



## **Background**

Northamptonshire Rape Crisis (NRC) has been supporting survivors of sexual violence in Northamptonshire for over 30 years. We provide frontline support to women, men and children (14+) who have experienced sexual violence in addition to working to raise awareness, improve the response of Government and other organisations and challenge public attitudes regarding the acceptability of sexual violence.

The Centre was first founded in 1986 under the name of Northampton Rape & Incest Crisis Centre and continues to be the only organisation in Northamptonshire where victims and their families can access free and confidential advice and support. Our service is highly valued by our clients and by local statutory organisations such as mental health teams, GP's and health professionals, social services and Northamptonshire Police who recognise that, without our vital support, many more victims would go on leading lives that are blighted by the trauma of sexual violence.

The stated aims and objectives of the organisation are:

- To relieve the distress and trauma of women, men and children who have suffered sexual abuse, rape, incest, and domestic abuse and of the non-offending families of such persons who are in need of support and encouragement
- To promote community education and research in the subject of rape, sexual abuse, incest, and domestic abuse and the effects thereof whether physical, medical, psychological or social and to disseminate the useful results thereof provided that no person is therein identified without prior consent of that person.

NRC acknowledges all forms of sexual violence including ; rape, sexual assault, childhood sexual abuse, same sex abuse, sexual harassment, rape in marriage, forced marriage, and so-called honour based violence, female genital mutilation, trafficking and sexual exploitation.

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse, it occurs where anyone under the age of 18 is persuaded, coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for, amongst other things, money drugs/alcohol, gifts affection or status. Consent is irrelevant, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them.

## **Rape Crisis England & Wales (RCEW)**

NRC is fully independent and benefits from membership of the national organisation Rape Crisis England and Wales (RCEW). RCEW exists to promote the needs and rights of women and girls who have experienced sexual violence, to improve services to them and to work towards the elimination of sexual violence.

RCEW is the national umbrella body for a network of autonomous member Rape Crisis organisations across England and Wales and was set up to support their specialist work. They also raise awareness and understanding of sexual violence in the wider community and with local, regional and national government.



## **SCRUTINY PANEL 1 – CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION**

### **CORE QUESTIONS – EXPERT ADVISORS**

- 1. Please provide details of the work currently being undertaken by your organisation to address child sexual exploitation (CSE)*

#### **Sexual Violence Counselling**

Counselling is available to anyone (14+) who has experienced sexual violence either recently or historically and is available short or long term, from 6 to 26 sessions. All counselling is person centred trauma therapy and is provided by our team of qualified sexual violence counsellors. All counsellors attend NRC's in-house 12 week specialist sexual violence trauma therapy training in addition to their professional training before starting their work with NRC.

#### **Emotional Support**

Available to clients that are not suitable for counselling, sometimes due to mental health, substance misuse or clients fleeing domestic abuse.

#### **IPV Telephone Helpline**

Our specialist helpline provides support for victims of interpersonal violence including rape, stalking, sexual abuse, FGM, harassment, historic sexual abuse, forced marriage, honour-based violence & sex trafficking. Available Monday to Friday 10am -- 3pm and staffed by a team of 5 specially trained counsellors.

All calls are anonymous and callers do not have to self-identify; callers can be signposted into Northamptonshire Rape Crisis service provision or be signposted to other more appropriate services.

Callers are able to access support via the helpline whilst receiving support from statutory organisations.

Calls to NRC's helpline vary from recent rapes, historic rape, and historic childhood sexual abuse.

NRC's helpline also receives calls from professionals seeking advice, survivor's friends or non-offending family members and work colleagues.

#### **Independent Sexual Violence Advisor (ISVA)**

Our ISVA advocacy service is for clients who need practical support to access or engage with the Police, GP, Sexual Health Clinics, Family Planning, Court



Services and Mental Health Service as well as specialist women's services such as Women's Aid.

NRC's ISVA is a trained counsellor and has an ISVA Masters degree. The role of an ISVA is predominantly supporting clients from report to court; supporting the client throughout the whole criminal justice system whereby that support continues after the court procedures have concluded.

### **Therapeutic Group Work**

We have 3 specialist groups that support our clients in alternative therapeutic settings:

1. A singing group that can be accessed whilst in therapy.
2. Mindfulness, which is an 8 week course that allows clients opportunity to practise grounding techniques needed before coming into therapy.
3. A short course called Enlightenment which offers a space for clients to look at healthy relationships and how to spot bullying or abusive behaviour.

These courses give survivors the opportunity to meet together in a non-judgemental environment and to address the many issues they face as a result of their abuse.

2. *Is there a clear and robust multi-Agency strategy for information sharing, preventing and managing CSE?*

### **Statutory Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation**

In March 2015, the Coalition Government published a report "Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation". This set out a national response to the failures in Rotherham, Rochdale, Oxfordshire and elsewhere, where children were let down by the very people who were responsible for protecting them. The report included a comprehensive and targeted set of actions to drive improvements across all parts of the system including healthcare, social care, education, law enforcement and criminal justice agencies. As part of this action plan, the Coalition Government committed to "Make sure that for the first time all professions work to the same definition of child sexual exploitation, so that they can more easily create joint risk assessments and work together to target disruption and investigate offending". The consultation on the proposed new statutory definition of CSE was opened in February 2016 and is ongoing.



The following details are taken from the consultation:

*The current definition of child sexual exploitation was published in the 2009 guidance “Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation”*

‘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’

Over time, a number of alternative definitions have been developed by voluntary organisations and devolved administrations and agencies. It has been said that this has led to agencies using different definitions or using the terms ‘child sexual abuse’ and ‘child sexual exploitation’ interchangeably, creating inconsistencies in risk assessment and data collection. This has led to some confusion and additional challenge for practitioners working with children and families. The “What to do if you’re worried a child is being abused”<sup>4</sup> (WTDI) advice to practitioners published in March 2015, gave a non-statutory definition which was welcomed for being simpler *and more* concise.

‘Child sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse where children are sexually exploited for money, power or status. It can involve violent, humiliating and degrading sexual assaults. In some cases, young people are persuaded or forced into exchanging sexual activity for money, drugs, gifts, affection or status. Consent cannot be given, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation doesn’t always involve physical contact and can happen online. A significant number of children who are victims of sexual exploitation go missing from home, care and education at some point.’

We have tested the definitions of child sexual exploitation set out in 2009 and 2015 with a range of national and local partners drawing on the definition of child sexual abuse, to consider similarities and also highlight differences. Conclusions are that the 2009 child sexual exploitation definition is not fit for purpose and that it needs to:

- be a simplified/shortened version of the existing definition which is universally agreed and applied across all partners with good clear associated guidance
- state that child sexual exploitation is a subset of child sexual abuse but the way it happens can be different to other forms of child sexual abuse (such as intrafamilial sexual abuse)



Based on what partners have told us, we propose changing the current statutory definition to the definition below:

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. It occurs where anyone under the age of 18 is persuaded, coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for, amongst other things, money, drugs/alcohol, gifts, affection or status. Consent is irrelevant, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and may occur online.'

### *3. What other multi-Agency forums exist to facilitate joint working?*

#### **CSE Provision in Northamptonshire**

Northamptonshire has a highly effective multi-agency team to prevent and protect young people from CSE and to prosecute perpetrators. The Reducing Incidents of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) team includes 12 specialist police officers (6 proactive and 6 investigative) CAN case workers, Children's Social Care workers and a health and education professional. There are also support staff for investigations including analytical support and a digital media investigator.

RISE support children (10 years+) who are at risk or are victims of exploitation. They work with the families of the children to manage and minimise risk and can handle a case load of up to 50 children at any time. The focus of the RISE team is to identify and reduce risk before exploitation has taken place, to remove the child from the exploitative situation and to secure prosecution of offenders.

In addition to the RISE team, the Northamptonshire Safeguarding Children Board provides a wide range of resources and training for professionals, parents, carers and young people regarding all aspects of CSE.

The 'Tackling CSE Toolkit' has been put together to provide advice for NCC Early Help and Prevention and Safeguarding and Children's Services staff on their responsibilities in relation to identifying CSE and what action should be taken if it's identified. The NCC teams covered include Child in Need (CiN), Looked After Children (LAC), Early Help Prevention (EHP), Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children (UASC), Leaving Care, Foster Care, and Residential Care.



*4 What is the extent and profile of CSE in Northampton? How do we know this?*

We know that NSCB's RISE supports 50 children from the age of 10+ years old at risk of exploitation, we also know this number represents just a small percentage of all the children potentially at risk, many children at risk will not self-identify as being exploited.

It is therefore difficult to truly understand the extent of CSE in Northampton – As a counselling service supporting 522 clients in 2015 - 2016 over 70% of clients accessing our service were adult's survivors of childhood sexual abuse, of those 70% over 90% told no one in childhood. We can therefore assume the extent is greater than that supported by NSCB's RISE.

*5 How effective has NBC, its partners and the Police, been in engaging with the local community and other organisations in raising awareness of CSE?*

NSCB's RISE has little to no engagement with Northamptonshire Rape Crisis despite the fact that we would be able to provide therapeutic intervention to both the 50 children and young people they support, we could also potentially provide therapeutic intervention to the children and young people that do not meet the RISE threshold.

*6 How can awareness be raised further of CSE, human trafficking and domestic slavery of children in Northampton?*

We feel improved awareness could be achieved by working better with partners, NBC should promote any prevention campaign identifying that CSE is a form of CSA and we all have a duty to stop it.

*7 How is CSE incorporated into local training programmes, and who is able to access this training?*

NSCB's training is delivered via Barnado's.

*8 What support is available to current, potential and historic victims of CSE?*

Northamptonshire Rape Crisis (NRC) is the only counselling service free at the point of access available to adult survivors of childhood sexual abuse or exploitation.

As we are the only organisation providing a provision for survivors of sexual violence, referral from GPs, Social Service, mental health, police, local authority, drug and alcohol organisations and DA organisations continues to grow year on year.

*9 Do you have further information regarding the role of NBC in tackling CSE?*

We would encourage NBC to work better with partners such as NRC, we would also encourage NBC to acknowledge that CSE is one form of CSA in order to help understand the true extent of the issue of sexual violence amongst our young people.

