

House Keeping

- Cameras please keep these on where possible
- Ask questions by commenting in the 'chat' or 'hands up'
- Listen, talk and discuss in a way that respects each individual
- Everyone has a responsibility and a right to contribute
- Please explain any jargon, technical language
- Acknowledge diversity
- Confidentiality
- Look after yourselves

Introductions

Please introduce yourself by saying:

- Who you are
- Who you work for and/or where you work
- What you would like to get out of today's training

Aims and Objectives

- Explore the definitions of both child sexual and child criminal exploitation.
- Explore risk factors associated to children that may be at risk of exploitation.
- Identify ways to improve practitioner's observation, assessment and documentation of exploitation.
- Gain a deeper knowledge of groups/gangs and recognise the increased risk for children associated with gangs and county lines.
- Increase knowledge of the local picture and local resources available to support children affected by child exploitation.

Recap Definitions

Child Criminal Exploitation

‘Child Criminal Exploitation... occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an **imbalance of power** to **coerce, control, manipulate** or deceive a child or young person **under the age of 18**. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity **appears consensual**. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve **physical contact**; it can also occur through the use of **technology**.

Criminal exploitation of children... includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft’.

(Home Office 2018)

‘When someone you trusted makes you commit crimes for their benefit’

(The Children’s Society)

Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)



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.

(Department for Education – February 2017)

County Lines

- This is a police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas/market & coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or “deal lines”. (Also known as Dangerous Drugs Network/DDN’s).
- It involves CCE as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as ‘**cuckooing**’.

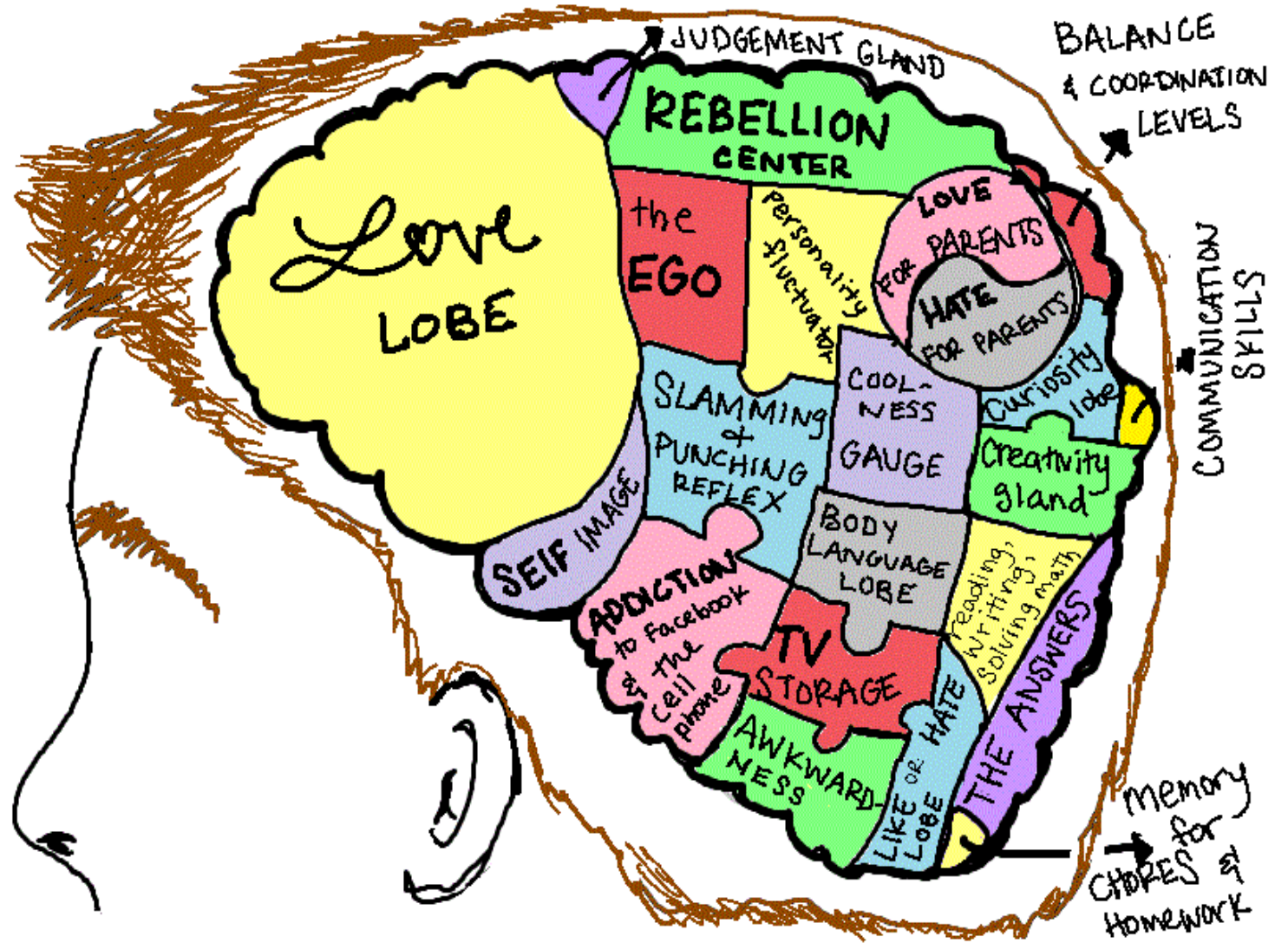
Local Lines

- Local lines replicate the County Lines model, but operate at a local level, within a community
- In Swindon we are seeing that it is increasingly local lines who are recruiting children and young people. Some young adults are facilitating the exploitation of other children/young people

Safeguarding Adolescents

Risk and Vulnerability

THE AVERAGE TEENAGE BRAIN



What are some of the risks/vulnerabilities in adolescence?

Shout out your responses.

Risks and Vulnerability

Some Natural Vulnerabilities

- ✓ Taking risks
- ✓ Experimenting with alcohol, drugs & sexuality
- ✓ Rebelling against parents/carers
- ✓ Staying out late
- ✓ Meeting new people
- ✓ Ignore good advice
- ✓ Reject authority
- ✓ Vulnerable to flattery
- ✓ Secretive
- ✓ Peer pressure
- ✓ Internet use

(Jessica Taylor - Forensic Psychologist)

Some Additional Vulnerabilities

- ✓ Feeling isolated
- ✓ Children looked after
- ✓ Bullied
- ✓ Poor parenting/protection
- ✓ Unstable family/friend network
- ✓ Previously experienced abuse
- ✓ Go missing a lot
- ✓ Homeless/sofa surfing
- ✓ Existing dependency
- ✓ Learning disabilities
- ✓ Exploring sexuality/gender identity
- ✓ Difficult life experience

Interconnected conditions for CSE.
Can be applicable to other forms of exploitation



Children/Young people are only vulnerable if there is an abuser in their vicinity targeting and wanting to abuse them.

Beckett 2011, 2016; text adapted to 'source of harm' in 2019)

Source: Beckett, Holmes and Walker (2017) *Child sexual exploitation: Definition and Guide for Professionals - Extended text*. [Click here to access](#).

Risk Reduction Response

- ✓ Danger of agencies responses to assign blame to the child and think that by giving child tools/advice this will safeguard them from abuse/exploitation - leaves the child/ren to reduce their own risk and vulnerabilities.
- ✓ Toolkits can be too prescriptive and bypass professional judgement - they should only ever be used as a guidance for professional judgement.
- ✓ Indicators need to be validated, or at least, not discriminated against boys, younger children and children from BMER (Black Minority Ethnic & Refugee) communities.
- ✓ Using CSE/CCE acronyms deters people from talking about what actually is happened - rape, assault, plugging, cuckooing, etc.

What are the signs of
Exploitation?

Please shout out your answers.

Signs of exploitation

- Going missing
- Use of drugs (increase/change)
- Unexplained money
- New items
- Withdrawn
- Criminal activity
- Being found out of county
- More than one phone
- Staying out later
- New or changes friendship groups/ages
- Self harming
- Items going missing from home
- Use of weapons
- Health concerns (both physical and emotional)
- Change in school attendance
- Change in appearance
- Change in behaviour
- Injuries
- Excessive use on internet
- Change in location/area spending time
- Tiredness
- Change in appetite

Attending to Language

What is Attending to Language?

- Need for professionals to consider the words, phrases, discourses and jargon used when speaking to/about children/young people and adults.
- Emphasis on the impact of language used and the implications it has on providing effective support to children/young people/adults subject to exploitation.
- Language used verbally and written in files, referrals, assessments and reports.

Consider the following...

Information contained on a report concerning a 17-year old Ali female who lives in semi-independent accommodation.

“Staff at her placement have become increasingly concerned at the number of male visitors to the home. She is demonstrating over sexualised and promiscuous behaviour, and staff there believe she may be putting herself at risk by prostituting herself. She comes home spelling of cannabis and they are concerned that she may be offering sex for drugs or money to buy drugs”. Staff are concerned she is recruiting and exploiting other residents.

What are your initial thoughts on reading this?

What if Ali was male?

Shout out your comments/observations.

The reality....

She has been forced through threats and violence to carry drugs and firearms for a gang.

She has also been forced to have sex with the gang members – she has been repeatedly raped.

She uses cannabis/other drugs as a way of coping.

She has been coerced to 'recruit' new children and adults not known to the police/other agencies.

The impact on individuals



Source: [Waltham Forest Council](#)

Click here if unable to open - [Victim blaming language – YouTube](#)

Some terms used and the implication

Term	What it can imply
Plugging	Dismisses the context of sexual violence, coercion, humiliation and exploitation the child has had to endure in the process of this act being committed
Going country	Implies a voluntary action and diminishes the multifaceted coercion, grooming and exploitation that occurs
Putting themselves at risk	Implies the child is free and able to make informed decisions and is responsible for risks instigated by the perpetrator or the contexts in which they live
Prostitution	Implies the child has capacity to make a free and informed choice and negates exploitation or coercion into sexual acts
Promiscuous	Implies an invitation to consensual sexual activity and elicits a stereotypical judgement which is victim blaming for non-consensual sexual contact.
Knife crime	Negates the potential seriousness of other forms of violence. Is this categorically more dangerous than a blunt object used to cause harm? Also does not consider the context which fosters a need to carry a weapon.
Cuckooing	Does not consider the multifaceted nature of exploitation and that a home either theirs or others is being used to facilitate further forms of exploitation
	Source: National Working Group Making Words Matter 2021

Term	What it can imply
Drug dealer	Hides the coercion and exploitation the child is subjected to. Implies autonomy in actions and consent to engage in criminal activity fully informed of potential repercussions and free from coercion
LAC kid	Not using the child's name creates emotional distance with the child and hides their individual experiences. How may this term be experienced by children when used by professional carers attempting to engage them therapeutically?
Gang member	Hides the coercion and exploitation the child is subjected to. Implies autonomy in actions and consent to engage in criminal activity fully informed of potential repercussions and free from coercion
Drug or Money Mule	This implies that the young person has the capacity to make a free and fully informed choice. It also does not recognise the exploitative context the young person is being influenced by.
Refusal to Engage or Hard to Reach	Does not recognise perpetrator influence or how accessible services are for the young person. Does not consider what processes may limit opportunities a young person has to engage with services or how safe do they feel to enter into 'unknown territory'.
The child is in communication with unknown adults online	Can imply that the child is proactive in seeking out adults online rather than attending to the motivations of adults in engaging in these communications with vulnerable children.

Responses To Individual Child Harm

Poorly worded response/inappropriate term

They will not engage with services.

A young person's previous experience of engaging with services may impact their perceptions of the support they are going to receive from a service. Young people may be expected to speak to lots of professionals, and impacts of funding, capacity, staff transitions can mean that a young person feels they won't be supported. It is important to recognise the factors creating difficulty for services to engage the young person.

25/2/22 from [Child Exploitation Language Guide | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#) (2022)

Appropriately worded response

Suggested alternatives may be...

- Due to the trauma they have experienced because of their exploitation, the child finds it difficult to trust unknown adults.
- Services have not yet found the best way to build relationships with them.
- Support was offered that did not meet the needs of the young person at that time.
- It is recommended that the services try an alternative approach to engaging the child.

Responses To Individual Child Harm

Poorly worded response/inappropriate term

Young person is vulnerable.

There are some specific terms that can help identify heightened vulnerability to exploitation, however it is the situation surrounding the young person rather than the young person themselves that is the cause of this vulnerability. Being specific about these environmental factors and vulnerabilities can be helpful to not only take any responsibility away from the young person but also to help design the multi-agency interventions – for example, the young person and their family is living in acute poverty and this creates a vulnerable situation to exploitation.

25/2/22 from [Child Exploitation Language Guide | The Children's Society](#) (childrenssociety.org.uk) (2022)

Appropriately worded response

Suggested alternatives may be...

- The young person could be in a vulnerable situation
- Their environment or situation could put them at risk of exploitation.
- The young person could be impacted by the situation surrounding them.
- The contexts or environments the young person is in could make them vulnerable to exploitation.

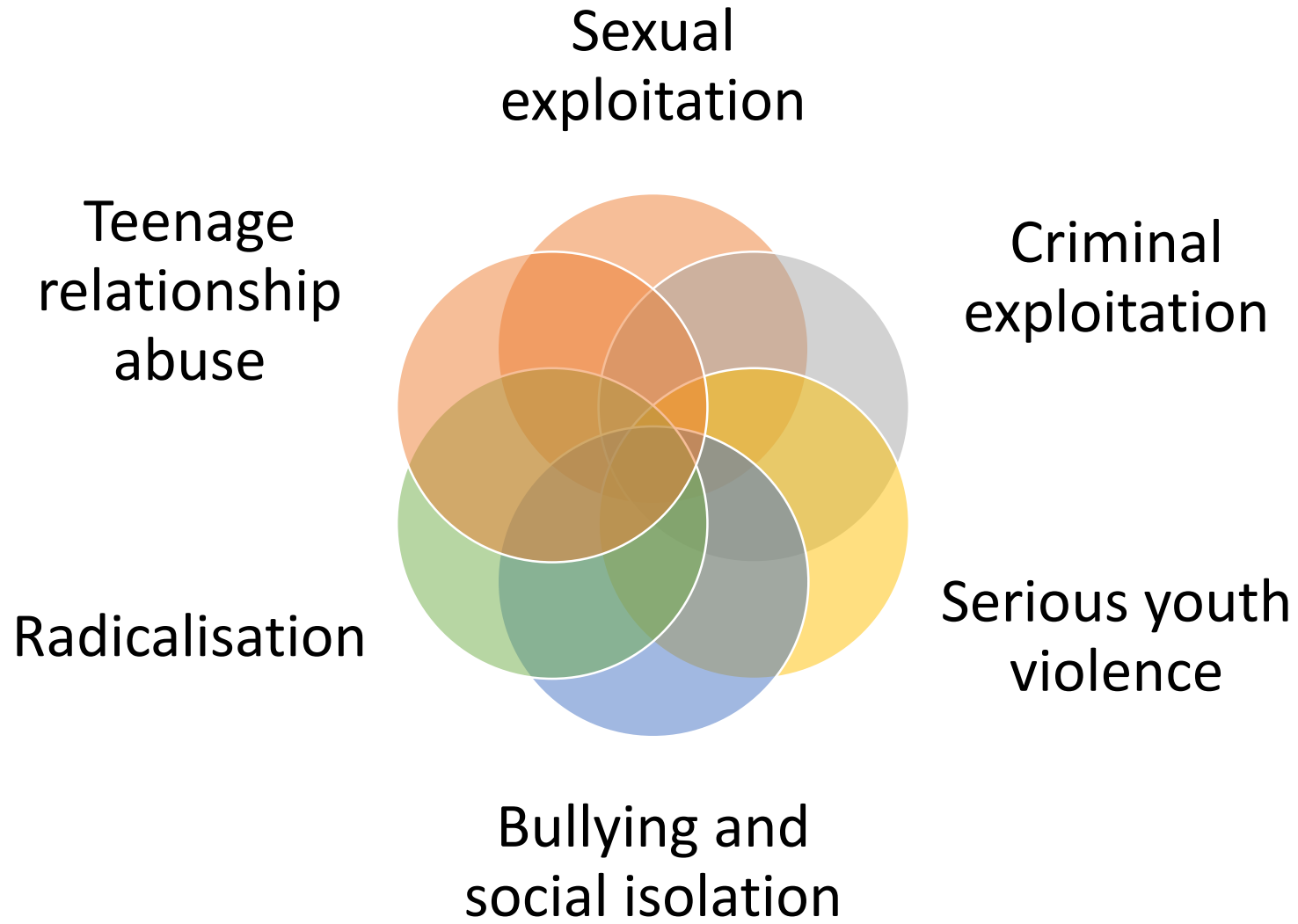
Risk Outside The Home (ROTH)
Adopting a Contextual
Safeguarding Approach

Risk Outside The Home adopting a Contextual Safeguarding approach

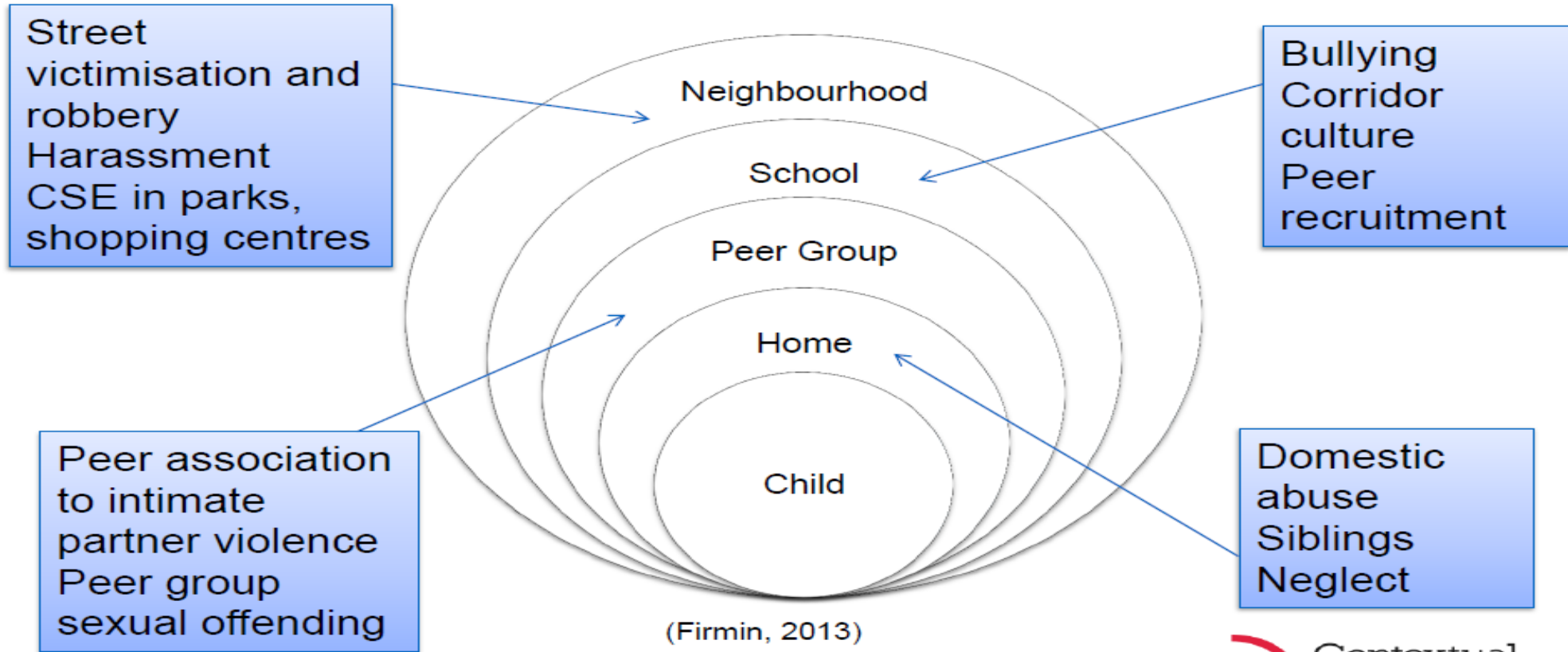
‘As young people get older their experiences of abuse are often associated with public environments in which they spend their time. Yet child protection procedures routinely intervene with individual young people and their families rather than the public environments where abuse occurs.’



Source: Firmin 2016



Contextual nature of adolescent vulnerability and safety



What do we mean by Children First ?

It is crucial that we see adolescents as children first. It may be tempting to view/treat them as mini-adults especially those who act older or are older. Remember they are still a child. Seeing an adolescent as a person makes it easier for us to see the wider context. We have adopted seven principles to improve our responses to adolescent risk:

See the person - not the behaviour, actions or offence

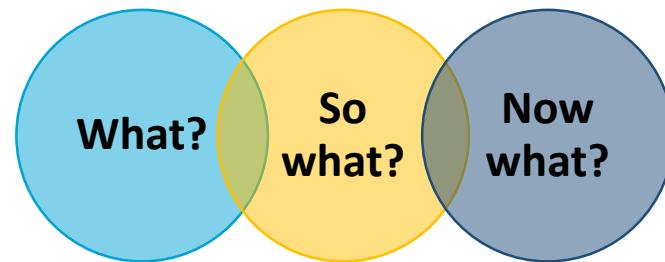
There is much more to an adolescent than their behaviour. Be aware of your own emotional responses

- 1. Work with adolescent development – particularly perception, autonomy, aspiration, and skills***
- 2. Work with adolescents as assets and resources e.g. draw on strengths to build confidence and resilience***
- 3. Promote supportive relationships between adolescents and their family and peers***
- 4. Prioritise supportive relationships between adolescents and key practitioner(s) through service design***
- 5. Take a holistic approach both to adolescents and the risks they face e.g. avoid labelling adolescents according to risks***
- 6. Ensure services are accessible and advertised – respond to adolescent autonomy, advertise benefits and provide outreach***
- 7. Equip and support the workforce***

What does Trauma-Informed mean ?

Research has shown that experiences of trauma can have a significant impact on adolescent brain development. In general, trauma can be defined as a psychological, emotional response to an event or an experience that is deeply distressing or disturbing.

Trauma can be thought of as an umbrella term under which Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs) belongs. Some adolescents will have a traumatic response to risk and/or harm that they have experienced. Trauma is subjective - an event that is traumatic for one person may not be for another. Individuals should be able to develop their own narratives.



An understanding of trauma helps practitioners to recognise that rather than being completely in control of decision-making, adolescents often make constrained choices compared to developed adults who can make choices, over which they have full control.

A 'trauma-informed approach' starts with a premise of asking
"What has happened to you?"
as opposed to
"What is wrong with you?"

What are Reachable Moments?

These are the occasions when a child comes into contact with a service at a time when they are vulnerable. This is a reachable moment because it gives us an opportunity to make a connection with that child, offering a chance to actually reach them.

Why are reachable moments so important?

Making a connection in a reachable moment could potentially change the direction of travel for a child and make a difference to their whole life.

Example: A child is found in a county lines situation and arrested. They are far from home, on their own and feeling afraid of what is going to happen to them. The child is fearful of the criminal justice system, how their carers/parents are going to react and the organised crime group which is exploiting them with whom they may also have a drug debt. This presents a “reachable” moment for any professional now involved. Due to the fear and vulnerability this child is experiencing it may be more likely that they positively receive offers of help and support. Our role is to make sure that offer of support is about the...

right conversation, with the right action, at the right time.

Adolescents and exploitation

- 'Imperfect victims' (Rees and Stein 1999) which makes addressing those risks and their impact a complex business
- Legislatively and socially caught in the middle - caught between being a child and an adult both in our laws and in our culture. However, we need to ensure we consider our young people are still in need of (and entitled to) *protection as child*.

Identify ways to improve practitioner's observation, assessment and documentation of exploitation.

Assessment Framework

Consider what parts of the assessment framework you can contribute to.

In your role/agency/service what do you see on a daily basis/interaction that will contribute to this assessment?

How can you express the voice of the child?



Local Picture

What does it mean for us Risk Outside the Home (ROTH)

- Protecting teenagers from risk outside of the home becomes 'everyone's business'.
- Rethinking Child protection.
- More children on CIN plans or ROTH Conference?
- A complex safeguarding process
- New people at and around the table
- Making sure people still come to the table (even if the framework of CP has changed)
- Working together is key
- Transitions into adult services essential
- How do we create safe spaces for young people

MARP - Multi Agency Risk Panel

- ✓ The purpose of MARP is to Quality Assure the safety planning in place for children at risk of Missing, and Child Exploitation.
- ✓ MARP makes Multi-Agency recommendations regarding the safety planning to all partners to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people highlighted at MARP
- ✓ Use **Victim Offender Location Themes (VOLT)** model
- ✓ Referral into MARP is by completion of the [Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework \(CERAF\)](#) *(replaced the Vulnerability Check List – VCL)*

Multi-Agency Meetings – Child Exploitation

- Mapping/ Risk Outside The Home meetings
- Emerging gangs meeting (being renamed Violence Reduction Forum
- Children who carry weapons



Key Messages – Child Exploitation

- ✓ Safeguarding children/young people is everyone's responsibility.
- ✓ Share information – no matter how trivial you think it may be.
- ✓ Need to be creative in our approach - How do we make brave decisions to do things differently?
- ✓ There is a real commitment to multi-agency working and evidence of good practice that has made a difference.

- ✓ Children/young people cannot consent to their own abuse.
- ✓ Any child/young person, male or female, can be at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation or Child Criminal Exploitation.
- ✓ Child Sexual Exploitation is more than just sexual assault: Perpetrators who sexually exploit children commit multiple crimes when they do so.
- ✓ Perpetrators can be women as well as men.
- ✓ These children do not see themselves as victims. They are not your ideal victims.
- ✓ Exploited children/young people may refuse help but they still need to be safeguarded, working with parents and children, wherever possible, is essential.

- ✓ It is important to recognise as practitioners that children do not fit neatly into one form of exploitation, they can be both criminally and sexually exploited at the same time.
- ✓ It is important to recognise that building a trusted relationship between children and practitioners is essential to effective communication and risk management.
- ✓ Establishing relationships takes time!
- ✓ Professional curiosity “don't take what I tell you at face value”

Every interaction is an intervention!

What action can you take? Some practical interventions.

- ✓ Challenge language - say what it is
- ✓ Engage with children/young people to map...
 - ✓ their peer relationships and friendships
 - ✓ areas where they feel safe/unsafe and
 - ✓ connections between children open to services
- ✓ Be [professionally curious](#)
- ✓ Recognise and capitalise on reachable moments
- ✓ Use [disruption tactics](#) such as Child Abduction Warning Notice (CAWN), Sexual Risk Order's (SRO's), National Referral Mechanism (NRM) applications
- ✓ Submit [Intelligence Reports](#), (if this link is not available please report any intelligence via 101),
- ✓ Make referrals to the Multi Agency Risk Panel (MARP), complete a [Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework \(CERAF\)](#), identifying Victim, Offender, Location & Themes (VOLT)
- ✓ Ask yourself – should you be the trusted adult that will continue to support the child?

Looking After Yourself

- We need resilient workers to support children and families
- This work is challenging and messy
- It takes a lot of persistent and stamina to develop relationships with children who have been exploited
- It can be emotionally draining and impact on your daily life
- ‘Stickability’- the need to stick with them whatever they throw at you!



‘To develop normally, a child requires progressively more complex joint activity with one or more adults who have an irrational emotional relationship with the child, Someone’s got be crazy about the kid.

That’s number one. First, Last, and always’.

Bronfenbrenner



Please complete the [course evaluation form - Child exploitation](#)

Useful Resources

Swindon Safeguarding Partnership website has a variety of resources:

- [Child Exploitation webpage](#)
- [Risk Outside The Home webpage](#)
- [Child Exploitation: Practitioners Resource :](#)
- [Safeguarding Adolescents Resource](#)
- [ROTH - Safety mapping and planning with young people in Swindon - Swindon Safeguarding Partnership](#)
- [Child Exploitation Initial Screening Tool](#)
- [Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework](#)
- [Using appropriate language for those subject to or at risk of exploitation](#)
- 7 Minute Briefings and Practice Briefs on a range of topics, such as [professional curiosity](#), [effective information sharing and consent](#) and [capturing the voice of the child](#)
- [Wiltshire Police Intelligence submissions](#)
- [CSE & Sexual Abuse Archives - Free Social Work Tools and Resources: www.ocialWorkersToolbox.com](#)
- [Serious Case Review Jacob \(Oxford\)](#)
- [The Children's Society – Child Exploitation Language Guide](#)