

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION (CSE)

January 2018

What is Child Sexual Exploitation?

The sexual exploitation of children and young people is a hidden form of abuse.

As outlined within the All Wales Child Protection Procedures, Child sexual exploitation is the coercion or manipulation of children and young people into taking part in sexual activities. It is a form of sexual abuse involving an exchange of some form of payment which can include money, mobile phones and other items, drugs, alcohol, a place to stay, 'protection' or affection. The vulnerability of the young person and grooming process employed by perpetrators renders them powerless to recognise the exploitative nature of relationships and unable to give informed consent.

Child Sexual exploitation (CSE) for the purpose of this report, includes:

- abuse through exchange of sexual activity for some form of payment
- abuse through the production of indecent images and/or any other indecent material involving children whether photographs, films or other technologies
- abuse through grooming whether via direct contact or the use of technologies such as mobile phones and the internet
- abuse through trafficking for sexual purposes

Children do not volunteer to be sexually exploited and they cannot consent to their own abuse; they are forced and/or coerced.

The All Wales Protocol for Safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children who are at Risk of Abuse through Sexual Exploitation applies to male and female children up to the age of 18 years irrespective of whether they are living independently, at home, with carers, or in a residential setting.

How do we know who these young people are?

Professionals can only work together to safeguard children if there is an exchange of relevant information between them. The protective network of professionals involved in multi-agency meetings should agree the ongoing response to risk together, enabling individuals to feel confident that information shared will be used to enable positive outcomes for the child or young person.

Referrals can be received from any agency or member of the public/family that feel a young person is at risk of CSE. It is usually the behaviours of a young person that develops over time that concerns other professionals, for example young people going missing a lot, taking drugs or misusing alcohol, anti-social behaviour and being invited to parties. Family members do not usually make the direct link with their child's behaviour and CSE concerns but the reports of their behaviour does then help the professionals to make the link and the right assessments and supports are provided to that young person.

Staff in all agencies should be familiar with the Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (SERAF) and be able to identify children at risk of CSE. This form is completed for every case when identifying those young people who are at risk of CSE. There are different risk and vulnerability indicators that are on the form that need to be ticked as a 'risk factor' against that young person. Those ticked are then added up and when there is a score of 16+ then the young person is considered as being at risk of CSE. The case is then discussed with the Safeguarding Principal Officer who makes the decision as to whether or not the case is heard within a CSE strategy meeting setting.

How do we manage this in Neath Port Talbot?

Within Neath Port Talbot the feedback from partner agencies, the family and more importantly the young person themselves suggests that we are managing these cases well. The outcomes that are achieved for the young people are positive and the engagement of that young person with agencies such as Better Futures (who complete the direct work around CSE) is good.

Previously it has been difficult to ensure that partner agencies attend CSE meetings regularly which results in difficulty in progressing plans for the young person. However, through continued effort and buying in partner agencies, the CSE meetings are very productive and there is now consistency in partner agency representation at each meeting.

How many young people do we have on the CSE protocol?

The number of young people on the CSE protocol is low. There are currently 8 young people on the protocol that we review on a 4-6 weekly basis.

Below is some data that shows the number of young people who have been subject to the CSE protocol. It is evident that since 2014, the number of young people subject to the protocol has decreased which could be for many different reasons. Some reasons we know for the safe decrease is the positive close working relationships that we have with our partner agencies and the dedicated work being undertaken by the social worker staff with the young people.

Another factor is the functioning of the Risky Behaviour Panel where professionals from all sectors attend and will discuss live issues within the communities. Such productive discussions have led to adult males and females being identified whom pose a risk to young people and positive action taken against such adults. This forum provides a good opportunity for information sharing and as a result a more proactive response from professionals/agencies to the issues/risks identified within the community.

All professionals continue to tackle the challenges of CSE within the community, whilst making the community a safer place where we can to safeguard our most vulnerable young people.

Table 1

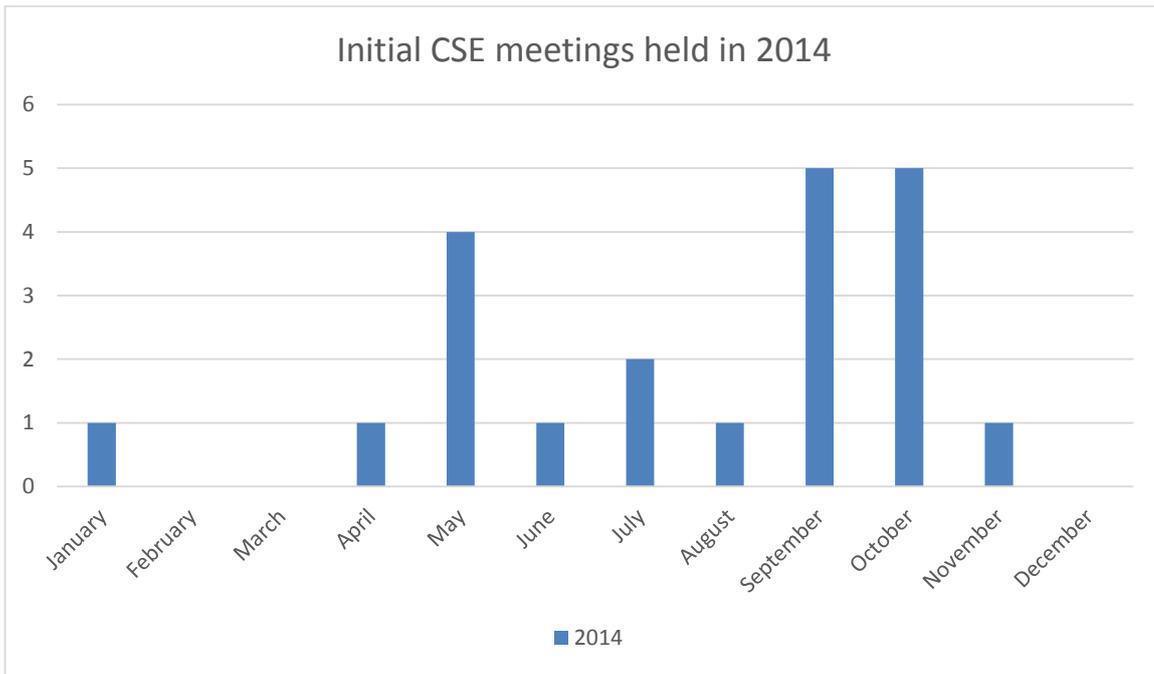


Table 2

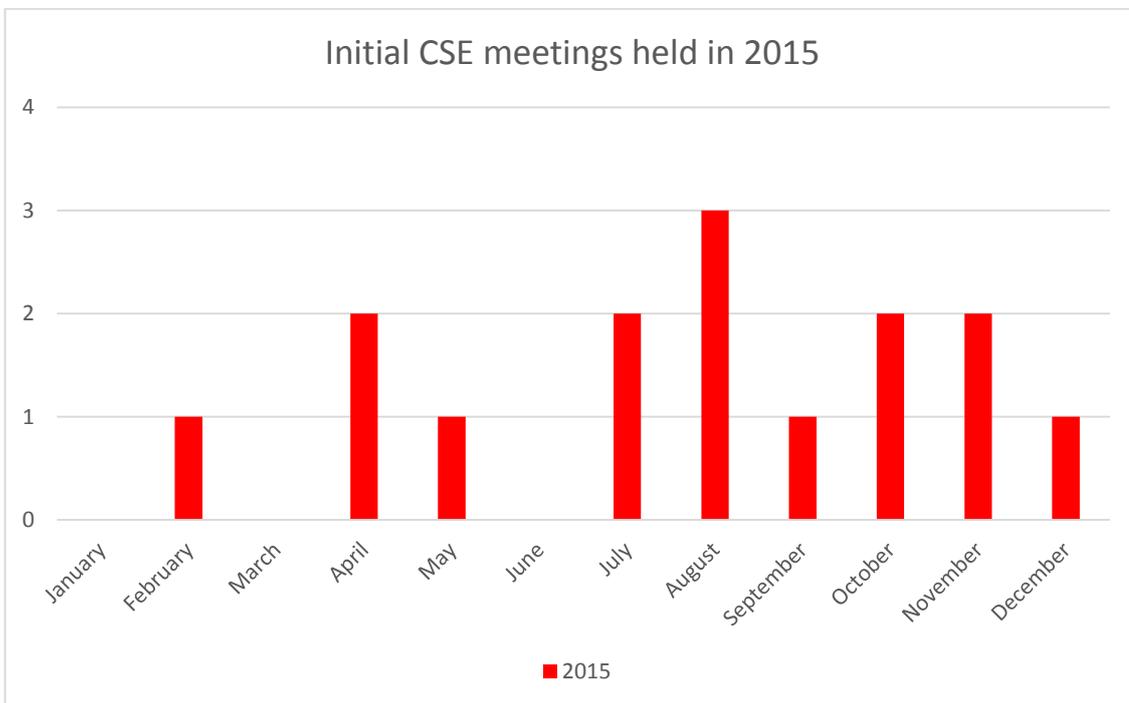


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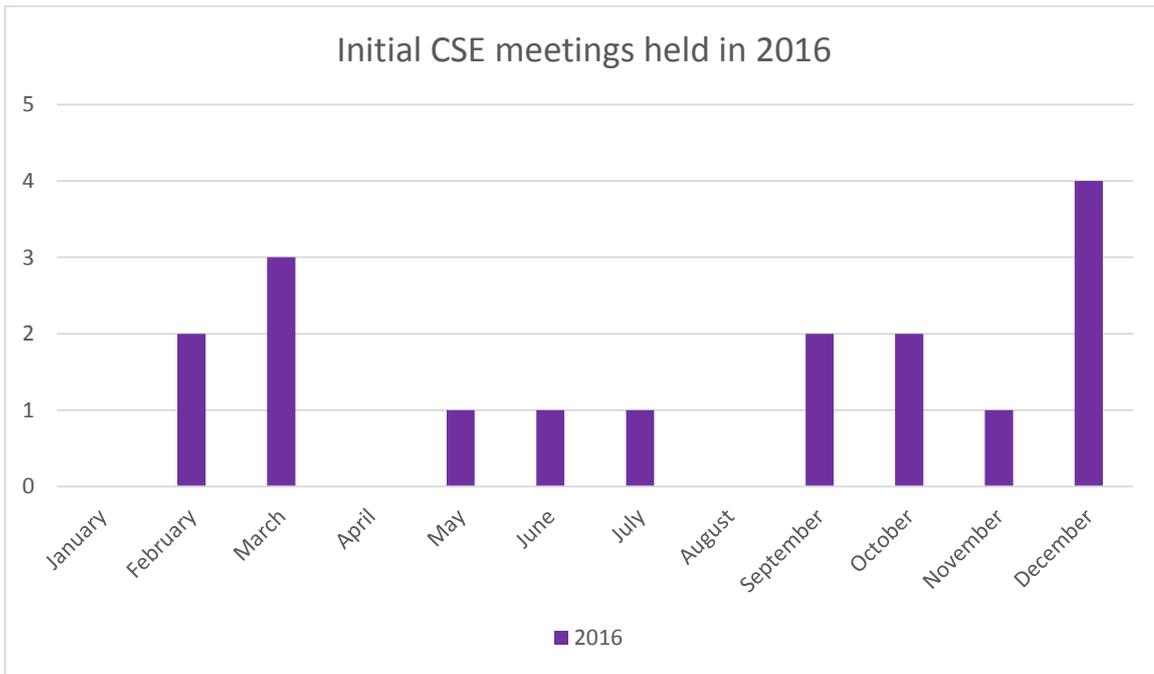


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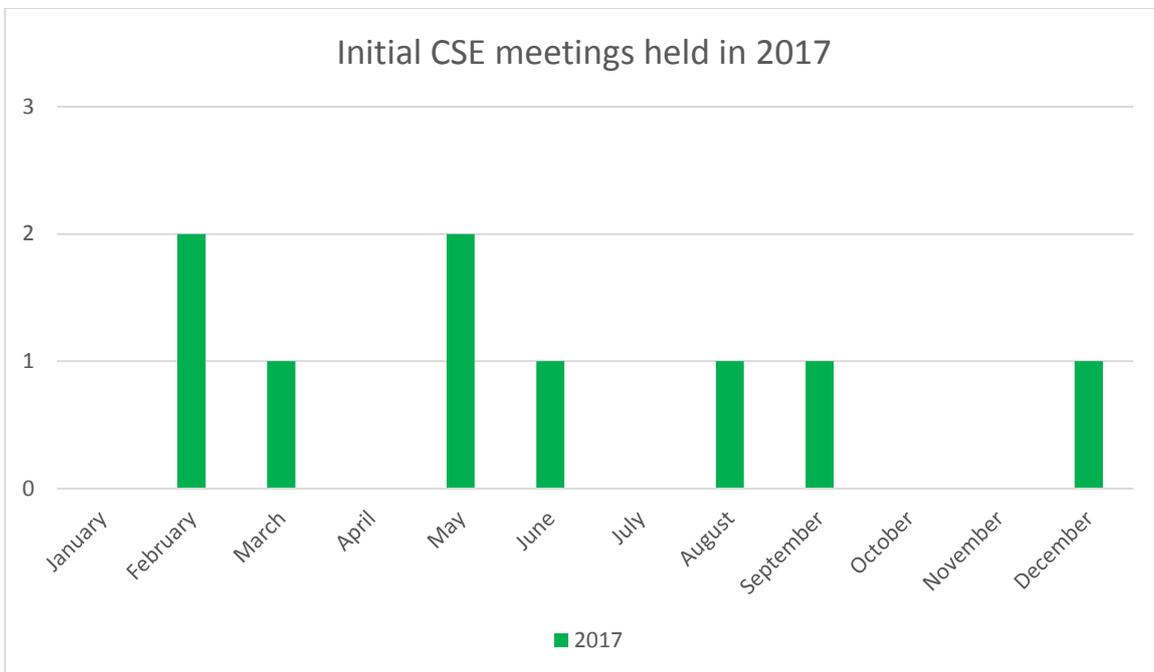


Table 5

Number of initial CSE meetings held:

2014	21
2015	15
2016	17
2017	9

What do we need to do moving forward?

Our priority is always and has always been ensuring the safety and wellbeing of the young person is at the centre of what we do. When sitting and listening to other professionals within the CSE meetings, the dedication and determination to support these vulnerable young people to improve their lives and keep them safe is evident.

Those professionals who attend the CSE meetings have a wealth of knowledge and experience about CSE, what the risks are and what support can be provided to the young person. However, what is missing is the family and the young persons' views about how they feel within the situation that they find themselves and if they felt the support they received was positive and if the support has made a difference. Currently you could say that this is measured on the progress made by that young person following support from services, the risk of CSE minimising and their names then being removed from the CSE protocol.

Hearing the voice of the young people and their family through the social worker is not enough. It is crucial that the most vulnerable young people are central within their own meeting and influence their own plan to better the circumstances that they find themselves within. It is evident that when young people and their families are part of the plan; that the outcomes are far more realistic and they are more likely to achieve the safe outcomes that everyone seeks to accomplish.

How are we going to do this?

It is felt that it will be more helpful to include the young person and their parents/carers within the CSE meetings that are held. Having the conversations with the young person and their families directly will influence the plans that are developed and will provide far more insight into the young person's world. We will see what they see as the concerns and how together we can reduce the risks around them.

It is hoped that working in this way, we will break down the barriers that many young people have with professionals (as they see professionals as interfering) and will provide the young person and their family with reassurances that each agency sitting around the table at that meeting is there to work openly with them and has a role to play in supporting them as a family.

It is proposed that during the first part of the CSE meeting, professionals will discuss the young person's circumstances and identify what if any are the wider risks within the community. Together a discussion will then be held in order to determine what support professionals can provide to the young person to minimise continued risk of CSE.

The second part of the meeting will involve the young person and family where appropriate joining the meeting. This will allow them to hear what has been discussed and then have the young person and family fully involved in pulling together a plan that they will actively engage with.

We understand how difficult it may be for a young person to attend the meeting and the anxieties around this and therefore will be proposing to hold such meetings at the Sandfields Community Centre which is a more informal venue.

It will be a priority to ensure that we better understand what young people say and wish to happen within their own lives and help influence their own futures.