

CSE Research: Short films for practice Research Briefing Note #8



Parents as partners in safeguarding children from sexual exploitation

Dr Kate D'Arcy, Dr Sukhwant Dhaliwal and Roma Thomas

Text of the Film

"Parents and carers are often excluded in work with young people who are, or who are at risk of being, sexually exploited by perpetrators external to the family. In cases where parents and carers are in no way connected to the abuse they can still be treated as though they are partly responsible for what has happened.

In these situations our research suggests it is crucial to work with parents and carers, to help them understand what the young person has gone through, the risks they face, and how they can be protected.

Direct work with parents can help to improve family relationships, and equip the whole family with the knowledge they need to help keep young people safe. Wherever possible, parents and carers should be included as partners in safeguarding their children."

Research Summary

This film is based on findings from the evaluation of the Barnardo's Families and Communities Against Sexual Exploitation (FCASE) pilot project funded by the Department for Education. FCASE is an important and innovative project that provides useful insights for work with families in preventing CSE. The programme was piloted in three sites across England: in urban, suburban and rural settings. FCASE combines several elements of work related to child sexual exploitation (CSE) that have not previously been brought together in a structured programme. These are:

- targeted early intervention/prevention work with parents and young people affected by CSE;
- training of professionals; and
- awareness raising among different communities.

Delivery of the direct work programme involves regular (separate) meetings between parents/carers and their worker and the young person and their worker. These meetings are intended to run parallel with each other.

Multiple methods were used to gather qualitative and quantitative data, including face-to-face interviews with parents, carers, young people and workers. A total of 31 case studies across the three sites were completed.

A focus on parents is often missing from the support provided by professionals for young people affected by sexual exploitation that has been perpetrated outside of the family. A review of the academic literature on effective support for parents of adolescents affected by CSE (D'Arcy, 2015) suggests that an ideal model of support contains the following:

- Helping relationships based on voluntary participation and trust
- Strengths-based provision focused on the positive aspects of parenting rather than the failings
- Flexibility of provision to address the needs of families
- Time and resources to undertake initial assessments and deliver necessary support
- Engagement with parents and young people in the design, delivery and evaluation of support/intervention
- Training and supervision for those supporting parents and young people

Our evaluation of FCASE identified these characteristics in the programme. Importantly, it found that working with families in a holistic manner promoted positive outcomes.

From our research we can identify a number of key factors which contribute to the effectiveness of work with parents, carers and young people.

- Working with parents and carers alongside young people using a strengths-based approach
- Equipping families with the knowledge and information to help them safeguard their children
- The role and value of the voluntary sector in developing working relationships with families and 'building bridges' between families and statutory services
- Engaging workers with specialist knowledge, relational skills, and family centred / victim centred working
- Assigning separate key workers to parents/carers and young people
- Providing continuity of workers in building trusting and productive relationships
- Providing effective training that makes appropriate and accurate referrals more likely
- The ability to work with families and young people flexibly, taking into account their needs and circumstances
- The availability of specialist prevention support for families within a CSE service

Questions for practice reflection

You may want to discuss or consider the following.

- How are parents and carers of children and young people currently included in your organisation's support and services for children and young people affected by sexual exploitation?
- What are the ways you might support parents and carers as well as young people affected by sexual exploitation?
- What are the potential ways of working in partnership with other agencies in both the statutory and voluntary sector to support families affected by sexual exploitation?

**Is there someone you know who would benefit from seeing this short film?
If so, take a minute to pass it on <http://youtu.be/HCeNqXuQKrI>**

To cite this film

University of Bedfordshire (2015) *Parents as partners in safeguarding children from sexual exploitation*. Available at: <http://youtu.be/HCeNqXuQKrI> (Accessed day, month, year).

References

D'Arcy, K (2015 forthcoming) *Exploring effective approaches to support the parents of adolescents who have been affected by CSE: mapping and reviewing the literature*.

D'Arcy, K, Brodie, I, Dhaliwal, S, Thomas, R with Pearce, J. (2015 forthcoming) *Families and Communities Against Child Sexual Exploitation (FCASE) Final Evaluation Report*.

PACE/Virtual College (2013) *Are parents in the picture? Professional and parental perspectives of child sexual exploitation*. London: PACE.

<http://www.paceuk.info/wp-content/uploads/2013/11/YouGovReport-Parents-in-the-Picture-FINAL-for-release-19112013.pdf>

The International Centre

Increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking

The International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire is committed to increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking in local, national and international contexts. This is achieved through:

- academic rigour and research excellence
- collaborative and partnership based approaches to applied social research
- meaningful and ethical engagement of children and young people
- active dissemination and evidence-based engagement in theory, policy and practice



THE QUEEN'S
ANNIVERSARY PRIZES
FOR HIGHER AND FURTHER EDUCATION
2013

Staff at the International Centre work collaboratively in teams with internal and external staff on applied research, evaluation, consultancy and training. We prioritise a focus on children and young people's participation, taking this seriously in all aspects of our work.

The University of Bedfordshire has been awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for The International Centre's pioneering research into child sexual exploitation. This prestigious prize is the highest form of national recognition open to higher and further education institutions in the UK.

What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?

The following definition of CSE is that used in the government guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' (DCSF, 2009, p.9)

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 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.