good relationship and gain trust.

We came up with ways to support young people who are victims of CSE. This project has raised my awareness about CSE. I appreciate the opportunity that I have been given to work on this project because it helps in so many ways.




Sophie (Inspector)

The training with Safer London taught me what CSE meant and how high a risk it was to young people. I learnt new skills such as Excel and focus group techniques. Interviewing social workers was a new skill for me as I have never interviewed anyone before.

Overall, this project has changed my perspective on CSE and what services Camden is providing for young people. I would like to support Camden to reduce CSE.

KEY RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1** Continue ongoing training for social workers, foster carers and other professionals, including use of social media by young people and associated risks of CSE.
- 2** Develop awareness-raising information (posters and leaflets) for young people, specifically highlighting peer exploitation.
- 3** Involve young people in providing awareness training for peers, parents and services, using creative activities such as drama workshops and short film productions.
- 4** The current CSE strategy meetings have two outcomes that find a young person either at risk or not at risk of CSE. It is recommended that there is a third outcome that requires more information to be gathered and further assessment to be completed prior to making the decision on risk.
- 5** Involve young people in a review of the return home interview form to ensure that the correct questions are being asked.
- 6** Ensure that every young person who has a missing episode is given an opportunity to receive a home return interview.
- 7** Make sure young people who have suffered CSE or are at risk of CSE have continued support from the same social worker so they can build a strong and trusting relationship.
- 8** Ensure parents are aware of peer sexual exploitation (including the use of social media to groom young people) as they have a key role in safeguarding young people.
- 9** Make sure local strategies and plans are informed by the opinions and experience of those who have been at risk of CSE.
- 10** Continue to develop a targeted preventative and self-protection programme for looked after children.
- 11** Ensure that support is also available for boys who are at risk of CSE or have been sexually exploited. Awareness raising and support work to include support groups for boys.
- 12** Continue to provide an independent person to conduct the return home interview. Young people respond positively to an independent person doing return home interviews. They engage well when the interviewer introduces herself as an independent officer (not a social worker and not from the police).
- 13** Young people want good quality relationships and sex education to help them understand issues around consent, respect for each other and what exploitation means. This could be done through drama activities and good video productions.
- 14** Young people would like police to develop a gentler, non-judgmental approach when investigating cases where young people are at risk of CSE and to focus on the safety of young people, not the crime.
- 15** Counselling to be made more easily available to young people in an informal, supportive setting.
- 16** Continue raising awareness about health services offered to young people, including emergency contacts and helplines.
- 17** Develop opportunities for young people to provide peer to peer support to young people at risk of CSE.



IF YOU WOULD LIKE
TO BE A YOUNG INSPECTOR
OR WOULD LIKE TO KNOW
MORE ABOUT THE PROJECT,
PLEASE CONTACT US VIA
www.backchatonline.org.uk