



**Project Phoenix:
Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation together in
Greater Manchester**

Communications Strategy

2014-2016



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INTRODUCTION

The Background to Phoenix

Project Phoenix emerged from the Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership in April 2012 following a scoping exercise into current practice in relation to child sexual exploitation. The partnership formally agreed to improve the response to child sexual exploitation strategically, operationally and tactically under the banner of Phoenix, with the objective of making Greater Manchester a beacon of good practice nationally. Phoenix has the support of the Association of Greater Manchester Authorities' Wider Leadership Team.

Under Phoenix there are now teams in place dealing with child sexual exploitation in each of the ten districts of Greater Manchester. Each team deals with cases of young people being sexually exploited and offers a joined-up, multi-agency response to dealing with the problem. Phoenix provides advice, support and guidance to these teams to ensure that all professionals are working to the best standards and to improve services offered to victims and those at risk of child sexual exploitation.

Definition

The sexual exploitation of children is not a new phenomenon, but is one that has entered the public consciousness in recent years due to some very high profile cases within Greater Manchester and in other parts of the country. There is clear evidence that child sexual exploitation is underreported and it is unlikely that our current understanding of the nature and extent of the problem is comprehensive. There is however a strong commitment from all key partners under the banner of Phoenix to improve the knowledge and understanding of the problem of child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester and to develop a consistently effective approach to identifying and responding to the problem across the conurbation, preventing young people being sexually exploited, providing appropriate protection to victims and ensuring offenders are brought to justice.

It is therefore vitally important that all key partners (including public and third sector organisations) involved in dealing with child sexual exploitation understand and can clearly articulate what is child sexual exploitation and how this differs from other forms of sexual abuse. There are several definitions of child sexual exploitation being used nationally, each developed by a different organisation or agency, including definitions developed by the Department for Education, Association of Chief Police Officers and the National Working Group. These definitions each adequately describe the characteristics of child sexual exploitation and are useful for professionals, but may be too verbose and formal for young people or other members of the public. Therefore Phoenix has agreed to use the definition of child sexual exploitation developed by the Children's Society in collaboration with young people, which is as follows:



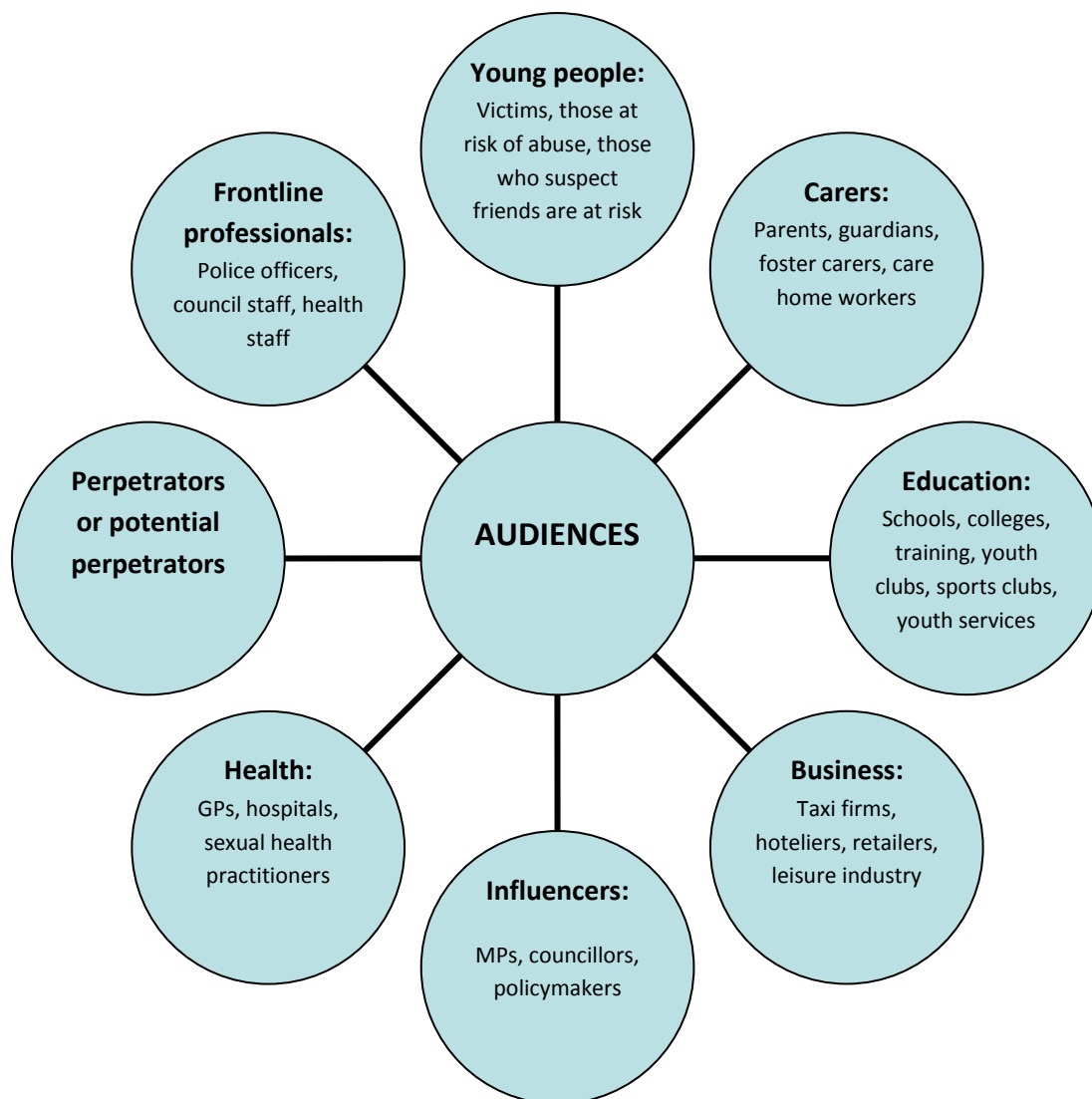
“Someone taking advantage of you sexually, for their own benefit. Through threats, bribes, violence, humiliation, or by telling you that they love you, they will have the power to get you to do sexual things for their own, or other people’s benefit or enjoyment (including: touching or kissing private parts, sex, taking sexual photos).”

Purpose of this Communications Strategy

Effective communication with the public and professionals regarding the problem of child sexual exploitation is a crucial strand to Phoenix. In particular, a key element of Phoenix is to raise awareness of the warning signs of child sexual exploitation, how to report concerns and the type of response you can expect to receive. This is important for a number of reasons. Firstly, to ensure that the public (particularly parents and carers) have a good understanding of child sexual exploitation including how and why it happens, so that they’re able to better protect young people from this abhorrent crime and to call on services to help them do this. Secondly, we want businesses to take responsibility for managing the risk of child sexual exploitation on their premises and report it to the authorities rather than turning a blind eye to it or taking the view that it isn’t their problem. Thirdly we want all professionals (public, private and voluntary sectors) that work with or come into contact with children, young people and families to take responsibility for dealing with child sexual exploitation and for them to feel confident enough to report it. And finally we want to educate children and young people about the various ways in which perpetrators operate so that they can make better, more informed decisions in order to protect themselves from being sexually exploited.



TARGET AUDIENCES





TENETS OF COMMUNICATIONS APPROACH

The organisations subscribing to this communications strategy will adhere to the following tenets of approach in all their individual and joint communications activity:

- **We WILL BE proactive, positive, transparent and, where necessary, robust.**
- **We WILL NOT be defensive.**
- **We will challenge inaccurate and / or misleading public comment and media articles / broadcasts**
- **We will have a consistent and coordinated approach between partner agencies to all communications activities**



AIMS

The single overarching aim of the Project Phoenix communications strategy is:

To raise awareness with the public of Greater Manchester about what CSE is, what the warning signs are and how to report it.

Below this overarching aim are a number of objectives, which are as follows:

- Provide the public, particularly parents and carers, with accurate and up to date information about how to spot the warning signs of child sexual exploitation and how to report it.
- Raise the awareness and active support of the public and key stakeholders in the work being done by the partner agencies to protect children and to combat child sexual exploitation.
- Aid accurate, informed and balanced reporting of CSE issues.
- To engender accurate, informed and balanced media coverage for the actions being taken by the partner agencies in combating and preventing CSE.
- To raise the awareness and understanding of the staff of all partner agencies of the definition of CSE and the work being undertaken to combat and prevent such crime.
- To be clear about what CSE is and ensure consistent datasets across all ten districts of Greater Manchester.
- To engage directly with businesses in Greater Manchester to ensure staff are aware of CSE, can spot the warning signs and report it appropriately.



STAKEHOLDERS

It is recommended that this communications strategy is adopted by partner organisations and specific statutory boards operating in Greater Manchester and engaged in the prevention and detection of child sexual exploitation, namely:

Statutory

- Office of the Police and Crime Commissioner, Greater Manchester
- Greater Manchester Police
- British Transport Police
- The Association of Greater Manchester Authorities (AGMA)
- Bolton Council
- Bury Council
- Manchester City Council
- Oldham Council
- Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council
- Salford City Council
- Stockport Metropolitan Borough Council
- Tameside Metropolitan Borough Council
- Trafford Metropolitan Borough Council
- Wigan Council
- Greater Manchester Sexual Health Network
- St. Mary's Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC)
- Crown Prosecution Service
- Greater Manchester Probation Trust

- NHS England
- Greater Manchester Fire and Rescue Service
- Residential Home Providers
- Housing Providers
- Other key commissioned services
- Connexions
- CEOP

Voluntary & Charitable

- Barnardo's
- Children's Society
- Crimestoppers
- National Working Group
- NSPCC
- Prince's Trust
- Victim Support
- Community & Faith Groups

Boards

- Local Safeguarding Children's Boards in Greater Manchester
- Project Phoenix Executive Board and Steering Group
- Greater Manchester Safeguarding Partnership
- Community Safety Partnerships



KEY MESSAGES

The following list comprises some generic messages all partners should seek opportunities to promulgate both internally within their own organisations and externally. Because of the broad nature of the issue, which key messages are used is dependent on the context of what type of communication is being done – **it's not intended that all key messages appear in all communication activity.**

Definition / generic / context-setting

- CSE is a national problem, not confined to Greater Manchester
- CSE is a form of child abuse where the victim is given something - food, money, drugs, alcohol, gifts - in exchange for sexual activity with the abuser. Offenders target vulnerable young people and use their power - physical, financial, emotional etc. - over the child to sexually abuse them
- Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child or young person's limited availability of choice as a result of their social, economic or emotional vulnerability
- A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation. This means that they are unlikely to report the abuse so we must all be alert to the signs of CSE and report concerns to the authorities
- CSE can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post images on the internet/ mobile phones without immediate payment or gain
- Following high profile CSE cases in recent years, we have all learnt much more about child abuse and child sexual exploitation. As a society, we have a greater understanding of CSE and a growing intolerance of it
- There is not one type of victim or offender of CSE. CSE can take many forms in many settings. If we look at just one model, such as group or gang CSE, we risk missing other victims who do not fall into that category. There is also a risk that victims don't recognise their abuse as CSE because it doesn't fit a particular model
- CSE is not an indictable offence but police and prosecutors can charge offenders with rape and other sexual offences as well as abduction, kidnapping and trafficking
- Cases of CSE may well go up before they go down and this isn't a bad thing.
- CSE is a priority for all Local Safeguarding Children Boards in Greater Manchester and all key partners are working collectively to tackle CSE in a consistent, joined-up approach.

Young people

- You could be at risk of sexual exploitation – know the signs
- It might seem harmless to get drawn into relationships with older people, you may be treated well, have a laugh or get given gifts



- But these gifts are often bribes to gain your trust, and make you feel you have to give something back in return.
- That might involve sexual acts. You might not feel you're being forced into it, and think you owe the older person something. In reality – it's sexual exploitation
- You may be pressured into keeping things secret – but there are people out there to help you.
- You may not be facing these pressures – but a friend may be. You can get them help.
- If this describes you, or a friend, visit our website for more information about what you can do and where you'll find helpful suggestions on how to keep yourself safe.
- It's not your fault that this has happened to you. Groomers are very clever in the way they manipulate young people.
- It's your body. You have the right to say 'no' to sex whatever the circumstances

Carers

- Young people can sometimes be drawn into sexual exploitation, which means they may be rewarded for performing sex acts.
- Adults who do this are skilled at "grooming" young people. They could offer drugs or alcohol, and then draw them into a sexual relationship.
- It could be that you have identified the risks before any damage has been done. We can provide support and help for you and your child to avoid dangerous, controlling and coercive relationships.
- There is help out there – agencies including the police, NHS and your local council are committed to combating this form of child abuse, and help you.
- Visit our website for more information and to know the signs
- Try to maintain good relations with your child. A groomer will try to isolate your child from their usual support network
- Encourage your child to talk to you about their day to day experiences. Talk through strategies to help them protect themselves if they find themselves in difficult situations.

Education

- Look for the indicators that young people are being drawn into abusive relationships – questions to consider are: are they missing school, are they regularly tired, are they receiving gifts that aren't accounted for, do they lack self esteem, are they using drugs or alcohol, are they known to be hanging around with older adults?
- Gathering information and intelligence to assist police can disrupt these offenders and help the child and others.
- There are specially trained police officers and children's services staff working together to disrupt and prosecute offenders, and safeguard children and young people.
- If you think there are signs that a young person you work with is at risk, visit our website for help and advice.
- Educate your pupils about healthy relationships



Single partner response to CSE

- The sexual exploitation of children and young people is a top priority for [NAME OF ORGANISATION]. Nothing is more important than protecting vulnerable people
- Awareness and understanding of this form of child abuse in [NAME OF ORGANISATION] has increased a huge amount in the last few years. We have stepped up to face the challenges involved in tackling in CSE
- We have invested significantly in tackling sexual exploitation and work together to disrupt and prosecute offenders, and protect children.
- There has been an excellent, proactive response to sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester which has led to many prosecutions in the last few years. This is in no small part to the fact that we are working in close partnership with many statutory, voluntary and charitable agencies and with the Local Safeguarding Boards

Perpetrators / Potential Perpetrators

- If you are involved in child sexual exploitation you will be caught
- CSE is child abuse and you could be looking at a sentence of up to 14 years imprisonment and to go on the sex offenders register
- Age does matter. Sexual intercourse with a person under the age of 16 is against the law.
- Make sure you get consent before you have sex. A person who is intoxicated with drink or drugs may not be able to give their informed consent.

Licensed Premises and Services

- Under the Licensing Act 2003 your premises license may be at risk if you do not take action to protect children.
- Under Section 182 of the Licensing Act 2003 license holders and delegated managers have a legal responsibility to make sure those under 18 are protected from 'physical, psychological and moral harm'.
- If you can demonstrate that reasonable steps have been taken to manage the risk (ie: you have shown due diligence) then this could protect your business.
- Information is contained on the website about what to do if you have concerns about a child or young person.

Professionals

- Be aware of what CSE is, how it can affect boys as well as girls and what the warning signs are.
- Ensure you know who the child protection / safeguarding lead in your agency is and be aware of the procedure to follow if you have concerns about a young person.
- Be aware that under Phoenix there are now specialist multi-agency teams in place dealing with child sexual exploitation in each of the ten districts of Greater Manchester. Contact them if you want advice.



- Stay alert to changes in behaviour of young people or any physical signs of abuse. Be professionally curious and investigate further.
- Think about ways that you might be able to better support and help young people to share information if they are worried about their own or another young person's situation.



COMMUNICATION METHODS

To deliver the aims of this communications strategy, a suite of tactics will be used by partner organisations. The tactics have been developed by communications professionals within the Phoenix partnership.

The following methods will be used:

- Development of a website to provide information and support to children, young people, carers and professionals
- Creation of marketing materials, both generic and adaptable for each of the areas of Greater Manchester
- Radio partnership
- Social media
- Targeted public relations
- Criminal convictions

A campaign will be launched in September 2014 to deliver key messages and publicise the website.

INTERNAL

All stakeholders should ensure that frontline staff are aware of the issue of child sexual exploitation.

A range of communications methods should be employed including briefing to staff through the internal channels available. This could include intranet messages, articles in newsletters, verbal briefings in team meetings and targeted messages to specific units.

LSCB trainers should have information about the campaign so they can incorporate into any training and awareness-raising sessions they run.

As some frontline staff do not have regular access to internal digital channels, targeted posters will also be designed to be put up in staff areas in police stations, council buildings, schools etc.



CRIMINAL INQUIRIES

In collaboration with Project Phoenix partners, positive media coverage to highlight the work being done to protect the public from known offenders will be arranged.

As well as promoting these prevention and protection messages and methods, Greater Manchester Police will aim to maximise 'pursue and prosecute' publicity surrounding the action taken against those investigated, prosecuted and convicted of CSE offences in order to demonstrate the firm and positive action being taken against offenders.

Greater Manchester Police will take responsibility for proactive communications activity to publicise criminal investigations and successful prosecutions.

The force will also seek appropriate opportunities to maximise publicity surrounding the recall to prison of those CSE offenders who breach the conditions of their licence.

In the context of criminal investigations and prosecutions, the GMP corporate communications branch will ensure they maintain a current and shared knowledge of all CSE investigations with the appropriate partner agencies such as the CPS, and use a range of communications devices to engage media interest / coverage, including, where appropriate:

- Pre-trial Briefings
- Background interviews
- Features and statements on websites and via social media
- Post plea / guilty conviction media interviews and statements by prosecuting authorities and partners (where appropriate)

The communications officers for those other partner agencies directly or indirectly involved in specific criminal enquiries will be alerted to their association in the case and will be guided with their own communications messaging where appropriate.

We announce all arrests relating to CSE operational activity upon arrest, unless there's a good reason not to. Each press release will be circulated with the Phoenix team and wider local authorities for update purposes, and there will be an agreed blurb attached to each press release announcement that reiterates the aim of Phoenix and emphasises the partnership approach.



Proposed note to editors:

Project Phoenix is Greater Manchester's collaborative commitment to the prevention and detection of child sexual exploitation in the region. If you're concerned that you or someone you know may be affected by child sexual exploitation please visit www.itsnotokay.co.uk



COMMUNICATIONS PLAN

The aim of this plan is to run an awareness campaign aimed at the target audiences and using the key messages listed in this strategy. The plan is as follows:

WHAT	WHY	DATE	COST
Development of website	Directing people to the website will be the main call to action on all communication activities. It will contain relevant information for young people, carers and professionals		
Bus advertising	If used during the summer, young people are likely to see ads on bus shelters		
Billboards	Where there is billboard availability and space within each local authority area this can be a cost-effective way of getting the message out		
Posters toolkit	Create a suite of materials for local authorities for local information to be included		
Leaflet toolkit			
Social media platforms	Use social media influencers to get messages out.		
Industry materials	For hotels, retail, taxis and retail, building on the work already done elsewhere		
Radio campaign	Radio can be used effectively to target parents and carers. Partnership would include ads, web coverage and editorial		



WHAT	WHY	DATE	COST
	coverage		
PR launch event	Once website is ready to go live		
PR campaign	Runs side by side with marketing materials. Develop local and regional stories to generate media interest in the campaign and drive people to the website.		



GOVERNANCE

There is a twenty-point project plan in place for Phoenix which is concerned with raising standards in relation to how all key partners deal with child sexual exploitation across Greater Manchester.

There are a number of themes within the project plan, which includes:

- Assessment and referral processes;
- Effective Interventions linked to continuum of response model levels;
- Information sharing and confidentiality;
- Partnership working and operational agreements;
- Marketing and Awareness raising;
- Education programmes;
- Disruption activity;
- Licensing;
- Quality and Inspection Standards;
- Governance and Peer Challenge;
- Missing from Home;
- Notification of out of area placements in residential homes.

The implementation of the Phoenix project plan is overseen by a steering group which meets monthly and includes representation from key partners from across the public and third sectors. The objectives of the steering group are as follows:

1. Capture and share best practice in relation to tackling child sexual exploitation.
2. Ensure all ten Local Safeguarding Children's Boards are fully compliant with Working Together guidance (DCSF, 2013) in relation to child sexual exploitation.
3. Oversee the development of a manual of good practice for child sexual exploitation and promote its use across all Local Safeguarding Children's Boards.
4. Ensure services for children and young people are joined up across Greater Manchester.
5. Examine opportunities for pan-Greater Manchester commissioning arrangements regarding services for children and young people.
6. Develop high quality recording standards in relation to child sexual exploitation across Greater Manchester.
7. Ensure robust performance management frameworks are in place across all ten districts in relation to child sexual exploitation.
8. Agree a Project Plan for Phoenix and oversee its implementation.
9. Ensure that the voices of children and young people are heard and are used to influence the way in which services are delivered across Greater Manchester.

The steering group reports to the Phoenix Executive Board, which meets every two months and comprises of senior managers from all key partners. The Executive Board provides regular progress reports on Phoenix to the AGMA Wider Leadership Team and the Greater Manchester Leaders' Group. The objectives of the Executive Board are to:



1. Ensure consistency in delivery across Greater Manchester in relation to identifying and responding to the problem of child sexual exploitation.
2. Seek equity of service for all children and young people in Greater Manchester.
3. Provide strong leadership for Project Phoenix, including representing the interests of the project at all Greater Manchester boards and partnership groups.
4. Provide quality assurance to current practice by all key stakeholders in relation to child sexual exploitation.
5. Oversee the implementation of specialist teams and the development of cluster arrangements in every district of Greater Manchester.
6. Ensure strategic alignment between Project Phoenix and other key programmes of work within AGMA.
7. Scrutinise and, where appropriate, challenge current practice by all partner agencies in Greater Manchester in relation to child sexual exploitation.



EVALUATION

The success of this strategy will be evaluated using the following mechanisms:

- The tone and prominence of media coverage both locally and nationally
- Changes in the level of reporting CSE
- Fluctuations in the number of successful prosecutions
- Comment by stakeholders and the public
- Amount of coverage in the local and national media
- The views of the public on social media
- Number of calls to Crimestoppers and other key partners
- Number of referrals broken down by agency

FOR FURTHER INFORMATION ABOUT THE PUBLICITY, ARTWORK AND MATERIALS CONTACT GMP PRESS OFFICE ON 0161 856 2284