

# Policy Briefing



## Safeguarding Children Board

### Child Sexual Exploitation Procedures

Many professionals who work with vulnerable young people will be aware of the recent publicity surrounding the sexual exploitation of young people and the recent report published by the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP). The extent of child sexual exploitation in England is clearly greater than was previously thought, and within the Wakefield district, it is known that some young people are at risk of exploitation or being actively exploited. Only by agencies working closely together, sharing information and joint planning can these vulnerable young people be identified and protected from exploitation.

It is therefore essential that when a professional identifies that a young person may be being exploited, or may be at risk of being exploited, that they take appropriate action to share this information with the relevant agencies, so that the concerns can be assessed and investigated.

#### **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION PROCEDURES**

The West Yorkshire Safeguarding Procedures can be accessed online at [www.proceduresonline.co./westyorkscb](http://www.proceduresonline.co./westyorkscb)

These procedures contain detailed information for professionals who are concerned that a young person, or sometimes a group of young people, may be at risk of child sexual exploitation. The procedures explain how to gain an understanding of the level of risk to the young person, and what to do next.

#### **ASSESSING RISK AND THE RISK MATRIX**

As indicated in the procedures, the first step for a professional who identifies that a young person may be at risk of child sexual exploitation is for the Risk Matrix to be used in order to try to understand the level of risk. This will help the professional to determine what to do next. Consideration of the Risk Matrix should be undertaken by the professional who has identified the concern. However advice on the use of the Risk Matrix can be obtained from a variety of sources including Social Care Direct, the local Police Safeguarding Unit, key safeguarding professionals in organisations etc. Professionals should be aware that the Risk Matrix is not a template, and is a means of helping professionals gain an understanding of the level of risk to a young person.

Key issues include:

- Where a young person is assessed as being at **Low Risk**, the CAF should be used to provide targeted, multi-agency support to the young person and their family. The local authority CAF Team should be notified of all CAF activity.

- Where a young person is assessed as being at **Medium Risk** or **High Risk**, a referral should *always* be made to Social Care Direct
- Cases of Medium Risk and High Risk will involve a multi-agency Strategy Meeting to enable sharing of information and joint planning of the investigation. This will normally be chaired by the local authority child sexual exploitation coordinator.
- Children aged under 13 who are thought to be at risk of child sexual exploitation can never be assessed as Low Risk
- Children with a learning disability who are thought to be at risk of child sexual exploitation can never be assessed as Low Risk

### **CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION FORUM**

Within Wakefield, the council's Youth Development and Support Service (YDSS) host a regular child sexual exploitation forum. This is a multi-agency forum, led by practitioners. It includes nominated representatives of YDSS, West Yorkshire Police and the council's Safeguarding and Family Support Directorate. The forum is designed to enable practitioners to receive support and guidance in relation to child sexual exploitation and for local intelligence to be shared with the relevant organisations. Practitioners who have a concern about either an individual or a group of young people can attend the forum to discuss the case. However, professionals should be aware that this forum primarily exists to advise, share intelligence and offer support, and does not remove the need for the child sexual exploitation procedures to be followed by the professional who has identified the concern.

Practitioners who wish to discuss child sexual exploitation at the forum should contact Julie O'Hara (YDSS Practice Manager for Vulnerable Young People on 01924 304155 or [johara@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:johara@wakefield.gov.uk)).

### **TRAINING**

The Wakefield and District Safeguarding Children Board offers multi-agency training on child sexual exploitation via a full day introductory course and a shorter briefing session on the local procedures and the Risk Matrix. Details of these courses can be obtained via the training brochure on our website ([www.wakefield.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren](http://www.wakefield.gov.uk/safeguardingchildren)) or by contacting the Safeguarding Children Board training team on 01977 722049 or by email at [wdsqb@wakefield.gov.uk](mailto:wdsqb@wakefield.gov.uk).