

The Reducing the Impact of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) Project: An implementation evaluation

Report produced for Barnardo's Scotland



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¹ Hereafter referred to as Barnardo’s

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Executive Summary

The RISE Project

Reducing the Impact of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) is a two year pilot project running in Aberdeen and Dundee. The project was designed to address the Scottish Government's National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (2014, 2016). Funding has been secured to extend the delivery of the project beyond the initial 2 year pilot, and it is intended that the service will be further developed and implemented more widely. The overall aim of RISE is to identify, protect and support children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of CSE, and those who have been identified as victims, and to prevent CSE by disrupting patterns of perpetration.

The work of the CSE Advisors has three major strands: training and consultation; direct work with children and families; and improving intelligence sharing as shown in Figure 1.

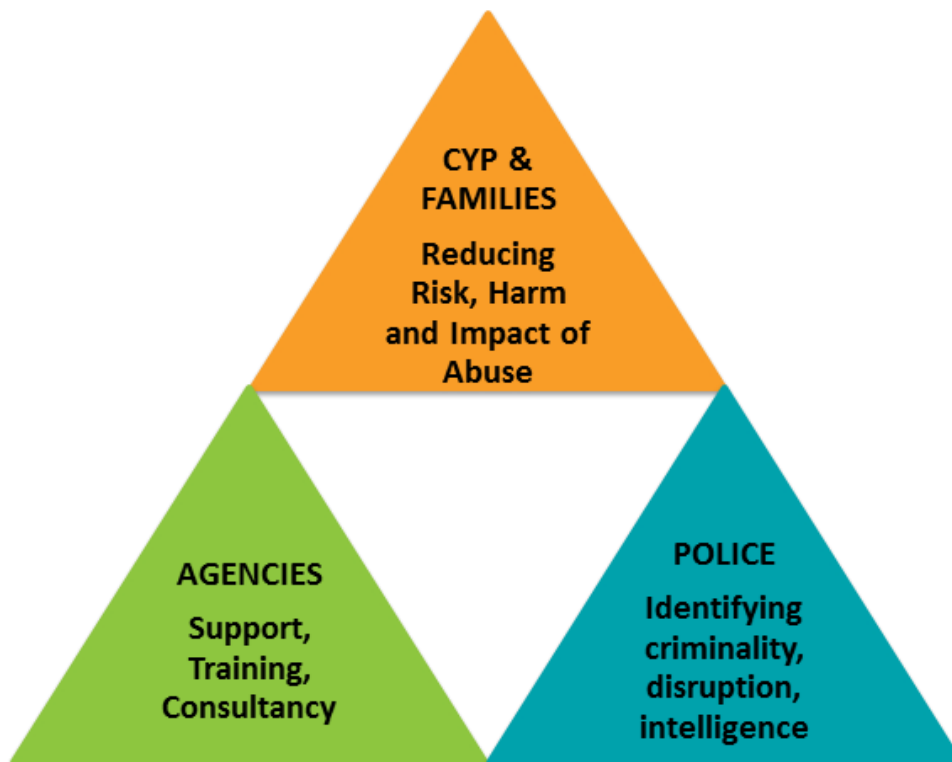


Figure 1: The “RISE Triangle” - the role of the CSE Advisor

Through direct work with children, young people and families, they support individuals at risk of CSE or affected by CSE, reducing risk, harm and impact of abuse. They facilitate a transformation in culture and systems to support and mainstream effective responses to CSE building capacity to respond to CSE across a wide range of relevant organisations (e.g. Police Scotland; schools and education; housing; social work, including Child Protection Core Group Meetings, Care and Risk Management Meetings,

Strategy Meetings and Inter-Agency Referral Discussions; sexual health clinics; residential care settings; youth groups; voluntary sector organisations; and community safety warden networks). Through training and awareness raising, support and consultation with professionals within a range of public and voluntary sector organisations, their work aims to build awareness, knowledge and skills, to improve the response to individuals who have experienced or are at risk of CSE. They work closely with Police Scotland, to coordinate intelligence information, to respond effectively to victims, and to improve identification and disruption of perpetrators and perpetrator networks.

Evaluation Aims

The aim of this research was to evaluate the implementation of RISE, and to identify early indications of potential impact. Four main research objectives underpin this principle aim:

- i) To examine the processes and structures which have been put in place to implement the project
- ii) To assess the effectiveness of these processes and structures across the two pilot sites
- iii) To provide an indication of the overall impact of the project – by gaining insights into the impact the project has on the intended outcomes of the pilot
- iv) To identify the key lessons learned in implementation of the project and identify potential challenges and opportunities for the future delivery and sustainability of the project

Method

The implementation evaluation takes a mixed method approach to examine the impact of the RISE project on the service landscape in the two pilot sites. Focus groups were conducted with 31 professionals from policing, social care, education, health and the voluntary sector in each site. Individual interviews were conducted with the CSE Advisors and a key police officer. These qualitative interviews and focus groups addressed questions around the way that project has been implemented, challenges and barriers to implementation, and perceived impact of the implementation. In addition, the research team examined routinely collected service data, including anonymised and aggregated outcomes data for children and young people, and self-assessment questionnaires for participants on CSE training programmes. Qualitative data was analysed thematically (Braun and Clarke 2006) and quantitative data was analysed descriptively and using a repeated measures ANOVA. Data was then mapped against an implementation framework using a matrix based analysis, to explore service and implementation outcomes.

Key Findings

Improving Multi-Agency Knowledge and Skills to Enhance the Response to CSE: Support, Training and Consultancy

- The introduction of the CSE Advisor role has been an effective way to improve professional responses to CSE, to provide targeted support for children, young people and carers, to enhance professional knowledge and skills.
- The Advisors have played a vital role in improving multiagency collaboration and information sharing.
- The model of training and consultancy delivered by CSE Advisors was regarded as highly effective by professionals in collaborating agencies, and was seen as transforming practice and service landscapes.
- Multiagency and police partners indicate that the implementation of the CSE Advisor role has resulted in more trauma aware practice, and trauma sensitive systems.
- Stakeholder professionals indicated that there was evidence that the role had supported more effective disruption of perpetration.
- CSE Advisors operated across multiple levels of work, and were involved in both strategic and frontline work. This enabled a crucial two way dialogue between direct involvement with children and young people, and policy development to support them.

Reducing Risk, Harm and the Impact of Abuse for Children and Young People

- The evaluation did not focus on children and young people's perceptions of the service offered by CSE Advisors, and did not directly assess outcomes. However, the routinely collated outcomes data held within services does provide some indication that the model has a positive impact on children and young people's outcomes. Future research should focus more fully on impact for children and young people.

Effective Policing of CSE: Identifying criminality, disrupting perpetration, sharing intelligence

- The location of the CSE Advisors within police buildings, but separate from police services was seen as a key aspect of the role's success, and it is suggested that this should be maintained in future deliveries.
- Police were also well represented in training numbers, also contributing to the CSE Advisor role's aim to improve police response to CSE, and to emphasise the importance of information sharing between organisations.

Potential for future implementation and translation of the CSE Advisor Role

- The role had high acceptability in the multiagency service landscape, and was highly valued. It was also evaluated as highly feasible.
- There is evidence of high fidelity to the original CSE Advisor model in the implementation of the model in each pilot site, suggesting translatability to other sites.
- Although the CSE Advisors are highly skilled professionals, the pilots have demonstrated that for the relatively inexpensive investment in a small number of specialist staff, high impact can be achieved, with evidence of transformation of individual professionals' attitudes, transformed practice and transformed organisations and systems. This indicates a model that is highly translatable into other local authority areas. However, further investment is needed to ensure that this vital role continues to be delivered and developed.
- The single post-holder in each pilot site was seen as highly effective, and has demonstrated significant impact in terms of raising awareness, transforming practice, and impacting policy, as well as providing a highly valued service for children and young people, and an effective role in facilitating information sharing. This suggests good value for investment, underscoring the model's potential for replication and translation.

Future implementation should be undertaken taking note of some cautions emergent from the implementation evaluation:

- Given the use of CSE Advisors across multiple domains, and with a wide ranging remit, organisations that deploy CSE Advisors should be aware of the potential for role strain and capacity issues, as well as for isolation. It is crucial that these professionals receive support both from their own organisation and from key organisations like the local authority and police, to ensure that they are fully embedded and receive sufficient support. The buy in of key stakeholders is therefore central to the success and sustainability of the model.
- Professionals from partner organisations did express concerns that the policy context was not sufficiently supportive of effective CSE responses, and that in particular there was a need for central governmental pressure to ensure that data systems were adapted to support the collation of CSE relevant data.
- The short-term funding of the role does raise some questions about sustainability, and this does require attention in the planning of future deliveries. It is nonetheless notable that further funding has been secured for the pilot sites, and that there is an intention to develop and deliver the project in other areas. There is evidence of strong commitment to the CSE Advisor role in

local authorities and Police Scotland, and this is promising in terms of both sustainability in the pilot sites, and translation to other contexts.

Recommendations for Future Research

This promising pilot project has yielded impressive impact in a short period of time, and shows great promise for future implementation and translation to other sites. However, the limitations of this study should be acknowledged in weighing up the findings. Several considerations should be given to future planned research. It is important to track the impact of the direct work with children and young people more explicitly, and a robust evaluation of the impact on children and young people's safety, wellbeing and future CSE involvement is important. The familiarisation and group-based work conducted in schools is promising, holding potential for early intervention and prevention, and this deserves fuller attention and focus in future implementation and evaluations. In addition, an evaluation of service data to track the impact of the CSE Advisors role on children and young people's future involvement with and pathway through services would be useful.

Introduction

Scottish Government (2016a) defines child sexual exploitation (CSE) as *“a form of child sexual abuse in which a person(s), of any age takes advantage of a power imbalance to force or entice a child into engaging in sexual activity in return for something received by the child and/or those perpetrating or facilitating the abuse. As with other forms of child sexual abuse, the presence of perceived consent does not undermine the abusive nature of the act.”*

The sexual exploitation of vulnerable young people has been acknowledged as a problem in Scotland for the last two decades (Scottish Executive, 2003; Rigby et al 2012), though the incidence has not yet been established (Brodie and Pearce, 2012). However, CELCIS undertook a scoping study of sexual exploitation amongst the looked after child population in two local authority areas in Scotland. They reported a prevalence of CSE amongst looked after children of 11%, rising to 29% of children looked after in residential units (Leperniere et al 2013; Welch et al 2014). Concerns have been raised about how frontline staff in residential care and statutory services respond to these young people, and the need to recognise their vulnerability (rather than for instance focusing only on behaviours which are often interpreted as criminality or problem behaviours) has been highlighted (Munro, 2004). Barnardo's Scotland (2014) have highlighted that several CSE enquiries across Scotland have resulted in prosecutions.

Concerns have been raised that the overall response to CSE in Scotland is patchy and that local authorities vary in their acknowledgement, awareness and understanding of the issues associated with CSE (Public Petitions Committee, Scottish Parliament, 2014). In particular, this report highlights a lack of coordinated staff training, support for young people, and disruption of perpetrators (Scottish Parliament, 2014). Laird (2014) and Fotopoulou (2016) have highlighted a lack of consistency in the ways children and young people are identified as being 'at risk' of CSE, resulting in potential variability in the assessment of CSE risk across local authorities. The evidence around good practice in CSE is scant, and largely focused on the central belt of Scotland (see Rigby and Murie 2013; Rigby et al 2017; Lerpiniere et al., 2013, Welch, et al 2014). As Rigby et al (2017) have noted “In the six years since Brodie and Pearce's (2012) review was published, the 'empirical evidence' landscape has not substantially changed in Scotland, despite the clear need for further research in these areas.”

CSE remains a key action area for the Scottish government. It is a priority to ensure that practitioners in the child protection and criminal justice sectors have an understanding that CSE is just one form of child abuse that arises from wider needs, vulnerabilities and inequalities, and young people in need require support, regardless of the label (Rigby et al., 2017).

Despite the limited research and understanding in Scotland, there has been substantial investigation of CSE across the remainder of the UK regarding its prevalence and some of the key practice and conceptual issues (see for example Berelowitz et al 2013; D'Arcy et al 2015; Harris et al 2017; Kelly and Karsna 2018; Melrose and Pearce 2012; Shepherd & Lewis 2016). The large body of research has identified the demographic diversity of victims of CSE across the country and factors that may increase vulnerability. There is also an emerging literature that challenges the efficacy of assessment and identification practice to date (see Brown et al 2017). Shepherd & Lewis (2016) identified and defined the different models of exploitation that have been highlighted including peer on peer; party flats; boyfriend; trafficking and online, together with some of the difficulties young people encounter in accessing appropriate support.

Within this context of a limited understanding of the issues across Scotland, and building on the previous work of Barnardo's across the country, the RISE project was developed to begin to address some of the gaps in practice and knowledge.

The RISE Project

Reducing the Impact of Sexual Exploitation (RISE) is a two year pilot project running in Aberdeen and Dundee. The project was designed to address the Scottish Government's National Action Plan to Prevent and Tackle Child Sexual Exploitation (2014, 2016). Funding has been secured to extend the delivery of the project beyond the initial two year pilot, and it is intended that the service will be further developed and implemented more widely. The overall aim of RISE is to identify, protect and support children and young people who are vulnerable or at risk of CSE, and those who have been identified as victims, and to prevent CSE by disrupting patterns of perpetration. The project adopts a proactive, multiagency approach, to improve existing processes and responses to identifying and protecting children and young people from CSE, and to disrupt perpetrators and perpetrator networks.

To achieve this, the Barnardo's RISE pilot embedded specialist CSE Advisors within Police Scotland divisions in each pilot site. The CSE Advisor role is proactive, and works in a coordinated, multiagency way, to ensure that effective systems and supports are in place to identify and robustly respond to CSE (see figure 1). The work of the CSE Advisors has three major strands: training and consultation; direct work with children and families; and improving intelligence sharing. Through direct work with children, young people and families, they support individuals at risk of CSE or affected by CSE, reducing risk, harm and impact of abuse. They facilitate a transformation in culture and systems to support and mainstream effective responses to CSE, building capacity to respond across a wide range of relevant statutory and non-statutory organisations. Examples of organisations CSE Advisors are actively involved with include: Police Scotland; schools and education; housing; social work; third sector agencies; sexual health clinics; residential care settings; youth groups; community safety warden networks; night time noise teams; youth justice services and some areas of the night time economy. Alongside these services, the CSE Advisors attend a range of meetings including Child Protection Core Group Meetings, Care and Risk Management Meetings, Strategy Meetings, Risk Management Meetings, Planning Meetings, Team Around the Child Meetings and Inter-Agency Referral Discussions. Through training and awareness raising, support and consultation with professionals within a range of public and voluntary sector organisations, their work aims to build awareness, knowledge and skills, to improve the response to individuals who have experienced or are at risk of CSE. They work closely with Police Scotland, to coordinate intelligence information, to respond effectively to victims, and to improve identification and disruption of perpetrators and perpetrator networks.

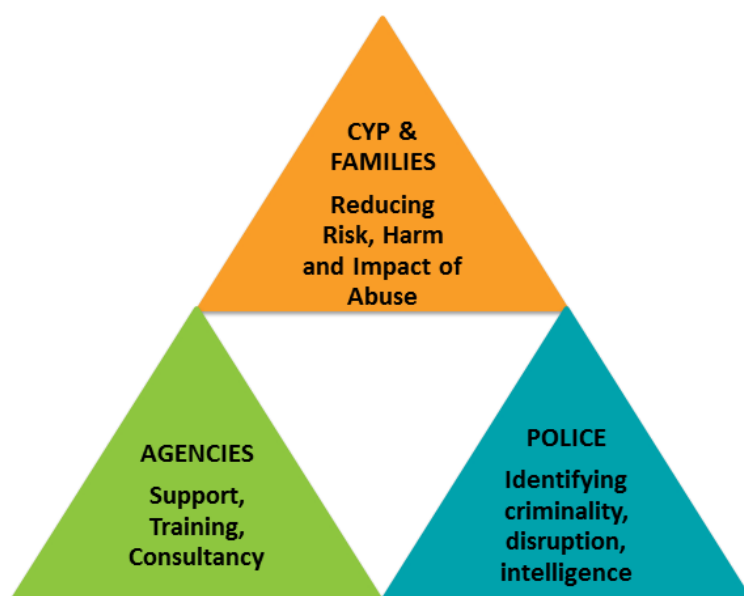


Figure 2: The “RISE Triangle”– the role of the CSE Advisor

Work with children, young people and families

The CSE Advisors work directly with children and young people. Direct work with children is heterogeneous in nature and tailored to the specific needs of the child. It might include: psycho- and socio-education, collaborative safety planning, going beyond safety planning to aim to reduce risk, developing confidence, and self-esteem and assertiveness strategies so young people can begin to put boundaries in place. Direct work requires listening to young people, demonstrating relational values, a non-judgemental attitude, being consistent and present, and engaging in ways that acknowledge how trauma can manifest. The CSE Advisors use flexible engagement methods that recognise differences in the needs and preferences of the child or young person. This includes differences in types of exploitation, differing perpetrator tactics, differing needs, varying family, cultural and socioeconomic backgrounds, differences in children and young peoples preferred method of engagement, varied perpetuating factors as well as different professionals and parents/carers around each child or young person. CSE Advisors provide one to one support in a context that is safe and comfortable for the child or young person.

Although there is flexibility within the method of engagement, there are core elements fundamental to the support delivered. CSE Advisors' direct work is based on understanding how abuse and exploitation are perpetrated, the processes and intricacies of perpetration, and its impact on children and young people. The work focuses on conveying clear messages to help the child or young person understand grooming and perpetrator actions, and offers support to children and young people to facilitate an understanding of their response to trauma and their experience of distress. CSE Advisors stand alongside children and young people to empower them to build confidence, resilience, and skills. Empowerment is facilitated through an emphasis on efficacy, assertiveness and building communication skills. CSE Advisors also support children and young people to identify risks, and empower them to take measures to reduce risks where they are able. Throughout these elements of their intervention, CSE Advisors place a central importance on understanding and supporting the child or young person as an individual with distinct needs and with inherent human value. This is important as personal value is often targeted and undermined through perpetrator behaviours, and reasserting the survivor's full personhood and rights is a central strategy for undoing some of this attack on selfhood, and the impact of the coercion, manipulation and control that perpetrators exert.

CSE Advisors have also adapted this model to provide support to parents and carers, something that is seen as valuable as a strategy for protecting children and young people, and that also enables an indirect route for supporting children and young people.



Figure 3: A model for direct one to one work with children and young people impacted by CSE

In addition to this one to one work, CSE Advisors also work directly with children and young people through outreach work in the community and through group work to build relationships within education settings for young people. This enables both preventative work and an alternative access point for children and young people who might find it difficult to engage with one to one support. There has also been ongoing engagement with children's residential houses, building familiarity, developing safety strategies, and being a person to whom young people can disclose information or concerns.

A further area of support was in bridging children and young people's connections to and confidence in reporting incidents to Police and other agencies who could protect them. The CSE Advisors felt that having an open and honest approach with children and young people was vital, supporting them to understand processes and explore their fears or concerns, explaining actions taken by professionals, and importantly in keeping them informed and incorporating their views throughout processes. This approach has resulted in numbers of children/young people who initially felt unable to engage with

statutory services and processes such as Joint Investigative Interviews, being able to be heard through a combination of adapted ways of professional approaches and tailored supports for the children/young people themselves.

Training

The CSE Advisor delivers direct training to a range of organisations and individuals who have a role in supporting children and young people. Training focuses on increasing professionals' knowledge and understanding of CSE, enhancing their ability to recognise and identify potential indicators of CSE, improve their understanding of factors that might place children and young people at greater risk of CSE, increase their understanding of their own role and their organisation's role in preventing and responding to CSE. The training also ensures that professionals know what action to take if they are concerned a child or young person is at risk.

Model of Consultancy

Consultation is offered by the CSE Advisors for professionals working with a child or young person who is at risk or who is victim to Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE). The professionals around a child can differ greatly, from a single agency to multiagency teams, and consultations are adapted accordingly.

For single agency consultations, the CSE Advisors will seek to upskill the professional(s) involved, equipping them with resources and tools to explore identified concerns, and build confidence in being able to discuss sexual exploitation and related topics. The resources are identified by the CSE Advisor learning more from the professional about the child/young person's experience and presentation, jointly thinking through what the young person is communicating, how they may view attempts to protect and support them, and creating a child centred approach of ways to best support them. This includes adapting resources to support the engagement with the young person and thinking about the use of language within discussions. The consultations also provide ongoing support to professionals to explore ideas and practise, increase their knowledge of CSE, and have someone to access for guidance or support to help build confidence in working with CSE and related topics. The CSE Advisors also explore areas for professionals to consider around keeping young people safe; things that are included in the consultations may be when to report a child missing, what details to record and who to share these with, supporting contact with other relevant agencies and advice around things to consider within safety planning.

Consultations are also offered for multiagency teams, and a combination of both consultancy models have been utilised, alongside training, for some young people who were experiencing CSE. Within a multiagency context, the consultations are less focused on specific resources and tools, and instead the CSE Advisors take an overview approach to how the people and systems around a young person are functioning, as well as keeping the perspectives of CSE and young people present. The input in these contexts is broad. One area CSE Advisors have influenced through consultation was child protection processes relevant to CSE, influencing these processes to become more child centred and perpetrator focused. This has included examples whereby regular child protection processes have been ineffective in supporting young people to disclose their abuse, and have relied heavily on those disclosures to take protective action. Through consultations, the CSE Advisors have supported professionals to think about other strategies and actions available to them to create safety for victims that does not rely on young people being able to identify or talk about their own abuse. The CSE Advisors offer advice around appropriate legislative options, disruption tactics and encourage agencies to be proactive with this. CSE Advisors have also highlighted areas where further information may be available through engaging with other partner agencies who are not commonplace within child protection processes, such as anti-social behaviour teams, housing, stores, the night time economy and youth groups. Further input is also given in areas such as safety planning, building consistency within multiagency teams, supporting more effective partnership working, the impact and effects of trauma, and thinking about the 'bigger picture' of exploitation around a young person.

Any learning needs identified through consultations have also enabled CSE Advisors to deliver focused training or signpost to another organisation who are able to support development. The consultations delivered have also highlighted gaps in service provision, prompted discussions around professional and process thresholds and other areas that have then went on to be explored at more senior levels, and has resulted in changes to both systems and organisational approaches.

Evaluation Aims:

The aim of this research was to evaluate the implementation of RISE, and to identify early indications of potential impact. Four main research objectives underpin this principle aim:

- i) To examine the processes and structures which have been put in place to implement the project
- ii) To assess the effectiveness of these processes and structures across the two pilot sites

- iii) To provide an indication of the overall impact of the project – by gaining insights into the impact the project has on the intended outcomes of the pilot
- iv) To identify the key lessons learned in implementation of the project and identify potential challenges and opportunities for the future delivery and sustainability of the project

Method

The evaluation uses a mixed method approach, combining an analysis of routinely collected quantitative data, and qualitative focus group and interviews with key stakeholders and CSE Advisors.

Focus groups

Focus groups were held in Dundee and in Aberdeen, and included mixed multiagency focus groups, and police focus groups. The multiagency groups included professionals from the public and third sector, incorporating social care, education, and health. The police focus groups included officers from a range of ranks, with varying strategic and operational roles. (See Table 1)

Table 1: Focus group participant numbers

Location	Focus Group	Number of Participants
Dundee	FG1 (Police)	5
	FG2 (Police)	6
	FG3 (Multi-agency)	7
	FG4 (Multi-agency)	3
Total participants Dundee		21
Aberdeen	FG1 (Multi-agency)	6
	FG2 (Police)	5
Total participants Aberdeen		11
Total participants all groups		32

Descriptive analysis

An overview of cases seen for direct work was provided by Barnardo's. This data includes numbers of children, young people and parents / carers seen for direct work by the CSE Advisors, and demographic information about these individuals. Children and young people were also assessed using Barnardo's Child Sexual Exploitation Outcomes measure, which captures CSE Advisors' assessment of risk and wellbeing at their first and last sessions (or most recent outcomes, in cases where involvement was not completed at the time that the data was downloaded from the Barnardo's data management system). This data is presented in a summary table (see Table 2).

Analysis of training data

To develop the capacity of professionals across public and voluntary sector organisations, CSE Advisors conducted training on CSE with a range of professional groups, between March 2017 and May 2018. Professionals were asked to rate themselves on five questions about CSE (See appendix 2). The self-ratings pre- and post- training were analysed using descriptive statistics and Analysis of Variance for repeated measures (ANOVA). (The data met assumptions of normal distribution – see appendix 1).

Integration of findings

The findings from the various methods described above were integrated using Proctor's (2010) implementation evaluation framework. This was achieved by mapping out the key findings from each of the studies against the characteristics of effective implementation detailed in Proctor's model. This was achieved using a matrix-based analysis.

Analysis

Descriptive analysis

The CSE Advisors engaged with 360 children and young people in the 15 month period under review – 227 in Dundee and 133 in Aberdeen. 284 outcomes were assessed. 207 were engaged through consultancy work, and 153 in direct one to one work. Both sites engaged with a total of 153 children and young people in direct one to one work – statistical analysis below. Most of these children and young people (n= 71, 46.4%) were aged 16-17, 49 (32%) were aged 11-15, and 26 (17%) were aged 18-21 (figure 3). 28 (24%) were male, and 116 (76%) were female (figure 4).

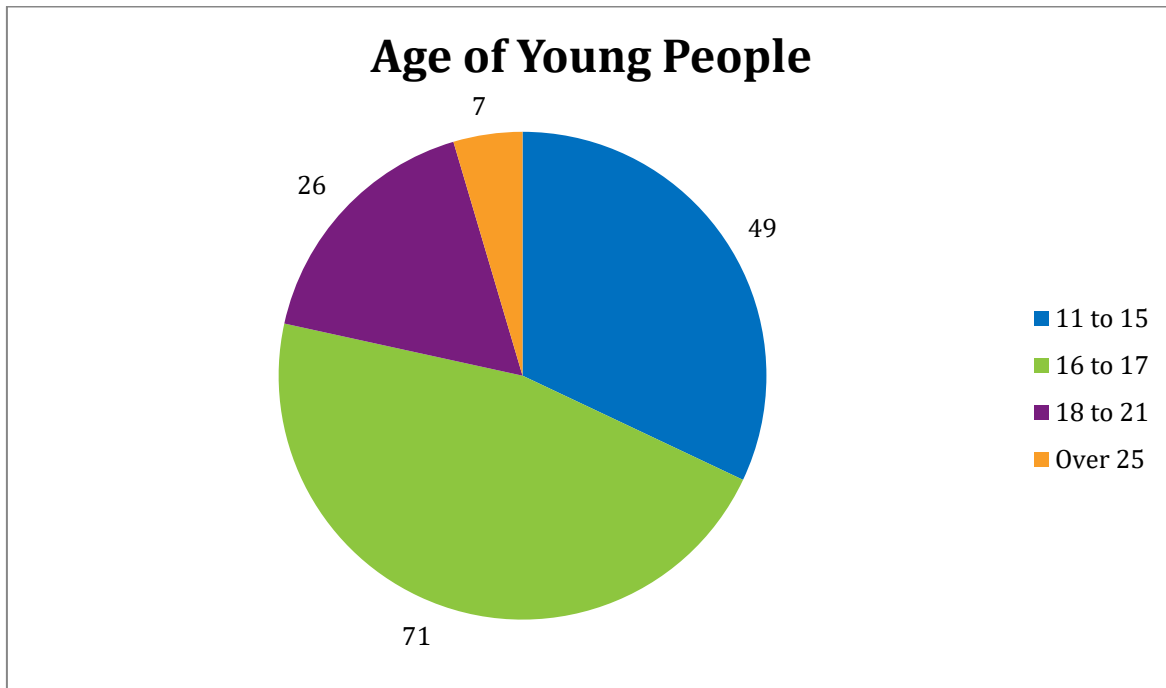


Figure 4: Age of the young people seen by the CSE Advisors

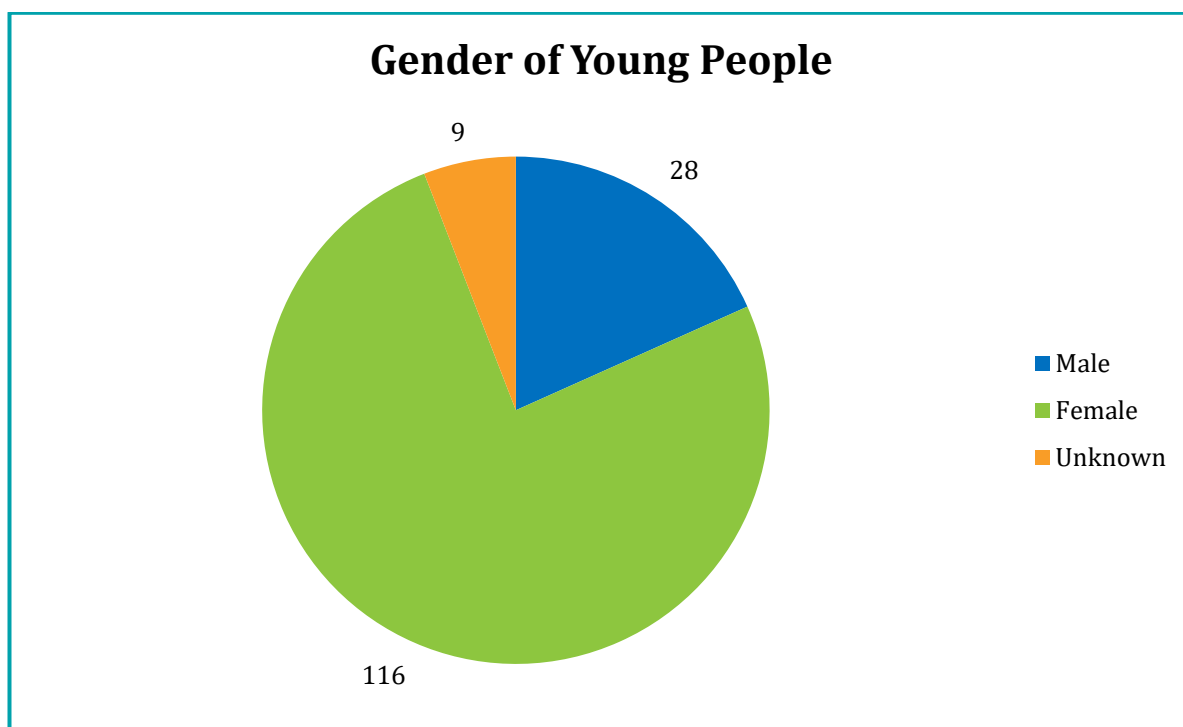


Figure 5: Gender of the young people seen by the CSE Advisors

Most of the children and young people seen for one to one work were white (n=124, figure 6), and 14 had an identified disability (figure 7). 39 were currently looked after, and 5 were care leavers, but the majority were not care experienced (figure 8).

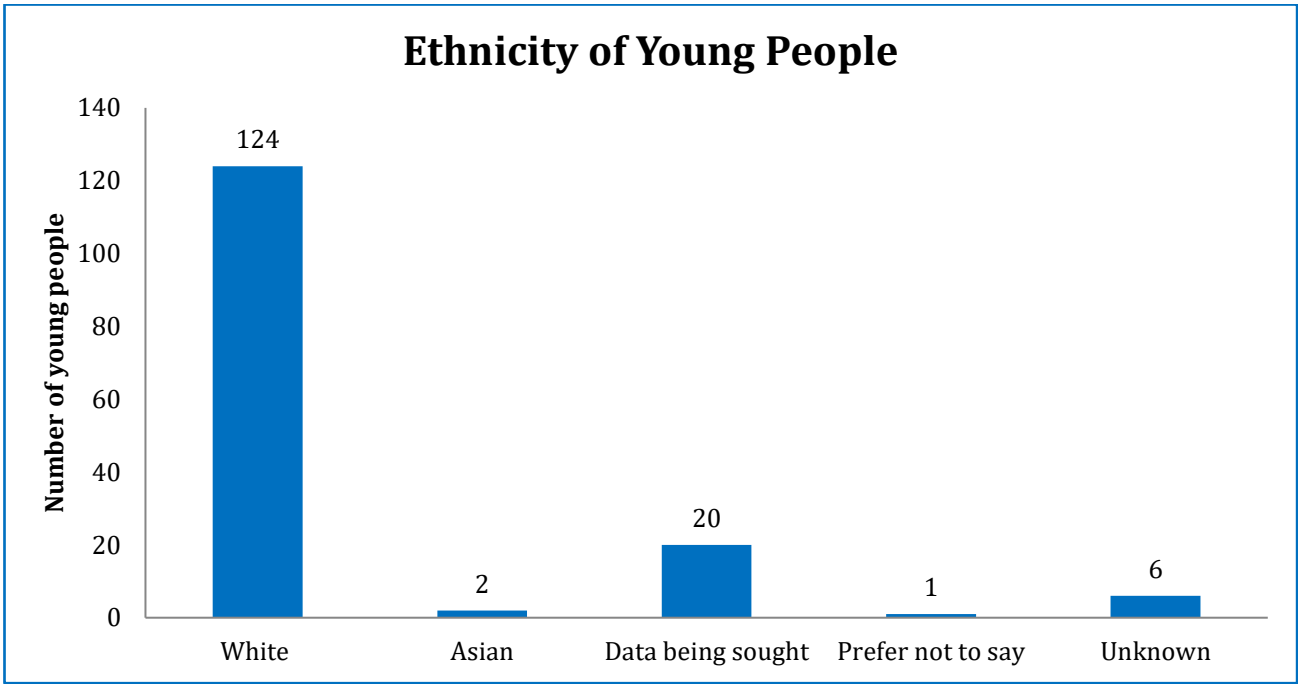


Figure 6: Ethnicity of children and young people seen by the CSE Advisors

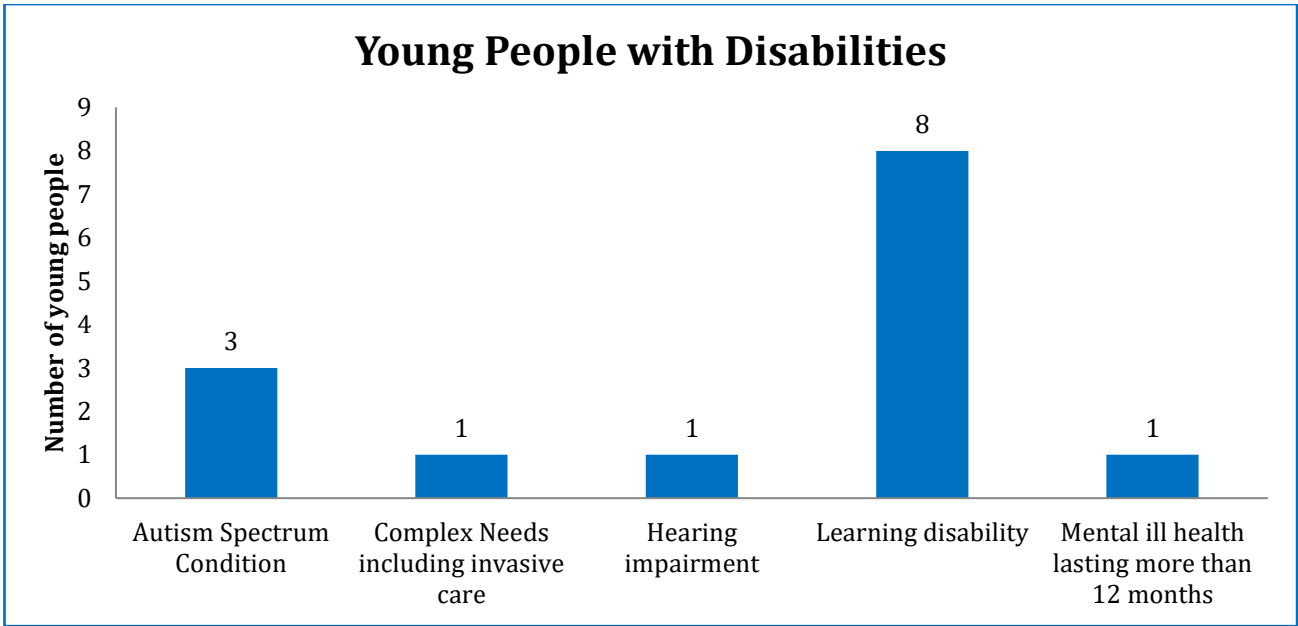


Figure 7: Documented number of children and young people seen by CSE Advisors with a diagnosed disability

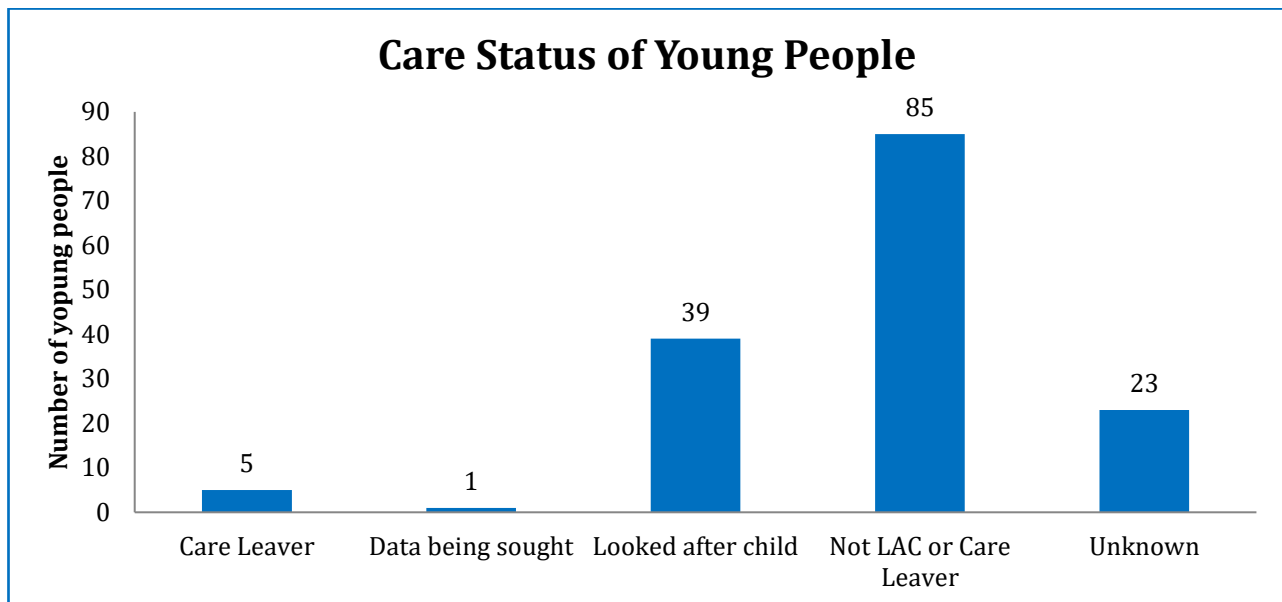


Figure 8: Care experienced status of young people seen by CSE Advisors

In addition, the CSE Advisors engaged in direct work with 9 parents/carers (this was for direct one to one work, and is not included in the numbers of residential workers and fosters carers reached through consultancy work).

At the beginning and end of direct work with children, young people and carers or parents, or consultancy with residential workers or foster carers, the CSE Advisor assessed children and young people against nationally agreed measures of risk and wellbeing. This was achieved by using the bespoke outcomes measure used to evaluate all Barnardo's Child Sexual Exploitation work. Table 2 shows the risk and wellbeing scores attributed to children and young people by the CSE Advisors at the point of referral and at final assessment.

Barnardo's Outcomes Framework

The service uses a comprehensive outcomes framework for the purposes of consistent monitoring and measurement of improved outcomes for children. The outcomes are matched to the SHANARRI² outcomes – safe, healthy, active, nurtured, achieving, respected, responsible and included. (See Table 2)

² Safe, Healthy, Achieving, Nurtured, Active, Respected, Responsible, Included – the wellbeing indicators included in the Scottish Government's 'Getting it Right for Every Child' policy framework.

Table 2: CSE Advisor ratings of children and young peoples' level of risk and wellbeing at the point of referral, and at the final assessment (Data provided by Barnardo's Scotland)

Outcomes	Number of children and young people with improved outcomes score	%	Number of children and young people with no change in outcomes score	%	Number of children and young people with decreased outcomes score	%
Enhanced parent/carer/adult - child relationships	4	26.67	11	73.33	0	0
Ability to express feelings	2	13.33	13	86.67	0	0
Improved mental health & well-being	0	0	15	100	0	0
Knowledge of sexual health strategies	0	0	15	100	0	0
Reduced/safer consumption of controlled substances	2	13.33	13	86.67	0	0
Able to identify abusive/exploitative behaviour	7	46.67	8	53.33	0	0
Recovery from sexual abuse/exploitation	2	13.33	13	86.67	0	0
Able to describe safety strategies	2	13.33	13	86.67	0	0
Reduction in level of risk/harm	8	46.67	7	53.33	0	0
Reduced association with risky peers/adults	6	40.00	8	53.33	1	6.67
Remains in regular contact with the service	1	6.67	14	93.33	0	0
Able to recognise exploitative behaviour/grooming on the internet	6	40.00	9	60.00	0	0
Stable and secure accommodation	0	0	15	100	0	0
Family has access to support services	0	0	15	100	0	0
Episodes of missing from home/care reduced	4	26.67	11	73.33	0	0
Satisfactory school/college attendance	1	6.67	14	93.33	0	0
Aware of own rights and those of others	2	13.33	13	86.67	0	0
Increased awareness and navigation of the legal system	1	6.67	14	93.33	0	0
Improved carer capacity to prevent abusive/harmful behaviours	5	33.33	10	66.67	0	0
Total	52		231		1	

An improved outcome was noted for children and young people in many cases. For instance, of the 15 young people assessed against Outcome 1.2.01 4 children and young people (**26.67%**) report enhanced parent/carer/adult - child relationships. For Outcome 2.1.02 - **46.67%** report that they could identify abusive or exploitative behaviour. For Outcome 2.1.13 **40.00%** report that they have reduced their association with risky peers/adults. Against Outcome 4.1.12 **26.67%** report that they have reduced episodes of missing from home/care, and on Outcome 8.2.05 **33.33%** report improved carer capacity to prevent abusive/harmful behaviours

Some caution should be used in interpreting the outcomes scores. Although children and young people are assessed against all items on the Barnardo's Child Exploitation Outcomes Measure, not all are targeted in the CSE Advisor service, and may be the remit of other organisations and teams. This is one reason for the lack of change in some items on the outcome measures reported in Table 2. For example, ensuring that a young person has stable and secure accommodation is not the remit of the CSE Advisor. It is important to note that CSE is a complex phenomenon, and that it is common that children and young people underestimate their risk and their levels of challenge in early reporting. Referrers may not know the extent of the difficulty they are experiencing, and may not fully understand the extent of their risk. In many cases, as awareness of their risk and levels of difficulty improve through engagement with the CSE Advisor, and as more information about their situation is disclosed, it may appear that their scores are worsening, or that they have not changed. This does not necessarily indicate a lack of successful work with the CSE Advisor, but instead may reflect initially suppressed scores.

Professionals' perceptions of knowledge and confidence pre- and post- training

CSE Advisors offered training to professionals from a range of different organisations working with children, young people and families. In Aberdeen, between March 2017 and March 2018, 151 professionals were trained from 9 organisations, and in Dundee, 227 professionals from 31 organisations. Data reported here relates to training conducted with professionals who returned their evaluation forms. Figures 9 and 10 show which organisations these trainees were from. Higher numbers of professionals were trained, but data was not available for these. These included two large training events in Aberdeen, a multiagency child protection conference with 135 mixed professionals, and a NHS conference with 130 GPs and senior NHS professionals.

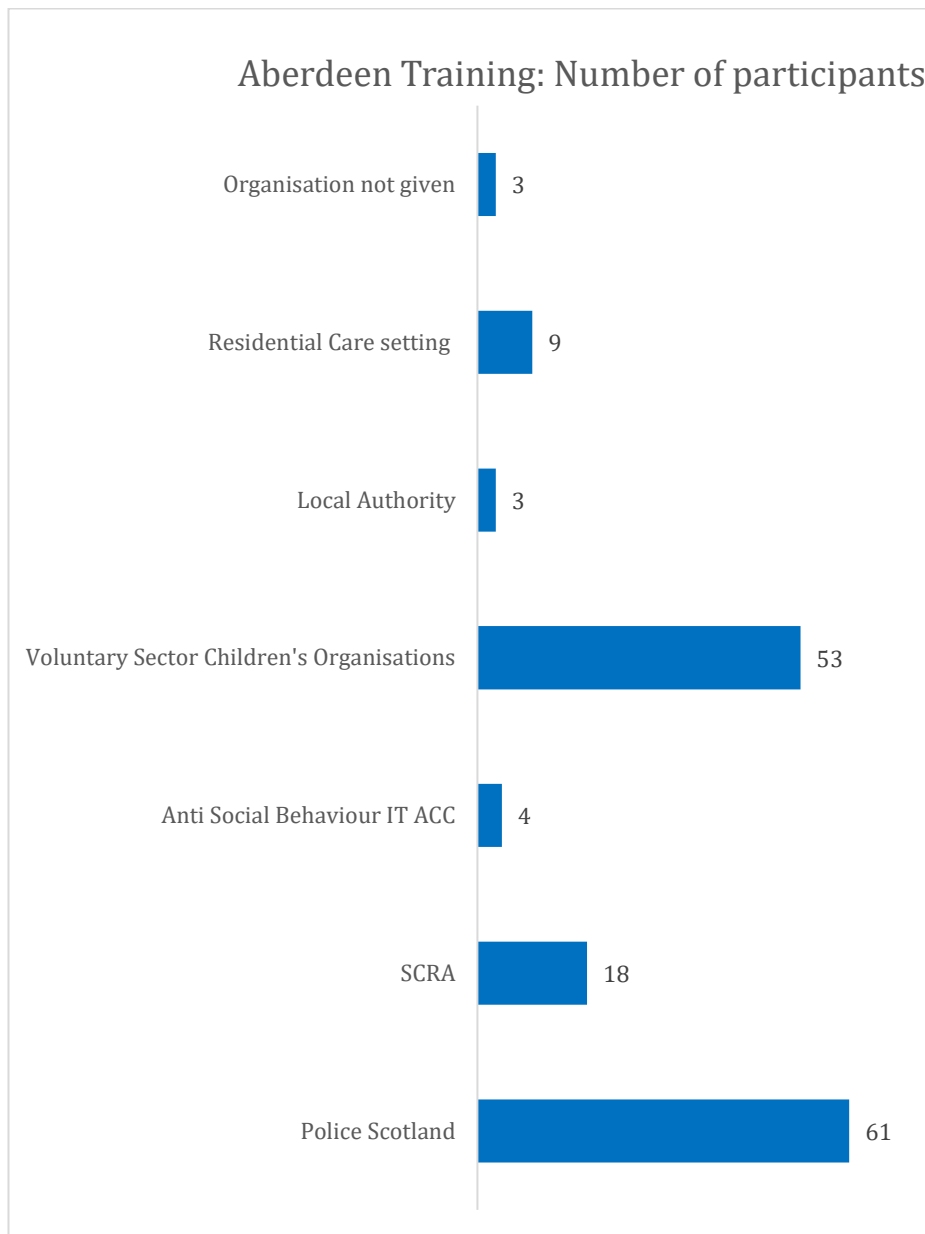


Figure 9: Bar Chart showing numbers of trainees by organisation in Aberdeen

Trainees rated themselves before and after training, on five questions relating to their knowledge, confidence and skills in relation to CSE. They rated themselves on a scale of 1 – 10 before the course and after the course in relation to the following statements, with 1 indicating that they have no confidence/knowledge and 10 indicating that they have maximum confidence/knowledge. The mean score for each of the five questions, and on the total score of their self-assessments was significantly higher after training (see figure 11)

Dundee Training: Number of participants

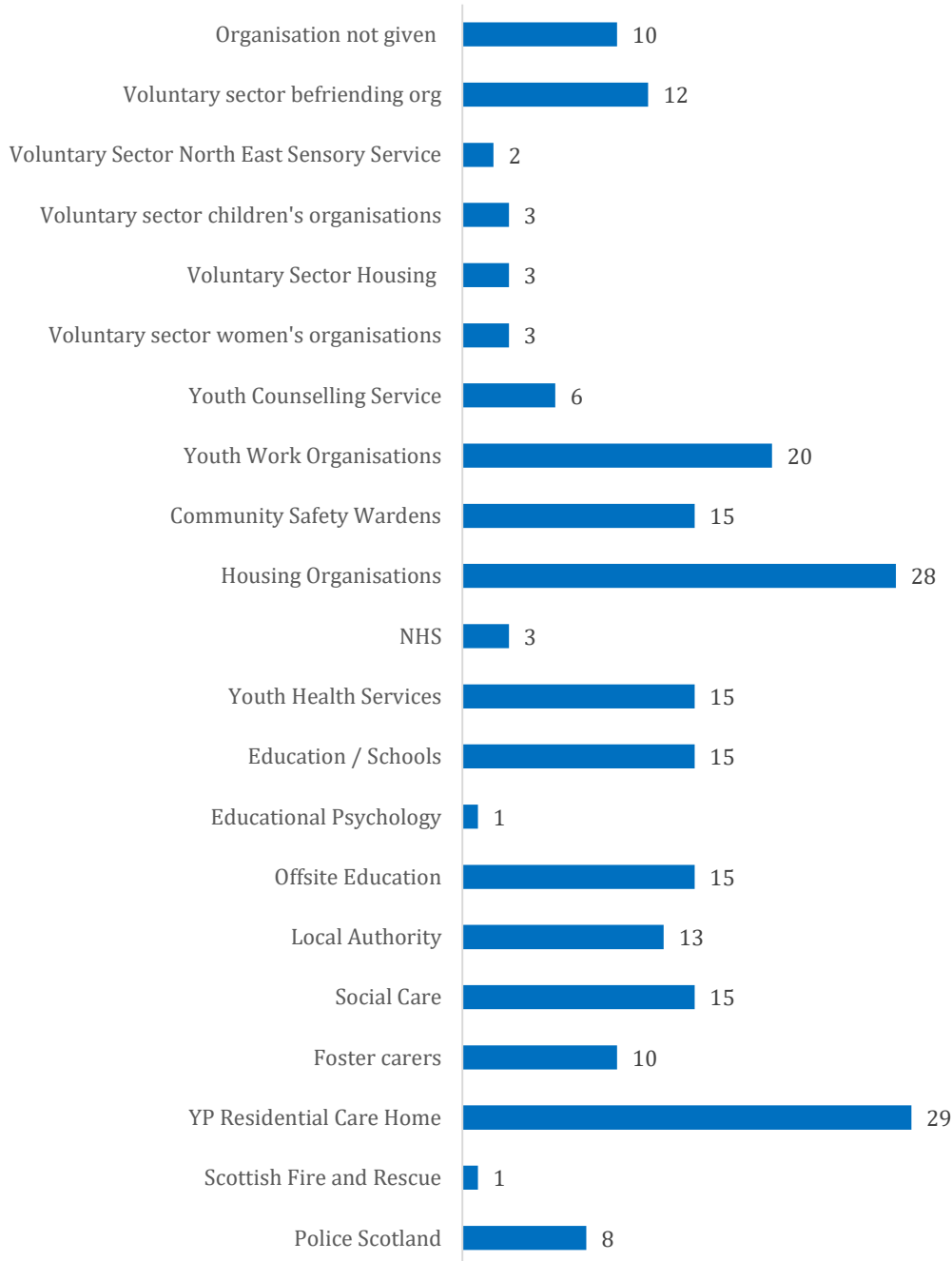


Figure 10: Bar Chart showing numbers of trainees by organisation in Dundee

Trainees perception of knowledge and confidence pre and post training

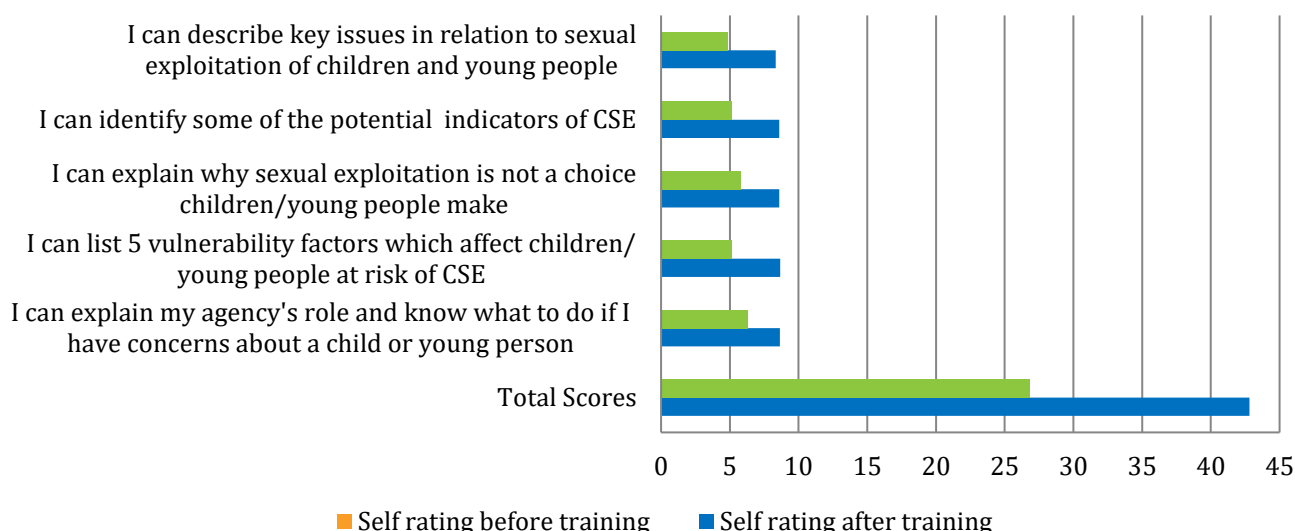


Figure 11: Changes in perceived knowledge and skills by trainees on CSE training

The significance of the difference between pre- and post- training self-assessment was evaluated using a repeated measures Analysis of Variance (ANOVA) with a Greenhouse Geiger correction (since assumptions of sphericity were not met for any of the variables). The ANOVA determined that mean self-assessment measures differed statistically significantly between time points, on total scores ($F=1309.033$, $p < 0.0001$) and this statistically significant difference is observed across all five key questions (see Table 3). This suggests that the training produces a significant increase in self-assessment of knowledge, skills and confidence relating to CSE and trainees' role in responding to CSE.

Table 3: Self scores of participants' knowledge and skills pre- and post-training

Statements presented to trainees	Self-rating before training			Self-rating after training			Test of significance	
	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	Mean	Std. Deviation	N	F	Significance
I can describe key issues in relation to sexual exploitation of children and young people	4.84	2.104	372	8.34	1.271	372	1311.596	.000
I can identify some of the potential indicators of CSE	5.16	2.154	372	8.59	1.261	372	1212.530	.000
I can explain why sexual exploitation is not a choice children/young people make	5.82	2.288	372	8.59	1.261	372	778.476	.000
I can list 5 vulnerability factors which affect children/young people at risk of CSE	5.10	2.443	372	8.67	1.431	372	1019.511	.000
I can explain my agency's role and know what to do if I have concerns about a child or young person being sexually exploited	6.31	2.358	354	8.65	1.391	354	430.562	.000
Total Scores	26.81	9.710	354	42.82	5.616	354	1309.033	.000

Qualitative feedback from evaluation forms suggested that the training was highly valued with participants noting:

Videos were emotive which made me reflect on my own duty and role as a professional in supporting young people. (Dundee)

All of it was structured well, explained well and gave me a better insight into the journeys of young people facing CSE, how to respond, other thoughts and legislation. (Dundee)

The facilitation style was spot on - reassuring as well as being so sensitive and challenging. (Dundee)

The small numbers of comments on how the course could be improved were largely focused on practical issues relating to venue, refreshments, and availability of handouts. Some suggested a need for a longer engagement with the issues. This might reflect the short amount of time available in pressured organisations for such training, but may also indicate a desire for follow up training for professionals whose roles might require this:

Would have appreciated the whole day course as the subject is so broad and so important (Dundee)

The two hours is not long enough to cover everything. What about a link to some eLearning to consolidate what we've learned today? (Dundee)

Evidence from the evaluation questionnaires suggests that training produced significant gains in knowledge and confidence in responding effectively to CSE, and that this training was highly valued.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Large numbers of professionals were trained in both pilot sites.
- Training offered by the CSE Advisors was highly valued, in both pilot sites.
- Participants' perception of their knowledge, skills and confidence was significantly enhanced by the training.
- Trainees came from a good range of professional and agency backgrounds.

Focus group analysis

Improving multiagency collaboration

A key element in improving outcomes for children and young people who are at risk of or have experienced CSE is improving multiagency coordination. This was seen as a central success in the role of the CSE Advisor.

Improved information sharing

Focus group participants reported that the CSE Advisor played a pivotal role in improving information sharing. Participants noted that they have direct access to relevant information that helps agencies collaborate by “putting pieces of the jigsaw together” (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen), enabling more effective early identification of risk, and disruption of perpetrator activity.

‘The role helps by sharing vital bits of information – [The CSE Advisor, Dundee] has access to a lot of knowledge across the city and area and this helps identify risk and disrupt perpetrator action.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘The role improves awareness raising, sharing intelligence and training’ (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

In all focus groups, participants noted the importance of the sharing of intelligence, to raise awareness of CSE, and to provide specific information and practical detail on risk – collating and making sense of intelligence, analysing perpetrator tactics and expressed risks shared by young people, and utilising these in the protection of young people more widely. For many, the location of the CSE Advisor within police buildings, without being a police officer, was a key element of their success.

‘I think it’s her location in the police hub – they are literally in the same room, her access to that has been really useful, rather than having her based in social services. That link is invaluable.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

Disrupting perpetration

Disrupting perpetration and perpetrator networks is a key part of Scottish policy on CSE (Scottish Government, 2016a), and the CSE Advisor role was intended to contribute to this aim. Information sharing was seen as a key element of the success of this element of the CSE Advisor role, and was seen

as supporting the effective disruption of perpetrator activities. Police in Aberdeen and in Dundee saw the CSE Advisor role as central to helping them get intelligence out into organisations, supporting swifter identification of perpetrators and of children and young people at risk:

‘We’re getting there, just raising that awareness and the powers that it gives us in terms of disruption.’ (Police focus group, Dundee)

This was echoed in the multiagency focus groups:

‘She really helps to identify risk – all we have to do is mention a name or a house and (the CSE Advisor, Dundee) can access the details – we’ve never had that before’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘She is a part of a jigsaw – she will come to management meetings. (The CSE Advisor, Dundee) will have most of the missing pieces, about party flats for instance.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘We can mention a place, or a person and (the CSE Advisor, Aberdeen) will immediately recognise that as a risk factor for the young person. He has information that we’ve never had access to before.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

This sharing of information between organisations has also supported teams in building a stronger understanding of CSE, risk factors and practices, enabling them to be more aware of it as an issue, and more confident in identifying concerns:

‘Multi-agency teams are more aware of the different signs – so I think it is helping the disruption work, you know if young people are being picked up in cars and dropped off an hour later. We are more aware of the signs and can then share information to work on disruption.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

Participants reflected on a sense of the mutuality of information sharing, noting how it helped them to respond more effectively:

P3: ³I think the advisors get information and names, they liaise with the police and the police share more info with them about addresses and the kinds of things that are going on. And the police are taking that a bit more seriously.’

P4: ‘Yes, and we’re more aware of addresses that are of concern, and we’re able to intervene a lot quicker if we know someone is there.’

(Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

This fluid sharing of intelligence between agencies has also enabled more effective responses to risk, and more targeted early disruption:

³ Participant numbers have been included when quoting focus group dialogue including multiple participants.

‘In terms of identifying risk early – with the police she can do what’s called perpetrator disruption. It works really well.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘She’s been good for disruption for me... there was a different young person associating with somebody who police were saying was a significant concern – identifying the two together and their non-school attendance and their association with an older male – it’s been helpful.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘We had a number of occasions where we were active and secured a number of prosecutions.’ (Police focus group, Dundee)

These participants have highlighted that the role has been particularly beneficial in the disruption of perpetration – something that was commented on and valued by all focus group participants. CSE Advisors’ role in disrupting CSE ranges from early intervention around identified risks, through to acting on identified exploitation to prevent further victimisation and recurring abuse. Early and effective information sharing was seen by all participants as fundamental to this work.

The CSE Advisors have contributed to the generation of intelligence known to Police via Operation Iridis; a CSE specific operation gathering information predominantly around perpetrators and locations. CSE Advisors obtain this information from several sources through engagement. Potential sources included children and young people, parents and carers, professionals and wider members of the community. During the period under review there were 6 intelligence entries generated via Operation Iridis in Aberdeen, and 20 in Dundee. Information included concerns around the supply of drugs and alcohol to children and young people, exchange of money for sexual act(s) with a child, human trafficking, locations of abuse and grooming, adults collecting children in cars, and information relating to sexual abuse and assaults not previously known to Police. The increase of intelligence reaching Police resulted in a number of proactive disruptive actions and investigations. CSE Advisors consulted with Police around disruption to ensure a perpetrator focus that was not dependent on disclosures from children and young people themselves, as well as to ensure any victims or potential victims had a considered and supported approach. As the Police Scotland comment from a focus group above highlights, this resulted in several prosecutions against perpetrators of abuse and exploitation.

Improved information sharing, combined with training and consultancy offered by CSE Advisors were seen as a central contribution of the role (see also the theme “Enhancing professional knowledge and skills, below). In addition, this was seen as directly improving cross-agency response to children and

young people at risk, enhancing organisational and multi-organisational capacity to disrupt perpetration.

Enhancing professional knowledge and skills

Focus group participants commented very positively on the CSE Advisors role in enhancing professional knowledge and skills in responding more effectively to CSE. This was supported through formal training, joint working and consultancy activity.

Training and Support

In training events, CSE Advisors served the dual role of raising knowledge and skills to respond to CSE amongst peers in the public and voluntary sector. Awareness building included four strands: 1) building awareness within the area of CSE; 2) building awareness of the role of the CSE Advisor; 3) developing knowledge and skills to improve identification of potential CSE; and 4) enhancing knowledge and skills to work more effectively to support children and young people at risk.

'We are now aware of what we have to look for' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

'He's been very involved with awareness raising... training up staff internally and externally' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

Focus group participants from Police Scotland all valued the availability of the CSE Advisor for training for police as well as for other colleagues in organisations beyond the police context. One officer noted the value of the training in ensuring that he was actively focused on CSE as an issue:

'Practically, from my perspective, at triage my focus is now at reading a VPD [vulnerable person's database] and thinking this is CSE. Whereas before when you don't have a CSE Advisor, it's just like you look at it and a button's ticked. When he did training, that wasn't ticked. But you wouldn't have thought about it before. It focused your mind on looking for it. Once he's given the presentation, you're more aware of it, looking for it.'
(Police Focus group, Aberdeen)

In both the multiagency and the police focus groups, participants reported a renewed or transformed awareness of CSE as an issue, so that they would actively look for indicators of CSE in case profiles. They reported this awareness enabled them to recognise the vulnerability of the individual young person as a potential victim, rather than taking reported problem behaviours at their face value. This had the potential to reduce the criminalisation of young people who themselves were victims.

'Probably it's raised our awareness about how behaviours... there's more to a behaviour. And I think if we're looking at what people are up to, we're thinking now a lot more about exploitation, so we've got maybe a current circumstance where we're concerned about an address young people are going to, but actually the person that lives at this address, could be... you know. So, I think we're thinking more out the box, and also being able to speak to [CSE Advisor, Aberdeen] about things and get his advice on things has been really good' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

'The main difference we've seen is a sort of awareness within the school team. She gave us nice handouts with key factors and key issues for us to take. Our case-loads are quite large, it's quite difficult. I can have anything from 70-80 children sitting on my caseload at any time. [CSE Advisor, Dundee] is always on the end of the phone if you have a slight concern. If you have the one piece of the jigsaw it allows things to happen in the background. Certainly that awareness for our team.' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

This participant highlighted the value of the training they received, and particularly the way that the input, and the materials provided were targeted and adapted for their busy workloads. It made a complex, difficult to manage problem just that bit more manageable. The difficulties that staff might experience in responding to difficult disclosures and complex cases is reflected by another participant:

'We've had input from psychologists around trauma, and from [CSE Advisor, Dundee] around trauma. Without a doubt, some of the disclosures are traumatic for the staff to hear from a young person, then to go and present in a child protection forum. We've explored clinical supervision under certain sets of circumstances around a disclosure... secondary trauma is really real, certainly within the houses, where young people are experiencing and discussing issues and staff are hearing that and trying to absorb the facts for record keeping, but also personally and emotionally.' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

The value here is not just in the content that has been delivered in training, but a recognition of the challenges inherent in supporting children and young people through experiences like CSE. This enabled conversations around the value of ongoing supervision and opportunities to debrief, to help staff to work more reflectively with the children and young people they support.

Beyond the training room: The importance of a continuous presence

In addition to formal training, the provision of consultation and additional support for peers from a range of organisations enabled professionals in the two areas to build specific skills to enable them to support children and young people better. These skills include an ability to identify signs of CSE risk or of being exploited, knowledge of services and support available for specific children and young people, understanding children and young people's behaviours to see how they might be impacted by CSE, and

identifying children and young people's needs and appropriate next steps. For instance, in the case below, the CSE Advisor was able to assist the individual in building skills around assessment and criminal justice support:

'Upskilling myself about how to write assessments and support children through a hearing, but also upskilling staff – he's had a consultation role and provided development for staff.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

As described in the introduction, CSE Advisors provide this consultancy in several ways. This includes being easily available for urgent discussions, or for a quick phone call with a professional about something that is concerning them, being available for more detailed face to face meetings to provide advice on specific cases, or to facilitate the understanding and development of their practice skills and understanding, to help problem-solve and consider alternative ways of thinking about a particular issue, as well as being available in a range of relevant meetings within and between organisations to offer CSE advice that can inform decision making about specific cases, and decision making at a strategic level. This ongoing availability for consultation and support was very highly valued in both delivery areas:

'You often get people phoning in after the training to ask something – if we don't have the answers we have [CSE Advisor, Dundee] on hand or we can pass information on – the signs are there but there could be potential exploitation. We can pass that on quickly.' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

'She can really speak to the staff to give them advice about how we are managing it [CSE concern]. I don't have an issue contacting her, she is always available and she never has an issue about how busy she is. She is there and will always reply to emails and she gets information to police quickly.' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

'It's all about giving us information, giving us tools, helping us address things – it's massively upskilling us. He's on the other end of the phone to answer questions.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

'Willingness and openness to meet when it suited partner agencies – to go over what her role exactly is. She is quick at getting back.' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

Participants stressed the importance of having access to the CSE Advisors beyond training to help them feel supported and to build competencies as they were working in the field. This was something that all participants commented on as crucial to the success of the role. Many were very anxious about working in this difficult and complex arena. They felt empowered by knowing that there was someone they could turn to if they were uncertain about their response to a CSE issue. This enabled them to tackle problems as they arose. Given the sense of CSE as very difficult to manage and respond effectively to, the sense of being able to rely on a speedy response was also very important.

'[CSE Advisor, Dundee] was my initial point of contact when I was looking for advice in relation to CSE and concerns around that. But it's also what she brings to the table because she is very skilled in terms of what she brings to meetings – in terms of sharing the skillset, she does that well. She has certainly skilled me up in terms of how I think differently now in relation to assessments. So there is upskilling going on when she does trainings – but it's about how we sustain that.' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

The importance of the continuous presence beyond the training context was also emphasised in relation to the sense of the CSE Advisors as reliable and dependable for other professionals. For instance, one participant noted:

'For us one of the best things about the role is having somebody to contact when we're worried about someone. Knowing that [CSE Advisor, Aberdeen] will respond, and they will see this through, it won't just be a call. It's knowing he will work on it, and if he needs to come out he will. You know he will investigate.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

Consultation therefore does not, for these participants, just involve a voice on the end of the phone. It means real, practical support that offered them a sense of containment and security to take action for children and young people, knowing that it would be taken seriously and that they would be supported to do what was required.

In addition, the presence of the CSE Advisor beyond training enabled more tailored upskilling of professionals:

'It has been really helpful in helping me understand needs in the assessments I do – it's helped me particularly a lot in my work because I wasn't used to CSE and I wasn't used to having to identify it based on observations. It upskilled me – it helped me with individual cases when I've been working with other colleagues and to help make links with police and other people so we can get a better understanding. It's been really useful' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

'I've asked [CSE Advisor, Dundee] to become involved twice with young people where there was a concern – when she's come in she was able to reframe the situation and it's made us act differently. If I'm ever in a stuck position she is my go to person and I ask her to become involved. I am getting better at doing what she does' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

The ongoing availability of consultancy and joint working enabled the development of a broad and tailored skillset, incorporating assessment, case work, co-working and networking to ensure joined up multiagency working. It also functioned to maintain CSE as a central aspect of the work of trained organisations and individuals:

'It wasn't just one thing like training, and then you'd forget about CSE, he was constantly there.' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

That constant presence enabled an ongoing awareness of CSE, supporting a transformation of attitudes and behaviours in organisations.

Enabling system change

In both areas, focus group participants in both the policing and the multiagency focus groups commented extensively on the way that the CSE Advisor role had transformed thinking across their local authority areas, and had resulted in significant changes to systems. Participants noted that before the inception of the role, there had been a very limited understanding of CSE, particularly in Aberdeen, where there had been minimal resourcing linked to CSE before the CSE Advisor was introduced. One participant described it as:

‘A service we didn’t know we needed, and couldn’t do without’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

The role has ensured that there has been a steady focus on CSE as a problem, and a constantly questioning orientation to what might underpin social, emotional and behavioural difficulties. This has supported the development of a more trauma informed understanding across all levels of service development and delivery, supporting professionals to more consistently ask the question ‘what happened to that child or young person?’, and ‘what has the perpetrator done to produce these behaviours in the child or young person?’ rather than ‘what is wrong with them?’, or ‘how do we control / regulate them?’.

‘Our young people are so vulnerable. Patterns of behaviour that we wouldn’t have seen as linked to exploitation, we can see how they’re linked to sexual exploitation. It’s made us think that we should be looking at this in a different way. It’s all too easy to see the surface of the behaviour, and the police to respond with charges. But that is letting them down. We need to see what’s happened to them, prevent them from being criminalised and keep them safe.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

P3: ‘I think you’re right, we’ve begun to change our language, so we’re not saying Jane is running amok. We’re saying she’s young, she’s vulnerable, who is she associating with, keeping her safe. And part of that is about people being more knowledgeable about CSE across our community, having someone there, championing this issue.’

P6: ‘Rather than being classed as problems with their behaviour, these 15 year old girls are seen so differently’

P4: ‘Yeah we wouldn’t have called it CSE years ago’

P6: ‘Yeah, we would have talked about child prostitution! (sounds of agreement) And [CSE Advisor, Aberdeen] has played a big role in relation to that change.’

Multi-professional focus group, Aberdeen

As the second set of quotes illustrates, this has enabled a complete reframing of children and young people's behaviours and experiences, with professionals 'reading' young people through a lens of potential CSE, and understanding that distressed behaviours often have traumatic underpinnings. This enabled them to shift their view of the young person from 'problem' to 'someone in need of help', and reconfigured their potential response to be oriented to the young person's needs instead of behavioural correction. The CSE and trauma informed lens supported them in more appropriately understanding how the child or young person may have been victimised, and undermined the use of inappropriate terminologies and mindsets in professionals' approach to children and young people.

The transformation in thinking that underpinned these changes in response was seen as quite profound by some participants. For example one suggested:

'... I think for me, it gives a name to something now. I don't know if it's a fear. Because some of what we have, prior to [CSE Advisor, Dundee's] role and now what we've become aware of in the city is pretty scary. I don't know if there's a fear or a resistance, you know – whether other people don't want to think that young people have been exposed to that or have been a part of that. I'm not sure' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

This participant suggested that there was a resistance to understanding children and young people's experiences of victimisation, prior to the introduction of the role of CSE Advisor, and that resistance and fear of acknowledging the extent and impact of CSE in the city was been overcome by the knowledge, skills and capacity that the CSE Advisor has brought. This suggested that the CSE Advisor instilled more confidence in professionals in their capacity to respond to CSE, which enabled them to 'see' what their own anxieties made it difficult to see before. As another participant from Dundee notes:

'if we had a CSE concern before we might not have necessarily known who to take it to, but [CSE Advisor, Dundee] is my first port of call without a doubt' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

The capacity that the CSE Advisor role has introduced to the areas is evident across all layers of service provision, supporting an ongoing and profound system change. In both locales, the CSE Advisor has been active at the strategy level right through to operational and frontline work. One senior figure in social care noted:

'I'm at a strategic level and from that level it's been absolutely invaluable with [CSE Advisor's] input. From a more local level... again, [CSE Advisor, Dundee] through the partnership, she's been fundamental in raising awareness about why we should do things differently... fundamentally, RISE has acted almost as a barometer for cases that

are not being risk managed effectively through our usual processes, particularly those transitions - for young people to adults. It's been really great for those who are a red flag and who are particularly at risk' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

This professional saw a clear line between the availability of the CSE Advisor across these layers of delivery and her capacity to shape change across the entire social care system. The constant awareness of CSE that the CSE Advisor has enabled has produced an identification of areas of operation where risk was not being sufficiently managed, improving delivery across the entire system.

In Dundee in particular, the CSE Advisor was reported as playing a central role in highlighting a specific service gap, in relation to young people aged 16-18, who under prior policy were not categorised as “children”.

'(Social work) just closed the folder and yet this was on our doorstep day to day, yet nothing was being done with this information – [CSE Advisor, Dundee] was picking up on VPD's and looking into the background and had time to do that... The young person just doesn't hit the criteria – she's just hit the 16 mark, she doesn't hit the remit for social work helping her. [The CSE Advisor] has been very useful – she has been key in terms of a link for trying to get this female support. There's still that hierarchy with social work and police – actually they're the ones that will make decisions... If it doesn't fit a criteria – if they're 16, 17 years old, unless they've got a diagnosed condition there's nothing there for them. [CSE Advisor] has been quite instrumental in helping us fill this gap – this female disengaged from social work, her capacity is quite in question. There's only so much as a police force that we can do. [CSE Advisor] has been able to go in, it's been very positive from that point of view.' (Police focus group, Dundee)

'[Without the role] there would be a gap for older young people. We get tied up in child protection and child being chronologically 16 – the legalities around that change. Working alongside [CSE Advisor, Dundee] has really brought us some clarity around that 16-18 and 16-19. This legislation does still – you know – initially, you have a concern, you make a phone call, the response would be 'well they're no longer a child'. Well they need to fall somewhere. They don't fit within the three-point check for adult legislation. This has really allowed us to protect this group confidently. I think that's a group that's in danger of slipping through – not quite a child, not quite an adult – slipping through' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

P1: 'I work with someone who is 16 – that crossover, I've relied heavily on [CSE Advisor, Dundee's] expertise – this is somebody I wouldn't usually work directly with. This has been invaluable in terms of joint working. P3 that transition point probably needed a bit more thinking about, although you might not be technically legally a child, you're still experiencing things the same way, so why shouldn't you also have access to [CSE Advisor] – I mean we did it, but why?'

P2 'any young person 16 or 17 should also be considered under child protection rather than adult protection' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

The work of the CSE Advisor here clearly exposed and dealt with a significant gap in policy and practice for young people who might still be very vulnerable, but whose needs were not being addressed in either adult or child social care. This has enabled better support and care for this group of young people, and an understanding that this gap needs to be addressed. The response from the local authority is still in development, but the identification of the gap has already enabled better working practices, and has stimulated crucial system level change.

The constant presence of the CSE Advisor promoted a mainstreaming of awareness about risk and adversity for children and young people.

‘there were a few (cases) who didn’t have CSE ticked next to it, but then you look again with [CSE Advisor, Aberdeen] and it had just been missed. You actually realise well yes this does have a CSE element to it. You wouldn’t have thought about it beforehand until he told you... I suppose it really focused your mind on looking for it (CSE) for a start... I think it just focused you a bit more’ (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

‘Aberdeen City has changed the way we work, changed the language, children’s homes have changed the way they practice. It’s all come together nicely, and we’ve developed a common practice about how we work with vulnerable young people.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

It is clear from participant responses that the transformation of thinking is not restricted to individuals with a specific child protection remit, and that there was evidence of much broader awareness raising, attitude change, and behaviour change.

As one participant suggests:

‘it is about getting people used to it... just building child protection into what you do’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

As noted above, this transformation of thinking around risk and CSE extended beyond professionals, and included a broader community wide change:

‘Any conversation about child trafficking, exploitation, etc, hasn’t just been about policing the young people themselves, but the broader community across Aberdeen, a much broader perspective, taxi drivers, and so on. (The CSE Advisor) had a big role in spreading that understanding much more widely. One of the ways that’s been done is through Facebook sessions, hosted by police – 3 sessions one CSE, one on trafficking, one on online safety. It’s hard to know exactly how many people that’s reached but we’re talking tens of thousands. (The CSE Advisor) has been key to getting that message out across the city.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

Facebook data for this intervention indicated 102 000 points of engagement with this campaign, demonstrating both its wide reach and potential influence, and the perception of need in the wider population.

In both pilot sites, all focus group participants indicated that the role of the CSE Advisor had become central to their work:

‘there would be a big gap in the city without her’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘[CSE Advisor, Dundee] role is pivotal in identifying vulnerable young people, inappropriate adults, any areas young people might be at risk. (The CSE Advisor’s) role is absolutely crucial’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘It’s funny, we didn’t use to have this role. But now we have it, I think if we didn’t have it, it would be a real disservice to young people.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

‘I as a professional I’d feel quite aggrieved if it wasn’t there. I think I’d feel that as a parent too’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

The participants clearly valued the role highly and felt it offered a crucial service for children, young people and families.

There was also a recognition that the kind of transformation that was required could not rest only on the work of the CSE Advisor:

‘.. this is not up to one person to tackle’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘school staff are coming to the training, but we need to build that in much more systemically, into the system, so it becomes part of the process, part of how we think. Across the board, it isn’t sustainable, from an educational point of view. If we were there earlier, the trajectory for these young people would be very different and it would actually save us money and time in the long-term. I would be interested from an educational perspective. [CSE Advisor, Dundee] has been useful in helping us to upskill staff in schools but I think there’s a huge way to go in terms of embedding it into the system’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

‘We can no longer pretend we have the resilience in our structures to respond [to CSE] in the way we’ve always responded – if we’re really serious about protecting children we need to really think about how we respond.’ (Police focus group, Dundee)

The task of ‘thinking differently’ was identified as needing to be embedded in school, policing and community systems. The responsibility for that transformation was owned by the organisations concerned. There was a shared sense of the importance and urgency of embedding an understanding of CSE across all systems and organisations. Service transformation was something that the CSE Advisors could and did support, but focus group participants viewed them as galvanising action, rather than being individually responsible for it. This suggests a system transformation that is healthy and sustainable.

There was also a strong recognition that service transformation required significant cultural shifts. This view was well expressed by one police participant who noted:

‘We (police) are culturally really risk averse. We put them (young people) in front of a camera and we medically examine them because that makes us feel better... but to me, what [CSE Advisor, Dundee] provides is a more therapeutic approach to what we’re doing... we can get this young person working in a different way. We (police) want everyone locked up and then the problem will go away. But this is never going to go away’ (Police focus group, Dundee)

Participants all talked about the importance of ‘thinking differently’, seeing the changes being developed as positive, but challenging. Cultural change is not generally easy, particularly when it disrupts ‘the way things have always been done’. The CSE Advisors role in enabling system transformation, and supporting professionals through this change, was therefore highly valued.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The role of the CSE Advisor was described as a catalyst to community and system change, raising awareness of CSE in a broad reaching and effective way.
- Participants reported a change of thinking to a more trauma informed and CSE aware approach to children and young people, producing a change of mindset away from seeing young people as ‘problems’ and instead seeing them as needing support.
- Participants (particularly those with a strategic role) valued the CSE Advisors’ multi-layered role, and their ability to operate across the strategic and operational domains, drawing together knowledges from policy and from the frontline.
- The CSE Advisor was seen as a key figure in identifying gaps in service, including issues with the identification and management of risk, and in the provision of services for young people aged 16-18 years.
- Participants recognised the importance of significant system and community transformation to improve outcomes for children and young people affected by CSE. Participants felt this culture change was already significantly underway.

Providing expert support to children and families

In addition to their training and consultancy role, the CSE Advisors provided extensive direct support for children, young people and their parents / carers. This took two forms – direct one to one work with

individual children, young people and parents / carers, and awareness raising interventions with children and young people in schools.

‘we don’t have the time or the resources to provide the level of support that’s needed for these young people’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

There was a strong awareness in both areas that direct work with CSE survivors was sensitive, expert and potentially very time consuming. In a context of austerity, the role of the CSE Advisor in managing direct work with very vulnerable young people was highly valued by all focus group participants. There was also a recognition that because the CSE Advisor was outside statutory provision, they were able to provide support that might otherwise not be possible:

‘There’s been a huge increase in numbers of youngsters charged with sexual offences, we’ve got a very long period between that charge and some kind of outcome in court. And I think for people, they can get tied up with how to offer really helpful good advice then, and helping young people to support young people understand that and to keep safe, without contaminating evidence before court that might or might not have happened on the internet. So, I think it’s quite central. Educating young people about the specifics, and keeping it separate from the wider concern about their vulnerability and culpability re the children’s hearing’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

Because the CSE Advisor does not have a court related role, they are freed up to focus on the children and young people, enabling them to have access to support that might otherwise be difficult for them to access.

Participants also recognised the specialist skill sets that the CSE Advisors brought to their work with children and young people:

‘We are trained up to an extent, but we are not trained counsellors. The disclosures that are being made, we are not qualified to respond in that way – and [the CSE Advisor] is.’ (Police focus group Dundee)

‘Being involved in the initial discussion – she was able to give advice in the initial discussions, but actually speaking to the female too – the assistant couldn’t believe the amount of knowledge that she had... actually to have that experience and to share that with other agencies was crucial for that individual’s safety.’ (Police focus group Dundee)

The CSE Advisors were seen as filling a skillset and role gap that was much needed in work with victims of CSE enabling sensitive and appropriate response, and supporting safety and risk management in a way that other professionals might find challenging. Although neither CSE Advisor has a counselling qualification, they do have professional skills that enable a more therapeutic approach that is central to the success of the role.

The CSE Advisors also offered direct awareness raising work with children and young people in schools, that had the potential to both enable prevention of CSE, and to position the CSE Advisor as a familiar adult should children and young people wish to disclose something or seek support and advice. This was seen as having an important and enduring impact:

'It's not just our school [CSE Advisor, Aberdeen] works with but he's hitting a few hundred people in each school, that's a lot of people raising awareness' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

'He can tell them a real-life story from beginning to end – that had a big impact, and they remember that.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

The impact of such interventions was understood to be enduring. One secondary teacher noted:

'I think the openness about sexual exploitation now and giving the young people a language to describe what is happening – and that means they're more willing to come forward and disclose things. By making everything much easier for them, in primary, by giving them the knowledge and understanding... well, by the time they get to secondary, I've noticed an increase in disclosure of inappropriate sexual behaviour online. And when that happens, we're ready. We know where to get help, we know it will be taken seriously. Social work, police, everything comes together.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

This work was seen as laying foundations to enable children and young people to come forward with disclosures or worries about risk. In 'providing a language' for children and young people, it was creating the conditions that enabled children and young people to see it as something articulable, not something shameful that had to be kept secret. This was complemented by the upskilling of the workforce to provide appropriate responses when disclosures were made.

Location within the police

In both Aberdeen and Dundee, the CSE Advisor was physically based at the Police Head Quarters.

Despite an awareness of initial discussion of whether this was the right location for the CSE Advisors, participants clearly indicated that there were significant advantages to this location:

'people know she's based in a police station, there might be some defensiveness around awareness of that. But [CSE Advisor, Dundee] just bounces it off, you know... I don't think the young people see her like that' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

'I think the kids take him more seriously because he's based in the police, but they don't see him as police.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

Participants felt that the location did not present a barrier to young people's engagement with the CSE Advisor. Rather, it potentially offered advantages, positioning the CSE Advisor as an expert with some gravitas, but without the regulative powers of the police.

We noted in the theme “Improving Multi-Agency Collaboration” that having the CSE Advisor located at the police Head Quarters enabled more effective intelligence sharing. This access was also seen as having the advantage of being able to ease communication and joint working between the police and other agencies:

‘She arranges joint visits with the police – and I have never been able to arrange that myself before.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

In addition, although co-located in police Head Quarters, participants were all clear that this was a physical and not an organisational positioning. The CSE Advisors were seen as ‘not-police’ but also not affiliated with other public sector bodies, providing a valued impartiality and neutrality in their interactions:

‘A positive about her role is that she doesn’t belong to any one of our organisations so she is impartial. When she’s at a meeting, she just asks! She helps you think and reflect’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

It is possible that this sense of the CSE Advisor as neutral and impartial enabled a lowering of traditional boundaries and defences that silo people within organisations, enabling more effective reflection and communication.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- Focus group participants were very positive about the role of the CSE Advisor. This positive evaluation was very widely shared.
- The CSE Advisor was seen as contributing to significant improvements in multiagency and collaborative working in response to CSE.
- Participants suggested the CSE Advisor role had contributed greatly to improved information sharing.
- Enhanced information sharing, training and improved collaborative work was seen as increasing the disruption of CSE activities.
- Training was important in raising awareness, understanding and confidence to respond to CSE.
- Training was seen as increasing professionals' ability to identify potential CSE, and increased the likelihood that they would screen for signs of CSE.
- Participants suggested that much of the training work of the CSE Advisor occurred through consultation and follow up contact *after* formal training. The consultancy role was seen as pivotal to the success of the role.
- The consultation offered by the CSE Advisors was seen as timely, responsive, and appropriate.
- The CSE Advisors were seen as flexible and able to adapt advice to the consultee.
- Participants felt supported and contained by the CSE Advisors in tackling this difficult area of practice.
- Participants felt that a very broad range of professionals had been upskilled as a result of the initiative.

A comprehensive role for a highly trained specialist

Participants were united in their view that the CSE Advisor role was a highly specialist one, and that it required a particular and complex skill set. This was particularly interesting given that the two postholders are highly experienced individuals in their own right but have quite different disciplinary backgrounds and career trajectories. Rather than needing a particular category of professional, the role requires an individual who has flexibility, is agile in response, can operate comfortably across multiple layers of organisations and local authorities, and is a confident and skilful communicator with a high level of CSE expertise:

'It's from a strategic level all the way down to well this person's been in court, how do we support them? It clearly works... I mean I'm not quite sure where his responsibility stops, he seems to be getting involved with a lot of things – he goes above and beyond what's required... all the little stuff, going along to meetings, the personal one to one's, all that stuff, which is part of the role I'm sure, but it's a huge role if that's what it is' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

'both operational and strategic – when you take it right down she's there with the young people on the floor as well' Multi-agency focus group, Dundee

'From the strategic point of view, the post has become key. I don't know how we'd progress what we've progressed strategically without having a role like that. There's a very strong drive from scot gov to address trafficking and online agenda. The CSE Advisor has really good grass roots skills, but he also has his eye on that policy agenda. It's having that central point to alert people to what's going on, but also somebody centrally to have that strategic focus on what's going on. One of the challenges is to have the data to back up what's happening. The postholder needs to have their eye on that, and be able to meet those goals, locally and nationally' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

'The role for me spans having a direct input role into statutory care, right down to universal services, in terms of education and support for the wider population. It feels a very big brief' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

'This post kind of spans direct involvement with the whole spectrum of need.' (Multi-agency Focus Group, Aberdeen)

Participants who themselves had a more strategic role tended to highlight the value that the CSE Advisors offered because of the multi-level nature of their role. They suggested that understanding the policy and political context, the local authority context, the strategic vision of organisations, but also an understanding of frontline work and what is happening 'on the ground' was central to the success of the role. One senior police officer suggested that being able to bring strategic oversight to the frontline, and frontline experience to strategic thinking had contributed uniquely and significantly to the success of the role, and its ability to enable service transformation. As one participant suggested:

' (The role needs) Somebody who will sit at working groups for CP committee, and will also go out one to one at the coal face making a difference.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

However, there was a recognition also that this kind of multi-level role could result in role strain, and across all focus groups concern was expressed that too much was being vested in one individual:

'we have a person trying to do it all, which is a huge job' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

'my only criticism is that there's only one of [CSE Advisor, Dundee] and she's doing about 3 people's jobs. We could do with more of [this role]!' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

'it's filled a vacuum that was there but there's a risk of overloading that individual... it's not a RISE or Barnardo's issue, it's a partnership issue.' (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

'[CSE Advisor, Aberdeen] really does try to do at least 2 people's jobs.' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

'very useful, could be doing with more hours' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

'certainly tries to fill two or three people's jobs' (Police focus group, Aberdeen)

'There's only so much one individual can do – she needs that support in place' (Police focus group, Dundee)

Further, although the independence of the CSE Advisor was highly valued, some participants expressed a concern that the role was 'too' independent, and potentially consequently insufficiently supported:

'all our different partners have worked in silos for so long. Ultimately, S can't work independently – it's unrealistic for her to work on her own. She needed support to do the work she is doing. Whilst she is a short-term solution, long-term... we haven't really come to a successful conclusion' (Police focus group, Dundee)

'not having that support (for the CSE Advisor) is a barrier for how this could work better... what could make it better is if we have genuine buy-in from the local authority' (Police focus group, Dundee)

This was not a majority view, but was one that was strongly and articulately expressed and appeared to be well-grounded. The concern that a single individual located in, but not embedded within, an organisation might become isolated does seem well-founded, as did the concern that the model of a single individual 'piloted in' may ultimately not be sustainable without local authority buy in.

Barriers and concerns

The focus groups were all characterised by strong support for the CSE Advisor and the role that they play, and valued the introduction of the role very highly. There were, however, a few concerns about the implementation of the role. In the previous theme, we discussed the business of the CSE Advisor, and the concern about whether they had enough support. In addition, participants discussed concerns about the legislative framework, and recording data to evidence the value of the role.

Participants noted that the development of the role was coherent with national strategy:

'Rolling out CSE training was pushed up the agenda – there seemed to be an email every 2 or 3 weeks suggesting you got on this training. NHS pushed for frontline staff to undertake additional training, and it has been of benefit to the city' (Multi-agency Focus group, Dundee)

*‘Scottish Government have indicated that CSE is a priority, but haven’t always been clear enough on how we should address that priority, or what evidence we need to provide.’
(Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)*

There is therefore a sense that CSE is an important issue in policy, both nationally and locally, but that there is less clarity and direction on how this should be enacted. The CSE Advisor role offered a clear model for addressing the priority, but participants felt it needed that policy wrap-around to really make it a secure and sustainable role.

‘In terms of disruption we’re still stuck in legislation that’s always been used- you can see it coming from a mile away like a truck. The mind-set, we have always done it this way – we’ve got a way to go in terms of disruption, from a legislative approach to perpetrators, we’re still old school, we’re not getting our head around the fact that we should be using legislation differently’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

Without clear policy guidance and legislative change to strengthen the identification of children and young people at risk, and to ensure an appropriate legal and organisational response to them, participants felt that there was a risk that individuals would return to old ways of doing things, and that the role on its own might not be sufficient.

Participants reported that there had been initial challenges with information sharing and smooth cross agency collaboration.

‘Process issues, how do we legally I suppose identify someone through a police system and legally give that information to another agency that is not a statutory agency, sharing personal information. We got round that, and information sharing processes are in place, though we hit a bump again with GDPR’ (Police Focus Group, Aberdeen)

‘We’re much better now – we’ve been able to make links between but we’re not quite there yet. I’m not sure the system is there yet, to support us to access this support. This is somewhere where we’ve still got work to do.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

Although the smooth movement of information between organisations has been addressed, it remains a complexity in the region (evidenced by the GDPR ‘bump’) and did slow down the progress of the role in some instances.

Another professional highlighted a further concern. This related to the lack of clear central guidance on what data should be collected to evidence improvements in identifying CSE and disrupting perpetrator action and networks in local authorities, and the lack of central support for the collation of this data:

'One of the barriers is around the data collection. It's frustrating for all of us to have to back all our work up with data, but there's no centralised support offered for this role, and that is proving very difficult and challenging. If this post is to be continued, I think that has to be coordinated with a more appropriate centralised response to that.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

The data collection problem here is a national issue. The lack of a directive for mandatory data collection from central government, and the varied data collection systems across different local authority areas can make detailing CSE related work very challenging. There was also an expression of caution that it might be difficult to evidence reduction in CSE in the first instance, because disruption and increased disclosures might result in initial increases in recorded figures.

'Because we missed CSE before, we don't have the data, we didn't record it. So almost all our stats are going to increase by virtue of the very nature of this role. We won't evidence that CSE is reducing, because we actually want to know them, we want to know it's happening.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

Another participant noted that if disruption is working effectively, they would have to provide evidence of an absence:

'It's difficult to work out that something didn't happen, because of our involvement. It's difficult to provide evidence of that. But there's information that would suggest that's the case.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

Establishing the effectiveness of the role may require looking 'sideways' at phenomena that might change because of the disruption of CSE. For instance, one senior child protection professional noted:

'What we have seen is a big change in local statistics on young people going missing. And that reduction not just down to the CSE Advisor, but that has definitely helped us to pull people together, so we're working together. Our numbers have plummeted in one or two years, from national normal to astonishingly low.' (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen).

This reduction may indicate that the disruption of CSE, and better support to children and young people at risk means that the risk of going missing is being directly impacted, and that young people are substantially safer as a consequence of the intervention.

A final concern related to the risk of lack of sustainability in the role. This was expressed both in terms of the risk of CSE being positioned as the CSE Advisors role, and the short-term nature of the funding for the role.

'My concern is that the work that Barnardo's have taken forward, it should actually be everybody's role – there's a risk associated with that. We have got a CSE strategy... I am writing it at the moment. But it's actually easier to delegate that to this one person, this

one resource rather than upskilling our teams. My concern is sustainability – there is only one of her, what is our contingency?’ (Multi-agency focus group, Dundee)

It is clear from the broader analysis of the focus groups that there is a widely shared sense that responsibility for CSE identification, disruption and support is viewed as an issue for everyone. However, it is important to attend to this caution, particularly in busy teams, and when government driven attention is diverted to another issue. It is important to ensure that this value of shared responsibility and accountability is retained across all organisations.

Participants also expressed concern about the short-term nature of the funding and the impact of this on the security of the post. This was identified as a key issue to ensure the longer-term success of this initiative:

‘I think probably we’d have to think about the security of the post. Because as soon as you have that fixed term contract, you’re immediately restricting a number of people who might be interested in that post. You’re not going to leave a permanent post to take that one.’ (Multi-agency focus group, Aberdeen)

This problem would be compounded if the previous concern around sustainability also came to fruition, as it would mean that the CSE agenda had become vested in an individual in an insecure post, whose role is particularly vulnerable. It must be stressed that these concerns were hypothetical, but that they are valid ones that need to be considered and engaged in thinking about the role in the future.

SUMMARY OF KEY POINTS

- The role of the CSE Advisor was seen as highly skilled, requiring an experienced, flexible and confident expert.
- Although the participants did think the two postholders' specific skillsets (as former police officer and voluntary sector professional) were important in determining the way they tackled the job, nonetheless the descriptors of the two postholders in action were remarkably similar across the two pilot sites.
- It was recognised that this was a 'big job' and that operating across multiple domains might produce role strain. However, the ability of the CSE Advisor to be aware of policy, and to operate across the strategic and operational context was highly valued.
- Concerns were raised that there was too much responsibility for CSE vested in one individual, and that there was a risk of overwork and potential operational vulnerability.
- However participants also clearly indicated that they felt that CSE Advisors had successfully achieved a sense of CSE as the responsibility of all professionals and indeed of the broader community.
- It was felt that the focus on CSE was supported by government policy and by local authority agenda, but that the steer nationally was not always sufficiently clear or sufficiently supported.
- The lack of significant legislative and policy change could in the future, it was feared, produce reluctance to change practice, and organisational inertia.
- Initial difficulties related to information sharing were resolved, but there was a sense these might emerge again in the future.
- Lack of central government support and guidance on data collection to evidence improvements was flagged as a concern.
- There were some concerns about short-term funding and the sustainability of this pivotal role.

Discussion and Conclusions

In this section we summarise the evidence, and draw out the implications for an evaluation of the implementation of the RISE pilots. We have mapped the analysis of the data against key characteristics of effective implementation derived from Proctor's (2010) implementation evaluation model. We then discuss the insights the findings offer into the intended outcomes of the project, and the implications of this for future implementation.

Project implementation: Processes and structures

Feasibility

Feasibility refers to the 'fit', 'utility' or everyday practicability of an intervention, and considers how compatible the intervention is with the organisation or set of organisations within which it is deployed. Based on focus group responses, the CSE Advisor role had high feasibility, and was seen as fit for purpose. As one focus group participant suggested "It is a highly valued role, with the right person in the job".

Fidelity

Fidelity refers to model adherence, or whether the intervention was delivered as intended. The CSE Advisor role was intended to have several components:

- *Direct work with children, young people and families affected by or vulnerable to CSE to reduce risk, harm and the impact of abuse*
- *Support, training and consultancy with professionals from a broad range of organisations working with children, young people and families. This included consultation and joint working with professionals to support knowledge and skill development. This element of the work also includes developing strategic and policy influence to maintain the profile of CSE in organisations and local government*
- *Liaison between police and other organisations to improve the flow of intelligence and support identification and disruption of perpetration*

Data suggests that the CSE Advisors are working directly with significant numbers of children and young people worked, and delivering multiple training events with a good range of professionals and

organisations. Focus group participants reported that the CSE Advisor had significantly improved the flow of information between the police and other organisations, to enable better identification of CSE and CSE risk, and to improve disruption of perpetration.

This suggests that the multiple aspects of the role are being balanced, indicating high model fidelity.

Reach

Reach refers to institutional spread – how far has the model reached across the intervention sites. It was clear that the energy and competence of the CSE Advisors has assured that they have achieved deep reach across organisations within their areas. This is evidenced in several ways. The training reach of the CSE Advisors has been impressive, with a total of 378 professionals being trained in the implementation phase of the project.

Other evidence of reach is the wide-ranging remit of the CSE Advisors, enabling them to engage in policy and strategy, consultancy and frontline delivery. This ensures that their knowledge and skills has deep and far reaching influence across multiple organisational levels.

In Aberdeen in particular, this has extended to community outreach work too, including the use of social media platforms, and communication targeting wider community members to ensure that ordinary citizens are also aware of CSE as an issue, and alert for signs of exploitation and for risk to children and young people. In both areas there was evidence that the action of the CSE Advisors had produced a stronger sense of responsibility for CSE, and that professionals saw CSE and child protection as part of their work, regardless of whether it was the immediate function of their role.

Acceptability

Acceptability refers to the perception within partner organisations that the innovation is agreeable and satisfactory to them. Evidence from focus groups suggests that the CSE Advisor role is very highly valued, and seen as integral to an effective response to CSE in the pilot areas. Participants reported high satisfaction with training content, with the ease with which they could access consultation and joint working, the nature of the direct work conducted, and their confidence in the credibility and expertise of the CSE Advisors.

Uptake and adoption

The uptake of the service has been good across all aspects of the role. Service data (summarised in table 2) indicates good numbers of children, young people and parents / carers being seen for direct work, and high numbers of professionals being trained across both areas. Large numbers of children and young people were also being reached through work in schools, and focus group participants suggested that the consultancy aspect of the CSE Advisor service was extensively used.

Sustainability

Sustainability refers to the sense that an innovation can be maintained, and is organisationally and institutionally embedded. In policy terms, there was a perception that the role fitted well with strategic policy initiatives at the national and local level. In this sense, there was clear evidence of policy support for the innovation.

The CSE Advisor role is well embedded organisationally and has high in principle support from local authorities. This is evident in focus group data, which reports high support for the role, high value, and a strong sense that the loss of the role would leave a significant organisational gap. However, concerns were raised about the long-term sustainability of the role because of its short-term funding and the lack of ownership of the role by local authorities. On the one hand, the *independence* of the CSE Advisor role was seen as a key strength. Its physical location within Police Head Quarters, without the role being designated as a police officer *within* Police Scotland, was valued as it enabled both effective information sharing and a sense of non-partisanship. On the other hand, there were concerns expressed by a small number of focus group participants that this might lead to isolation and a lack of embedded support for the role. There was also a concern that short-term funding cycles may make it difficult to recruit the kinds of highly trained and expert professionals needed to make the role a success.

It was also noted by participants that the CSE Advisor was a 'big role', spanning multiple levels of organisations and multiple forms of service delivery. This was recognised as a key element in the success of the role, but also seemed to introduce a level of vulnerability. In particular, participants were concerned about workload and role strain, and felt that there was a risk that as awareness of CSE rose, so would demand, and that individual postholders might become overwhelmed.

Overall, at the level of implementation, the innovation has clearly enjoyed significant successes, and is highly valued by organisations and professionals. Some caution should be exercised though in relation

to the data presented here (largely qualitative and service level data). Further, the long-term sustainability will rest on the success of the project in identifying perpetrators, protecting children and having appropriate support and preventative measures in place, and this data will be slower to generate, given the limitations already noted around the problem of measuring success in a context where awareness raising will generate an increase rather than a decrease in recorded incidences.

Insights into intended outcomes

The CSE Advisor role has produced a range of successful outcomes in the two pilot sites. Please note the term 'outcomes' is not used here to refer to quantitative measurements of effectiveness, but rather to the achievement of project aims.

Assessment data for direct work indicates that involvement of the CSE Advisor improves outcomes for approximately a third of young people and carers / parents who receive this service. Caution should be exercised in interpreting this data: it is based on the subjective judgement of the CSE Advisor conducting the assessment; data does not always reflect the closing session of the intervention; and some items on the measure do not reflect the aims of this specific intervention. Further, the wide-ranging needs of the children and young people impacted by CSE meant that some necessary variability in the nature and extent of the direct work conducted. In focus groups, there did seem to be some confusion about the specific detail of direct work, and there is not a single model of direct working within the role, making formal outcomes assessment challenging. However, given the complexity of the cases the CSE Advisor is working with, the level of improved outcomes is high. Further, assessments suggested that the interventions are not harmful. Focus group participants report very high satisfaction with the direct work conducted by the CSE Advisors, suggesting that children and young people benefit greatly from their involvement. The positioning of the CSE Advisors outside social care and policing was seen as freeing them up to provide a different kind of direct support for children and young people. For example, CSE Advisors supported children and young people to keep safe and well during the period that they may be involved with court, a service that statutory professionals often find very difficult to provide because of concerns about contamination of process. The CSE Advisor was seen as providing valuable emotional support, and providing information and skills to keep children and young people safe and to prevent or reduce future risk.

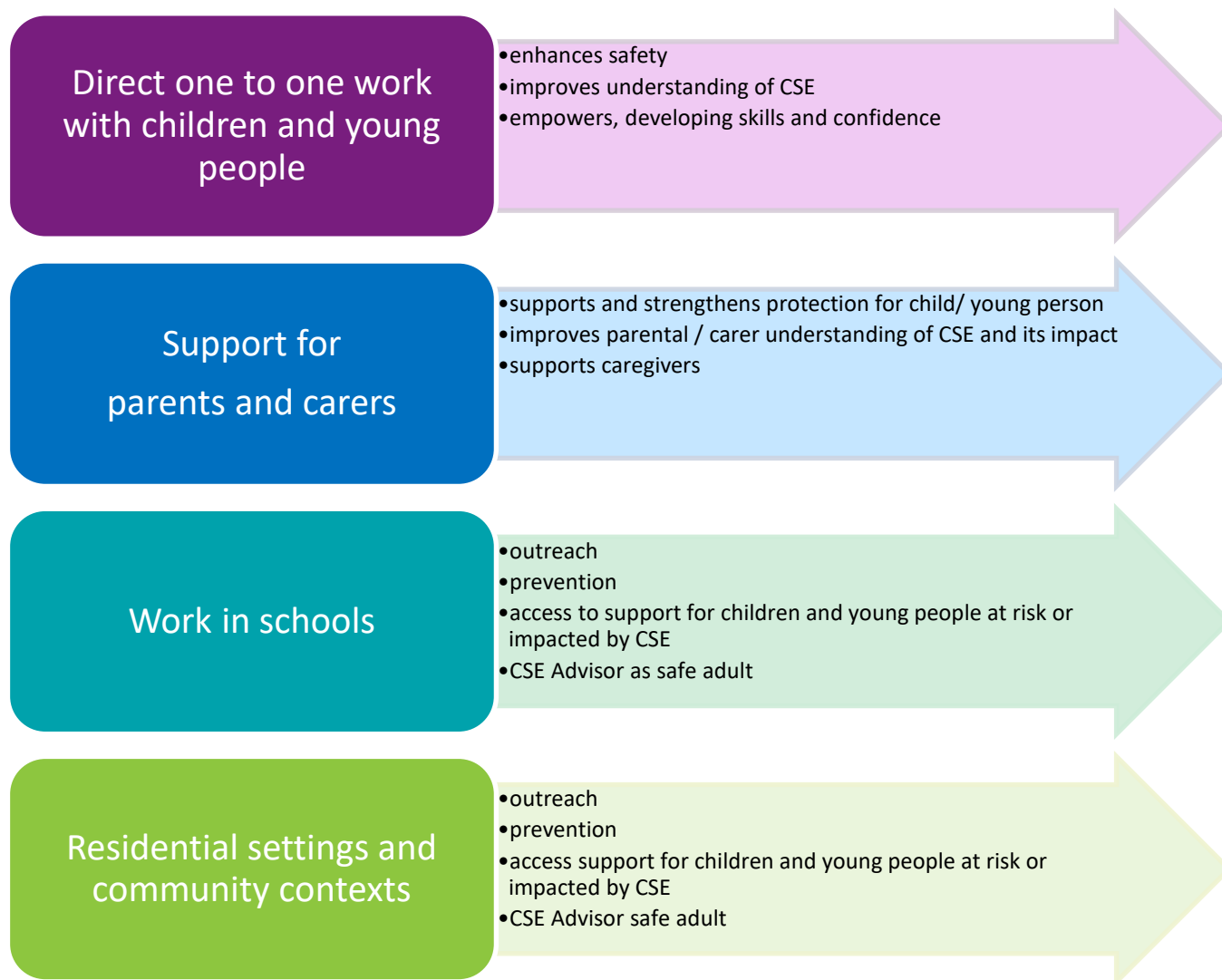


Figure 11: How CSE Advisors work to improve outcomes for children and young people

Quantitative data also suggests a good throughput of professionals being trained to raise their understanding, skills and awareness of CSE as an issue. Self-reports from trainees suggest significant improvement in knowledge, skills and confidence in responding to CSE. Focus group data further highlights the value of the CSE Advisor in upskilling the workforce, to assure better detection and identification of risk factors for CSE.

The CSE Advisor role was also intended to improve rates of disruption of perpetration. Although there is no quantitative data available to evidence this at this point in implementation, nonetheless there is a widespread perception amongst professionals in both pilot sites that the role has been very effective in supporting disruption. This was reported to have been achieved through higher rates of detection, better information sharing, and improved collaborative working amongst professionals, and across statutory and voluntary sector services. Further, information and awareness campaigns to improve the

response of the broader community were seen as promising initiatives that could further enable disruption and improve reporting rates for CSE risk and involvement.

The consultancy role of the CSE Advisor was particularly highly valued, and was seen by focus group participants as central to their skills development. The CSE Advisors were viewed as credible, and their accessibility and responsiveness was highly valued. For social care and education professionals, joint working offered opportunities to access criminal justice spheres that had previously been inaccessible, further underscoring the value of the role in breaking down silo working and improving multiagency collaboration and information sharing.

The CSE Advisor was seen as playing a central role in service transformation, and in shifting perceptions of children and young people. They were seen as enabling a more trauma informed approach to children and young people at risk. This trauma informed approach meant that professionals were better able to recognise the widespread nature of CSE and to recognise how it might impact on children and young people, including an understanding of the signs of CSE risk and victimisation, and the signs of trauma in children and young people. A trauma informed approach also ensures that knowledge about trauma and its impact – particularly the trauma produced by CSE – is embedded in policies, procedures and pathways. This enables more sensitive personal and systemic responses to children and young people who have experienced the trauma of CSE, and reduces the risk of re-traumatisation, or of blaming victims for the harms produced by perpetrators. It is clear from the evaluation that the CSE Advisor role has significantly contributed to the development of more trauma aware professionals, and more trauma responsive systems. Professionals and organisations have developed skills to better understand how signs of vulnerability, risk and exploitation might manifest in children and young people's actions.

Key lessons from implementation

The CSE Advisor role was highly valued in both pilot sites, and was viewed as an effective way to support an improved and more appropriate response to children and young people who are at risk of or have experienced CSE. The introduction of the CSE Advisor role was seen as an effective way to improve professional responses to CSE, to provide targeted support for children, young people and carers, to enhance professional knowledge and skills. CSE Advisors have played a vital role in improving multiagency collaboration and information sharing, and multiagency and police partners indicated that

the implementation of the CSE Advisor role has resulted in more trauma-aware practice, and trauma sensitive systems. Stakeholder professionals also indicated that there was evidence that the role had supported more effective disruption of perpetration.

The model of training and consultancy delivered by CSE Advisors was regarded as highly effective by professionals in collaborating agencies. The availability of the CSE Advisors, and their presence in key decision-making fora was seen as transforming practice and service landscapes. It is important for the CSE Advisor to operate across multiple levels of work, and to be involved in both strategic and frontline work. This enables a crucial two-way dialogue between direct involvement with children and young people, and policy development to support them. However, it is also important that organisations that deploy CSE Advisors be aware of the potential for role strain and overwork, as well as for isolation. It is crucial that these professionals receive support both from their own organisation, and from key organisations like the local authority and police, to ensure that they are fully embedded and receive sufficient support. The buy in of key stakeholders is therefore central to the success and sustainability of the model.

Although the evaluation did not focus on children and young people's perceptions of the service offered by CSE Advisors, and did not directly assess outcomes, stakeholder professionals viewed their direct one to one work, and their work in schools as an effective and welcome intervention for this group of children and young people. However, the routinely collated outcomes data held within services does provide some indication that the model has a positive impact on children and young people's outcomes. Future research should focus more fully on impact for children and young people.

A key aspect of the CSE Advisor role was to improve information sharing and the flow of intelligence between police and other agencies, enabling better identification and response to CSE, and improving the ability of professionals to disrupt perpetration. The location of the CSE Advisors within police buildings, but separate from police services was seen as a key aspect of the role's success, and it is suggested that this should be maintained in future deliveries. Police were also well represented in training numbers, further evidencing that the CSE Advisor is impacting police response to CSE. The role of the CSE Advisor in improving information sharing was seen as central to the success of pilots.

Professionals from partner organisations did express concerns that the policy context was not sufficiently supportive of effective CSE responses, and that in particular there was a need for central

governmental pressure to ensure that data systems were adapted to support the collation of CSE relevant data.

The short-term funding of the role does raise some questions about sustainability, and this does require attention in the planning of future deliveries. It is nonetheless notable that further funding has been secured for the pilot sites, and that there is an intention to develop and deliver the project in other areas. There is evidence of strong commitment to the CSE Advisor role in local authorities and Police Scotland, and this is promising in terms of both sustainability in the pilot sites, and translation to other contexts.

Although the CSE Advisors are highly skilled professionals, the pilots have demonstrated that for the relatively inexpensive investment in a small number of specialist staff, high impact can be achieved, with evidence of transformation of individual professionals' attitudes, transformed practice and transformed organisations and systems. This indicates a model that is highly translatable into other local authority areas. However, further investment is needed to ensure that this vital role continues to be delivered and developed.

Future research

This promising pilot project has yielded impressive impact in a short period of time, and shows great promise for future implementation and translation to other sites. However, the limitations of this study should be acknowledged in weighing up the findings. Several considerations should be given to future planned research. It is important to track the impact of the direct work with children and young people more explicitly, and a robust evaluation of the impact on children and young people's safety, wellbeing and future CSE involvement is important. The familiarisation and group-based work conducted in schools is promising, holding potential for early intervention and prevention, and this deserves fuller attention and focus in future implementation and evaluations. In addition, an evaluation of service data to track the impact of the CSE role on children and young people's future involvement with and pathway through services would be useful.

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Appendices

Appendix 1:

Table 4: Test of normalcy of data distribution for pre- and post-training self-evaluations

	Tests of Normality					
	Kolmogorov-Smirnov ^a			Shapiro-Wilk		
	Statistic	df	Sig.	Statistic	df	Sig.
I can describe key issues relating to CSE	.130	354	.000	.967	354	.000
I can identify potential indicators of CSE	.118	354	.000	.962	354	.000
I can explain why CSE is not a choice for children and young people	.110	354	.000	.968	354	.000
I can list 5 vulnerability factors that affect risk of CSE	.096	354	.000	.969	354	.000
I can explain my agency's role and know what to do if I have concerns about children and young people	.127	354	.000	.952	354	.000
I can describe key issues relating to CSE 2	.198	354	.000	.899	354	.000
I can identify potential indicators of CSE 2	.213	354	.000	.869	354	.000
I can explain why CSE is not a choice for children and young people 2	.214	354	.000	.862	354	.000
I can list 5 vulnerability factors that affect risk of CSE 2	.229	354	.000	.833	354	.000
I can explain my agency's role and know what to do if I have concerns about children and young people 2	.210	354	.000	.830	354	.000
Total Score for Pre-training	.075	354	.000	.988	354	.005
Total Score for Post-training	.120	354	.000	.928	354	.000

a. Lilliefors Significance Correction

Appendix 2

RISE Interview and Focus Group Schedule

Tell me a little bit about the RISE project, and how it has developed since it started.

What has your role been in the RISE project? Tell me about your experience in that role.

How has the activity of the RISE project impacted on your work and your organisation?

What have been some of the best features of the programme? Some of the wins?

Can you give examples of good practice that have emerged in the project, in your area of work?

What have been some of the barriers – organisations, interpersonal, personal?

How have you and other project members responded to challenges?

Do you think that the project has increased capacity to identify and respond to CSE?

Do you think that the project has contributed to reducing the activity and effectiveness of perpetrators?

What elements of the work you have done do you think has been most effective in identifying and supporting children and young people at risk of / who have experienced CSE?

Based on your experience, is there anything you would change about the model, its delivery or its implementation?

Do you feel, overall, that the project has been a success? Why and how?