

# **CSE Research: Short films for practice Research Briefing Note #7**



## **Raising community awareness of child sexual exploitation Dr Kate D'Arcy, Dr Sukhwant Dhaliwal and Roma Thomas**

### **Text of the Film**

*"Raising community awareness of child sexual exploitation is key to prevention and early intervention, but how best to do this?"*

*Our research suggests that it is really important to have clear aims and objectives, and to be planning right from the start with communities, groups and organisations themselves. We also need to think about how we reach communities. Who are the right people to talk to? Where are these people situated? And what is the information that is meaningful to them?"*

*We need to have sensitive discussions about child sexual exploitation, sexuality and sex without diluting the focus on child protection and children's rights.*

*However we do community awareness raising it's really important to evaluate the work, and use the lessons learned. We need to remain open to challenge and change if we seek to empower our communities to safeguard their children and young people."*

### **Research Summary**

This film is based on the evaluation of the Barnardo's 'Families and Communities Against Sexual Exploitation' project (FCASE), produced by the University of Bedfordshire. Barnardo's has been at the forefront of raising awareness of the issue of child sexual exploitation nationally, and FCASE is an important and innovative project which provides useful insights for developing community awareness raising initiatives elsewhere. FCASE combines several elements of work in the area of CSE that have not previously been brought together in a structured programme. These are:

- targeted early intervention/prevention work with parents and young people affected by CSE;
- training of professionals; and
- awareness raising among different communities.

In the UK, work with young people affected by CSE is developing at a rapid pace. However, work with communities and parents/carers is less frequently found. The evaluation identified a number of key factors that contribute to the effectiveness of community awareness raising activity. These include the following.

- Establishing clear aims and objectives

- Undertaking a scoping exercise to identify who your communities are, and who is accessing services as well as any groups of people who are under-represented
- Evaluating community awareness raising activities in order to better understand how knowledge and awareness can be raised effectively among different communities and groups
- Building relationships and developing equal partnerships with groups, communities and sectors
- Considering a multitude of spaces and mediums to raise awareness to meet different communities' needs
- Careful consideration of the routes into communities as well as child protection and children's rights i.e. thinking about the right people, places and the right information to share for meaningful and relevant awareness raising
- Developing appropriate strategies to enable positive and open discussion of CSE, sex and sexuality with a wide range of communities
- Multi-agency working and support, for example in training professionals and CSE champions and supporting them in different communities

### **Questions for practice reflection**

You may want to discuss or consider the following.

- Are there opportunities for you to raise awareness of child sexual exploitation in your community of practice?
- What needs to be done to disrupt child sexual exploitation in your local communities?
- How you can combine support for young people, parents and community awareness raising in order to prevent CSE?

**Is there someone you know who would benefit from seeing this short film?  
If so, take a minute to pass it on <http://youtu.be/h2zOGUBVMZY>**

### **To cite this film**

University of Bedfordshire (2015) *Raising community awareness of child sexual exploitation*. Available at: <http://youtu.be/h2zOGUBVMZY> (Accessed day, month, year).

# The International Centre

## Increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking

The International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire is committed to increasing understanding of, and improving responses to, child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking in local, national and international contexts. This is achieved through:

- academic rigour and research excellence
- collaborative and partnership based approaches to applied social research
- meaningful and ethical engagement of children and young people
- active dissemination and evidence-based engagement in theory, policy and practice



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Staff at the International Centre work collaboratively in teams with internal and external staff on applied research, evaluation, consultancy and training. We prioritise a focus on children and young people's participation, taking this seriously in all aspects of our work.

The University of Bedfordshire has been awarded the Queen's Anniversary Prize for Higher and Further Education for The International Centre's pioneering research into child sexual exploitation. This prestigious prize is the highest form of national recognition open to higher and further education institutions in the UK.

### **What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?**

The following definition of CSE is that used in the government guidance 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation' (DCSF, 2009, p.9)

*Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.*