



# Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2018

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## 1. Introduction

There have been a number of high profile cases relating to child sexual exploitation that have been widely publicised. These have included Operations Retriever and Kern in Derby, Operation Doublet in Rochdale and Operation Bullfinch in Oxfordshire. All of these operations have seen multiple adult men convicted of serious sexual offences and trafficking offences against children. Peterborough has also had its own high profile cases under Operation Erle, which has seen a total of 10 male defendants convicted of 59 offences against 15 young females, receiving a total of 114 years and 9 months in custodial sentences.

A number of reviews and learning exercises have taken place, including the Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham by Professor Alexis Jay in August 2014 which raised many concerns about the treatment of victims and identified failures by the police, social care managers and officials in their response.

As a cross-county partnership, we have also undertaken activity to determine what work is needed locally to support children and families. This has identified that long lasting, trusting relationships are vital to support children and young people and that success is not possible without partnership working.



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I want people to understand the enormity of its effect on my life'  
Quote from young person, Buckinghamshire Serious Case Review

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## 2. Definition of child sexual exploitation

The cross county partnership have agreed to work to the following definition, as provided by the Department for Education and updated in February 2017:

*'Child sexual exploitation 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'.<sup>1</sup>*

## 3. Key themes and issues



Child sexual exploitation (CSE) is a type of sexual abuse. Children in exploitative situations and relationships receive something such as gifts, money or affection as a result of performing sexual activities or others performing sexual activities on them.

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<sup>1</sup> *Child sexual exploitation Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation* February 2017 Department for Education



Children or young people may be tricked into believing they're in a loving, consensual relationship. They might be invited to parties and given drugs and alcohol. They may also be groomed and exploited online.



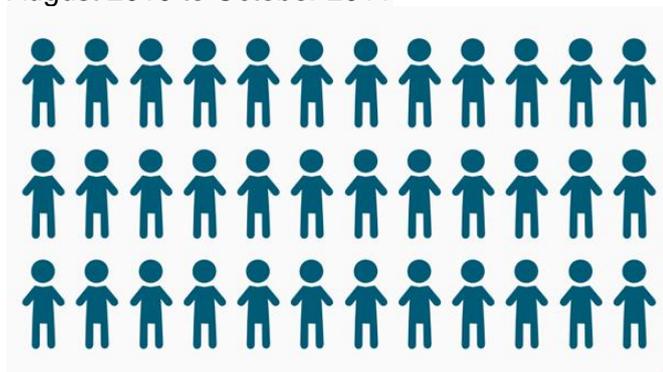
Some children and young people are trafficked into or within the UK for the purpose of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation can also happen to young people in gangs.



<https://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/>



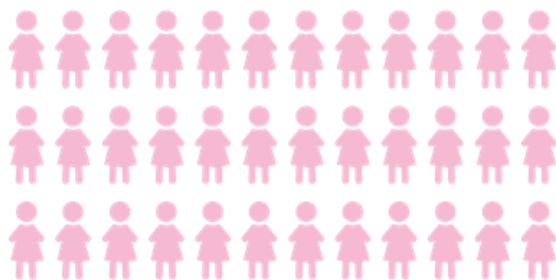
Over 2,400 children were victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups from August 2010 to October 2011



Source: Berelowitz, S. et al (2012) "I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world." [The Office of the Children's Commissioner's inquiry in to child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups: interim report \(PDF\).](#)



Over 360 children were trafficked for sexual exploitation last year



Source: National Crime Agency (2017) [National referral mechanism statistics - end of year summary 2016 \(PDF\).](#)



'They were dangerous people, I don't want to be looking over my shoulder for every minute of the day'

Quote from young person, Buckinghamshire Serious Case Review



## 4. The Role of LSCBs in Safeguarding Children against Child Sexual Exploitation:

The LSCBs will ensure that:

- The needs of children and young people who have been or may be sexually exploited and their families have been considered when planning and commissioning local services;
- Specific local procedures are in place covering the sexual exploitation of children and young people;
- Local safeguarding training includes information about how to identify the signs of sexual exploitation and an understanding of how to gather evidence which can be used to bring prosecutions against abusers;
- Where sexual exploitation is known to be prevalent locally, specialist training is available for key professionals;
- Systems are in place to track and monitor cases of sexual exploitation that come to the attention of local agencies;
- A LSCB sub-group is put in place to lead on the issue of sexual exploitation, driving work forward and ensuring effective cooperation between agencies and professionals;
- There is a dedicated lead person in each partner organisation with responsibility for implementing this guidance;
- Arrangements are in place to cooperate with neighbouring areas and those areas where children who have been sexually exploited are believed to have lived or been present.

## 5. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board Policy Statement

- The sexual exploitation of children (CSE) is completely unacceptable. Children and young people who are sexually exploited are the victims of child sexual abuse, and their needs require careful assessment and intervention. They are likely to be in need of welfare services and – in many cases protection under the Children Act 1989.
- It is our collective responsibility to identify those children and young people at risk of exploitation and our joint responsibility to protect them and safeguard them from further risk of harm. It is also our joint responsibility to prevent children becoming victims of this form of abuse and reduce the opportunities that offenders may have to exploit children in the future.
- We aim to raise the profile of child sexual exploitation in order to protect and safeguard children from harm. We shall achieve this by developing and maintaining effective local responses and through the delivery of an effective multi-agency strategy and action plan delivered by key partners through the CSE Strategic Group. This includes the implementation of timely and effective risk management and the

implementation of a comprehensive range of child centred interventions for children who are at risk or victims of sexual exploitation.

- We recognise that sexual exploitation can have a serious long term impact on every aspect of a child or young person's life, health and education. It can damage the lives of families and carers and can lead to family break ups. Effective interventions delivered by all agencies to assist with these longer term impacts are also a key area of focus for the LSCB.

## 6. Principles Underpinning the Multi-Agency Response to Child Sexual Exploitation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

This strategy is based upon the seven principles set out below, as identified in the 'See Me, Hear Me Framework'<sup>2</sup>

### 1) The child's best interests must be the top priority

The responses by the LSCB to CSE seek to take a child centred approach, whilst at the same time recognising that to protect other children and future abuse there is a need to identify, disrupt and prosecute offenders.

Children do not make informed choices to enter into or remain in sexually exploitative situations. They do so through coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation. Children under 16 years old cannot consent to sexual activity and sexual activity with a child under 13 years is statutory rape.

For more information, see **Guidance for Professionals Working with Sexually Active Young People Under the age of 18**<sup>3</sup>

Sexually exploited children or those at risk should be treated as victims of abuse, not offenders. Prosecution should be focused on those who abuse children and young people in this way. It is important to remember that these perpetrators may be adults, or they may be the child's peer or close to their age. The needs of the children within a perpetrator's family must also be considered.

### 2) Participation of children and young people

'Children want to be respected, their views to be heard, to have stable relationships with professionals built on trust and to have consistent support provided for their individual needs. This should guide the behaviour of professionals. Anyone working with children should see and speak to the child; listen to what they say; take their views seriously; and work with them collaboratively when deciding how to support their needs.'<sup>4</sup> Agencies should always consider the wishes and feelings of the children and young people receiving their services. This is no more or less true for victims or those at risk of CSE.

### 3) Enduring relationships and support

Support should be tailored to meet the needs of the individual, taking into account their age, ethnicity, beliefs, sexual orientation, disability, language and maturity. As mentioned

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<sup>2</sup> *If Only Someone Had Listened: Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups* OCC 2013

<sup>3</sup> <http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/children-board/professionals/procedures/sexuallyactiveyp/>

<sup>4</sup> *Working Together to Safeguard Children* Department for Education 2015

above, lasting, trusting relationships with professionals who offer consistent support are crucial to support and protect children and young people and aid their recovery.

As with other areas of child protection, the effective safeguarding of children and young people is best achieved through early help and intervention. Professionals working with young people are well placed to identify risks at an early stage and should ensure they have the knowledge and skills to identify and respond to the vulnerabilities and risk indicators of CSE. Information concerning training and guidance and information can be found on the LSCB website.

Professionals should be supported in building relationships with the children and young people they are working with. They should also have access to support for themselves through their line manager and/or the lead for child sexual exploitation within their agency.

#### 4) Comprehensive problem-profiling

It is important for all LSCBs to establish the prevalence and character of abuse in their areas. The most effective and accurate profile includes data from a range of agencies, compiled with the oversight of the LSCBs and shared across key partners to inform activity concerning CSE.

Profiles should contain the following:

##### a) The incidence of CSE:

This should include data held by Children's Social Care, Police, health agencies and the voluntary sector, and should be considered for consistency and accuracy. Collection of data may be best facilitated via the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH).

##### b) Information on local trends:

The LSCB have sought this data from Cambridgeshire Constabulary in order to strengthen their approach to CSE. Information collated by the Police has identified 'hotspots' and those young people considered to be most at risk.

##### c) Prevalence of core risks:

This information indicates the probable extent and character of abuse in the area. This can then be used to determine what type of preventative services are likely to be most effective in reducing the risk of CSE. Good practice would be to share and compare this data with boarding local authorities and other relevant areas.<sup>5</sup>

#### 5) Effective information-sharing within and between agencies

There is in place an effective information-sharing protocol predicated on the best interests and safeguarding of children and young people. All relevant agencies and services should be signatories and it should clearly state what information should be shared, by whom and the process for doing this. It can be found here:

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<sup>5</sup> Taken from *Tackling child sexual exploitation: Helping local authorities to develop strategic responses*. Barnardo's 2012

<http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2015/04/cambs-information-sharing-framework.pdf> .

For more information, professionals should refer to the Department for Education Guidance: 'Information sharing: Advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services to children, young people, parents and carers' 2015

#### 6) Supervision, support and training for staff

Agencies within Cambridgeshire and Peterborough should invest in the development and support of staff including the provision of regular supervision and the opportunities for staff to reflect on practice. Those professionals who offer direct support to sexually exploited children and young people might require further intensive training and must have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice with a skilled consultant or supervisor.

#### 7) Evaluation and review

Regular evaluations and reviews of this strategy and the CSE Action Plan must be undertaken to ensure services are progressing activity to reduce the risks posed to young people by child sexual exploitation, and interventions are achieving their intended outcomes. Children and young people from the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough areas should be involved in this process to ensure improvement. Questions against which the strategic response should be evaluated are detailed in the See Me, Hear Me Framework<sup>6</sup> under the following headings:

- Voice of the child
- Voice of the professional
- Protecting the child

## 7. Missing Children and Young People

This section should be read in conjunction with the LSCB Protocols on Missing Children and Young People:

Peterborough

<http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2016/08/Missing-Person-Protocol-August-16.pdf>

Cambridgeshire:

<http://www.safeguardingpeterborough.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2018/04/Cambridgeshire-Protocol-Children-who-go-Missing-from-Home-Care-and-Education.pdf>

There are clear links between children and young people who go missing from home or care settings and CSE. Missing episodes are a high risk indicator of child sexual exploitation.

Assessing situations such as missing children goes beyond the simplicity of the actual event and needs a much more sophisticated approach. Agencies need to be mindful of the fact that the focus on the number of occasions where a child goes missing is not as important as why

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<sup>6</sup> 'See Me, Hear Me Framework, from *If Only Someone Had Listened: Inquiry into child sexual exploitation in gangs and groups* OCC 2013

they go missing and the increased risks they face when they do. Any kind of assessment must take this view, and must look at any factors which may 'push' or 'pull' a child or young person into sexual exploitation. 'Push' factors are exactly what you'd expect - they're things that push a child away from home. They include not feeling accepted in the environment where children should be safe and happy. Family breakdown and arguments can generate 'pushing away', as can abuse, drug and alcohol misuse by family members, and new stepfamilies moving in.

## 8. Agency and Professional Responsibilities:

### **Responsibility of all agencies**

No one agency is able to address the complex elements of child sexual exploitation on its own, largely because a child's and family's needs cannot always be met by a single agency. Effective interventions, whether early help, child in need or child protection depend on professionals developing working relationships which are sympathetic to each other's legal responsibilities, agency's purpose and procedures respective roles and agencies capacities.

All agencies represented on the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board have a responsibility to contribute to the safeguarding of children in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire.

### **Responsibility of Health**

Health is a universal service that is accessed by individuals from all of the communities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. Health professionals are involved with children and families throughout their lives and as a consequence they get to know families in more detail than other statutory agencies. Health professionals, particularly sexual health workers, school nurses and specialist paediatric staff, spend time with young people either in people's homes or other establishments (schools/ hospitals/clinics) and are very well-placed to identify cases of Child Sexual Exploitation. It is important that health professionals are alert to the signs of sexual exploitation in young people and attend the numerous safeguarding training opportunities that are available to them. The nature and impact of child sexual exploitation is cumulative and corrosive so it is essential that all health professionals maintain accurate, detailed and contemporaneous records that help to form a "picture" of the exploitation. When a practitioner identifies concerns regarding exploitation in a young person's life they should speak to a member of the Health Safeguarding Children team to determine what the next steps to take are.

### **Responsibility of Children's Services**

Children's Services are responsible for co-ordinating statutory assessments of children's needs which include the parent's capacity to meet those needs. The assessment may result in the provision of services designed to address the identified needs of the child through a child in need plan. Where a child is assessed as having suffered, or being at risk of, significant harm Children's services will convene an initial child protection conference to consider the risks on a multi-agency basis. This may result in the child becoming subject of a child protection plan under the category of neglect. Children's Social Care has the statutory responsibility for child protection cases but it will work with other agencies to develop, implement and monitor a plan (Child in Need or Child Protection) to help the child and their family and stop the neglect

## **Responsibility of Police**

The police have a duty of care to protect all members of the community and to bring offenders to justice. The welfare of children is a priority for the service, and all officers are responsible for identifying and referring children who are at risk or in need. Any Officer can utilise emergency powers to ensure immediate protection of children believed to be at immediate risk of suffering significant harm (this is a very draconian step and should only be utilised in exceptional cases). The police regularly enter people's homes or target known crime hotspots and are therefore well placed to identify issues that might indicate child exploitation. In these circumstances the police should liaise with Children's social care or the early help team. It is imperative that Police Officers attend safeguarding training so that they are aware of the signs of abuse and exploitation and know the pathway to follow if they have concerns.

## **Responsibility of Education**

All schools play an important role in the prevention and identification of all forms of abuse. Schools are a universal service that often provide a safe environment for children and young people. Due to the amount of time that school staff spend with children (and their families) they often know the child and their circumstances better than other agencies.

Schools and settings therefore play a crucial role in identifying behaviours that may be indicative of CSE. Concern that a child or young person may be involved in sexual exploitation or at risk of being drawn into it should always initiate action to ensure the child's safety and welfare.

All education settings should have a policy which sets out how they will address child sexual exploitation. This may be part of the full safeguarding policy or a standalone document. Some schools will have a designated person for CSE, others will incorporate this into the role of Designated Safeguarding Lead. The safeguarding governor should also be aware of their responsibilities for CSE.

All adults in schools and settings should be vigilant at all times and aware of the possible indicators of CSE to be able to identify those at risk of being sexually exploited.

There should be provision within the curriculum in all schools and settings for children, from an early age, and young people to understand the meaning of healthy, positive relationships and learn about how to keep themselves and others safe.

## **Responsibility of Housing**

Housing providers and services may have important information about families or locations identifying cases of exploitation or contributing information to assessments. Staff have an important part to play in reporting concerns where they believe that a child may be in need of support through early help or in need of statutory intervention.

It is important that housing professionals attend safeguarding training so that they are aware of the signs of abuse and exploitation and know the pathway to follow if they have concerns

## **Responsibility of Probation Services**

In discharging its statutory responsibilities, the National Probation Service (NPS), through its work with offenders and their families, may become aware of children who are at risk of sexual exploitation (CSE). All Probation staff have a responsibility to be aware of the signs of potential CSE and to refer appropriate cases to early help or Children's Social Care.

In line with its statutory responsibilities, NPS staff will provide advice to the courts regarding the sentencing of offenders convicted on CSE related offences and work closely with prison staff to address their offending behaviour during their sentence. NPS will also work closely with community partner agencies (such as police and social care) when supervising offenders on licence after their release from prison in order to protect the public and reduce the potential for further harm.

NPS staff will work in collaboration with other agencies at strategic and operational level in developing effective partnership work in dealing with CSE. This will include contributing to assessments on individual cases and following all relevant child protection policies, procedures and protocols.

## **Responsibility of Youth Offending Service**

The Youth Offending Service aims to prevent offending and re-offending of children aged 10-17. All YOS staff have a responsibility to be alert to safeguarding issues in their work with children and their families. Concerns should be raised with the manager and where appropriate will be referred Children's Social Care.

## **Responsibility of the Voluntary and Community Sector: NSPCC and Link to Change**

The VCS often undertake a range of programmes with young people experiencing complex issues, including those affected by sexual abuse and exploitation. The VCS are therefore well-placed to identify early concerns that relate to abuse and exploitation. It is important that when commissioning services we understand the role played by VCS in informing what services need to be delivered.

## **Responsibility to share information**

Information sharing is essential to enable early intervention and preventative work, for safeguarding and promoting welfare and for wider public protection.

It is important that practitioners can share information appropriately as part of their day-to-day practice and do so confidently.

It is important to remember there can be significant consequences to not sharing information as there can be to sharing information. You must use your professional judgement to decide whether to share or not, and what information is appropriate to share.

Data protection law reinforces common sense rules of information handling. It is there to ensure personal information is managed in a sensible way.

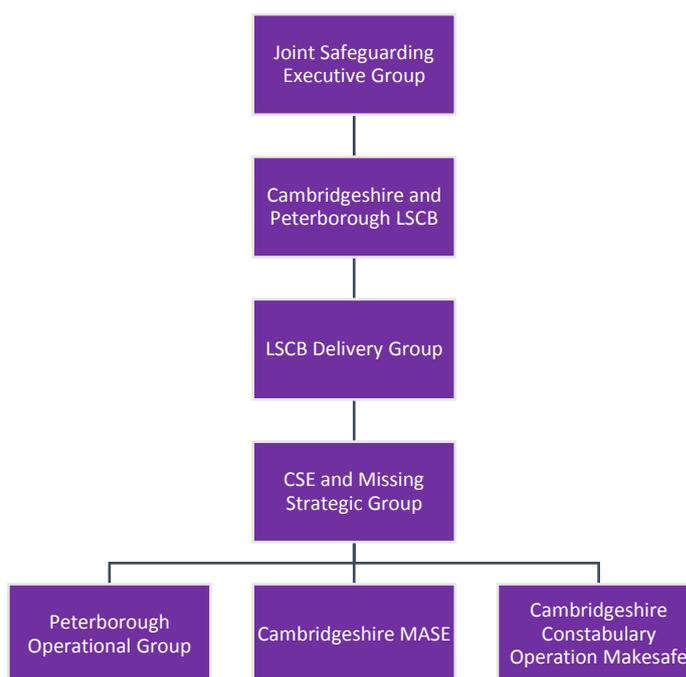
It helps agencies and organisations to strike a balance between the many benefits of public organisations sharing information, and maintaining and strengthening safeguards and privacy of the individual.

It also helps agencies and organisations to balance the need to preserve a trusted relationship between practitioner and child and their family with the need to share information to benefit and improve the life chances of the child

## 9. Governance Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group

Peterborough and Cambridgeshire LSCB have formed the Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group. This group reports to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board (CPSCB).

The overall purpose of the CSE and Missing Strategic Group is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic and operational multi-agency response to Child Sexual Exploitation and children who go missing from home and care across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough encapsulated in the Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Action Plan. The group includes 'Missing' within its title and remit as missing episodes are known to be a high risk indicator for CSE.



## 10. Performance and Quality Assurance Framework

The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board are responsible for scrutinising multi-agency performance data. To assess the impact of this strategy the CSE and Missing Strategic Group will regularly monitor the following multi-agency quality assurance information:

- What children, young people and their families tell us
- Thematic case audits (both single and multi-agency)

In addition the following outcome indicators will be used to provide the CSE and Missing Strategic Group with insight into the effectiveness of the strategy:

- Contacts received by the MASH specifically associated with child sexual exploitation, including: age, gender, ethnicity and referring agency.
- Data concerning children who go missing from home and care, including: age, gender, frequency of episodes, and length of episodes.

- High risk CSE or missing cases presented at the Cambridgeshire MASE and Peterborough Operational Group.

## 11. Governance

Governance is provided by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board and scrutiny of progress against the strategic aims and objectives and performance management indicators will be undertaken through the Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group.

All group members are responsible for implementing and embedding this strategy within their own agency and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board will hold members to account over this.

## 12. Appendix One



### **Terms of Reference for the Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough**

#### **1. Purpose**

- a) The CSE and Missing Strategic Group reports to Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board.
- b) The overall purpose of the Strategic Group is to monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic and operational multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation and children who go missing from home, care and education across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. This work is encapsulated in associated action plans and work plans such as the Communication Plan.

#### **2. Terms of Reference**

**The CSE and Missing Strategic Group will deliver on the Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy, and work plans on behalf of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board and will regularly review these documents.**

The activities of the group will be based upon the following principles:

- Ensuring that current practice and interventions are informed by evidence and linked to national policy and developments
- Ensuring the focus is on prevention as well as response
- Ensure multi-agency practice is regularly reviewed and evaluated
- Ensuring that current and future multi-agency policies and procedures are appropriately designed to be responsive in meeting the demand that CSE poses within the local community and when necessary develop new policies and procedure, for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children.
- Ensure that there is evidence supporting effective responses to the risk of harm associated with CSE and going missing from home, care or education to children and young people
- Ensure staff are adequately trained in how to identify and respond
- Ensure that the public receive key messages
- Ensure links to other partnership groups in Peterborough and Cambridgeshire, including the LSCB's E-safety sub-group, ensuring the key messages are shared between the two groups

All members will be responsible for linking to their senior management teams in their agencies and will take on pieces of work as appropriate to their role on behalf of the group.

### **3. Structure**

The chair will be the DCI from Cambridgeshire Constabulary Public Protection department holding the lead on child sexual exploitation. Both the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Business Units will ensure that agenda and papers are up to date and that links with appropriate groups in the two individual authorities are maintained. Cambridgeshire LSCB will provide administration and minute taking.

### **4. Membership**

The core membership of the Child Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group will be:

- Police Strategic Lead(s) for CSE and Missing (Police to provide Chair and deputy chair)
- Strategic Leads for CSE and Missing from Children's Social Care
- Education representatives (including Further Education rep(s))
- Health representatives
- Youth Offending Service(s)
- LSCB representatives

Each member will have the appropriate skills base required to effectively execute the group's work plan. Others agencies or representatives will be invited to attend as appropriate.

Members will take the responsibility for attending meetings, fully contributing by bringing expertise and updates on the contribution of their agency towards all work plans and informing their respective agencies of issues and developments.

A correspondence group will be set up to whom key messages can be delivered and from whom information can be gained. The membership of the core group above and the correspondence group will be reviewed annually.

### **5. Accountability**

The Child Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group is accountable to the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board.

### **6. Frequency of meetings**

The Child Exploitation and Missing Strategic Group will meet quarterly as a minimum or if required by the nature of or to meet the needs of a particular work stream, more frequently as decided by the Chair.

The work of the group will be reviewed bi-annually and the CSE Action Plan will be updated for each meeting.

Agencies will be held to account by the Chair of the group and the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Safeguarding Children Board for any lack of attendance and/or engagement or activity towards the work of the group.