

CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION BY ORGANISED NETWORKS

An inquiry into institutional responses to Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks

Update Note

1. The Inquiry is inviting applications for Core Participant status in connection with its Child Sexual Exploitation by Organised Networks Investigation.
2. This Update is intended to amplify the published Definition of Scope for this investigation, and should be read with that document. In short, the Investigation aims to investigate the nature and extent of, and institutional responses to, sexual exploitation of children by organised networks through a number of case specific investigations and a review of information available from published and unpublished reports and reviews, court cases, and previous investigations.
3. The Inquiry has reviewed a large number of previous published reviews, inquiries and reports on child sexual exploitation and several large-scale prosecutions. It has adopted the following working definition of Organised Networks:

An organised network is characterised by two or more individuals (whether identified or not) who are known to (or associated with) one another and are known to be involved in or to facilitate the sexual exploitation of children. Being involved in the sexual exploitation of children includes introducing them to other individuals for the purpose of exploitation, trafficking a child for the purpose of sexual exploitation, taking payment for sexual activities with a child or allowing their property to be used for sexual activities with a child

4. For the purpose of the Inquiry's scoping work, the Inquiry analysed publicly available data on a number of risk factors (including number of children on child protection plans, deprivation index, policing arrangements, absence from school etc.) and chose a sample of 13 local authority areas. Institutions in these areas were asked to provide information and complete questionnaires. A large volume of material was provided, which the Inquiry has been considering.
5. Through this scoping work, the Inquiry has identified **eight themes** falling within the Definition of Scope on which it intends to hear evidence at a public hearing of this Investigation, which will take place in 2020. These are:
 - **Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Problem Profiling (including gender and ethnicity) and disruption of offenders.** Whether police forces have comprehensive and up to date information about local patterns of child sexual exploitation in their area and the extent to which their information, and how they use it, is effective and reliable.
 - **Empathy and concern for child victims.** Whether child victims feel they are treated with empathy and respect by the police, local authorities and support

services when they disclose sexual exploitation. What action the police and local authorities take to ensure that victims are treated with empathy and respect, and what action they take to prevent and/or respond to negative stereotyping of victims.

- **Risk assessment and protection from harm.** Whether risks to sexually exploited children are understood, documented and managed effectively. Whether local multi agency meetings take appropriate action to safeguard children from the threat of sexual exploitation.
- **Missing children, return home interviews and looked after children.** What is being done to prevent children from going missing and to protect such children from the threat of child sexual exploitation; whether Return Home Interviews are carried out, and what use is made of data from such interviews; the extent to which looked after children go missing; and how those placed in residential homes in other areas are protected from sexual exploitation.
- **Male victims.** Barriers to the identification of males as victims and any regional variation in identifying male victims of Child Sexual Exploitation.
- **Children with a disability.** The threat of sexual exploitation to children with learning and other disabilities. What is being done to safeguard disabled children who are at risk of sexual exploitation.
- **Partnership working on child sexual exploitation.** How well partnerships share information in relation to child victims, and perpetrators of child sexual exploitation and whether effective partnership work prevents victimisation and supports children.
- **Audit, review and performance improvement.** The extent to which audit activity has driven improvements in professional practice responses to child sexual exploitation.

6. Having looked at a greater number of areas in its scoping exercise, the Inquiry has decided to focus on **six particular geographic areas** through which to explore these themes. These provide a range of features including size, demography, geography and social characteristics as well as being likely to illustrate contrasting practice and performance on the themes listed above. The areas are defined by local authority boundaries and are as follows:

- **St Helens**
- **Tower Hamlets**
- **Swansea**
- **Durham**
- **Bristol**
- **Warwickshire.**

7. Applications for core participant status are invited from individuals and institutions who consider they have a **sufficient interest** in the investigation of **the themes** outlined

above **in any these six local authority areas**. While the Inquiry is likely to obtain evidence from a range of institutions a significant focus will be placed on the role of the police and local authorities in these geographical areas and in relation to these themes.

8. Applications which relate to child sexual exploitation by organised networks other than in respect of the eight themes and six geographical areas set out at paragraphs 6 and 7 above are unlikely to be successful, in the absence of exceptional reasons.
9. The Inquiry will conduct a searching investigation into any institutional failure to protect children in this context. The investigation will however be proportionate, and it is unlikely that the Inquiry will make any fresh determination as to whether an incident of child sexual exploitation by organised networks of a child in fact occurred, or whether there was an individual failure, as opposed to an institutional failure, to protect children from child sexual exploitation by organised networks.
10. Applications for Core Participant status should be submitted in the prescribed form **before 4pm on 27 March 2019**. Applicants should read the [definition of scope](#), and [guidance document](#). In particular applicants should note that applications should be set out in writing on no more than 4 sides of A4 paper and as a minimum should include the information set out at paragraph 14 of the guidance.
11. The Inquiry will hold a preliminary hearing in connection with this investigation at **10.30 am on 2 May 2019** at its Hearing Centre in Pocock Street, London, SE1.