Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership

Strategic Assessment 2014/15 - Continuous Assessment

Quarter 2: Child Sexual Exploitation

Section 1: Key Findings and Recommendations

This section highlights the key findings emerging from the analysis of anti-social behaviour in Huntingdonshire, and considers opportunities for partnership working in light of these findings.

Key findings

Researchers at a national level identify clear problems with establishing both the nature and the scale of CSE. Brodie & Pearce 2012[1] lists a number of studies that highlight the difficulties in researching CSE as a topic, particularly around establishing consistent data sources and definitions.

Brodie & Pearce 2012[2] also identifies where there is consensus between different studies regarding the individual characteristics associated with **the risk** of sexual exploitation. The nature of these issues, and how they interact with a child or young person's experience of victimisation vary considerably. Generally, most of the Research emphasises the need to treat each young person as an individual.

Locally, this study reviews the national risk factors against the opinions and experience of local professionals and against available data.

- For Huntingdonshire, professionals referred to previous examples of inappropriate relationships that had developed locally that had then led to a vulnerable young person travelling elsewhere.
- None of the professionals identified the most serious levels of CSE within the Barnardo's model of CSE. Concern was expressed regarding past examples of the development of inappropriate relationships (usually involving one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person physically, emotionally or financially, one indicator may be a significant age gap within the relationship).
- Locally, concern was raised about places that attract teenagers but have relatively low levels of surveillance; particularly when associated with additional risk taking behaviour such as drink and drugs.
- Professionals of all agencies could give examples of young people they had worked with where harm had been initiated using mobile technology or the internet.

For all the cases or examples mentioned, professionals identified where action had taken place. All current concerns had been referred to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub).

Consolidating Community Risk Factors for Huntingdonshire have been mapped on the maps within

[1] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404853.pdf
[2] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404853.pdf

the main report. Map 1 highlights the risks that relate to the community such as HMO's, deprivation and drugs, Map 2 shows individual risk factors such as social care, health and education. Overall, Huntingdon North and St Neots Eaton Socon are the wards which exhibit a number of risk factors. These high rates of the risk factors could compound to increase the risk for children in these wards; Therefore further preventative work could be targeted to raise awareness of CSE and help with prevention.

Recommendations

Statutory guidance clearly identifies **the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) as having the lead role** in coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of the work of their members in tackling child sexual exploitation. The guidance does identify that beyond the LSCB other local partnerships have a role to play including community safety partnerships.

In respect of tackling child sexual exploitation, the following recommendations are made in respect of the Huntingdonshire Community Safety for the Partnership:

- Support the Local Safeguarding Children's Board (LSCB) strategy for tackling child sexual exploitation. This could be by providing resources to the board whether it's financial or supporting the work they do. The work could involve supporting and promoting Chelsea's choice or any equivalent. As well as supporting any preventative work that the LSCB are involved in.

- All partners can increase awareness and understanding of CSE for staff within their own agencies and teams. The Community Safety Partnership can be instrumental in ensuring that all staff members are aware of the signs of child exploitation and know what to do if they suspect a child is a victim of CSE.

- Prevention is better than cure – The Community Safety Partnership can support educating and teaching children and parents about risk factors e.g. use of social media, as well as fostering better understanding as to what is an appropriate relationship.

- The Partnership would find the Project Phoenix Handbook[3] (from Greater Manchester) of considerable benefit, particularly guidance on disrupting possible CSE (page 19 onwards) when considering actions to respond to the community risk factors identified within this report.

[3] http://www.tamesidesafeguardingchildren.org.uk/resources/materials/misc/project-phoenix-handbook-final.pdf

Section 2: Analysis

Introduction

Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership requested that the second quarterly strategic assessment focus on Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). Child Sexual Exploitation is a form of child abuse and one that can manifest itself in many different ways.

While those who have worked with children for many years will testify that CSE is far from a new phenomenon[4], what has changed is the level of professional and public awareness generated by a series of high profile investigations and criminal trials. Cases in Rotherham, Rochdale, Derby, Oxford and other towns and cities have uncovered not only the previously hidden scale of the problem but also a particular pattern of abuse.

Child Sexual Exploitation, the role of Community Safety Partnerships

The statutory guidance[5] clearly identifies **the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) as having the lead role** in coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of the work of their members in tackling child sexual exploitation. This function is discharged by *'participation in planning & commissioning'* of services to meet the needs of children, young people and their families as well as *'developing policies and procedures'*. As a minimum, the LSCB procedures should support professionals in identifying signs of exploitation, providing the framework within which information is shared and action taken and identify how victims are supported (see section 4.10 of the guidance[6]).

The Cambridgeshire Local Safeguarding Children's Board child sexual exploitation strategy[7] is available on the internet http://www.cambslscb.org.uk/prof_cse.html and should be considered in conjunction with this report.

The guidance does identify that beyond the LSCB other local partnerships have a role to play, including Community Safety Partnerships and that links between the two *"can be used to ensure a common understanding of the nature of the problem, local priorities and how different agencies will cooperate to address it"* (Section 4.18 of the guidance)[8].

In particular, Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership should consider how it can support and add value to the existing LCSB strategy, in particular the strands of:

- Raising public confidence and awareness;
- Strengthening existing partnerships and leadership;

[4] The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could IT?, Ofsted 2014
[5] Safeguarding Children and Young People for Sexual Exploitation, Supplementary Guidance, 2009
[6] Ibid
[7] LSCB CSE strategy http://www.cambslscb.org.uk/prof_cse.html
[8] Safeguarding Children and Young People for Sexual Exploitation, Supplementary Guidance, 2009

- Intelligence and performance monitoring;
- Learning & development.

A more recent thematic inspection of measures to tackle CSE by Ofsted of eight local authorities[9] identified that LCSB progress against CSE action plans should be shared regularly with Community Safety Partnerships (page 8, recommendations, paragraph five) and Partnerships should ensure that information and intelligence is also shared. Ofsted also considered strong governance arrangements between the respective boards of the LSCB, CSP and H&WB[10] as being indicative of a holistic approach to CSE being taken; with links to related strategies such as those covering gangs, domestic abuse, licencing and PSHE in Schools.

Definition of child sexual exploitation (CSE)

Within official guidance Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) is defined as:

> *"involving 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"*[11]

In addition to the statutory definition, Barnardo's recognises that there are different types of CSE based on the nature of the relationship between the victim and the perpetrator(s). The table below shows the definitions of the different types of CSE.

Table 1 Barnardo's definition of child sexual exploitation

Type of CSE	Description
Inappropriate relationships	Usually involving one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person (physical, emotional or financial). One indicator may be a significant age gap. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.
'Boyfriend' model of exploitation	The perpetrator befriends and grooms a young person into a 'relationship' and then coerces or forces them to have sex with friends or associates.
Peer exploitation	Peer exploitation is where young people are forced or coerced into sexual activity by peers and associate's. Sometimes this can be associated with gang activity but not always
Organised / networked sexual exploitation or trafficking	Young people (often connected) are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced/ coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at 'sex parties', and young people who are involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised 'buying and selling' of young people by perpetrators.

Source: Adapted from Cambridgeshire LCSB CSE Strategy quoting Barnardo's

[9] The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could IT?, Ofsted 2014
[10] Health & Well Being Board
[11] Department for Education 2012 Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation: National Action Plan Progress Report.

It is the last of these (organised / networked sexual exploitation or trafficking), in particular a pattern of abuse involving predominantly White British girls as victims and gangs of predominantly Asian heritage men as perpetrators, that has had such a high profile nationally.

National Research

Researchers at a national level identify clear problems with establishing both the nature and the scale of CSE. Brodie & Pearce 2012[12] lists a number of studies that highlight the difficulties in researching CSE as a topic, particularly around establishing consistent data sources and definitions. For example one research project identified that some cases that were initially identified as CSE on further investigation, were subsequently found to involve other types of sexual abuse or assault.

Victims

Brodie & Pearce 2012[13] identify where there is consensus between different studies. Individual characteristics associated with **the risk** of sexual exploitation are known to include:

- family difficulties;
- experience of different types of abuse and neglect;
- experience of the care system;
- a history of educational difficulty, including truancy and exclusion from school;
- a history of running away or going missing;
- drug and alcohol misuse; and
- delinquency and gang involvement.

The nature of these issues, and how they interact with a child or young person's experience of victimisation vary considerably. Generally, most of the Research emphasises the need to treat each young person as an individual.

Brodie & Pearce 2012[14] also quote Scott, Creegan and Smith, 2005 to the extent that research suggests a 'pattern of detachment' from key relationships for young people be that with family, school or community that contribute to vulnerability to CSE as well as other dangers.

Perpetrators

In the largest study of community-based CSE to date, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP)[15] found that about one in three of all offenders were operating in groups. CEOP identified 230 such groups, primarily duos and trios. Yet one in ten groups had seven or more offenders.

As with most crime, **the groups** were largely ethnically similar. The most common single ethnicity group for CSE was Asian. When **all suspects** (both group and solo offenders) were considered, 49% were white, 46% Asian, and 5% black.

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[12] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404853.pdf
[13] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404853.pdf
[14] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404853.pdf
[15] Quoted by Jill Dando Institute http://www.ucl.ac.uk/jdibrief/crime/child-sex-exploitation

The Jill Dando Institute goes on to cite other research which found:

- Offenders are predominantly male, ranging in age from late-teens to early-60s.
- Many have jobs which provide ready access to victims and easy grooming opportunities, such as in taxi firms and takeaways.
- Groups may form from strangers with a shared interest in children, or from pre-existing social networks, including relatives, friends or colleagues.
- Certain offenders play a pure facilitation role, providing flats for 'parties', driving victims around or supplying alcohol or drugs.

Places that have been identified where offences have taken place tend to show the opportunistic nature of the offending. Any place with a low level of surveillance/supervision could form a potential abuse location, such as private 'party' flats, cheap hotel rooms, cars or parks. For group-based CSE cases, there are often many different locations involved.

Huntingdonshire Picture

In building a picture of the possible risks of CSE for Huntingdonshire the researchers faced the same problems noted by Brodie & Pearce 2012[16] mentioned above. Albeit the overall aim of the analysis was to provide a basis for partnership discussion and action rather than to complete a comprehensive audit. Therefore the report relies on the following:

- Qualitative views / interviews of professionals who currently work with young people in Huntingdonshire (listed in appendix a);
- Translation of 'risk factors' from national research into a local context.

Accessing data on exact numbers of victims of CSE and the scale of CSE in Huntingdonshire was particularly challenging. The MASH (Multi-Agency Safe-Guarding Hub) reported that they are changing the way they record and collate data with a new way of recording commencing on the 1st of October 2014. It was hoped that this would provide accurate statistics on some elements of CSE in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough in the future.

A detailed analysis of the 21 recorded crimes tagged as having some similarity to CSE since December 2012 showed that none had occurred in Huntingdonshire.

Broader information on all victims of child abuse and sexual offences in Huntingdonshire was available but is only covered in brief as it is not directly relevant to CSE.

Qualitative Views

It was acknowledged that the recognition of CSE is something that professionals have become more engaged with. Local agencies are getting better at considering the warning signs, sharing

[16] http://www.scotland.gov.uk/Resource/0040/00404853.pdf

information and working proactively with other agencies to identify possible victims due to the clearer mechanisms to share concerns about a particularly young person. The majority of professionals believe that possible cases of CSE were now more apparent due to this increased awareness. Through discussions, professionals mentioned the following vulnerabilities:

Vulnerability One: Travel / Movement of Victims

National research found that it was common that victims would be moved around, within or between towns. For Huntingdonshire, professionals referred to previous examples of inappropriate relationships that had developed locally that had then led to a vulnerable young person travelling elsewhere.

Vulnerability Two: Places with relatively low surveillance

Nationally offenders have been known to establish relationships with victims in public places, such as town centres, shops, restaurants, takeaways and parks. Locally concern was raised about places that attract teenagers but have relatively low levels of surveillance; particularly when associated with additional risk taking behaviour such as drink and drugs.

Vulnerability Three: Proliferation of mobile / internet technology

Professionals of all agencies could give examples of young people they had worked with where harm had been initiated using mobile technology or the internet. As one professional observed in previous years when your child went to bed you knew they were safe, now the children have access to their phones and the internet abuse could potentially happen at any time.

Vulnerability Four: Development of inappropriate relationships

None of the professionals identified the most serious levels of CSE within the Barnardo's model of CSE. Concern was expressed regarding past examples of the development of inappropriate relationships (usually involving one perpetrator who has inappropriate power or control over a young person physically, emotionally or financially, one indicator may be a significant age gap within the relationship).

For all the cases or examples mentioned, professionals identified where action had taken place. All current concerns had been referred to the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub). Broader concerns about specific places had been addressed by multi-agency meetings with follow-up actions such as detached outreach work, 1:1 sessions and where appropriate additional police patrols. Awareness raising was also underway through for example the 'Chelsea's Choice' theatre production and work improving the understanding of the consequences of risk taking behaviour.

Risk Factors

Nationally many risk factors and warning signs of CSE have been identified. There are a range of factors that can influence a young person's vulnerability to being exploited. The information below is a selective list and the national literature does not always agree. In reality, victims of CSE come from a variety of backgrounds and any child or young person could be a victim of child sexual exploitation.

The risk factors can be split into individual and community factors.

Community vulnerabilities

Houses of multiple occupation

Nationally[17] houses of multiple occupation (HMO's) are considered to be 'risky' locations where CSE could occur. Research has also found a link between ethnicity / nationality of the offender and tendency towards using this type of property as an offence location.

There is little information to support there being any specific concerns in respect of HMO's and CSE in Huntingdonshire.

Areas that have a high volume of HMO's are the wards of Huntingdon North and Huntingdon East.

Deprivation

National evidence[18] refers to children living in poverty and deprivation being at a greater risk however local evidence from Operation Earle showed that children from a wide range of socio-economic groups are at risk. Huntingdonshire has one ward, Huntingdon North, which is in the top 20% of most deprived wards in Cambridgeshire (although individual deprived households can be found anywhere). Map 1 below shows the most deprived wards in the district in red and the least deprived in a light grey colour.

Low Cost Hotels

The use of low cost hotels has been a feature within significant national cases of CSE. One agency did raise concerns about this issue, although the premises were outside of the District. Improving information about the extent of these types of premises in the area could then inform preventative action. Work could be targeted at hotel staff to report bookings or room use by young people possibly at risk of exploitation.

[17] Project Phoenix Handbook, Multi-agency guidance for delivering effective strategies to tackling child sexual exploitation in Greater Manchester

[18] College of Policing, Responding to CSE https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation/#risk-factors

Drugs

The prevalence of drugs in the community can also influence the vulnerability of children and the Jay Report[19] identified substance misuse as a significant risk factor in cases of CSE in Rotherham. There was some concern raised around young people involved with drugs and the subsequent vulnerability this created.

In Huntingdonshire, the highest level of drug offences since April 2014 has occurred in the ward of St Neots Eynesbury followed by Huntingdon East.

Individual's vulnerabilities

Children in care

Within significant national cases e.g. Rotherham, children who are living in care or in need of protection or who going missing made up a disproportionate number of victims. There is no available evidence that this is a specific problem in Cambridgeshire. There are robust arrangements in Cambridgeshire to support children living in care particularly around reporting episodes of missing from care and return interviews conducted by "independent" members of staff.

Map 2 below shows the rate per 1,000 children (aged 0-19), who as of the 31/08/2014, were either looked after children (LAC), a child in need (CIN) or subject to a child protection (CP) plan. This is reflective of the entire child protection workload. Huntingdon North recorded the highest rate of children who were LAC, CP or CIN followed by Huntingdon East.

Health

Levels of teenage pregnancies and sexually transmitted diseases are considered to be community risk factors for child sexual exploitation. Map 2 below shows the rate of teenage pregnancies per 1,000 females aged 15-17. Huntingdon North recorded the highest rate, followed by St Neots Priory Park.

Low self-esteem and self-harm are also considered a risk factor and a warning sign for CSE[20]. Data for hospital stays for self-harm for 2008/09 to 2012/13 show that the only ward in Huntingdonshire that recorded a significantly higher rate than the average value for England was Huntingdon North[21].

Education

Young people and children who are missing from school, truant, or excluded are common risk factors associated with being a victim of CSE. National research has found that the majority of victims were disengaged from school and therefore was a warning sign and a risk factor to a child being a victim of CSE[22].

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[19] Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham, Alexis Jay, paragraph 4.13, page 31.
[20] https://www.app.college.police.uk/app-content/major-investigation-and-public-protection/child-sexual-exploitation/#risk-factors
[21] http://www.localhealth.org.uk/#z=500306,295716,88867,58323;v=map4;i=t3.self_harm;l=en
[22] Ibid 17

Map 2 below shows the percentage of pupils in each ward who are persistently absent. This means they have missed 15% or more of school time in the last two terms. The average percentage of pupils who were persistently absent in Huntingdonshire was 3.5%. In Huntingdonshire six wards recorded more than 3.5% of pupils being persistently absent. St Neots Eaton Socon recorded the highest percentage of pupils (5.8%), followed by Huntingdon North. The percentage of fixed termed exclusions was also looked at and it was found that 6.5% of pupils in Huntingdon North had a fixed term exclusion followed by 6.2% in St Neots Eaton Socon. If the young people are not at school then they are more vulnerable to partake in risk taking behaviour. However evidence from other national enquiries also shows that young people who were being sexually exploited were registered in school and would leave school and return the same day having been exploited whilst off the school premises

Technology

Technology offers children and young people many positive opportunities for learning and social interaction. Unfortunately, it also provides perpetrators with new opportunities and pathways to target potential victims. Children are spending more time online and are increasingly likely to communicate with someone not known to them using social networking. Barnardo's has found that young people have been targeted by perpetrators through a variety of media including social networks such as Facebook, instant messaging apps such as Blackberry Messenger, dating apps such as Grindr and via online gaming.

The internet, social media and mobile technology have allowed perpetrators to identify potential victims. They can groom victims online and they can also use it to arrange meetings with the child. The Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) reported in 2013 that perpetrators were using social media and the internet to have a 'scatter gun' approach to targeting a large number of potential victims in one message.

Lack of aspiration

Some agencies in Huntingdonshire were concerned that lack of aspiration was a risk factor that made young people more vulnerable to CSE. It is thought that those with lack of aspiration get diverted into risk taking activities or fulfilment through relationships. In this case young people may not present themselves as 'victims', often taking on a different character to mask their vulnerability. Many believing that they are in a relationship with their abusers and not recognising themselves as victims. One qualitative narrative offered by someone working with young people in Huntingdonshire was that a young person developing an inappropriate relationship might consider themselves to be "lucky"; not seeing what was wrong with what was happening as they would be getting commodities, such as new mobile phones, drugs / alcohol and attention.

Age and gender

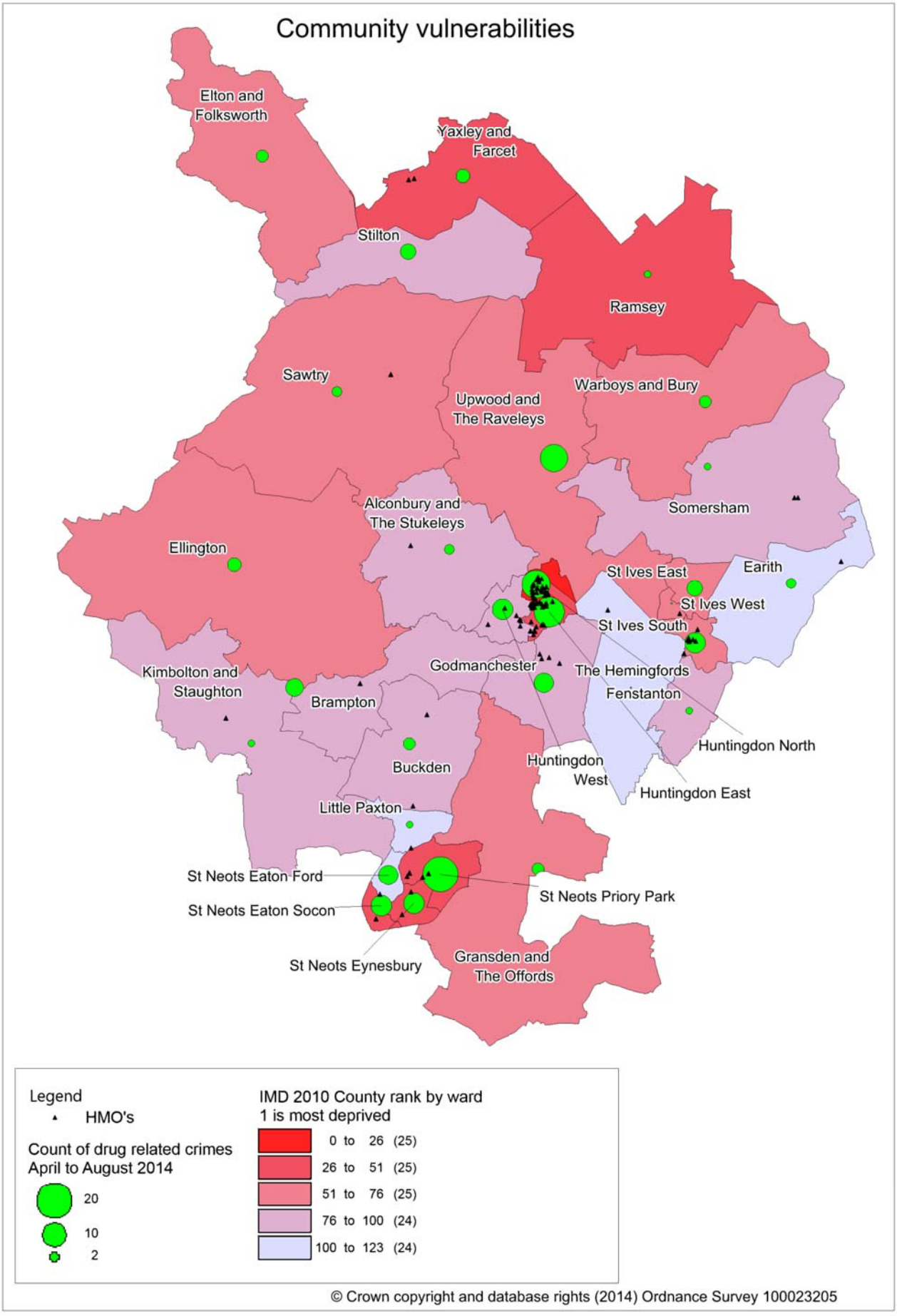
The police report that victims in Cambridgeshire (including Peterborough) are ‘typically’ female aged around the age of 15. Although there have been victims between the ages of 12 to 16 as well as young males.

Consolidating Risk Factors

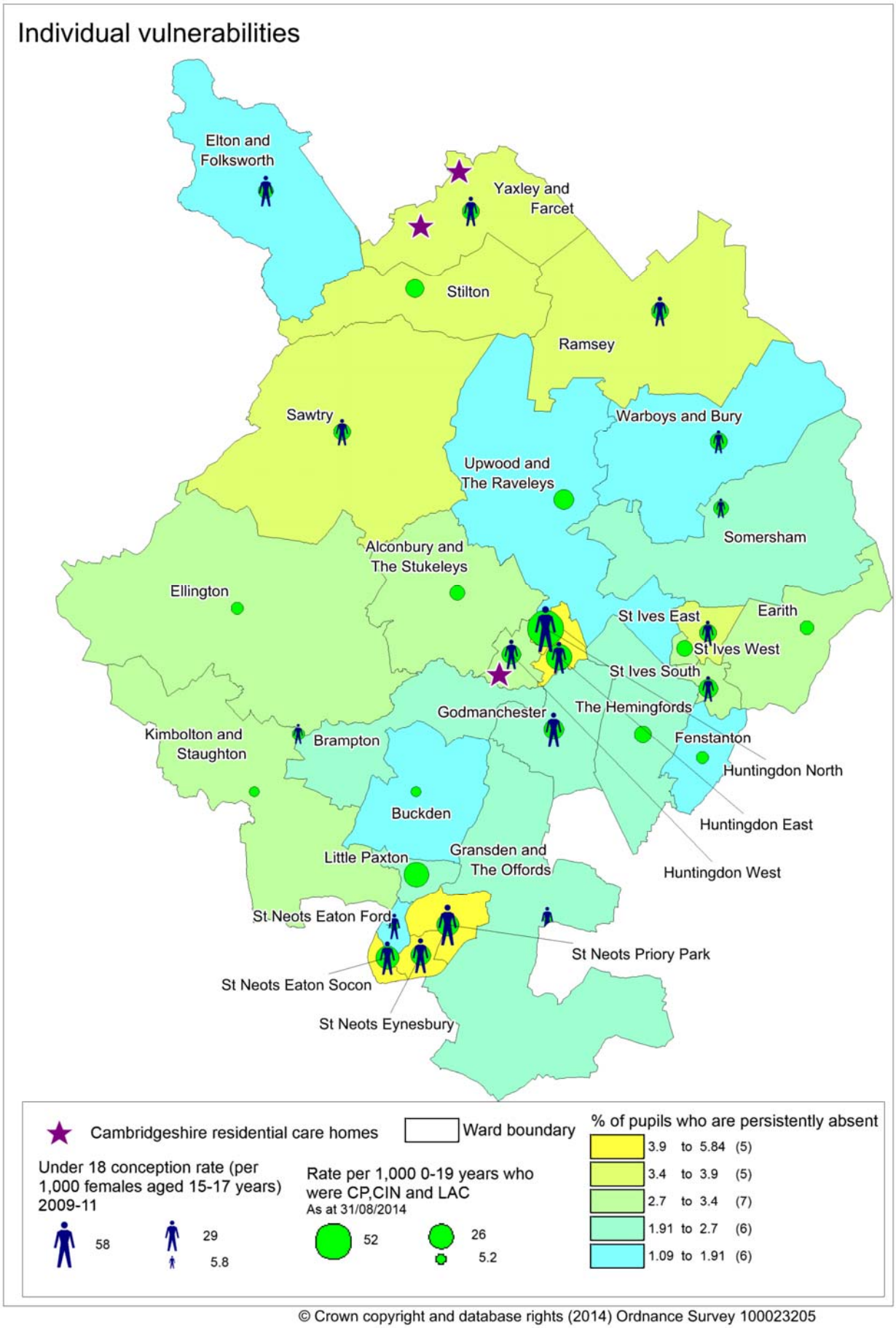
National risk factors for Huntingdonshire have been mapped on the maps below. Map 1 highlights the risks that relate to the community such as HMO’s, deprivation and drugs. Map 2 shows individual risk factors such as social care, health and education.

Huntingdon North and St Neots Eaton Socon are wards which have a number of risk factors. These high rates of the risk factors could compound to increase the risk for children in these wards; Therefore further preventative work could be targeted to raise awareness of CSE and help with prevention.

Map 1 Community risk factors



Map 2 Individual risk factors



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Long term impact on the victim

Although the issue has had significant national coverage the partnership should keep in mind that the impact upon the victim is devastating; it impacts on their health, happiness and development. One young victim interviewed by the CEOP[23] said that "What most people don't realise is that it scars you for life. It still affects you years later".

The vulnerability of many victims that renders them susceptible to the grooming tactics employed by perpetrators also makes recovery difficult; indeed the victims are often singled out for their vulnerability."[23]

Victims can also be reticent to disclose exploitation voluntarily, as a result of fear of exploiters, loyalty to perpetrators and failure to recognise that they have been exploited as well as having a negative perception of fear of authorities. Therefore they are also likely to be hostile to engagement with services who offer help[8]. So there is a need for proactive engagement at a community level that can build confidence, awareness and promote disclosure.

Local ways of responding to CSE

The statutory guidance[24] clearly identifies **the Local Safeguarding Children Board (LSCB) as having the lead role** in coordinating and ensuring the effectiveness of the work of their members in tackling child sexual exploitation. In addition, both the County Council (as lead agency for Child Protection) and the police have significant arrangements in place to address the issue[25].

Guidance does identify that beyond the LSCB other local partnerships have a role to play including Community Safety Partnerships.

In particular, Huntingdonshire Community Safety Partnership should consider how it can support and add value to the existing LCSB strategy. In particular the strands of:

- Raising public confidence and awareness;
- Strengthening existing partnerships and leadership;
- Intelligence and performance monitoring;
- Learning & development.

[23] CEOP thematic assessment executive summary
[24] Safeguarding Children and Young People for Sexual Exploitation, Supplementary Guidance, 2009
[25] LSCB CSE strategy http://www.cambslscb.org.uk/prof_cse.html