

PAN-BEDFORDSHIRE CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION STRATEGY 2015-2017

BEDFORDSHIRE HAS A ZERO TOLERANCE POLICY ON SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.

WE WILL PROACTIVELY WORK IN PARTNERSHIP TO KEEP CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFE FROM SEXUAL EXPLOITATION.

INTRODUCTION

In Bedfordshire we recognise that CSE cannot be dealt with by individual organisations working alone. Both victims and offenders cross administrative boundaries, and therefore the collective response of those who work to protect children and young people is a must.

This strategy sets out our commitment that all agencies across Bedfordshire, serving the community, will work together to prevent CSE happening. We are clear that safeguarding is everyone's responsibility. We will pursue and prosecute offenders and we will protect those who have been victims and survivors. We are committed to listening to children, young people and the community. The voice of the child is at the heart of what we do.

CSE is child abuse and we will not tolerate it in our community.

BEDFORDSHIRE

Bedfordshire is divided into three unitary authorities: Bedford Borough, Central Bedfordshire and Luton. The three local authorities have very distinctive populations with vastly different profiles and needs. This strategy makes it clear, that despite these differences we are committed to working together to prevent and manage CSE whilst at the same time responding to the individual needs of each community. Through working together, we have developed our understanding of CSE and the aims and objectives of this strategy and the associated action plan is based on national guidance underpinned by local understanding.

OUR STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

We have identified three key areas that need to be strategically addressed. This strategy identifies our plans to increase our effectiveness in how we **prevent** CSE from happening by raising awareness, how we **pursue** those responsible by identifying them early and proactively target and disrupt their activity, and how we **protect** children and young people who are at risk of, or who are victims or survivors of CSE by providing early help and support.

GOVERNANCE

Governance of this strategy sits with the Bedfordshire Chief Executive's Forum, its CSE sub group and the Pan Bedfordshire Strategic Board. In addition the three Directors of Children's Services will report to their respective Local Safeguarding Children Boards on this strategy and its implementation. The LSCB's will hold partners to account for their role in delivering this strategy and associated action plan.

LINKS TO OTHER STRATEGIES

We recognise that CSE cannot be considered in isolation to other forms of abuse or exploitation and that there can be an overlap with other areas of need. This strategy must therefore be considered and implemented alongside other strategies and procedures.

This strategy is informed by the See Me, Hear Me Framework (www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk).

For further information about how we are addressing CSE in Bedfordshire go to: www.bedfordshireagainstcse.org

PREVENT

Raising awareness of CSE amongst children young people, adults, parents, carers, professionals, the community and potential perpetrators to **prevent exploitation** and **reduce tolerance** of sexually exploitative behaviours

- Listen to and engage with communities, children, young people and their families and professionals to raise awareness and understanding of CSE so that they know what to do if they are worried that a child or young person is at risk of CSE.
- Deliver an effective and co-ordinated training and awareness programme for all staff at a level appropriate to their role within the organisation and their involvement with children and young people.
- Review local and national investigations to learn lessons about best practice in preventing CSE and implement the findings.

Success in **PREVENT** will mean:

- An increase in the number of practitioners trained in identifying and appropriately responding to CSE.
- An increase in public and practitioners reports of CSE as a result of awareness campaigns.
- An increase in the number of children, young people and families aware of CSE and what to do if they have concerns for themselves or other children and young people.

PREVENT THREAT

PURSUE

Working together to bring offenders to justice and **disrupt behaviour**. Identifying them early, targeting them via multi-agency disruption plans and **securing justice** for victims by obtaining convictions

- Pro-active and robust use of enforcement and legislative powers to challenge and confront inappropriate and criminal behaviour.
- Gather and share intelligence and information to ensure proactive identification of offenders or persons showing at risk of offending.
- Ensure cross border multi-agency co-operation and sharing of intelligence including engaging with organisations across the UK to pursue and disrupt offenders.
- Review local and national investigations to learn lessons about best practice in pursuing offenders and implement the findings.

Success in **PURSUE** will mean:

- An increase in the amount of disruption activity employed against perpetrators
- An increase in the number of prosecutions for CSE crimes.
- An increased identification of CSE hotspots and people of interest.
- An increase in the quantity and quality of information received and shared between agencies working to protect children and young people.

REDUCE THREAT

PROTECT

Identifying **children and young people** at risk or subject to sexual exploitation and providing early **help and support**

- Deliver multi-agency working arrangements that ensure cases of CSE are identified early and that a lead professional is working with all children and young people identified as being at risk or subject to CSE to ensure that they are protected through the correct intervention to reduce the long-term impact.
- Provide assertive and persistent interventions for children and young people, particularly those where professional engagement is complex and challenging.
- Ensure there is a consistent and robust approach to the assessment, planning and review of children and young people experiencing or at risk of CSE.
- Work collaboratively with children and young people, parents and carers in order to identify joint solutions.
- Review local and national investigations to learn lessons about best practice in engaging with children and young people and protecting them from harm, and implement the findings.

Success in **PROTECT** will mean:

- An increase in attendance of children/young people and their carers at multi-agency meetings.
- An increase in the engagement of children and young people in preventative interventions and support.
- An increase in the involvement of children and young people in the decision making process about their care and protection.
- Every child or young person at risk of CSE has a risk assessment completed.

REDUCE VULNERABILITIES

REDUCE THE PREVALANCE OF CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION