



## Learning & Improvement Briefing 6

# Learning from the Independent Investigation into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham

September 2014

The [independent investigation](#) into child sexual exploitation (CSE) in Rotherham revealed systemic council and police failings in the borough, where at least 1,400 children were found to have been subjected to appalling abuse between 1997 and 2013. Over a third of these victims were known to social care due to child protection and neglect concerns.

Early identification of CSE was evidenced by those working in residential care and from youth workers who knew the young people well. However, their concerns were ignored by senior managers and politicians over a 12 year period, despite the fact that there was growing evidence that CSE was a serious problem in Rotherham. Social care managers believed that the scale and seriousness of the problem was being exaggerated and the Police gave no priority to CSE, regarding many victims with contempt and failed to act on their abuse as a crime.

The Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board oversaw the development of good inter-agency policies and procedures applicable to CSE, however they failed to regularly quality assure the implementation and effectiveness of these. The challenge and scrutiny function of Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board and of the local authority was lacking when it was most required.

Improvements have been made in Rotherham in the last 4 years by both the council and the Police. The Police are now well resourced and trained in CSE. There is a central team within Children's Social Care that deals with CSE; however the council is facing challenges in dealing with increased financial pressures, which inevitably impact on frontline services. There are still matters to address within Children's Social Care such as improving risk assessments and the lack of provision of long-term support for child victims.

Rotherham Safeguarding Children Board has improved its response to CSE, now holds agencies to account and quality assures the effectiveness of responses through case file audits and performance reporting.

### What do I need to know in order to respond effectively if I have concerns around CSE?

Shropshire's Safeguarding Children Board (SSCB) has developed a [Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and Practitioner's Toolkit](#) that will help you to assess the level of risk to a child and make a referral to the Child Sexual Exploitation Panel, if appropriate.

The Panel meets monthly to discuss cases and to ensure that a range of agencies work together to provide support for children at risk of sexual exploitation, gather intelligence, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.

The Child Exploitation sub-group reports regularly to the SSCB on performance in relation to missing children, CSE and e-safety. The SSCB recently commissioned a SCIE Learning Together Review on a CSE case in order to assess the effectiveness of the SSCB CSE strategy and panel process, (learning from this will be published shortly).

SSCB also delivers multi-agency CSE training for practitioners. See the Practitioners section of the [SSCB website](#) for further information.