

6. CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND THEIR FAMILIES

6.20 Child Sexual Exploitation

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is recognised nationally as one of the most important challenges facing agencies today. It is a devastating form of abuse that can have damaging and long lasting impacts for children and their families.

In Buckinghamshire partners work to the following definition of CSE as developed by the National Working Group for sexually exploited children and young people;

“The sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of performing, and/or others performing on them, sexual activities.

Child sexual exploitation can occur through use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition, for example the persuasion to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones with no immediate payment or gain. In all cases 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. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability”

6.20.1 Importance

CSE is a form of child abuse that is often hidden from sight, difficult to identify, and harder still to stop. It preys upon the most vulnerable in society and perpetrators in previous years have evaded prosecution.

6.20.2 Numbers and prevalence

The prevalence of CSE nationally is difficult to ascertain with any accuracy due to:

- Low levels of reporting by victims, failure to disclose is often because the child may not identify their experiences as CSE
- Inconsistency in differentiating between those at risk of and victims of CSE in recording
- Variable levels of awareness and understanding of CSE across communities
- Inadequate intelligence gathering and information sharing

- Uncertainty or differences in interpretation where grooming, child sexual abuse within the family, internal trafficking or other activities that can be defined as CSE are present.

Existing national estimates are:

2038 victims of CSE (localised grooming, rather than online grooming, trafficking, or peer-on-peer abuse) were reported to CEOP in 2011 - where there was relevant information 311 were in care, 842 were known to have been reported missing at least once, 61% were white, and most came into contact with agencies at the ages of 14 or 15 (CEOP, 2011).

1145 reports of online CSE were received by CEOP in 2012. 80% of victims were female. 13-14 year olds were the largest victim group at 35% (CEOP, 2013).

From 1997 to 2013 there were 1400 cases of CSE in Rotherham (Jay, 2014). The CLG inquiry indicated that Rotherham was not an outlier and CSE in the UK is large scale, nationwide and increasing (CLG Committee, 2014).

Arriving at a definitive number for the cases of Child Sexual Exploitation in Buckinghamshire is challenging for a number of reasons. Firstly, whilst all agencies use the same definition for CSE, each agency uses different criteria for identifying a victim or potential victim of CSE. This in turn means that a case might be identified as CSE by one agency but not by another.

The key agencies involved in CSE prevention and support have completed a joint audit of their data. Each of the three agencies ran a report from their systems for all cases where a child or young person was known to be a victim of CSE and/or was known to be at risk of becoming a victim within the last year (April 2014 – March 2015).

6.20.2.1 Thames Valley Police

The Thames Valley Police (TVP) audit found that in the last performance year (1st April 2014 to 31st March 2015) the police had an indication that 87 children and young people were potentially the victim of CSE in Buckinghamshire. The youngest child was 10 and the peak ages were 14 - 16. 8% were males.

The police suspected 135 children were the victim of CSE by groups of offenders from 1st April 1998 until the 31st March 2014.

6.20.2.2 Children's Social Care

Children's Social Care does not currently distinguish in their recording between children at risk and subject to CSE. The figure also includes all children over 10 in a household where one child is known to be subject to or at risk of CSE to ensure preventative support services are provided.

The system audit found that 38 children were recorded with CSE as the primary reason for being known to social care at the time of the audit (June 2015). The 'snap shot' audit showed that teams are currently working with 80 children known to be subject to or at risk of CSE. 25% of those currently being worked with are male.

6.20.2.3 Barnardo's 'R-U-Safe?'

Barnardo's 'R-U-Safe?' is commissioned to provide a Prevention of Sexual Exploitation Service for young people aged 11-18 who are living and staying in the Buckinghamshire area and a service to work in line with the Thames Valley Missing Children Protocol for all missing children and young people aged 11- 18 years who have returned home/to care.

'R-U-Safe?' worked with 223 children between 1st April 2014 and 5th May 2015. These children were either at risk of or being sexually exploited. The youngest child they supported was 10, the peak ages were 14 and 15 and the oldest was 18. 17.4% of their clients were male.

Of the 80 children being worked by social care, 26 are also on the TVP list. Of the 223 children that 'R-U-Safe?' worked with, 38 are also on the TVP list.

6.20.3 Trends

As going missing is one of the most significant indicators of CSE, 'R-U-Safe?' receive all the return from missing reports from TVP. They provide a Return Interview service for all children who go missing and a 6-session programme for those who present with high risk factors. They receive referrals for children who are at risk of or suffering sexual exploitation and work with them on a 1:1 basis to reduce their risks and prevent further abuse. The tables below show the increasing demand over the past 3 years.

Figure 1 Return from missing reports received

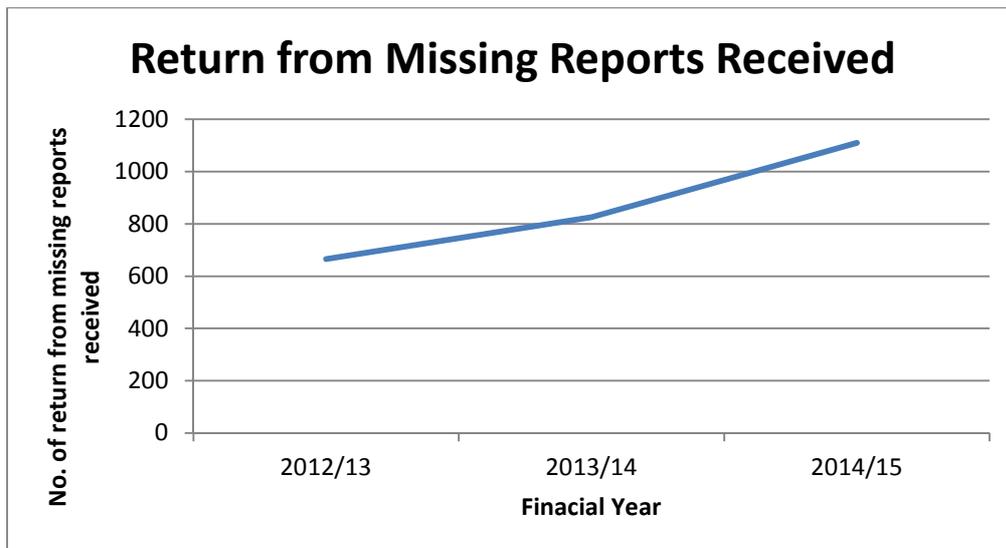
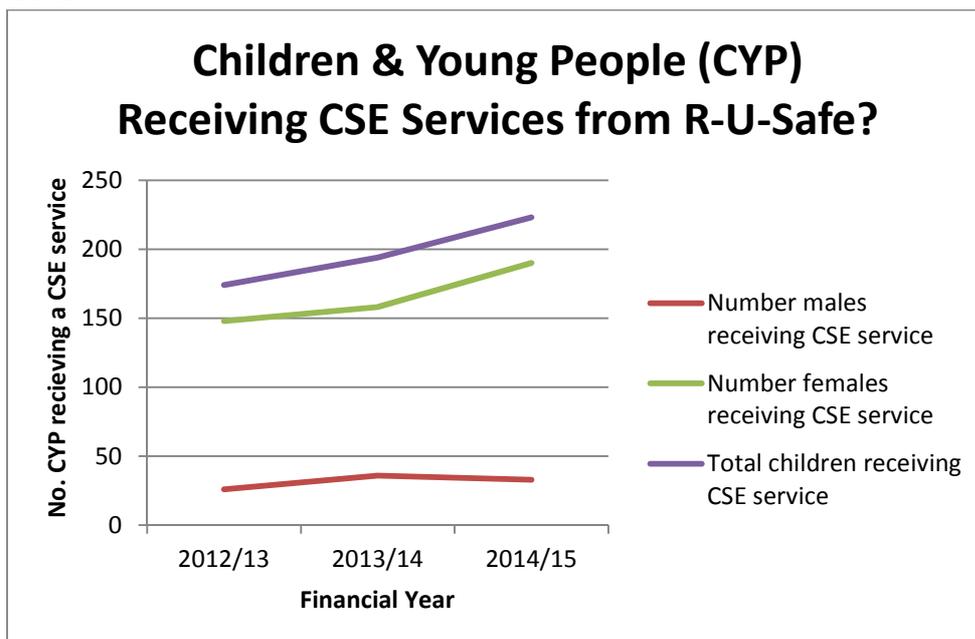


Figure 2 Children and young people (CYP) receiving CSE Services from R-U-Safe

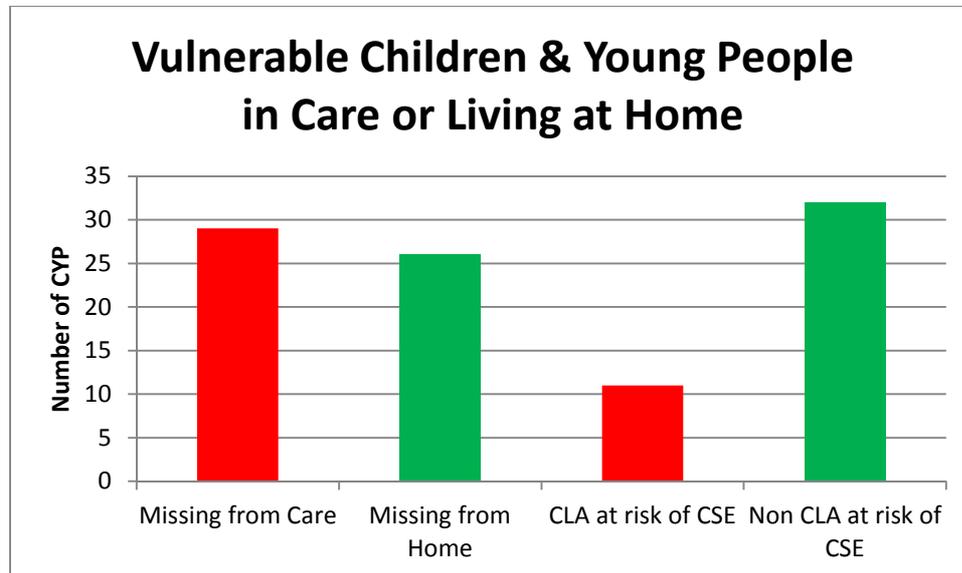


6.20.4 Inequalities

A monthly, multi-agency meeting, Missing and Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Conference (M-SERAC), takes place in Buckinghamshire. There have been 10 M-SERAC meetings between January and October 2015 where 98 young people have been discussed.

Given that only 447 of the 117,600 child population in Buckinghamshire (i.e. 1 in 265), the data below demonstrates that children who are looked after are at a significantly higher risk of CSE than the general population.

Figure 3 Vulnerable children and young people in care or living at home



40 (41%) were Looked After at some point during the period they were being discussed at M-SERAC. Of these 40 LAC, 29 (72.5%) were discussed for missing episodes, and 12 (30%) for CSE concerns.

Of the 58 (64%) children who were not in Local Authority Care, 49 (84.5%) had come to Police attention for Child Protection concerns prior to being referred to M-SERAC

34 (35%) of the children discussed raised concerns regarding mental health (7 (21%) were male and 27 (79%) were female) and 65 (66%) raised concerns regarding substance misuse (25 (39%) were male and 40 (61%) were female).

6.20.5 Comparisons

The charts below show the areas of residence and gender split of the 98 young people discussed at the M-SERAC meetings between January and October 2015 where have been.

Figure 4 Areas of residence of CYP discussed at M-SERAC meetings

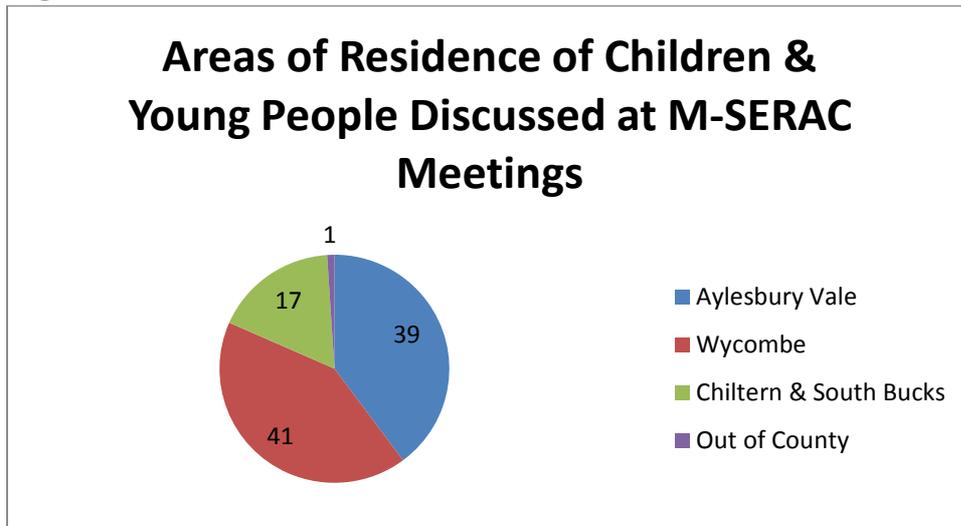
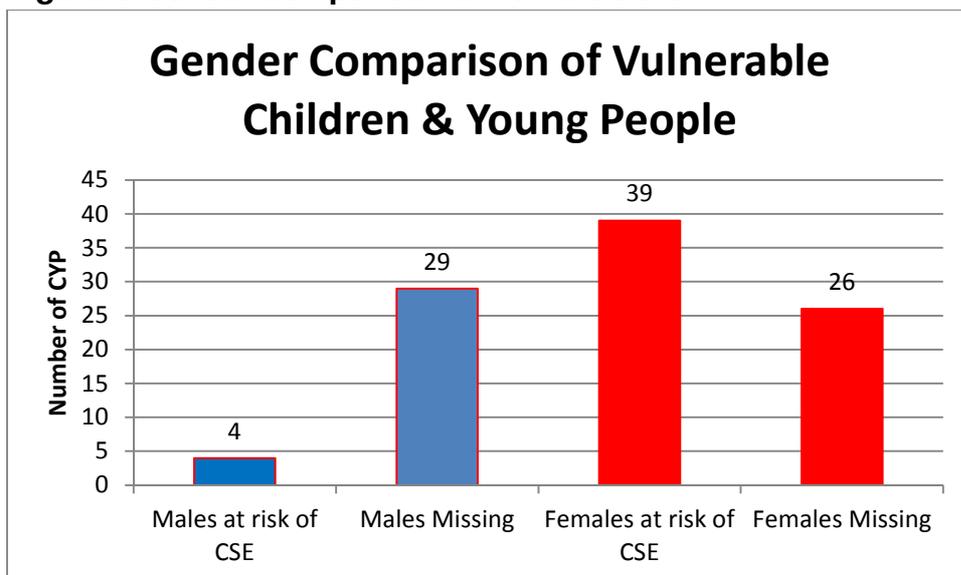


Figure 5 Gender comparison of vulnerable CYP



42 (43%) of the 98 children discussed had come to the attention of Police for criminal offences prior to being discussed at M-SERAC. Of those 42, 27 (64%) were male and 15 (36%) were female.

6.20.6 Demand

CSE is a very sensitive issue due to the high profile cases that have been in the press both nationally and locally. The Buckinghamshire Safeguarding Children Board (BSCB) has a CSE sub group which has been running awareness raising events for young people in secondary schools through a theatre production, 'Chelsea's Choice' and for their parents through evening presentations, 'R-U-Safe?' have been raising

awareness with partners, in schools and with workers in the night time economy and TVP have had a programme to raise awareness in the hotel and B&B trade. The expectation is that demand on services will increase but due to the hidden nature of CSE it is difficult to predict by how much.

6.20.7 Horizon scanning

In July 2015 a co-located group of social workers and TVP commenced working as the Swan Unit, a CSE specialist team. This has expanded and will include colleagues with health and education expertise and 'R-U-Safe?' and TVP missing workers. This will increase the expertise in Buckinghamshire and enable children at risk of or subject to CSE have speedy and comprehensive protection and support.

6.20.8 Public views

A thank you from one of the girls

*Thank you for helping me and telling me a thing or two,
Thank you for helping me with the things I find hard to do.
Thank you for helping my confidence raise,
Thank you for encouraging me and giving me praise.
Thank you for making me see what life is about,
Thank you for helping me stay when I wanted to find a way out.
Thank you for your time and your care,
Thank you for taking me for me and just being there.
Thank you for all the hard work you have put in for me,
Thank you for mending the relationship with my mummy.
Thank you for helping to get me out of that relationship,
Thank you for telling me advice when my life's about to slip*

(Thank you poem from a Buckinghamshire child receiving support, RUSafe, Barnardo's)

*All day I dream about
Something I know I have no doubt
I can't be happy I can't pretend
I can't wait until the day this all ends
Is there something I can't see?
Because it seems everyone's happy apart from me
I feel like life's a waste of time
I can't wait until it is the end of me
If only I could have some hope
Then maybe I could feel I cope*

Extract from a poem by a Buckinghamshire child who
was sexually exploited

Alison Byrne
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June 2016