1. Introduction

This protocol addresses local multi-agency working arrangements agreed by Wandsworth Safeguarding Children’s Board and the Wandsworth Children and Young People’s Partnership. This protocol draws from the guidance and is consistent with the ‘Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation’ Guidance, 2009. It has also adopted the London Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children Abused through Sexual Exploitation.

2. Definition

Sexual exploitation incorporates sexual, physical and emotional abuse. Sexual exploitation of children and young people can take many forms from a seemingly consensual relationship where sex is exchanged for gifts, money, accommodation or affection, to serious organised crime and child trafficking. In all cases those exploiting the child/young person always hold some kind of power over the victim. As a result of being sexually exploited children and young people should be treated as victims of sexual abuse and suffering significant harm.

3. Purpose of Protocol

See Flowchart (Appendix 1) and Referral Form (Appendix 2)

To provide local procedures in line with the guidance stated in Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation 2009.

The guidance expects local authorities to:
- Develop local prevention strategies
- Identify those at risk of being sexually exploited
- Take action to safeguard and promote the welfare of particular children and young people who are being, or may be, sexually exploited and
- Take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people in this way.

The police investigations must be against those who coerce, abuse and exploit children and young people.
4. **Scope of Protocol**

This protocol comprises a number of areas in which children and young people may be at risk of sexual exploitation. Sexual exploitation is often linked to other issues in the life of a child or young person.

4.1 **Sexual Exploitation has links to other types of crime.**

This includes:

- Child trafficking (into, out of and within the UK)
- Domestic Violence
- Sexual violence in intimate relationships
- Grooming (both online and offline)
- Abusive images of children and their distribution (organised abuse)
- Organised sexual abuse of children
- Gang related activity
- Immigration-related offences
- Domestic servitude

4.2 **Significant factors for children and young people who may be at risk of sexual exploitation:**

- Running away from home / care and going missing
- Non attendance at school and school phobia
- Being in residential or foster care
- Drug and alcohol misuse
- Parents / carers with a high level of vulnerabilities
- Sexually risky behaviour
- Sexual health problems
- Domestic servitude, neglect and violence
- Bullying
- Teenage pregnancy
- Long term sexual, physical and psychological harm
- Forced marriage
- Mental health issues
- Self harm and suicide
- Changes in behaviour or habits
- Forced isolation from family, friends, community
- Learning disabilities
- Immigration status
- In “relationship” with older male or female
- Involved in gang culture
- In receipt of goods or money as “gifts” or for which there is no account

4.3 **Attitudes of Children and Young People**
It is very common for children and young people not to recognise that they are being abused due to the grooming methods often used by the perpetrators. The needs of children and particularly of young people aged 16 and 17 years are likely to be overlooked for this reason. Although faced with limited choice, they may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily. It may take many weeks or months for practitioners who work with young people to build up their trust, and help them to recognise that they are being sexually exploited.

5. Seeking advice/discussion and referral

Professionals in all agencies should be alert to the possibility that a child/young person they are working with may be being sexually exploited. The professional may already have concerns about the child/young person e.g missing school, missing from home, self-harming. The professional should discuss their concerns with their agency’s designated safeguarding lead. If after discussion the concerns remain, a decision should be made about whether a referral should be made to Children’s Specialist Services (CSS). The lead professional for Sexually Exploited Young People in the Referral & Assessment Service (RAS) can be contacted for discussion and further clarity. Once a decision is made that a referral should be completed this should be in the normal way in accordance with Working Together 2010.

Note: Where a child/young person is considered to be at risk or likely to be at risk of significant harm or if the agency’s designated safeguarding lead is not available a referral must be made immediately to Referral and Assessment Service Telephone (020) 8871 6622

In addition, there should be a Champion in your agency you can approach for advice and information.

5.1 Young people under 13 years of age

All cases involving under 13’s should always be discussed with a Child Protection Co-ordinator. There should always be a presumption that the case will be reported to children’s Services. All cases of children under the age of 13 years believed to be engaged in sexual activity and/or penetrative sexual relationships must be referred to Children’s Services who will refer to the Police. This recognises the particular vulnerability of children of this age engaging in sexual behaviours and that they are deemed too young to give consent to actual activity.

5.2 13-16 year olds

Although sexual activity with young people under the age of 16 years remains illegal, 13-16 year olds are considered competent to give consent, in certain circumstances.

Therefore, when making an assessment about risk for this age the professional should take into account:

- The age of the child/young person
- Level of understanding/maturity
• Any key risk factors
• Behaviour of young person
• Any evidence of grooming
• Age of boyfriend / girlfriend or sexual partner

5.3 16/17 year olds
It is important to consider that just because a young person is 16 or 17 years old and has reached the legal age of being able to consent to sex that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. They are still defined as children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004 respectively and can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation. They have the right to appropriate support and protection from harm.

6. Children’s Specialist Services/Young People and Learning

On receipt of referral RAS will consider the need for completing an initial assessment. If the child/young person is considered to be at immediate risk a Strategy Meeting/Discussion will take place and a S47 investigation may be initiated with appropriate steps taken to secure the safety of the child/young person.

Where a child/young person is already known to CSS the Strategy Meeting/Discussion should be chaired by the Team Manager for the allocated Social Worker. If a S47 investigation is required it should be completed by the allocated social worker or a sufficiently experienced social worker.

If it is agreed that the child/young person should be the subject of a Sexual Exploitation Multi-Agency Panel (SEMAP) meeting the Social Worker must complete the SEMAP referral form. Appendix 1.

The Social Worker will be advised of the date of the SEMAP meeting.

The SW must complete a referral to Wandsworth Police’s Public Protection Desk using the Form 87A (Secure email address and dedicated telephone number). If the case involves a suspect within the child or young person’s family or is carer or person in a position of trust then the Form 87A should be directed to the South West CAIT office (secure email, SPOC etc). The referring social worker must always check that the email has been received.

See Appendix 2; Flowchart for Referral

7. Sexual Exploitation Multi-Agency Panel (SEMAP)
There will be scheduled SEMAP meetings which will be held every month at Welbeck House. They will be attended by a core group of professionals from Children’s Services, Sexual Exploitation Lead, Police, Safeguarding Standards Unit (SSU), Health, Education, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) and Youth Offending Team (YOT).
All follow-ups/reviews will be scheduled into these meetings. The meetings will be chaired by Wandsworth Council Sexual Exploitation Lead. A record of the meeting will be completed and sent to all participants.

7.1 Purpose of SEMAP meeting

- Share and clarify information
- Establish exact nature of concerns
- Establish risks for child/young person
- Establish risks for any other children/young people, including siblings
- Systematically gather information regarding links with offenders and young people. This wider strategy could also enable cross-referencing of associates and show relationships between groups of people on a borough wide and cross-borough basis.
- Consider any action against and the likelihood of prosecution of relevant adults
- Agree on action and make recommendations to address the concern
- Develop a multi-agency support plan for the child/young person and parent/carer
- Consideration is to be given to the impact on the child of prosecution of relevant adults

7.2 Outcomes of SEMAP meeting

- There is no need to proceed further at this point
- Concerns identified/Safeguarding/Disruption Plan agreed/possible review SEMAP
- S47 investigation

8. Police Action Following SEMAP

A Safeguarding/Disruption Plan targeting identified individuals can be effective. Whenever a young person is the subject of a strategy meeting he/she is entered onto the Police intelligence system, which alerts officers to the fact that they are vulnerable. This means that any information regarding that young person is collated. The young person is flagged up on the police system and links between offenders/pimps/boyfriends and other young people can be identified. If the young person is found with an offender, or potential offender, this will be entered as an intelligence record. Incidents of concern at the address to which the young person goes missing can be collated and addresses can be recorded systematically for the police to check if the young person goes missing again. If the young person is willing to make a formal complaint/allegation a statement/ABE video will be taken. The young person’s situation will be monitored though intelligence gathering and a report will be made to the relevant professionals if further concerns are raised prior to a review meeting being held.
The police can also use Restraining Orders, Anti Social Behaviour Orders, Child Abduction Notices (The Child Abduction Act 1984, Section 2) to disrupt incidences of sexual exploitation.

9. Children’s Services Action Following SEMAP

Where appropriate the Social Worker will complete an assessment. Following the SEMAP meeting, the case will be dealt with by either convening a Team Around the Child (TAC) Meeting or a Child Protection Conference.

A TAC meeting should be convened to agree:

- The development of a Child’s Plan which meets the young person’s developmental needs and develops a strategy to support the young person in exiting from sexual exploitation. The Child’s Plan will be informed by the multi-agency assessment.

- Services necessary to support the young person and address any therapeutic needs he/she may have.

Where identified concerns do not meet the threshold for Children’s Specialist Services (CSS) involvement the TAC should agree the lead professional for the child/young person.

The young person may remain at risk of significant harm despite all agencies’ best efforts because of continuing involvement in sexual exploitation. The Child’s Plan is reviewed regularly in this light.

10. Children Looked After

The following factors should be taken into account when considering concerns about a looked after child:

- The risks to other children in placement
- Whether the child should remain in placement
- The feasibility of controlling the child’s movements and the whether the placement can keep him/her safe
- Whether the child’s parents should be informed. Any decision not to inform the parents must be recorded on the child’s file
- Other children in the placement should be monitored to identify whether they are also at risk of harm or involved in sexual exploitation
- Foster carers and residential care workers should be asked to take positive action to clarify and record suspicions and minimise the child’s involvement in sexual exploitation
- If there is knowledge or suspicion that looked after children are involved in sexual exploitation together or are controlled by the same person there will need to be additional planning and consideration given to using child protection and/or organised abuse procedures.
Our approach is to work inclusively and in partnership with families and carers, acknowledging their concerns and stress factors.

11. Working with Parents / Carers
Parents and carers play the most crucial role in safeguarding and promoting the welfare of their children. If a child or young person is suffering or at risk of suffering significant harm through sexual exploitation by someone outside the family, this may not necessarily be as a result of parents or carers having difficulties in meeting their child’s needs. Involving parents/families early in interventions can be a significant way forward in protecting and supporting their children.

In some cases parents and carers will be complicit in the exploitation of their children.

12. Appendices
1) Referral form
2) Flow Chart

13) Other key documents

- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation 2009 (DCSF)

- London Child Protection Procedures for Safeguarding Children abused through Sexual Exploitation
  http://www.londoncp.co.uk/procedures/supp_6.html

- Working Together to Safeguard Children 2010 (Department for Children, Schools and Families)
  https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00305-2010

- Safeguarding Children and Young People who may be affected by Gang Activity 2010 (Department for Schools, Children and Families)
  https://www.education.gov.uk/publications/standard/publicationdetail/page1/DCSF-00064-2010
14. Glossary

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<thead>
<tr>
<th>Acronym</th>
<th>In full</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>CAIT</td>
<td>Child Abuse Investigation Team</td>
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<td>CAMHS</td>
<td>Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>CSS</td>
<td>Children's Specialist Services</td>
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<tr>
<td>RAS</td>
<td>Referral and Assessment Service</td>
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<tr>
<td>SEMAP</td>
<td>Sexual Exploitation Multi-Agency Partnership</td>
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<tr>
<td>SPOC</td>
<td>Single Point of Contact</td>
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<td>SSU</td>
<td>Safeguarding Standards Unit</td>
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<tr>
<td>TAC</td>
<td>Team Around the Child</td>
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<tr>
<td>YOT</td>
<td>Youth Offending Team</td>
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Revised November 2011
Suspected/Evidence of Sexual Exploitation?

Consultation with Sexual Exploitation Lead
Is child considered to be at immediate risk?
if NO

Inter-Agency Referral to Children’s Services

If YES, refer to police and/or …..

If NOT Known/Closed Case

Refer & Assessment

Assessment

Strategy Discussion

NFA/ S47 Investigation / Complex Assessment

Referral to Sexual Exploitation Multi Agency Panel (SEMAP)

Initial discussion at SEMAP

Possible Outcomes:
- Complex Child in Need /Youth Support Team
- Child Protection Case Conference
- Refer Out and No Further Action
- Review SEMAP
- Child Looked After
- Referral to other agencies, e.g Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Consult with Agency Safeguarding Lead

SE Lead records Consultation Record

Referral to Sexual Exploitation Multi Agency Panel (SEMAP)

Initial discussion at SEMAP

Possible Outcomes:
- Complex Child in Need /Youth Support Team
- Child Protection Case Conference
- Refer Out and No Further Action
- Review SEMAP
- Child Looked After
- Referral to other agencies, e.g Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS)

Strategy Discussion /Section 47 Investigation ?

Reviewed via one of below:
- SEMAP
- Child Looked After Review
- Child Protection Case Conference
- Team Around the Child

Allocated

Children/Adolescents Looked After

Children in Need / Youth Support Teams

Review via one of below:
- SEMAP
- Child Looked After Review
- Child Protection Case Conference
- Team Around the Child