



## CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION POLICY

### INTRODUCTION

***'Child Sexual Exploitation is as much a reality here in Scotland as it is around the world – a reality that we, as a nation, must tackle collectively. All children and young people have the right to be cared for and protected from harm, and to grow up in a safe environment where their rights and needs are respected'.***

***Aileen Campbell MSP Children and Young People.***

This policy is a statement of commitment by the Board of Directors of the Good Shepherd Centre. It provides a set of guiding principles and definitions in relation to the prevention of child sexual exploitation, the support and protection of children and young people.

It is based on the shared belief that child sexual exploitation of vulnerable individuals is unacceptable and will not be tolerated. We aim to reduce the risk by challenging misunderstandings about the **children and young people who are victims of child sexual exploitation.**

### What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is a form of sexual abuse and is any actual or attempted abuse of a position of vulnerability in which children or young people are exploited, coerced and/or manipulated into engaging in some form of sexual activity in return for something they need or desire and/or for the gain of a third person. The 'something' received by the child or young person can include both tangible items such as food, somewhere to stay, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes or money and more intangible 'rewards' such as perceived affection, protection or a sense of value or belonging. Child Sexual Exploitation can occur through the use of the internet or on mobile phones. In all cases, those exploiting the child or young person have power over them because of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or resources. For victims, the pain of their ordeal and fear that they will not be believed means they are often too scared to come forward. Fear of what might happen if they do not comply can also be a significant influencing factor.

There are many different pathways and routes into child sexual exploitation, many of which involve grooming. There is a growing understanding within agencies responsible for child protection that grooming plays an integral part in the sexual exploitation of children and young people. This is recognised within Section 1 of the Protection of Children and Prevention of Sexual Offences (Scotland) Act 2005 which makes it a criminal offence to groom a person under the age of 16.

The Minister for Children and Young people published Scotland's National Action Plan to

Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation in 2014. It represents a comprehensive and ambitious strategy for addressing this complex challenge. It builds on work that has been happening across Scotland, bringing together examples of local best practice with national strategy, which will help us ensure that we are taking the necessary steps in our commitment to protecting all our young people.

The All Parliamentary Group (APPG) 2012 Inquiry into children in care who go missing found that children running away from care are particularly vulnerable to sexual exploitation. Many have had difficult starts in life and experienced neglect, abuse or trauma. The report highlighted that perpetrators target children's homes because of the high vulnerability of all the children placed there and how easy they can make contact with the children. Other vulnerable groups may include LGBT (Lesbian Gay Bisexual and Transgendered), BME (Black and Minority Ethnic), Learning Disabilities, SEN (Special Educational Needs) etc.

## **Missing Young people**

Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children is a key duty of all professionals involved in the care of children and young people and requires effective joint working between agencies and professionals. When a child goes missing or absconds, they are at risk. Safeguarding children therefore includes protecting them from this risk. When children abscond, it must be recognised as an early indication that a child is at risk. Absconding should be seen explicitly as a child protection issue with protocols and procedures in place.

Looked after children missing from their placements are particularly vulnerable. In 2012, two reports highlighted that many of these children were not being effectively safeguarded: the Joint All Party Parliamentary Group (APPG) Inquiry on Children Who Go Missing from Care and the accelerated report of the Office of the Children's Commissioner's on-going inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups. Key issues identified suggested that:

- Children in residential care are at particular risk of going missing and vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation.

Child Sexual Exploitation can put young people at risk of running away and running away makes young people particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation.

Staff within the Good Shepherd Centre are experienced in building trusting relationships with children. They can also help play a part in engaging with children to develop a support package to meet their needs if they are at risk of absconding. The Good Shepherd Centre can also provide a range of additional services, such as family work and specialist support to parents.

The Good Shepherd Centre have a protocol with the Police and Local Authorities for dealing with children who abscond or go missing in their area. The protocols are reviewed regularly with all agencies. The importance of working successfully in partnership is critical in tackling harm related to young people who go missing. This multi-agency approach is key whether it's sharing information, prioritising missing young people and sharing the same terminology or approach to risk assessment.

## Key Indicators

All staff at The Good Shepherd Centre have a responsibility to ensure that young people accessing the service are living in a safe and nurturing environment that is free from harm. This will be achieved by the whole centre approach to sexual exploitation documented in this policy.

All staff should be aware of the key indicators of children being sexually exploited which can include:

- Physical Symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault).
- Going missing for periods of time or regularly coming home late with no plausible explanation.
- Regularly missing school or education or not taking part and being disruptive in education;
- Appearing with unexplained gifts or new possessions that can't be accounted for.
- Associating with groups of older people, antisocial groups, or with other vulnerable young people involved in exploitation.
- Having older boyfriends or girlfriends.
- Suffering from or testing for sexually transmitted infections.
- Regular/repeat pregnancy testing.
- Mood swings or changes in temperament and emotional wellbeing.
- Drug and alcohol misuse.
- Displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour such as over familiarity with strangers, dressing in a sexualised manner or sending sexualised images by mobile phone ('sexting').
- Being involved in abusive relationships, intimidated and fearful of certain people or situations.
- Spending time at places of concern, such as hotels or known brothels.
- Adults loitering outside the child's usual place of residence.
- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults.

## Sexual exploitation of individuals with disabilities

Research reveals that children with learning disabilities are more vulnerable to child sexual exploitation than other children and face additional barriers to protection and to receiving support. This issue is often hidden as there is limited awareness that young people with learning disabilities are sexually exploited.

Individuals with a learning disability, cognitive impairment and/or mental health problems are particularly vulnerable to child sexual exploitation and abuse. Reasons for this include:

- Society's attitudes and assumptions, which often devalue individuals with disabilities.
- Prejudice and misconceptions regarding people with learning disabilities, e.g. belief that they are insensitive to pain.

- Communication difficulties may make it difficult for individuals to be heard or understood.
- Failure by professionals to recognise the signs of exploitation and the misidentification of behaviour as symptoms of illness or impairment, e.g. self-harm.
- The individual may be isolated and prone to grooming via the internet and social media sites.
- An impaired capacity to avoid or resist abuse.
- A tendency to show affection easily to strangers and acquaintances.
- The individual may have learned to be compliant, by having to fit in around others whose approval is essential for well-being or survival.
- Lack of sexual knowledge and understanding about sexuality.
- Lack of awareness with regards to consent and risk.
- Lack of access to appropriate sex education.
- The individual may have no other frame of reference and may not recognise that they are being exploited.

We should also be aware that many children and young people who are victims of child sexual exploitation do not recognise themselves as such. It is therefore likely that young people will find it difficult to seek help/support and disclose.

It is important that staff are aware that young people who are victims of child sexual exploitation rarely directly disclose because they often do not recognise their own exploitation. For example, a young person may believe themselves to be in an adult relationship with their abuser.

## **Non –Disclosure**

Disclosure of sexual exploitation can be particularly difficult for young people; the sophisticated grooming and priming processes conducted by perpetrators and the exchange element of this form of abuse can act as additional barriers to disclosure.

Examples of other reasons for non-disclosure include:

- Fear that perceived benefits of exploitation may outweigh the risks e.g. loss of: supply of alcohol, drugs; the relationship and associated, love and attention;
- Fear of retribution or that situation could get worse;
- Fear of violence within exploitative relationship;
- Shame;
- Fear of not being believed;
- Fear of labelling e.g. as a prostitute or gay;
- Fear of separation from family and /or threat of secure care;
- Loss of control; fear of Police involvement and court proceedings.

This policy should always be followed in conjunction with our current Child Protection procedures and is meant to reinforce safeguarding and thus more comprehensively reduce the opportunity for further sexual exploitation of children. Prevention being achieved through early intervention work.

It will also help us to meet the requirements of the Children and Young Person's (Scotland)

Act 2014 which places a legal requirement on agencies through the responsibility as a 'corporate parent' to safeguard, support and promote the wellbeing of children and young people.

The Good Shepherd Centre continues to be proactive in ensuring that all staff receive training and support/supervision that will equip them with the knowledge and confidence to implement child sexual exploitation procedures in accordance with the legislative requirements.

## **Legislative Context**

The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (The UNCRC) (1989) is an international agreement that protects the human rights of children under the age of 18. The UNCRC forms the basis for GIRFEC and the Scottish Government has made a commitment to embed this agreement into all of its work with children and young people. The UNCRC is clear within articles 35 and 36 that abuse would include 'prostitution', trafficking for sexual purposes and involvement in the production of child sexual abuse images.

## **GIRFEC**

The Getting It Right For Every Child (GIRFEC) approach provides a framework for all those who work with children and young people. The framework puts children and young people at the heart of children's service provision as well as encouraging inter-agency working to ensure children and young people have the best start in life. GIRFEC is being embedded into policy and practice across Scotland and the Children and Young People (Scotland) Act 2014 aims to embed the principles of GIRFEC in legislation.

## **The National Guidance for Child Protection in Scotland (2014)**

This guidance provides a national framework for all those working with children and young people to enable all organisations, services, agencies, practitioners and individuals to protect children and promote their wellbeing. The guidance sets out key responsibilities and information about strategic planning of services and their delivery. Guidance on specific issues such as child trafficking is also provided for practitioners working at local level. The guidance has recently been refreshed to include a specific reference to CSE and should be read alongside this policy.

## **POLICY AIMS**

Child sexual exploitation is an abhorrent crime. It is a form of child sexual abuse, and it must be understood in that context. Child sexual exploitation cannot be considered in isolation. Many of the young people who become victims have been vulnerable and at risk from an early age and remain vulnerable to other forms of abuse and neglect. While child sexual exploitation is a complex issue, our approach to addressing it should have the same principles – children and young people are at the centre of everything we do, and only by continuing to work in partnership can we best protect them.

These principles are reflected at the core of the plan, in an infrastructure in which the principles of Getting it Right for Every Child – of putting the child at the centre, and multi- agency

partnership working – are recognised as key to delivering best practice. Scotland's National Action Plan 2014 will allow us to identify and consolidate the best practice already in operation and build on it.

The main aim of our sexual exploitation policy is to deliver a comprehensive and successful response to the problem of child sexual exploitation. It has an emphasis on prevention activity; is designed to help identify relevant issues at the earliest opportunity and enable quick information sharing with relevant partner agencies, in order to prevent or minimise risk and harm to a young person.

This aim will be addressed through the following objectives:

- To reduce the harm caused to children.
- To raise awareness to enable early identification of children at risk.
- To support children and young people affected by CSE.
- To ensure all young people are listened to, respected, valued and feel valued.
- To ensure that CSE is part of current provision of sexual health/wellbeing guidance for young people in the centre.
- To ensure that all staff are fully updated on any issues of CSE and aware of the reporting procedures within this policy and the Child Protection policy. Good Shepherd Centre staff are obliged to create and maintain an environment that prevents child sexual exploitation and sexual abuse. Managers at all levels have particular responsibility to support and develop systems that maintain this environment.
- To ensure all concerns that a child is at risk of CSE are raised with the designated lead for Child Protection, who will share their concerns with Social Work in line with the center's Child Protection procedures.

## **Preventative Strategies**

### **Clear leadership**

The Good Shepherd Centre works across multiple local authorities and agencies and this requires significant coordination. The senior management team ensure that good intentions translate into real protection for young people from child sexual exploitation, and there is a clear ownership of the issue and well-defined lines of accountability.

### **Supporting individuals affected by sexual exploitation**

Our response to sexual exploitation will reflect the learning from reports and investigations across the UK to ensure support, protection and recovery measures are robust and responsive.

As well as responding to immediate risk or safety concerns full consideration will be given to preventative measures developed for young people within the centre. These include

- A whole school approach to tackling Child Sexual Exploitation which includes assessments, Individual Crisis Management Plans, staff training and young people's awareness sessions.
- All staff will attend Child Protection and Child Sexual Exploitation training and annual

refresher training which will include the ability to identify issues relating to Child Protection and Child Sexual Exploitation and how to respond using the relevant procedures.

- All young people will participate in CSE awareness sessions and be given advice regarding sexual health, substance and alcohol misuse, personal safety, healthy relationships and other high risk behaviour.
- All young people will be educated on e-safety procedures to develop their awareness of online risks and reporting procedures should they have any concerns about themselves or peers.
- A full range of supports will be offered, and information is available e.g. Childline, Who Cares Scotland?
- Emphasis on the importance of follow up interviews with Police Scotland when a young person has been missing or has absconded in order to identify any patterns or concerns.
- Robust Inter-agency collaboration with Social Work, NHS, Police Scotland and other professionals to share information to help address any gaps in knowledge and to identify useful strategies and resources.
- Protocols for sharing information between partner agencies and families which helps to ensure that young people at risk have a full assessment of their needs and a referral is made to relevant services for intervention and support.
- Up to date risk assessments on all young people affected by child sexual exploitation.

## Procedures

If there are any concerns where young people are at risk of child sexual exploitation staff should follow these procedures:

### ASK

Ask yourself the following questions

1. What have I seen?
2. What have I heard?
3. What do I feel is unusual or different?
4. What has actually happened?
5. What is my concern?
6. What is this telling me?
7. What should I do now?

### ACT

1. Protecting children and young people and keeping them safe is everyone's job!
2. Keep your focus on the child or young person - their safety is paramount!
3. Doing nothing is not an option!
4. Do not assume someone else will do something!
5. Do not delay unnecessarily - act quickly!
6. Look, Listen and Record your Concern!
7. Look Further and See Beyond!
8. Follow Child Protection procedures

For the procedures to be successful it is paramount that corporate ownership and robust interagency working are prerequisites. Any concerns that a child is at risk of CSE should be raised with the designated lead for CSE, who should share their concerns with Social Work in

line with the Good Shepherd Child Protection procedure. Within the Good Shepherd Centre, the named person should be the Child Protection Co-ordinator.

### **Key messages for practice**

- Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse, in which a young person is manipulated or forced into taking part in a sexual act. Young people from any background can be exploited for sex in this way. Boys and young men are abused as well as girls and young women. In all cases, those exploiting the child or young person will have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.
- All young people have a right to be: Listened to, Respected, Valued and feel Valued
- Child Sexual Exploitation is hidden, and young people will often not disclose, or recognise their abuse.
- Child Sexual Exploitation is sexual abuse – no child can consent to their own abuse.
- Everyone has a duty to act if they suspect a child is being sexually exploited. The role of staff in relation to children abused through CSE is in the prevention, recognition and referral stages.
- Everyone must take responsibility for protecting children from this abuse and that means not only knowing your role, but also the roles of other agencies and individuals.

### **MONITORING AND EVALUATION**

The Child Sexual Exploitation Policy is reviewed annually, and any recommendations are implemented

### **REVIEW**

Date policy implemented: 20<sup>th</sup> May 2015

Updated 14<sup>th</sup> March 2016

Review Date: March 2017

Review Date: March 2018

Review Date: March 2019

Updated: April 2020



