

What is child sexual exploitation?

The Government definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows: **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 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or 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.**

Does the force take CSE seriously?

Tackling child sexual exploitation and bringing offenders to justice is a priority for South Yorkshire Police.

We now operate with a deeper understanding of child sexual exploitation. We are acutely aware of the grooming process and the impact it has on a child. It leads the victim to view the behaviour as normal and not recognise themselves as victims.

The cruel process used by groomers encourages the victims to return to them – this is not consent and will not be deemed as such by South Yorkshire Police.

We treat child sexual exploitation with the utmost sensitivity and would urge anyone who has concerns about a child who could be at risk to come forward.

We want to encourage and empower victims to come forward to report the dreadful crimes committed against them in the confidence that they will be listened to, they will be taken seriously, and that support and care is available.

In March 2016, Professor John Drew published the findings of his independent review into how South Yorkshire Police responds to child sexual exploitation. His report found that “considerable lessons had been learned” and that there have been “significant improvements” since the Jay Report was published in August 2014.

To read more about the review and the findings visit the website: www.drewreview.uk

How many officers are working on child sexual exploitation now?

There has been a significant increase in the number of officers and staff working to protect and safeguard vulnerable people in South Yorkshire.

We now have over 150 officers and staff dealing with matters relating to child sexual exploitation, child abuse and child safeguarding across South Yorkshire.

We've set up co-located multi agency teams in every district. These teams are made up of specialist police officers, social workers and representatives from Barnardo's who sit side-by-side. This enables us to share information at the earliest opportunity and take action to prevent child sexual exploitation.

In July 2016, a ground-breaking child sexual exploitation service was launched in Rotherham. Evolve, which comprises of social workers, police officers, a child sexual exploitation specialist nurse, a Barnardo's project worker, and others, working in one place to provide support and protection to children at risk of sexual exploitation and their families. You can read more about Evolve here:http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/news/article/868/transforming_child_sexual_exploitation_services_in_rotherham

How many investigations into CSE do you have ongoing?

South Yorkshire Police continues to investigate a large number of child sexual exploitation-related crimes.

A number of complex investigations are ongoing into many of those offences and further prosecutions are anticipated.

For details of the latest figures relating to child sexual exploitation, including the number of live investigations and the number of people charged with offences, please visit our dedicated webpage:<http://www.southyorks.police.uk/spotthesigns>

Investigations of this nature can take many months to complete, particularly when the offences occurred a long time ago.

However, we are determined to bring those responsible for these horrendous crimes to justice and will use every tool at our disposal to enable us to do so.

Where we have offenders we are not able to bring charges against, we have robust offender management plans in place to help prevent reoffending whilst the investigation continues.

Who is investigating the abuse of 1,400 victims in Rotherham referred to in the Jay Report?

South Yorkshire Chief Constable David Crompton has asked the [National Crime Agency](#) to conduct an independent investigation into non-familial child sexual exploitation and abuse in Rotherham between 1997-2013, (the geographic area and time period covered by Alexis Jay Report).

The NCA operation, called Operation Stovewood, began in December 2014. A summary of its Terms of Reference is available on the NCA website www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk

The National Crime Agency has full direction and control of the investigation. The NCA also coordinates activity across all relevant South Yorkshire Police criminal investigations into past abuse in Rotherham, to ensure that all law enforcement opportunities are explored and that there is no duplication of activity against offenders.

Operation Stovewood is not responsible for investigating police misconduct, other professional misconduct or past failings in investigations or safeguarding duties. Such matters will be examined by South Yorkshire police and/or the Independent Police Complaints Commission, other professional bodies or the national CSE inquiry led by Professor Alexis Jay.

Who is in charge of Operation Stovewood?

Roy McComb, NCA Deputy Director for Specialist Investigations, is the officer in overall command of Operation Stovewood. A Major Incident Room has been established with officers working from a number of locations in South Yorkshire. More officers are being recruited and the size and skill set of the investigation team will flex in accordance with operational needs. The investigation is funded by South Yorkshire Police and will take a number of years. The NCA will operate in an open and transparent manner and regularly update on the progress of the investigation.

What is happening at the moment?

The investigation, which is now in its investigative stage, has three priorities:

Working with partners to support victims. This includes ensuring that victims receive the 'right service, first time' and that the most appropriate arrangements are in place to provide advice and support.

Victim needs will be jointly considered with council, health and other agencies, and the NCA will ensure, wherever possible, that *all* current inquiries and investigations coordinate their approaches to victims and witnesses to reduce the impact on them.

Support will be available for all victims, regardless of whether they can support any investigation or subsequent court case. All information will be examined.

Targeting offenders – the investigation will follow all potential lines of enquiry without fear or favour and strive to bring all those responsible for harming children to justice. It will focus firstly on anyone suspected of still being active and those suspected of causing most harm in the past.

Building confidence in the investigation among victims, partners and the public, and in the work of partner agencies, is our third equally-important priority.

Key Challenge – Operation Stovewood has gathered a massive amount of paper records from Rotherham Council (Risky Business files) and other sources, well in excess of 100,000 pieces of paper to date. Information relating to the 16-year period under investigation needs to be read, indexed, assessed and prioritised – before being transferred into an electronic format for the first time - in order that links with other pieces of information can be identified. This is a massive task and will take a number of further months to complete. [also delete stack of paper image please]

What has the investigation found so far?

As of November 2016, the investigation had 42 designated suspects, with more suspects still to be identified or traced. Operation Stovewood has engaged with 124 victims and survivors and is taking accounts from them, at a pace they are comfortable with. There are currently 17 specific investigations within the overall 'Operation Stovewood' umbrella. There is currently in excess of 11,100 lines of enquiry to follow-up.

Have you identified all 1,400 victims of abuse?

Work to identify all victims of non-familial child sexual abuse in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 is ongoing. The NCA has the names of hundreds of victims and survivors and there are some yet to be identified. We will reach out to those we know of and seek to identify others as quickly as

professionally possible, but the investigation is large-scale and complex and it will take us a number of years to do so.

In addition to identifying and speaking with victims, Operation Stovewood is prioritising action against suspects who may continue to pose any risk of harm today and those who have caused most harm in the past. In time, we will examine all allegations of abuse and, most importantly, we will listen to victims.

The NCA is working with South Yorkshire Police, Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, local health agencies, the Office of Police and Crime Commissioner and others to tackle past non-familial CSEA in Rotherham; identify offenders and ensure that victims and witnesses have access to advice, information and appropriate support.

The NCA will publish updates on the progress of Operation Stovewood at regular intervals on its website: www.nationalcrimeagency.gov.uk

Does the force plan on making more arrests?

There remain a number of ongoing investigations into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and across South Yorkshire. A number of people have been charged and convicted of both current and past child sexual offences in Rotherham.

More information about convictions and court results can be found on our dedicated child sexual exploitation webpage – www.southyorks.police.uk/spotthesigns - as well as a month-by-month breakdown of individuals charged and cautioned with these offences.

Operation Stovewood has arrested nine people so far.

Information about further arrests, together with information about any charges, will be published by the NCA as soon as it is available.

Before an individual can be arrested for an offence, we need to have reasonable grounds to suspect they have committed a criminal offence. Names of potential suspects are not enough to make arrests.

We will make arrests and seek to charge people with offences when we have enough evidence to do so. We work very closely with the Crown Prosecution Service to gather the best evidence possible in order to bring a case to court.

We have also developed strong processes to ensure information and intelligence received about sexual exploitation is collated, shared with partners and reviewed on a very frequent basis to see if any further action can be taken.

Non-recent offences create greater complexities in securing evidence such as CCTV and forensic evidence. However, this is something we are determined to overcome and we will take every opportunity to bring offenders to justice. This at times may mean prosecuting offenders for other, unrelated, criminal offences as we have evidence to support those prosecutions.

If we are unable to bring charges against an individual, work is undertaken with partner agencies to do whatever is possible to safeguard a victim, or potential future victim, from harm.

Why do you release suspects on bail?

Child sexual exploitation investigations are complex and take time. There is not always enough evidence to charge someone with an offence when they are arrested.

If this is the case, a suspect will be released on bail often with a number of restrictions or conditions.

During the period the suspect is on bail, the police will continue to carry out their investigations and gather evidence.

This will help to support a prosecution in court once a suspect is charged.

Are all the offenders Asian?

Our staff will relentlessly go wherever the evidence takes them and do everything they can with partners to identify offenders and bring them to justice, regardless of ethnicity or gender.

On our dedicated child sexual exploitation webpage, we publish stories of individuals convicted and sentenced for these offences. Please visit www.southyorks.police.uk/spotthesigns

Are there Asian victims?

Sexual violence and abuse can take many forms and affects all communities.

We understand that rape and sexual violence is under-reported in all communities but particularly in Asian communities and this is something we are working with partners and charity organisations to address.

As part of that, we will look to raise the awareness of minority groups about sexual violence and abuse, how to report it and where victims can go to receive advice and support.

We would encourage all victims to come forward and tell us about what happened to them in the knowledge they will be listened to, they will be taken seriously, and their needs will be supported throughout.

We would also encourage witnesses to contact us with any information they have about a potential victim.

Will I have to go to court if I report CSE to police?

Not all victims will want to relive what happened to them and feel that by reporting it to police they will have to go through the court process.

Telling us about it doesn't mean you will have to go through that process if it is not what you want. We will listen to what you tell us and what you want when making any decisions about what action can be taken.

We know how hard it can be for victims to come forward but in partnership with other agencies and charities, we can ensure that appropriate advice and support is provided.

We would encourage all victims to come forward and tell us about what happened to them in the knowledge they will be listened to, they will be taken seriously, and their needs will be supported throughout. We would encourage witnesses to share what they know too.

What is happening with the Independent Investigation?

In addition to the National Crime Agency's independent investigation detailed above, the Police and Crime Commissioner for South Yorkshire Dr Alan Billings commissioned an independent review of South Yorkshire Police's handling of reports of child sexual exploitation.

Professor John Drew was appointed to lead the review which started in September 2015. In March 2016, Professor John Drew published his findings. His report found that "considerable lessons had been learned" and that there have been "significant improvements" since the Jay Report was published in August 2014.

To read more about the review and the findings visit the website: www.drewreview.uk

Will officers face disciplinary action?

South Yorkshire Police has referred a number of complaints to the Independent Police Complaints Commission (IPCC) in relation to child sexual exploitation in Rotherham.

We remain committed to assisting them with their independent investigation into any alleged misconduct.

You can read more about their investigation here: <https://www.ipcc.gov.uk/force/south-yorkshire-police>

What progress has been made by South Yorkshire Police since the Jay report?

Since the publication of the Alexis Jay report in August 2014, South Yorkshire Police has made significant progress in tackling child sexual exploitation but we understand more needs to be done.

There has been a marked increase in the number of police officers and staff dedicated to tackling child sexual exploitation and we are absolutely committed to achieving justice, stopping harm and preventing future offending.

In Barnsley, Doncaster, Rotherham and Sheffield, there are dedicated child abuse investigation teams as well as multi-agency safeguarding hubs (MASH), who have responsibility for investigating a wide range of issues including child abuse, domestic abuse, missing from home and sexual offences.

Working alongside our partner agencies gives us greater opportunities to share information about individuals who may be at risk and take the appropriate action to safeguard them from harm.

In Rotherham in July 2016 Evolve, a dedicated child sexual exploitation service, was launched. Evolve comprises of social workers, police officers, a child sexual exploitation specialist nurse, a Barnardo's project worker, and others, working in one place to provide support and protection to children at risk of sexual exploitation and their families.

Investigations

There remain a number of ongoing investigations into child sexual exploitation in Rotherham and across South Yorkshire. A number of people have been charged and convicted of both current and past child sexual offences in Rotherham.

More information about convictions and court results can be found on our dedicated child sexual exploitation webpage, as well as a month-by-month breakdown of individuals charged and cautioned with these offences.

The webpage also gives details of the number of referrals we've received, the number of live investigations we have and the number of people charged with child sexual exploitation offences - <http://www.southyorks.police.uk/spotthesigns>

Training

We continue to invest in further training to ensure we continue to improve our service to victims and survivors of child sexual exploitation.

In June 2016 Operation Makesafe, one of the force's child protection training packages, was recognised as part of a global study on the sexual exploitation of children in travel and tourism. This followed some work between SYP and students at Sheffield Hallam University to translate the materials into a number of languages, so more people could be offered the training.

Makesafe has been rolled out to hotel staff across South Yorkshire and since November 2014, a number of other industries have received the training including all SYP call handlers and dispatchers, bus companies, as well as the package being delivered at HR forums in South Yorkshire.

The initiative is now being used by other police forces across the country and is recognised by the College of Policing as best practise.

In March 2015, the force commissioned Barnardo's to deliver training to our specialist child protection officers to help further improve victim support across South Yorkshire. Over 100 detectives took part in the training, delivered by a former detective inspector from Devon and Cornwall Police and one of Barnardo's social workers and head trainers.

The bespoke training focused on a variety of subjects, including the psychological effects of sexual exploitation, how police engage with victims, models of exploitation and national investigations.

Campaigns

The first phase of an awareness raising campaign was launched with partners across the county in November 2014 to encourage people to spot the signs of child sexual exploitation, and come forward with information about young people vulnerable to sexual exploitation.

The Spot the Signs campaign includes a series of posters depicting 14 different signs that a young person may be a victim of sexual exploitation, as well as the details of support services available. These were displayed in prominent public locations including on buses, in shopping centres and doctor's surgeries.

The campaign received support from the Child Sexual Exploitation National Working Group, and received positive feedback both on social media and by Her Majesty's Inspectorate of Constabulary (HMIC). It has also generated several online discussions, which is helping to increase awareness of the subject.

Legislation

We are also using legislation innovatively to enable us to take offenders to court even when the victim does not feel able to give a statement to police.

These are called victimless prosecutions and are used to ensure all opportunities to bring offenders to justice are explored.

How can I report child sexual exploitation?

We would encourage any victim of sexual violence or abuse to come forward and report it to police, in the confidence that they will be listened to, that they will be taken seriously and that a thorough investigation will take place.

Anyone with information about potential offenders should contact Crimestoppers, where information can be given anonymously, on 0800 555 111 or by calling police on 101.

Anyone wanting help or advice about child sexual exploitation can call or text the national helpline 'Say Something' on 116 000.