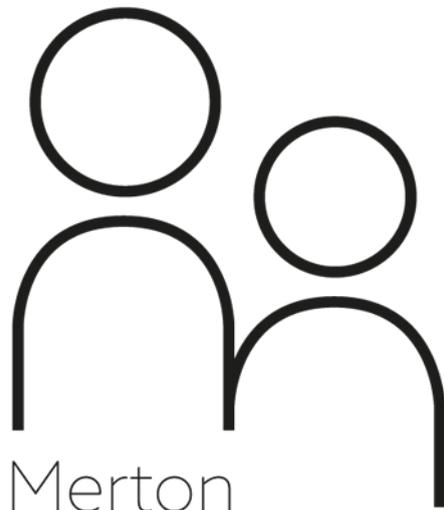


Merton Safeguarding Children Board

Child Sexual Exploitation Protocol



Merton
Safeguarding
Children Board

Author: Lee Hopkins Lead: Paul Angeli	Date Updated: April 2015	Approved By MSCB: January 2015	Review Date: March 2016
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Introduction

This protocol sets out the multi-agency arrangements for identifying and responding to children, young people and families affected by child sexual exploitation in the London Borough of Merton.

The Protocol includes the provision of local procedures in line with the guidance in *'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation'* Action Plan, 2012.

The guidance expects local authorities and their partners to:

- Develop local prevention strategies
- Identify those at risk of being sexually exploited
- Take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of particular children and young people who are being, or may be, sexually exploited and
- Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way.

PREVENT

PROTECT

PROSECUTE

The DfE Action Plan places an equal emphasis on police investigations and activity against those who coerce, abuse and exploit children and young people as well as efforts to protect children and young people at risk of harm.

This Protocol draws from the guidance and is consistent with the *'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation'* Guidance 2009 (part B Chapter 8 2014) It has also incorporated the *London Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation*.

Definition

The sexual exploitation of children and young people (CSE) under-18 is defined as that which:

'involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability' (Department for Education 2012)

A local young person who has been supported with their experience of child sexual exploitation described it as:

- **Someone using or taking advantage of a young person for their own advantage and needs and wants.**
- **Child Sexual Exploitation is when someone who is under 18 years of age is lead, influenced or forced in to doing or having sexual acts on them without actually choosing it and isn't allowed or able to say "no".**
- **The person exploiting them has control and power and influence over them and will make the child feel they have not got any other choice.**
- **Child Sexual Exploitation can happen anywhere in the country nice towns and not nice towns and this includes via online and social media in and out of schools**

Principles

The principles underpinning a multi-agency response to the sexual exploitation of children include:

- **A child-centred approach** - Action will be focussed on the child's needs, including consideration of children with particular vulnerabilities or sensitivities, and the fact that children do not always acknowledge what may be an exploitative or abusive situation. Sexually exploited children are children in need of services under the Children Act 1989 and 2004. They are also children in need of protection.
- **A proactive approach** - This should be focussed on prevention, early identification and intervention, as well as disruption activity and prosecuting perpetrators.
- **Parenting, family life, and services** - Action will take account of family circumstances when deciding how best to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people.
- **The rights of children and young people** - Children and young people are entitled to be safeguarded from sexual exploitation just as agencies have duties in respect of safeguarding and promoting welfare.
- **Responsibility for criminal acts** - Sexually exploited children should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders. Sexual exploitation of children and young people should not be regarded as criminal behaviour on the part of the child or young person, but as child sexual abuse. The responsibility for the sexual exploitation of children lies with the abuser and the focus of police investigations should be on those who coerce, exploit and abuse children and young people.
- **An integrated approach** – Tackling sexual exploitation requires a three-pronged approach; prevention, protection and prosecution.
- **A shared responsibility** – Multi-agency responsibility is underpinned by a strong commitment from managers, a shared understanding of the problem of

sexual exploitation and effective coordination by the Local Safeguarding Children Board.

- **Recognition** - Sexual exploitation includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse, as well as, in some cases, neglect.
- **Children under sixteen cannot consent to sexual activity** - Children do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexually exploitative situations, but do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation. Section 5 of the Sexual Offences Act 2003 makes it an offence for a person intentionally to penetrate with his penis the vagina, anus or mouth of a child under the age of 13. Whether or not the child consented to this act is irrelevant.

Key Factors

This protocol describes a number of factors which may place children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation. These are sometimes referred to as 'push and pull' factors and may occur singularly or in combination.

The lists below are not exhaustive but are potentially significant influences on a young person's vulnerability to sexual exploitation, since sexual exploitation is often linked to other issues in the life of a child or young person.

Sexual Exploitation is often linked to other types of crime including:

- Child trafficking (into, out of and within the UK)
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships
- Grooming (both online and offline)
- Viewing, creating or distributing abusive images of children
- Organised sexual abuse of children
- Gang related activity
- Immigration-related offences
- Domestic servitude

Significant factors for children and young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation:

- Running away from home / care and going missing
- Non attendance at school and school phobia
- Being in residential or foster care (especially out of area)
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Parents / carers with a high level of vulnerabilities
- Sexually risky behaviour
- Sexual health problems
- Domestic servitude, neglect, violence/abuse and bullying Teenage pregnancy
- Long term sexual, physical and psychological harm
- Forced marriage
- Mental health issues including self harm and para-suicide
- Notable changes in behaviour or habits

- Forced isolation from family, friends, community
- Learning disabilities
- Immigration status
- In “relationship” with older male or female
- Involved or associated in the gang activity culture
- In receipt of goods or money as “gifts” or for which there is no account
- Friendships/peers involved or associated in Children Sexual Exploitation
- Family involved in sexual exploitation
- The family unaware exposure of children and young people in social media leading to potential vulnerability and life long consequences

See Appendix 1 CSE Safeguarding Mnemonic.

Working with Parents / Carers

Parents and carers play the most crucial role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their children. If a child or young person is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm through sexual exploitation by someone outside the family, this may not necessarily be as a result of parents or carers having difficulties in meeting their child’s needs. Involving parents/families early in interventions can be a significant way forward in protecting and supporting their children.

In some cases parents and carers will be complicit in the exploitation of their children and this would be a theme to explore in depth through the process of any assessment and plan to safeguard the young person.

Working with Children and Young People

Young people may be sexually exploited for many reasons and commonly they may suffer with low self esteem. This can then make them vulnerable to unwittingly becoming involved in situations which ultimately exploit them. It is very common for children and young people not to recognise that they are being abused due to the grooming methods often used by the perpetrators. The needs of children and particularly of young people aged 16 and 17 years may be overlooked for this reason. Although faced with limited choice, they may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily. It may take many weeks or months for practitioners who work with young people to build up their trust, and help them to recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

Young people involved in or at risk of sexual exploitation often have chaotic lives and a history of poor relationships with the helping professions. Accessibility has to be more than just making a service available. Effort needs to be made to ensure that services are provided in a safe environment, flexible and responsive to young people’s needs, by staff who take time to build a trusting relationship. Providing support to young people on their own terms is crucial, as is honesty about the boundaries of confidentiality.

Many sexually exploited young people have few, if any, concerned, attentive adults in their lives. With a history of abuse, family breakdown and poor parental relationships, often with a background of disruption in the care

system, it is hardly surprising that young people are attracted to the attention offered by abusive, unsafe adults. Our services aim to provide a different kind of attention; attention that will 'hook' a young person out of unsafe relationships into safe and positive ones. This entails focusing on the issues that matter to the young person and persistence over time. Consistent and persistent attention from a specific worker enables the development of a protective, supportive relationship within which a young person feels safe enough to examine their lives and start to make changes.

The steady persistence of workers may eventually be understood as being a genuine demonstration of concern and an indication of reliability. Such persistent engagement techniques are particularly important to counteract the influence of, often equally persistent, abusive adult.

Referral and Consultation

Professionals in all agencies should be alert to the possibility that a child/young person they are working with may be being sexually exploited. The professional may already have concerns about the child/young person e.g missing school, missing from home, self-harming. When considering possible exploitation any professional should first discuss the concerns with their agency's designated safeguarding lead. If you need to discuss a potential child sexual exploitation concern you can also contact the CSE leads in CSC and YI and the Police.

- Lee Regan - Police Single Point of Contact
lee.regan@met.pnn.police.uk 020 8649 3154
- Susan Keith - Lead Independent Chair and IRO
susan.keith@merton.gov.uk 020 8545 3012
- Gabrielle Onwenna - CSE lead in MASH
gabrielle.onwenna@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net 020 8545 4304
- Emma Bradley YW & G Worker
Emma.bradley@merton.gov.uk 0208 545 5352

Police

There are various police teams who may become involved with a young person who is at risk of being sexually exploited. This includes CAIT, Sapphire Team, Missing Persons Unit, Public Protection Desk, C.I.D. and Safer Neighbourhood Teams. Police coordination of a Safeguarding/Disruption Plan towards targeted and identified individuals can be effective.

The Pan-London Child Sexual Exploitation Operating Protocol provides operational guidance on the processing of CSE cases, including 'branch flags', liaison with SC&O5 and Forensics. Operationally, Merton Police will follow this response.

The MPS Sexual Offences, Exploitation and Child Abuse Investigation Command (SC&O2/5) will have overall responsibility, within the police service, for all Child Sexual Exploitation Investigations. All initial category 1 suspicions/allegations will be managed by Borough Operational Command Units or Children's Services.

The MPS Sexual Exploitation Team will monitor these suspicions/notifications to support Borough Operational Command Units and Children's Services to ensure timely interventions are made where appropriate. All category 2 and 3 allegations will be allocated to the Sexual Exploitation Team who will decide upon the appropriate pathway to the police response.

Reporting Suspicions of CSE - Multi Agency Responsibilities

Professionals in all agencies should be alert to the possibility that a child/young person they are working with may be sexually exploited. The professional may already have concerns about the child/young person e.g. missing school, missing from home, self-harming.

If you are concerned about potential child sexual exploitation you will need to complete the CSE screening tool and risk assessments tool. The tools will be available through the MSCB (Merton Safeguarding Children Board) website or otherwise through the MSCB administrators on mertonlscb@merton.gov.uk. When you have completed the screening and risk assessment tools you should send them to mash@merton.gov.uk; QAPD (Quality Assurance Practice Development) Manager susan.keith@merton.gov.uk.

If the child in question has a lead professional, they are the point of contact for concerns and **upon notification of concerns** will become responsible for completing the screening and risk assessment tool at Appendix 2.

While it may be appropriate to complete the checklist with the child/family of the child, consideration should be made of whether engaging the child and family and alerting them to the risks may compound risk or further alienate the child.

Persons of Concern and Locations of Interest

The CSE screening and risk assessment tool requests any known information on persons and locations of interest. This information will be considered at the MASE (Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation) meeting to identify patterns and to ensure that, where appropriate, disruption activity takes place, and evidence to support prosecution is gathered.

The CSE screening and risk assessment tool defines a 'person of concern' as someone who 'appears to be developing a friendship or relationship based on power over a child by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources'.

Locations of interest may be varied but could include fast food outlets, parks and taxi ranks.

Categories of risk

Following completion of the checklist, the referring professional must apply professional judgement to assess the category of risk. (See Appendix 2&3)

Category 1 Low: A vulnerable child or young person where there are concerns they are being targeted and groomed and where any of the CSE warning signs have been identified. However, at this stage there is no evidence of any offences.

Category 2 Medium: Evidence a child or young person is being targeted for opportunistic abuse through the exchange of sex for drugs, perceived affection, sense of belonging, accommodation (overnight stays), money and goods etc. The likelihood of coercion and control is significant.

Category 3 High: A child or young person whose sexual exploitation is habitual, often self denied and where coercion/control is implicit.

The completed form should then be returned to Mertonlscb@merton.gov.uk, the QA (Quality Assurance) manager will agree the pathway for referral and response. The QA manager will also review the information contained within it and facilitate a decision around how work will progress. For Category 1/2/3 concerns a CSE Strategy meeting will be convened by the Local Authority.

The role of the CSE Strategy meeting and Multi-agency discussions

A CSE strategy meeting should take place for all children considered at risk of sexual exploitation.

Child Protection Procedures should be followed where:

- a) The child is at immediate risk of significant harm.
- b) The child has other additional vulnerabilities.
- c) There is concern that the sexual exploitation is being facilitated by the child's parent/carer.
- d) There is concern that the sexual exploitation is facilitated by the child's parent/carer failing to protect.
- e) There is concern that a related or unrelated adult in a position of trust or responsibility to the child is organising or encouraging the sexual exploitation.

CSE/Strategy meetings will be convened for Level 1, 2 and Level 3 cases. They will be arranged by the Lead Agency, often Children's Services, as specified by the London Child Protection Procedures. The panel will also include those professionals who are working with the individual victims to coordinate and deliver a child in need or child protection plan. Cross-borough

meetings for Looked After children that are placed out of borough should also be established where required. The CSE lead in Children's Services should have an overview of these cases and ensure adequate information is shared with the MASE panel. Chapter 4 of the Procedures clarifies the process for Multi-agency network meetings and MAP meetings as follows: (See Appendix 4 for Flowchart and quick guide)

Category 1 Low: Multi-agency network meeting/discussion and diversion plans

In cases where there are indications that a child is at risk of being groomed for abuse through sexual exploitation, professionals in any of the agencies should, after consultation with their agency's nominated safeguarding children adviser, call a strategy meeting. The aim of the meeting / discussion should be to develop a safety plan to enable the child to protect themselves, to recognise and avoid risky behaviours and people and to engage in positive activities and relationships.

Strategy meetings should be attended and involve agencies currently providing services for the child - e.g. the child's school and/or Education Welfare Officer, health services as appropriate (school nurse, sexual health professional, GP), LA Children's Social Care lead professional or equivalent; and any other agency which is in a position to contribute significantly to the development of a diversion plan for the child.

Where appropriate, the child and their family should be made aware of the concerns, engaged in developing the diversion plan and involved in all subsequent network meetings to review the plan. However, engaging the child and family and alerting them to the risks should be approached with a high level of sensitivity to avoid compounding risks or furthering alienation. There are circumstances where a child's parent/carer may not be invited to attend a network meeting consistent with the wishes of the young person and their Fraser competence.

The strategy meeting should be minuted and the safety plan should be shared with relevant professionals in the child's professional network. Agencies will need to support the completion of a common and shared assessment (CASA) as a way to formulate a plan in partnership with the child and their family.

Categories 2 Medium and 3 High: Multi-Agency planning meetings and safeguarding and support plans

In cases where a child is considered to be at high or medium risk of sexual exploitation, this assessment should be reached by the professional in consultation with their agency's nominated safeguarding children adviser. The professional and/or the nominated adviser should make a referral to their local LA Children's Social Care service in line with *section 6. Referral and assessment, London Child Protection Procedures*

As in all cases of suspected abuse and neglect, LA Children's Social Care will respond in one of three ways and will advise the referrer of which plan is in place: **Child in Need or Child Protection or Looked After**.

A single assessment will be undertaken to identify the child's level of risk and need for service provision and the assessment may identify the child to be at risk of significant harm and in need of protection. This will necessitate a child protection enquiry and a core assessment of need under section 47 of the *Children Act 1989*; or

In cases where an LA Children's Social Care assessment confirms that a child is at risk of significant harm, they must convene a multi-agency Strategy Meeting, in order to determine whether child protection enquiries should be made in line with *section 7. Child Protection Enquiries, London Child Protection Procedures*,

Strategy meetings under Section 47 of the Children Act 1989 should be chaired by a LA Children's Social Care child protection manager / team manager.

Attendance at the meeting should include:

- The referrer, if a professional;
- Lead officers from education and health services
- Social worker if allocated;
- LA Children's Social Care duty senior if not allocated;
- Any other relevant person (e.g. fostering link worker, residential key worker / manager YOT worker, voluntary agency worker, GP); and
- Identified police officer from the Child Abuse Investigation Command, Clubs and Vice or the Missing Person Unit, or CSE single point of contact. (See Appendix 5 for relevant services)

Attendance at the meeting of the child and their family should only be considered if attendance will not compromise the child's safety or the progress of an investigation.

The final decision should be taken by the LA Children's Social Care child protection manager or team manager for the child's case in consultation with the police. This decision should be clearly recorded on the child's case file.

Criteria for deciding whether or not to invite the child and their family includes:

- The child's age and level of maturity, taking into account learning difficulties;
- The child's perception and interpretation of their involvement;
- Patterns and frequency of any behaviour causing concern;
- Identity and role of adults involved;
- Age and maturity of other participants;
- Nature of sexual activity, who is controlling the sexual activity, where it is taking place;
- The actual and potential physical and emotional effects;
- Whether any physical injuries have been caused;

- Existence of substance misuse and their significance for the child's behaviour;
- Likely reaction of parents/carers;
- Likely reaction of peers; and
- Likely reaction of other agencies.

The purpose of the meeting should be to:

- Share and clarify information;
- Establish exact nature of concerns;
- Establish risk for any other children, including siblings;
- Consider the likelihood of prosecution of relevant adults;
- Agree on action and make recommendations to address the concern;
- Develop a safeguarding and support plan for the child and parent/carer;
- Work towards a recovery strategy; and
- Identify the factors to be taken into account (these will include the indicators in the Risk Assessment Framework).

The outcome of meeting may be that:

- There is no need to proceed further at this point;
- There is a need to invoke child protection procedures;
- There is a need for further assessment;
- There is a possibility of criminal action against an adult;
- Counselling is required to divert the child from involvement;
- There is justification for criminal action against the child;
- There is insufficient information at this stage, but concerns remain, and further work is required to clarify them;
- A referral to a voluntary project / organisation should be made; and/or
- A referral for a family group conference should be made.

The CSE Strategy meeting should be minuted, the safeguarding and support plan must specify who is responsible for undertaking the work, and a copy of the minutes should be retained by or sent to the lead professional. Unless no further action is agreed, or child protection procedures are invoked, a date for a review meeting should be agreed, to take place no later than three months after the initial meeting. If the child's parent/carer has not been present, the meeting must consider what information to give at this point, and who should undertake this. Parents/carers should usually be notified of concerns regarding their children, and what action is being considered to address these.

As with all child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation involves varying degrees of coercion, reward, secrecy and fear, which means that interventions to support and rehabilitate children may need to be long-term, and safeguarding and support plans should be progressed at the child's pace. Where no concerns are identified, there will be no further action. In these cases, LA Children's Social Care will advise the referrer verbally and in writing as to the basis of the decision.

Young people under 13 years of age

All cases involving under 13's should always be referred to and discussed with the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Team (MASH) Team Manager or the Child Protection Conference QA Practice Development Manager. All cases must be reported to Children's Social Care.

All cases of children under the age of 13 years believed to be engaged in sexual activity and/or penetrative sexual relationships must be referred to Children's Social Care who will refer to the Police if this has not already happened. This recognises the particular vulnerability of children of this age engaging in sexual behaviours and that they are deemed too young to give consent to any sexual activity.

Young people aged 13-16

Although sexual activity with young people under the age of 16 years remains illegal, 13-16 year olds are considered competent to give consent, in certain circumstances. Reference to Report of Office of the Children's Commissioner November 2013 '*Sex without consent, I suppose that is rape: How young people in England understand sexual consent*'

Therefore, when making an assessment about risk for this age the professional should take into account:

- The age of the child/young person
- Level of understanding/maturity
- Any key risk factors current or historical
- Behaviour of young person
- Any evidence of grooming
- Age of boy/girl friend or adult

Young people aged 16/17

It is important to consider that just because a young person is 16 or 17 years old and has reached the legal age of being able to consent to sex that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. They are still defined as children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 respectively and can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation. They have the right to appropriate support and protection from harm. The need for continued support also extends to Young People age 18+ as care leavers. In considering the vulnerability of a 16-17 year old, thought needs to be given to their ability to give informed consent to sexual activity. The Mental Capacity Act (2005) includes provision for assessing 16-17 year olds' capacity to consent. It is important to recognise that adults can be sexually exploited, particularly adults at risk, and concerns about a young person of 18 or over should be referred to adult safeguarding.

Aged 18 and over

Where a young person is not supported through care leaving services but they are at risk of sexual exploitation then early collaboration should be held

with Adult Safeguarding and Safer Merton services including Housing to establish a continued framework to provide further support on into early adulthood.

MASH and CSE

The MASH will provide a key role in identifying those at risk of CSE by identifying the warning signs within referral notifications. These signals will trigger a risk assessment which will then be channelled through the agreed pathways to progress services such as investigations or interventions.

The information gathered from partners within MASH will be assessed by Children's Social care (CSC) and appropriate partner agencies, on a case by case basis.

On receipt of a referral MASH will consider allocation for the completion of a Single Assessment. If the child/young person is considered to be at risk of significant harm a Strategy Meeting/Discussion will take place and a S47 investigation initiated with appropriate steps taken to secure the safety of the child/young person. For all other cases of suspected CSE a Child Sexual Exploitation strategy meeting will be convened

At the point a potential Sexual Exploitation referral is identified as a s47 enquiry, the strategy discussion/meeting for that enquiry needs to be chaired by the relevant team manager in order to plan a response to the immediate risk.

Request for a Sexual Exploitation Strategy Meeting this will be referred to the Quality Assurance Practice and Development Manager, who will then allocate an Independent Reviewing Officer (IRO) to chair and co-ordinate the CSE Strategy meeting ensuring collaboration and planning between partner agencies. The CSE Strategy meeting must then pass the referral to the next MASE Operational Panel with a copy of the agreed actions for tracking and review.

Where a child/young person is already known to CSC the Strategy Meeting/Discussion should be chaired by the Team Manager or Assistant Team Manager alongside the allocated Social Worker. If a S47 investigation is required it should be undertaken by the allocated social worker or a sufficiently experienced social worker.

All cases of suspected, actual or potential sexual exploitation should be referred to the MASE Operational Panel. For any cases that do not meet the criteria for social work allocation these should be discussed with the Independent Chair, the CSE Champion or in their absence the QAPD Manager to agree who should act as the lead professional and thereby complete the risk assessment referral to the MASE Panel and Strategy meeting.

Any planned referral of the case to the MASE should not prevent more immediate case planning and intervention.

If the case involves a suspect within the child or young person's family or is a Carer or person in a position of trust then the Form 87A should be directed to the Police Child Abuse Investigation Team office (secure email, SPOC, etc.). The referring MASH social worker must always check that the email has been received. All such communications should be through secure emails.

Sexual Exploitation and the role of the MASE Meeting

All referrals to the MASE group will usually have already had a sexual exploitation meeting. The lead professional at that sexual exploitation meeting should copy of the agreed actions from the sexual exploitation meeting. The sexual exploitation meeting will also establish the level of risk ascribed to the case and the lead professional will be given a time slot to present at the next MASE meeting and supported by the lead independent chair for sexual exploitation meetings.

The MASE meeting will consider the actions put forward for the case and any additional multi-agency involvement and confirm or adjust the risk assessment grading.

The MASE Meeting

MASE meetings are held monthly. These meetings also incorporate the Children Missing from Home and Care to ensure effective cross-over between these often interlinked issues.

MASE meetings are attended by a core group of professionals from Children's Services and all relevant Sexual Exploitation Leads from Merton Police and SC&05, Health, Education, Youth Services, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS), Youth Justice Team (YOT) and key partners from the voluntary sector (e.g. Barnardos and Jigsaw4u).

Purpose of MASE meeting

- Review all CSE assessments, including nature of concerns, protective factors, and risks to other children and young people.
- Review all multi-agency support plans for the child/young person and parent/carer
- Systematically gather information regarding links with known or suspected offenders and young people to support cross-referencing of associates and show relationships between groups of people on a borough wide and cross-borough basis
- Share and clarify information across all agencies
- Ensure coordination with the MASH
- Ensure close links with the Missing from Home and Care monthly tracking meetings
- Ensure there is effective cross border liaison with other LSCBs and CSE leads
- Ensure a focus on prosecution or disruption activity for perpetrators

Cross-borough meetings for those children that are placed out of borough should also be established when required. Any intelligence should be passed through into the Police and LSCB by respective SPOCs.

Outcomes of MASE Operational meeting

1. There is no need for enhanced services and single agency to monitor
Or
2. A Team Around the Child approach is taken to prevent potential sexual exploitation. This can be under a CASA with a lead practitioner or under Children In Need.
Or
3. Concerns require a coordinated Safeguarding assessment/Disruption plan with an allocated social worker and possible specialist support
Or
4. S47 investigation and possible Initial Child Protection Conference with specialist support.

See quick guide & flowchart Appendix 4/5

This protocol will be reviewed annually as part of MSCB scheduled reviews.

CSE KEY CONTACTS

NAME	AGENCY	TEL.	EMAIL
Curtis Ashton	FAS	020 8545 3801	curtis.ashton@merton.gov.uk
Gabrielle Onwenna	Duty Manager MASH	0208 545 4216	gabrielle.onwenna@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net
Nicola Church	Police Borough	0208 247 7800	nicola.s.church@met.pnn.police.uk.cjism.net
Louise Doherty	Health (Comm Services)	0208 545 4053	clcht.safeguardingchildrensmerton@nhs.net
Bev Selway Yvonne Wilkins	Education	0208 288 5624	Bev.selway@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net Yvonne.wilkins@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net
Anna Di Mascio	Barnardos	0207 700 2253	anna.dimascio@barnardos.org.uk
Pam Byfield	Jigsaw4u	0208 687 1384	Pambyfield@jigsaw4u.org.uk Mertonjigsaw4u@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net
Roberta Evans	Y.O.T.	0208 274 4943	roberta.evans@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net
Caroline Muller	CSC: Quality Assurance & Practice Development	028 545 3211	caroline.muller@merton.gov.uk
Ernest Ewwaraye	Transforming Families	020 8545 4965	ernest.ewwaraye@merton.gov.uk.cjism.net

Note: Contact directly to confirm pathway to exchange information securely before sending confidential data.

Useful Websites

○ Child Exploitation Online Protection (CEOP) www.ceop.co.uk
○ The National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People (NWG) www.nationalworkinggroup.org
○ UK Human Trafficking Centre (UKHTC) www.soca.gov.uk
○ UK Border Agency (UKBA) www.ukba.homeoffice.gov.uk
○ Department for Education www.education.gov.uk
○ Barnardos phone App. Would You
○ Online learning for Parents on CSE - E Academy www.safeguardingchildrennea.co.uk

Appendix 1

Warning signs for children and young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation

Sexual health and behaviour

Evidence of sexually transmitted infections, pregnancy and termination; inappropriate sexualised behaviour

Absent from school or repeatedly running away

Evidence of truancy or periods of being missing from home or care

Familial abuse and/or problems at home

Familial sexual abuse, physical abuse, emotional abuse, neglect, as well as risk of forced marriage or honour-based violence; domestic violence; substance misuse; parental mental health concerns; parental criminality; experience of homelessness; living in a care home or temporary accommodation

Emotional and physical condition

Thoughts of, or attempted, suicide or self-harming; low self-esteem or self-confidence; problems relating to sexual orientation; learning difficulties or poor mental health; unexplained injuries or changes in physical appearance identify

Gangs, older age groups and involvement in crime

Involvement in crime; direct involvement with gang members or living in a gang-afflicted community; involvement with older individuals or lacking friends from the same age group; contact with other individuals who are sexually exploited

Use of technology and sexual bullying

Evidence of 'sexting', sexualised communication on-line or problematic use of the internet and social networking sites

Alcohol and drug misuse

Problematic substance use

Receipt of unexplained gifts or money

Unexplained finances, including phone credit, clothes and money

Distrust of authority figures

Resistance to communicating with parents, carers, teachers, social services, health, police and others



Appendix 2

Child Sexual Exploitation Screening Tool

Child sexual exploitation is a form of abuse. It involves children and young people being forced or manipulated into sexual activity in exchange for something- money, gifts or accommodation, or less tangible goods such as affection or status. The sexual activity and exchange may be seen as consensual, but are based on an imbalance of power which severely limits victims' options. This Tool has been developed to enable the identification of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation.

Date:

Name of child/young person:

Completed By:

Significant Risk Indicators	Current or during the past 6 months:	Prior to 6 months ago:
Periods of going missing day and/or night		
Relationship of concern with a controlling adult (male or female) or young person, which might involve physical and/or emotional abuse and/or gang activity		
Entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults (not car theft)		
Unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothes or other items		
Frequenting areas known for risky activities		
Groomed/abused via the Internet and mobile technology		
Having unexplained contact with hotels, taxi companies or fast food outlets		

Additional Risk Indicators	Please tick
Whereabouts unclear or unknown – day and/or night	
Absences/exclusion from school or not engaged in school/college/ training/work	
Multiple callers – Unknown adults/young people	
Physical injuries without plausible explanation	
Sexually transmitted infections/ Pregnancies / termination of pregnancies	
Drugs Misuse	
Alcohol Misuse	
Self-harming/challenging behaviours/suicide attempts/ eating disorders/aggression	
Use of a mobile phone which causes concern – including sexting/multiple phones/sims	
Unsafe use of internet	
Has been sexually assaulted	
Disclosure of sexual/physical assault followed by withdrawal of allegation	
Risky/inappropriate sexual behaviour	
Lack of awareness/understanding of being safe	
Peers involved in sexual exploitation/risky or concerning behaviours	
Living independently and failing to respond to attempts by workers to keep in touch	
A&E attendance because of alcohol/drug misuse	
Being accompanied to appointments by an unknown person that causes concern	
Association with gang members that suggests sexual exploitation is a possibility	

Vulnerability Factors	Please tick
Unsuitable/inappropriate accommodation/sofa surfing	
Isolated from peers/family/social networks	
Sexual abuse (during childhood)	
History of Local Authority Care	
Involvement in criminal activities and/or at risk of gang involvement	
Breakdown of family relationships	
History of Child Protection involvement in relation to neglect, physical or emotional abuse	
Family history of domestic abuse and/or substance misuse and/or mental health difficulties	

Other Concerns

The framework includes three categories of risk and is intended to inform appropriate responses in relation to children and young people's safeguarding needs. The presence of one significant risk indicator will necessitate action as described in the significant risk section on the next page.

Please use your professional judgement to reflect upon the indicators you have ticked above and consider the health, welfare and safety of the child in question. (NB: A 'child' is any person under the age of 18, male and female and older children can be equally as vulnerable).

	Description	Associated actions
	<p>Low risk Universal Plus</p> <p>(at risk) - a vulnerable child who is at risk of being targeted and groomed for sexual exploitation.</p>	<p>Referral to be made - CSE Strategy Meeting Educate to stay safe.</p> <p>Work with children, young people and families to develop an awareness of the risks that can lead to a situation in which they may be exposed to sexual exploitation.</p> <p>Keep records as to incidents and risk indicators and monitor any changes in vulnerability which may result in increased risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) in the future.</p> <p>Make contact with the Service CSE Champions and / or CSE administrator. Refer to MASE.</p>
	<p>Medium risk Additional Needs</p> <p>(at risk) - a vulnerable child who may be targeted for opportunistic abuse.</p>	<p>Establish risk and need by completing the CSE screening and risk assessment. Send the risk assessment to the CSE administrator for discussion and data collation purposes</p> <p>Referral to be made to MASH for consideration and coordination of CSE planning and intervention</p> <p>Follow the Merton Safeguarding Children Board Protocol for children abused through sexual exploitation. Convene a CSE Strategy Meeting in consultation with the CSE administrator.</p> <p>Intervention with the children, young person and families to address risk awareness and staying safe should be undertaken. A planned programme to raise awareness of sexual exploitation and to provide tools for children and young people to self-protect is required.</p> <p>Discussion with Police regarding missing episodes and referral for independent return home visits to be completed.</p> <p>Disruption tactics to be considered; Police Information Sharing forms to be sent to Child Abuse Investigation Unit. Consideration via criminal and civil proceedings to disrupt perpetrators.</p> <p>Review risk following significant change in circumstances.</p>
	<p>Significant risk Complex/ Significant Needs</p> <p>A child who may be targeted for opportunistic abuse through exchange of sex for drugs, accommodation (overnight stays) and goods etc. OR A child who is at significant risk or is already being sexually exploited. Sexual exploitation is likely to be habitual, often self-denied and coercion and control is implicit.</p>	<p>Establish risk and need by completing the CSE risk assessment. Send the risk assessment to the CSE administrator for discussion and data collation purposes and to have a discussion with the CSE Head of Service and / or CSE administrator to arrange a CSE strategy meeting.</p> <p>Referral to be made to MASH for a section 47 assessment to be considered, although the use of ICPC in cases of CSE should be rare, but may take place where there are a number of other concerns alongside CSE. A joint investigation between Police and Children's Services.</p> <p>Using the Risk assessment toolkit to update single assessment as well as any other agency assessment.</p> <p>Use key disruption tactics: Gather evidence and use Police information Sharing forms, Abduction Orders, Harbours Notices.</p> <p>Consideration for Health, Police, Children's Services risk alerts. Cross referencing with links to other safeguarding issues such as Teenage Pregnancy and Domestic Violence strategies</p> <p>Consultation with the UKHTC / UKBA where appropriate.</p> <p>Harm reduction / detox intervention to be offered to the child, young person and family. Participants of the meeting should agree a safety plan and action to include long-term intensive direct work with the individual child or young person.</p> <p>Risk should be closely monitored and regularly reassessed as part of the risk reduction process.</p>

Appendix 3

Merton Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Risk Assessment Tool & Referral Form

This form allows you to explore some of the vulnerabilities and indicators present in a child or young person that you know might be at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation. It is intended to help you think about what the risk might be to the young person and about what to do with the information you have.

You should always bear in mind other services may have other information to add to what you know so if any of the indicators in Section 2 appear to be an issue, particularly if more than one or if compounded by vulnerabilities in Section 1, you should speak to other agencies or family during the assessment and/or use this assessment to support discussion with your Designated Officer or to supplement a CASA or referral to another service including Specialist CSE Team / Children's Social Care.

If you suspect anyone is in immediate danger, call the Police on 999. If a child/young person is currently at risk of significant harm, including from CSE, refer immediately to your local Children's Social Care.

General details

Name and role of worker completing assessment		Agency and contact details	
Child/Young person's Name/Alias/Known as		Local Authority currently living in	
Language(s) spoken		Date of Risk Assessment	
Age/DOB		Legal status	
Ethnicity		Gender	
School		GP name Surgery	
Parent		Carer	

Section 1. Vulnerabilities: These are things which may make a young person more at risk of being targeted for CSE. They give context to the specific indicators of CSE in section 2. However, the absence of these vulnerabilities does not preclude children being targeted; evidence shows victims can come from any background and without any prior vulnerability. You may not need to complete this section if you are also doing a CAF or other standard risk assessment / referral form as long as, in making your summary of risk, you bear these factors in mind.

Migrant/refugee/Asylum Seeker/Trafficked status through NRM		Sexuality (If known)	
Known to Children's Social Care/CP Plan/LAC, now or previously?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Physical/Learning Disabilities / communication disorders	
Involvement with the Youth Justice system? (if yes provide brief details including type of criminality)	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>	Is the child receiving support or services from any other Agency, such as drug & alcohol or mental health services	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Has sexual exploitation previously been identified as a specific issue for this child? Please provide details	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If yes when:		

Neglect by Parent/Carer/Family member		History of / current family domestic abuse (including risk of forced marriage/risk of honour based violence/familial child sexual abuse)	
Physical / emotional/ sexual abuse by Parent/ Carer/ Family member		History of / current substance misuse in family	
Poverty or Deprivation		Family history of exploitation or Prostitution	
Unsuitable or inappropriate accommodation (Inc. street homeless, staying with inappropriate adults/hostel/B&B)		Family history of mental health difficulties impacting parenting	
Breakdown of Family relationships		Family bereavement	
Low self-esteem or history of being bullied or of bullying		Lack of positive relationship with a protective/ nurturing adult	
Recent bereavement or loss		Young carer	
Disconnecting from support networks i.e. family/friends		Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household	
Unsure about their sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation to their families/friends		Living in a gang neighbourhood (postcode gangs)	
Gang association either through relatives, peers or intimate relationships		Ethnicity (bullying or gang ethnicity)	
Section 2. Risk Indicators: Children are groomed and exploited in different ways. It may be difficult for parents, carers and practitioners to differentiate between ordinary teenage behaviour and the risk of or involvement in sexual exploitation but below are some signs that may signify if the child is being groomed for sexual exploitation or actually being sexually exploited.			
Within family / home / relationships			
Change in behaviour being more secretive / withdrawn / isolated from peers or not mixing with usual friends		Increasingly disruptive, hostile or physically aggressive at home or school Inc. use of sexualised language	

Associating with relationship with significantly older men or women who encourage emotional dependence, loyalty and isolation from safe relationships (record details of adults i.e. occupation/ description)		Physical or emotional abuse by a boyfriend / girlfriend or controlling adult including use of manipulation, violence and/or threats	
Associating with other sexually exploited children		Multiple callers (unknown adults/older young people) - (record description/names etc.)	
Estranged from family			
Regularly coming home late or going missing from home, care or education for any period of time (whether reported or not).		Returning home after long intervals appearing well cared for	
Health and Mental Health			
Change in physical appearance (new clothes, more/less make-up, weight gain/loss)		Increased health / sexual health related problems	
Marks or scars or physical injuries on the body or face which they try to conceal		Expressions of despair (Inc. depression, mental ill health, self-harm, suicide thoughts/ attempts, overdose, eating disorder)	

Branding (i.e. of gang logos)		Repeat/unplanned pregnancy or pregnancies (including ending in termination/ miscarriage(s))	
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STI's) and/or repeat tests particularly with negative results			
Behaviour and experiences			
Concealed / concerning use of the internet including web-cam, online gaming (via X-box, PlayStation), chat rooms etc.		Exclusion from school or unexplained absences from, or not engaged in school/ college/ training/ work	
Failing to respond to attempts to keep in touch by workers/carer or recent disengagement		Reports of being taken to hotels, nightclubs, takeaways or out of area by unknown adults	
Sexualised risk-taking, including on internet or mobile phone, such as sexting (sending explicit messages or photos to adults or peers)		Young gay/bisexual exploring sexuality in unsupported way	
Association with gangs		Increasing use of drugs or alcohol or misuse of drugs or alcohol	
Fear of victimisation from other gangs due to gang affiliation or rivalry		Constrained by 'rules' of a gang	
Inability to negotiate exit from a gang due to fear/dependency		Displaying signs of harassment/unwanted attention	
Fear of gang leaders		Evidence of sexual bullying and/or vulnerability through the internet and/or social networking sites	

Involvement in criminal offending activity (i.e. ASB/criminal damage/theft)		Unusual association with groups of adults	
Appearance and possessions			
Unexplained amounts of money, mobiles, credit, expensive clothing, jewellery or other items/gifts		Overt sexualised dress	
Having multiple mobile phones, sim cards or use of a phone that causes concern – multiple callers or more texts/pings than usual		Possession of hotel keys/cards or keys to unknown premises	
Incidences			
If any of these are known to have happened and the Police or Social Care are not yet aware you must refer to the local CSE Team, if there is one, otherwise to Social Care- or direct to the Police in emergencies.			
Child under 13 engaging in penetrative sex with someone over 15 years		Entering/leaving vehicles cars with unknown adults	
Child meeting different adults and exchanging or 'selling' sexual activity		Frequenting areas known for on/off street sex work	
Receiving rewards of money or goods for introducing peers to CSE adults.		Disclosure of sexual/physical assault followed by withdrawal of allegation	
Knowledge of towns or cities they have no previous connection with		Being taken to clubs or hotels and engaging in sexual activity	
Abduction or forced imprisonment		Association with taxi firms/takeaway owners (night-time economy)	
Being taken to brothels/massage parlours		Seen in CSE hotspots (certain flats, recruiting areas, cars or houses)	
Please add any additional information that you feel is unusual/ relevant / concerning			

Appendix 4 Quick Guide

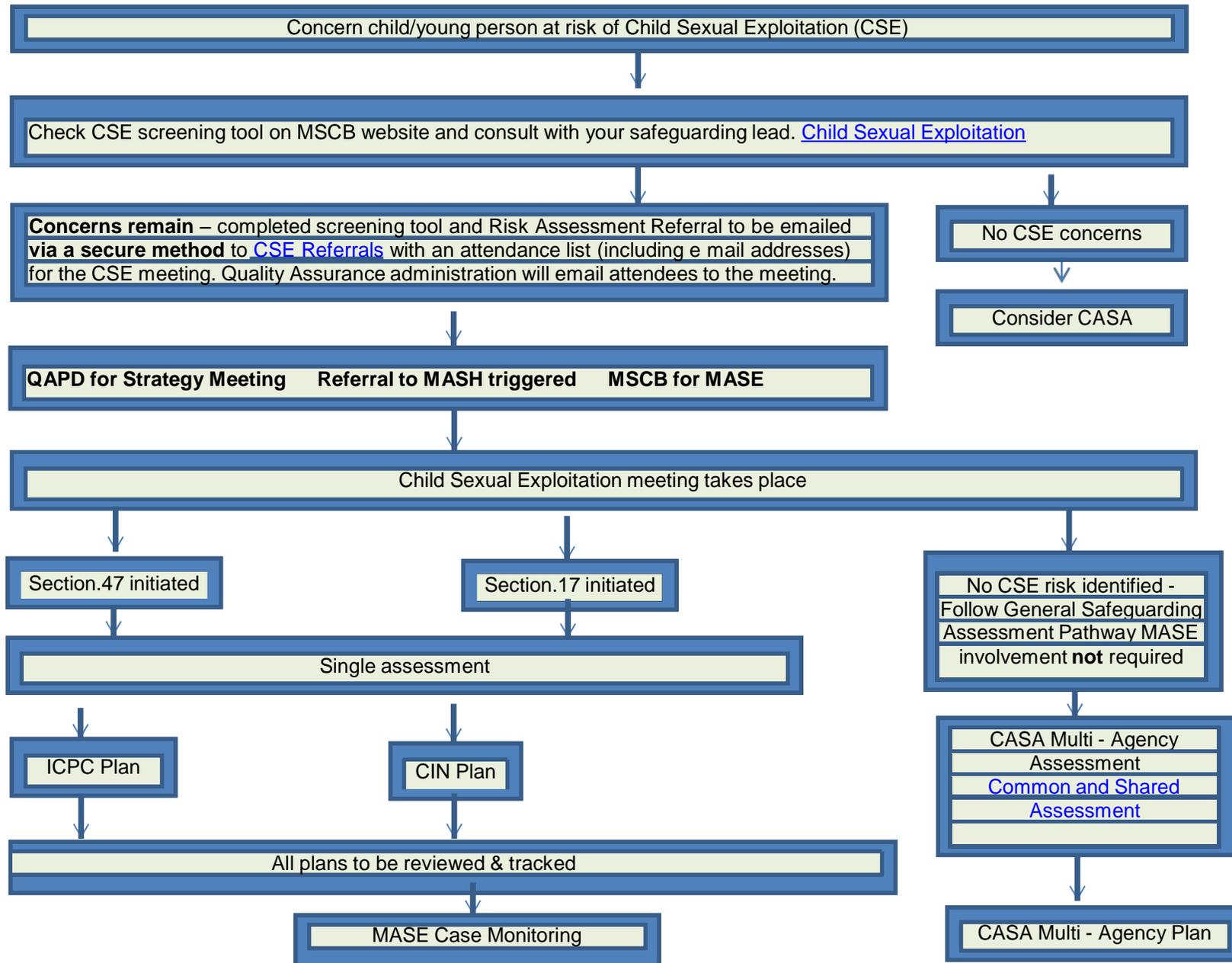
What to do if you suspect a child/young person may be sexually exploited

1. Any professional or member of the public can refer a concern about suspected child sexual exploitation.
2. Remember – where there is an urgent and immediate need to protect a child or young person call the police on 999.
3. In all cases of suspected child sexual exploitation contact Children's Social Care services via the MASH (multi-agency safeguarding hub) on 0208 545 4226/7 or QA Manager/IRO-CP Chair email CSE.Referrals@merton.gov.uk
4. If you are a professional making a referral you will be asked to complete the CSE screening tool and risk assessment if you have not already done so. This is available through the MSCB website at www.merton.gov.uk/lscbsafeguarding

Children's Social Care and MASH response

1. MASH and First Response will initially determine if the referral should be treated as a child protection concern under S47 Children Act 1989 jointly with the police or as a child in need (S17) or under the common and shared assessment arrangements (CASA). Please refer to the Merton Wellbeing Model. www.merton.gov.uk/casa
2. The QAPD service will appoint a chairperson for the CSE strategy meeting, agree a time and venue and invite identified participants.
3. Unless there are child protection grounds to exclude the child/young person and their family they should always be invited to any CSE strategy meeting.
4. The purpose of the CSE strategy meeting is to gather all relevant multi-agency information in order to understand the risks the child/young person faces and to develop an effective safety plan with them and their family.
5. The Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation Panel (MASE) will log and track the case, setting a timeframe for review based on the complexity and risk profile. All CSE referrals will be referred to MASE subject to a CSE strategy confirmation.
6. The social worker/lead professional must attend the MASE panel to provide relevant background information and to seek support from relevant partner agencies.
7. The MASE panel will confirm the risk matrix screening and ensure effective coordination with partners including the commissioned voluntary sector.
8. The screening tool will be used to benchmark indicators of possible CSE and track the changes in these to determine outcomes for young people.

Appendix 5 CSE Referrals & Risk Assessment Pathway Flowchart



Appendix 6 CSE Support Agencies

SERVICE	BRIEF DESCRIPTION	CONTACT
MASH Merton	MASH provides a single point of contact for professionals and members of the public who want to seek support or raise concerns about a child. Monday to Thursday 08.45 – 17.15 Friday 08.45 – 16.15	Telephone: 0208 543 4201 Email: MASH@merton.gov.uk
Emergency Duty Team	The Emergency Duty Team (EDT) provides overnight, weekend and public holiday cover for Children's Social Care. The Service is for anyone who is in danger and unable to protect themselves, or for those who cannot remain in the community without immediate intervention.	Telephone: 0208 770 5000 Email:
Metropolitan Police	If you need to report an emergency, serious incident, or if you are concerned about immediate safety of a child and young person.	Telephone: 999 in emergency or 101 in all other cases Email:
Barnardos	Working with children and young people vulnerable and abused through sexual exploitation	Telephone: 0208 550 8822 Email: supportercare@barnardos.org.uk
Jigsaw4u (Missing)	Debrief all local Missing young people and Young runaways, and following up potential cases of sexual exploitation.	Telephone: (020) 8687 1384 Email: info@jigsaw4u.org.uk
Sexual Health services Check it out	Provide individual sexual health and contraception advice for young people including support to individual students in confidential school settings.	Telephone: 0845 567 2000 Email: http://www.smcs.nhs.uk
Catch22	Specialist substance and alcohol misuse service for young people	Telephone: 020 3701 8641 Email: msm@catch-22.org.uk
Brook Advisory Service	Providing sexual health screenings, support and counselling for those young people under 25.	Telephone: http://www.brook.org.uk/
Housing	Services for young people homeless or at risk of homelessness.	Telephone: Email:
Stonewall	Advocate a creative and holistic approach to HIV and sexual health promotion that is proactive and responds to change, and that removes barriers to social inclusion and eliminates inequalities	Telephone: 08000 502020 Email: info@stonewall.org.uk
Education Welfare Service	The Education Welfare Service promotes the importance of school attendance and investigates the causes of poor attendance.	Telephone: 020 8545 4021 Email: education.welfare@merton.gov.uk
Youth Offending Service	The YOS work with young people in custody and the community, subject to statutory Court Orders, Youth Cautions and early intervention work to reduce their risk of re-offending and harm to the public, whilst managing their vulnerability through tailored intervention plans such as gender specific programmes.	Telephone: Email: youth.offending@merton.gov.uk
Jigsaw4U (advocacy)	Challenge and champion children and young people's rights to ensure that when decisions are made they are involved, consulted and listened to.	Telephone: (020) 8687 1384 Email: info@jigsaw4u.org.uk