

**CHILD**  
**EXPLOITATION**  
criminal exploitation  
trafficking  
'county lines'

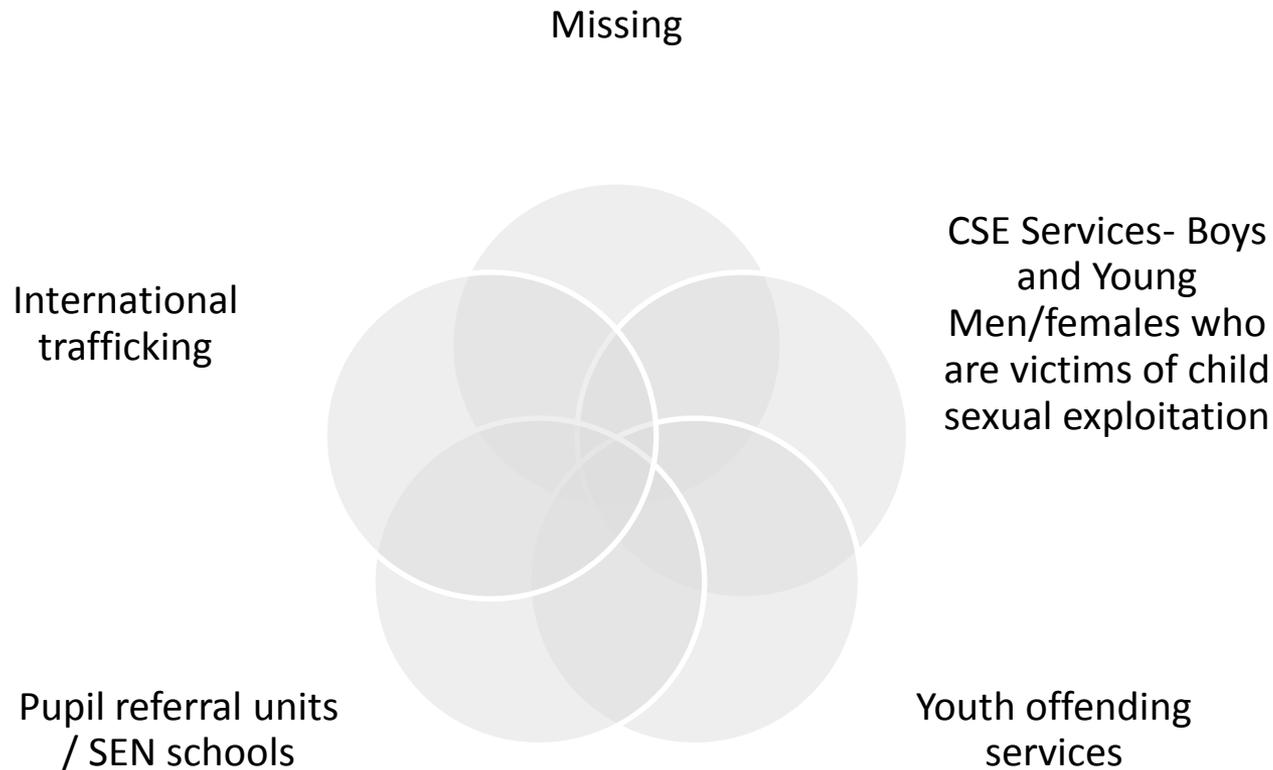
# Reframing exploitation

- *Criminal Exploitation 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 completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal nature. Child criminal exploitation often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. 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.*
- [http://knowsleyscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p\\_prev\\_tack\\_crim\\_exploit.html#def\\_ch\\_crim](http://knowsleyscb.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_prev_tack_crim_exploit.html#def_ch_crim)
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# Context and Scale

- In a 2016 NCA report 80% of areas reported exploitation of children by gangs and ages ranged from 12-18 year olds, with 15-16 year olds being exploited most frequently
- Children, usually boys, are regularly trafficked out of major cities along 'county lines' for the purpose of criminal exploitation
- Our own services report the following risks face by children – mainly boys but there are growing concerns about girls being targeted – being criminally exploited:
  - Sexual assault, rape and physical assault
  - Witnessing adult sexual behaviour and extreme violence
  - Being forced to carry, drugs, money or weapons
  - Being made to live, eat and sleep in conditions that would lead to a child being removed if they were in a family home

# Where do we see these victims?



# The Children's Society services

- CSA/E Prevention Programme
- Working with NCA to map intelligence and TOR
- Delivering training across the country
- STRIDE service for this type of child victim
- Missing services/outreach missing services
- Boys and Young men services

# Influencing and policy change

- **All Party Parliamentary Group on Missing**
  - Roundtable in March 2017 on criminal exploitation and missing and event in December on County Lines
- **Seeking a Home Affairs Select Committee session on 'county lines'**
- **National Missing Persons Register in 2018 and new Missing Strategy**
- **16 and 17 year old working group**
  - Disruption toolkit
- **Internal trafficking and the National Referral Mechanism**

# What does good local practice look like?

- Information sharing arrangements between the police, local authorities and voluntary sector
- Ensure all children who go missing receive a Return Home Interview and information/intelligence is shared with the police
- Multi-agency risk panel, rather than siloed vulnerabilities e.g. CSE, trafficking, criminal exploitation
- Mapping of risks and young people
- Information sharing arrangements between the police, local authorities and voluntary sector
- All staff in the local authority and police force recognising these children as victims and referring them to the National Referral Mechanism – any other professionals report to police and children's services

# Risk to young people

- Physical injuries: risk of serious violence and death
- Emotional and psychological trauma
- Sexual violence: sexual assault, rape, indecent images being taken and shared as part of initiation/revenge/punishment, internally inserting drugs
- Debt bondage- young person and families being 'in debt' to the exploiters; which is used to control the young person.
- Neglect and basic needs not being met
- Living in unclean, dangerous and/or unhygienic environments
- Tiredness and sleep deprivation: child is expected to carry out criminal activities over long periods and through the night
- Poor attendance and/or attainment at school/college/university
- Poor long term outcomes for young people

# Sexual exploitation risk whilst being trafficked

- Videos being circulated of gang members beaten, naked, crying
- Youngers being raped orally or anally by one older or multiple gang members
- Younger gang members being 'disgraced' in other, similar ways
- Young males witnessing adults having sex in the traphouses
- Young males being forced to carry drugs in their anus. Females in their vagina
- Young male being stripped naked to prove he did not have the drugs on him

# Barriers to identification

- Currently no accepted legal definition of criminal exploitation and also very little guidance, training and support
- Criminal exploitation not fully understood by services working with young people which impacts on the response a young person receives.
- The visible symptoms are responded to, meaning that many young people receive a criminal justice response and their safeguarding needs can be overlooked as a result.
- Gender bias and perceptions of victimhood

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