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The NWG is a charitable organisation formed as a UK network of over 14,500 practitioners who disseminate our information down through their services, to professionals working on the issue of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and trafficking within the UK.

Our network covers voluntary and statutory services and private companies working in this field. We offer support, advice and raise the profile, provide updates, training, share national developments, influence the development of national and local policy informed by practice. We have developed our youth advisory board to enable young peoples' voices to be heard through the work that we do.

www.nwgnetwork.org
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Introduction

The NWG Network

The principle aim of the NWG is to offer support and advice to those working with children and young people under eighteen who are affected by abuse through sexual exploitation. The Charity’s objective is to tackle child exploitation, in particular but not exclusively by promoting, enabling, supporting and developing the protection of children and young people who are affected by sexual exploitation. Their mission statement is:

*To assist in the eradication of sexual exploitation and/or modern slavery of children and young people.*

CSE Response Unit

In March 2015 the government published a report into tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE), which included plans to develop a national taskforce to assist practitioners to tackle this form of child abuse. The government provided the NWG with £1.24 million to develop the taskforce and deliver its objectives over the next three years. This funding has enabled the NWG to recruit a team of specialists to help support professionals tackling CSE.

*‘The recognition by the government of the need to address the issues of sexual exploitation among our young people is an important progression towards our aim of a society that has zero tolerance to the abuse of children and young people today.’* NWG 4th Annual Conference brochure (2017)

The CSE Response Unit team comprises specialists in safeguarding, police and justice, health, education and community engagement, a parental engagement lead a youth engagement lead. The taskforce was named the **CSE Response Unit** and was formally launched in September 2016. The unit is responsible for:

- Providing support and guidance to practitioners at an operational level.
- Assisting local authorities, police forces, local safeguarding boards and other organisations with strategic planning and responses to CSE.
- Supporting professionals through a resources library containing a wide range of tools aimed at addressing CSE.
- Operating an out-of-hours helpline for professionals who require immediate assistance.
- Developing a register of skills and knowledge consisting of practitioners and agencies who can be deployed to assist professionals and agencies in tackling CSE.
- Helping agencies to ‘operationalise’ recommendations from reviews, inspections and operations.

Organisations engage with us on a voluntary basis and the Unit works with professionals and agencies following a request for assistance; there is no mandatory requirement to work with the unit, maintaining the ethos of the NWG to work in collaboration with partners.

The evaluation

The NWG commissioned SCIE to evaluate the impact of the CSE Response Unit on the operations and strategic practice of the practitioners it supports and identify learning and make recommendations about what is working and how services could be improved in
The evaluation was tasked to produce a series of case studies that explore in depth the breadth of work undertaken by the CSE Response Unit, and the different ways this work has had an impact on practitioners.

This is a mixed-methods evaluation, using a theory of change model to guide and underpin the evaluation framework. Scoping began in December 2017 with the bulk of the fieldwork, including face-to-face and telephone interviews and an online survey, taking place in January to March 2018. An interim report was submitted in February 2018 which included analysis and case studies from the qualitative fieldwork. This final report, submitted in April 2018, also incorporates findings from the online survey.

The purpose of this report

This report brings together the data from across the different research strands and presents it thematically against the key research questions. These findings are reported in the following sections:

1) **Process findings**: This section reviews practitioner experiences in working with the CSE Response Unit. It explores the ways in which the NWG Network has supported the CSE Response Unit activity and the wider skills and knowledge of the team. It concludes with ideas about how to refine practitioner support in future.

2) **Impact findings**: The middle section explores the impact of the CSE Response Unit upon practitioners, including their awareness of CSE and confidence in tackling it locally through their action plans, strategic partnerships, skills and capacity.

3) **Impact case studies**: This section contains nine case studies that unpick in greater detail the specific work of the CSE Response Unit and the impact it has had upon practitioners.

The report closes with a summary of conclusions from which it makes recommendations. The CSE Response Unit theory of change and a copy of the practitioner survey are contained in Appendix A and B.

This report has been written for the NWG Network with the aim of being shared with the Department for Education. The case studies contained in this report have been signed off by practitioners that contributed to them, with consent for them to be included in this report. If the NWG Network wish to use any case studies in a public facing capacity, it would be appropriate to re-contact practitioners to gain additional consent.
Methodology

This section summaries SCIE’s approach to the evaluation.

Scoping and set up

Theory of change and evaluation framework: We conducted an initial review of project documents including: previous evaluations of NWG; CSE Response Unit reports; delegate feedback from events and training; and feedback on CSE Response Unit activities. From this we designed a theory of change for the CSE Response Unit, clearly articulating the inputs, activities, outputs and intended outcomes of the work. The model, and the assumptions that underpin it, is captured in Appendix A.

The theory of change model shaped the evaluation framework, outlining who we need to speak to and the questions we ask, in order to meet the evaluation brief. The key evaluation questions identified through this process are:

1. How well has the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit supported its members? In particular:
   a. How has the CSE Response Unit provided an effective response to practitioners?
   b. How has the CSE Response Unit helped build the capacity of practitioners?
   c. How has the CSE Response Unit helped practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action?
2. How can the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit refine and improve their services to its members?
3. What has been the impact of the CSE Response Unit on raising the profile of CSE and how to tackle it?
4. What has been the CSE Response Unit’s impact in the national context, i.e. transition work, end gang violence, other government priorities?
5. In what ways has the NWG Network enhanced the reach and impact of the CSE Response Unit?

Fieldwork

To explore these key evaluation questions, fieldwork consisted of two key strands: qualitative interviews to build impact case studies and a practitioner online survey.

Qualitative interviews: We completed 18 in-depth interviews across a range of stakeholders in the following groups

- CSE Response Unit and NWG staff (n=8)
- CSE Response Unit Register of Skills and Knowledge associates (n=2)
- Practitioners (from the police, public health, academia) (n=8)

Interviews with CSE Response Unit and NWG staff occurred over two visits to the NWG offices. Interviews with practitioners occurred over the phone. All interviews explored: the different strands of CSE Response Unit activity; the nature and quality of support given to practitioners; and the impact of the work upon their CSE-related operations and strategy. Nine interviews were written up into case studies to explore in more detail the depth and breadth of the impact of CSE Response Unit activity.

Online survey: The online survey was launch on the 2 March and ran for two weeks until the 16 March. It included 13 questions and focused on: the reasons why practitioners contact the CSE Response Unit; the nature and quality of the support they receive; the
impact this support has upon their practice; and recommendations for future NWG Network and CSE Response Unit activity. A copy of the survey is included in Appendix B.

To maximise response rates, the survey was sent out to the entire membership (of over 14,000 NWG members) who were invited to complete it within the two-week deadline. It received 122 responses over that period and was completed by practitioners from across a range of roles, as outlined in Figure 1 below:

**Figure 1: Which of the following best describes your role?**

For the 25% (n=30) of respondents who indicated they were in ‘other’ roles, these included:

- **Other school-based or youth roles**: school safeguarding officer (n=3); pre-school manager; inclusion support worker; student welfare/DSL; YOT manager
- **Safeguarding and CSE-specific roles**: Safeguarding children’s board (n=2); safeguarding consultant; sexual violence counsellor; CSE and missing children coordinator
- **Housing representatives**: registered manager of independent provision (n=2); supported housing commissioning manager; role in the hotel business
- **Training**: training officer (n=2)
- **Fostering and LAC**: policy manager (fostering); team manager (fostering)
- **Other**: parent; writer; researcher information professional; Police and Crime Commissioner’s office

In order to delineate the experiences of the NWG from the CSE Response Unit, we asked survey participants whether they had ever worked with the CSE Response Unit. Of the 120 participants that answered this question, 8% (n=10) respondents had worked directly with the CSE Response Unit team, while 14% (n=17) said they couldn’t distinguish between the support of the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit. This is illustrated by Figure 2 below:
Figure 2: Have you ever worked with the CSE Response Unit?

Given the nature of CSE Response Unit activity, which tends to be more focused work with key stakeholders, we anticipated a smaller percentage of total respondents (out of the 14,000-strong membership) would have direct experience of working with the CSE Response Unit. Additionally, the qualitative interviews with practitioners revealed that there is a tendency to view the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit as the same thing, and that they often struggle to attribute activity to one over the other. This is particularly the case for those respondents who work closely with the CEO, who leads both strands.

As such, we routed the survey into two cohorts: those who were certain that they had worked with the CSE Response Unit and those that reported they hadn’t or were uncertain. We have referred to this second cohort as the wider membership throughout this report. Each cohort was asked the same series of questions. This meant we didn’t lose anyone from the survey and were able to gather valuable insight into the key activities and behaviours that are valued by the wider membership.

Findings from both cohorts are presented alongside each other in the main report. This is not necessarily to encourage comparison, given the sample of those who report they have worked with the CSE Response Unit is small and so not statistically significant. Rather, it is to show that through the research process we have been mindful to attribute impact directly to the CSE Response Unit team, where possible.
Process findings

The evaluation framework identified the following three questions that explore the process of working with the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit:

- In what ways has the NWG Network enhanced the reach and impact of the CSE Response Unit?
- How has the CSE Response Unit provided an effective response to practitioners?
- How can the NWG and CSE Response Unit refine and improve their services to its members?

Findings against these three areas are presented thematically in this section of the report.

Enhancing the reach and impact of the CSE Response Unit

The research revealed a number of ways in which CSE Response Unit staff drew upon the wider resources of the NWG Network in delivering their day-to-day work. This includes:

- having the resources in place to hit the ground running;
- the reputational reach of the NWG Network;
- and the wider contact list and network.

Resources in place to hit the ground running

CSE Response Unit staff pointed to the general breadth of NWG resources on the subject of CSE, and the organisational structures already in place. From the growing membership (of over 14,000 practitioners) to the body of resources on the website, not to mention the annual calendar of events (including smaller, issue-focused forums and training to the large national conference). Interviewees agreed that the position of the wider NWG Network facilitated the quick set-up of the CSE Response Unit.

The CSE Response Unit team signpost practitioners on an on-going basis to this body of NWG materials and events. The online survey is helpful in quantifying NWG Network members’ usage of the different NWG resources. As the following graph illustrates, over two-thirds of respondents (68% [n=81]) have downloaded resources from the website, followed by just under half of respondents (46% [n=56]) who have accessed information from the website or through other social media. The least used resources are the Out-of-Hours helpline, which scored under 1% (n=1) each. Live Chat has little data unless the enquirer is passed to the Response Unit for further support. Non-members contact the NWG through the Live Chat and is usually anonymous.
Graph 3: Have you ever accessed any of the NWG Network resources or materials?

These resources and events have also supported CSE Response Unit staff to: promote and raise awareness of their work in the first instance; scope out key objectives and issues facing practitioners and to shape a response; gather and disseminate good practice; and sense-check their initiatives and workstreams as they develop. As such there is a broad consensus that being hosted by the NWG Network has meant that the CSE Response Unit is able to piggyback onto existing structures and tap into organisational knowledge in order to ‘hit the ground running’. As one interviewee commented:

‘We have long established NWG forums, and the website, the newsletters, engagement with the membership. A significant body of resources and the annual conference, which the CSE Response Unit has piggybacked on. We have existing structures for us to promote the CSE Response Unit, to hit the ground running to meet the objectives.’ CSE Response Unit staff

Existing reputational reach and trust of NWG

As well as the physical resources of the NWG, CSE Response Unit staff also reflected on the less tangible ways the Network has helped their daily work – most notably building upon NWG’s positive reputation and credibility in the field, and the subsequent trust awarded it by practitioners as an independent, national organisation.

The survey echoes this from the practitioner perspective. Of those who had worked directly with the CSE Response Unit, 67% (n=6) agreed or highly agreed that they trusted the team to give them independent and objective advice. For the wider membership, 47% (n=36) either agreed or highly agreed, with just over a third 30% (n=23) saying that this was not relevant to them. This is demonstrated in Figure 4 below:

![Graph 3: Have you ever accessed any of the NWG Network resources or materials?](image-url)
Figure 4: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that you trust the team to give you independent and objective advice?

The CSE Response Unit works with a range of practitioners, each at different starting points and from different backgrounds. CSE is a vast and sensitive subject. Some practitioner interviewees reported being new to it or knew of colleagues who’d received criticism in their handling of CSE cases in the past or had issues when trying to engage other local partners. Given this backdrop, the ability to quickly build relationships, be approachable, and establish credibility and trust is essential to the success of the CSE Response Unit’s work:

‘So even though the CSE Response Unit was new, being from NWG meant there was trust around it. It was not another inspectorate. Otherwise there could have been a degree of scepticism.’ CSE Response Unit staff

‘Building relationships is at the core of it. And lots of people are quite battered by inspections – positive or negative. And that’s what we’re not.’ CSE Response Unit staff

‘Sometimes they want validation, they ask ‘have I done OK?’ People like that. They come to us as we’re non-judgemental. Won’t go to a social service department, might feel judged. So, they come here.’ CSE Response Unit staff

Practitioners also described ways in which the NWG CEO supported events, often through facilitation and by securing interesting speakers to take part and give different perspectives on the subject of CSE. Linking in with the national NWG organisation was seen as a quick and effective way to raise the profile of these events.

The NWG networks and contacts

Practitioners and CSE Response Unit staff alike described how CSE is a multi-agency issue. CSE crosses police lines, affects different social service departments and is a health and education concern. Beyond these spheres, there are a number of other agencies and workplaces that have the potential to prevent or spot CSE in action, from youth clubs to taxi drivers. Given this landscape, and the need for a place-based response
to tackle CSE activity, practitioners often noted – and valued – the extensive network and reach of the NWG, which was openly available to them upon request.

Practitioners constantly note the value of the NWG Network and gave examples of where it helped them broker relationships, source credible speakers for events, as well as gather and draw upon examples of other good practice from across the UK.

**Using members to scope out the issues facing practitioners and shape a response**

The NWG did some initial scoping to explore practitioner needs before the CSE Response Unit was formally launched. It hosted three scoping events across the UK, bringing together key members to discuss the issues facing them and their key concerns around CSE. This process led to the development of the Assessment tool (see case study: building tools to improve future practice).

In addition, individual CSE Response Unit specialists describe using the Network Newsletter to send out wider scoping emails, either to gather good practice or again to identify needs to address in subsequent work. This identified the need for a Benchmarking tool to help frontline workers assess their engagement with parents during safeguarding or other CSE-related processes (see case study: building tools to improve future practice):

> ‘We know all about the poor practice but the best practice is hard to find, so we going to go out to the network and ask them to get in touch… I’m forever going back out to the network and there are resources that have come back which go onto the website straight away.’ CSE Response Unit staff

> ‘The good thing about having a network is you can put it out to the network, e.g. there’s a scenario here, has anyone come across it before? Having long tentacles is a long benefit for the service.’ CSE Response Unit staff

As such, the CSE Response Unit (and different workstreams) was able to use the ‘long tentacles’ of membership to pre-empt and effectively respond to certain areas of concern.

**Sharing best practice around CSE**

One of the benefits of siting the CSE Response Unit within the NWG Network is that there is an existing structure through which the team can disseminate best practice. In this way, there is a feedback loop, whereby there is the capacity to reach out to the membership for information and, in turn, the membership can be kept abreast of developments and CSE best practice.

The survey revealed that respondents generally agree that the team is good at sharing best practice. Indeed, as shown in graph 5 below, 77% (n=7) of those who have worked with the CSE Response Unit agree or highly agree this is the case, with 58% (n=44) of the wider membership either agreeing or highly agreeing that the team are good at sharing best practice around CSE (over a fifth of this cohort say this is not applicable to them).
Figure 5: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that the team are good at sharing best practice around CSE?

Providing an effective response to practitioners

The NWG Network membership, team ethos and team experience are seen as vital mechanisms to enabling the CSE Response Unit to effectively respond to practitioners.

Range of reasons to get in touch

The survey asked respondents to detail why they first got in touch with the NWG Network, as illustrated in graph 6 below. The orange bars reflect responses from those who indicate they have worked directly with the CSE Response Unit (n=10) and the blue bars denote responses from the wider membership (n=100).

Figure 6: Why did you first get in touch?
As the Figure illustrates, significant proportions of both groups report getting in touch with the CSE Response Unit and NWG Network to learn more about good practice in CSE. This reflects the wider standing of the organisation within the field of CSE. Other indicators show some disparity. Some of these are outlined below, although the smaller sample of the CSE Response Unit suggests the need for caution in drawing hard conclusions here.

- A greater percentage of those who have worked with the CSE Response Unit got in touch to discuss training or workforce development (55% [n=5]) compared to 16% (n=16) of the wider membership.
- Half of those from the wider membership report getting in touch with the CSE Response Unit for assistance with strategic planning (50% [n=50]) compared to the fifth of those respondents who worked with the CSE Response Unit (22% [n=2]).

Receiving a prompt response to the initial enquiry

We asked survey respondents to consider whether they had received a prompt response to their initial inquiry. As presented in graph 7 below, for those who had worked directly with the CSE Response Unit, 77% (n=7) either agreed or highly agreed they had received a prompt response. For the wider membership, 36% (n=28) either agreed or highly agreed, but almost half of this cohort, 49% (n=38) felt this question did not apply to them. This is likely indicative of the larger number of members who access information through the website or social media, rather than contact a team member directly.

Figure 7: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that you received a prompt answer to your initial enquiry?

In interviews, practitioners also noted the speed of the team’s response as well as their generous investment of time, despite being so clearly very busy:

‘They always get back to me. I know they’re really busy but they get back really fast. They’re always willing, I’ve never had any bad feedback about them.’ Practitioner

‘[I value] the unstinting time that they offer. They’re always around. In the run up to the event I had to be careful not to be too greedy on their time.’ Practitioner

The team ethos – responding to the individual needs of practitioners

The CSE Response Unit is led by the needs identified by practitioners who proactively get in touch with them. The potential breadth of requests is immense, and case studies describe a range of ways in which the CSE Response Unit has worked to: bring together
stakeholders from a wide range of partners to focus on a regional CSE response and design action plans as a result; facilitate events and broker relationships; design tools to support better practice in future; deliver bespoke training as required; and support the development of a University module to enhance the training of the future workforce. A wider range of day-to-day smaller ad hoc requests and conversations between practitioners and the CSE Response Unit supplements these examples.

In the survey, 66% (n=6) of those who had worked with the CSE Response Unit agreed or highly agreed that the information they received answered their initial question. A smaller percentage of 48% (n=37) of the wider membership either agreed or highly agreed – although a notable number (42% n=32) felt this question was not applicable to them.

**Graph 8: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that the information you received answered your initial question?**

![Graph 8](image)

**Accessibility of the team**

Interviewees described the accessibility of the CSE Response Unit. This builds on the reputational reach of the NWG already described, but interviewees also value the open team ethos and relationship-building approach, where they are encouraged to get in touch with the CSE Response Unit even after the initial response has been resolved.

The survey explored the extent to which respondents believed the teams to be accessible. Of those who had direct experience of working with the CSE Response Unit, 78% (n=7) either agreed or highly agreed that the team were accessible and approachable. For the wider membership, the largest proportion of respondents felt this was either not applicable to them to answer (39% n=30) or didn’t know (14% n=11). Nonetheless over a third of the wider membership either agreed or agreed more broadly with the statement.
Figure 9: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that the team are accessible and approachable?

What is revealing, however, is the high proportions of both cohorts who would approach the teams in future if they needed to. Of those who have worked with the CSE Response Unit, 78% (n=7) either agreed or highly agreed they would get in touch if they had any questions on CSE in future, which is broadly echoed by 71% (n=55) of the wider membership. This suggests that members – whether they have direct experience of working with the teams or not – broadly see the organisations as one they can approach if they need to.

Figure 10: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that you will get in touch with the team if you have any questions on CSE in future?

Individual experience – those who can walk the walk

Practitioners contact the CSE Research Unit team with a wide range of issues, most often informed by their own specific role and background. As such, the CSE Response Unit team each lead on their own specialist area, including police, health, education and
community, safeguarding, parental engagement and children and young people engagement, as a means to cover the breadth of issues brought to them by practitioners.

Survey respondents were asked to consider their views on the skills and knowledge of the individual team members. Of those who had direct experience of working with the CSE Response Unit, 67% (n=6) either agreed or highly agreed that the specialist they spoke to had the right skills and knowledge to answer their question. Again, over half of the wider network didn’t think this was relevant to them, but over a third who did answer still agreed this was the case. This is illustrated in graph 11 below.

**Figure 11: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that the specialist I spoke to had the right skills and knowledge to answer my question?**

![Graph showing responses to the question](graph.png)

In addition to the individual specialisms, it also matters to practitioners that the staff have first-hand experience of working in CSE. Being able to ‘walk the walk’ is one way the team gain credibility among practitioners:

‘A lot of us have been CSE workers, have been that practitioner, which makes the members feel like we know what we’re talking about. Not just people talking the talk, virtually all of us have been practitioners prior to being the CSE Response Unit and NWG.’ NWG Staff

This experience as an ex-practitioner is seen as particularly invaluable in the police setting when communicating with forces, as it helps inform language, effectively respond to questions (knowing the wider operational landscape) and gain quicker buy-in.

**Team experience – a skills mix**

As well as exploring the skills and knowledge of individuals, the survey also asked respondents to reflect on the overall skills mix of the team as a whole. Of those who had worked with the CSE Response Unit, 55% (n=5) either agreed or highly agreed that the team draws upon a wide range of skills and knowledge across the CSE field, which is broadly matched by 49% (n=37) of the wider membership.
Figure 12: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that the team draws upon a wide range of skills and knowledge across the CSE field?

Members of the CSE Response Unit specialist team value the strengths and specialisms of each other and talk of being able to draw upon the experiences of each other if a question needs exploring from another angle or if it falls out of their own individual specialisms. This ability to ‘bounce off each other’ and draw information from across the CSE Response Unit is seen to be a unique feature of the team:

‘We all bring different skills to the table. We bounce off each other. You might have one conversation about something, and then someone brings – embedding and building on each other.’ CSE Response Unit staff

‘[Practitioners] know the unique nature of the team. We have specialists all in one room. If we don’t know the answer straight away we say, leave it here, and then we talk about it and go back to them. And people are quite happy for that – to leave their issues with us.’ CSE Response Unit staff

Embedding youth and parental engagement

Whilst the individual practitioner focus might vary – it may be a police-based issue, an educational initiative or a public health challenge – the thread of young people and parental engagement runs throughout the work of the CSE Response Unit.

Previous NWG Network activity with young people, most notably the Say Something campaign, has engaged young people to identify their concerns and build up a toolkit in response. This mains that the CSE Response Unit can draw upon a network of young people, and gain insights from its current work with them, as explained in more detail by the Youth Engagement lead below:

‘A group of young people we were working with in the South West wanted to create an app to support young people to be safe online. We had a series of conversations about the internet and how young people use it and adults use it. Some of these conversations have been massively forming to [the
CSE Response Unit. A network member got in touch to say they were doing this online piece and I was able to get back to say we’ve done this work. And I spoke to the rest of the [CSE Response Unit] team and then sent out a blog to members to say this is what we’re all working on.’ Youth Engagement lead

The CSE Response Unit has developed a number of processes to ensure that youth and parental engagement is embedded into the wider work of the Unit. Whenever the Youth Engagement lead runs a group with young people, it is attended by someone else from the CSE Response Unit, or even by the NWG Network trainer, to ensure that they are hearing messages directly from the young people themselves. Key tools, such as the Assessment or Benchmarking tools, have been produced in consultation with young people and parents. The Youth Engagement lead has worked directly with the Parents Lead to create a proforma around how to engage young people and parents in meetings, to ensure their voices are adequately built into the decision-making process.

Much of the youth engagement focus has occurred through regional panels of young people¹. However, one future opportunity, given the practitioner-led focus of the CSE Response Unit, is to go to the local areas and engage with the young people in the different regions to explore how CSE manifests, and can be tackled, locally.

The out-of-hours helpline

One area that was seen as less relevant to the CSE Response Unit offer is the out-of-hours helpline. Practitioners that contact the NWG, and who get passed over to the Response Unit, tend to use the ‘live chat’ function on the NWG website, email directly or make a phone call enquiry, although as graph 3 above illustrated, survey respondents indicated low usage of both the out-of-hours helpline and the live chat function. As one interviewee commented:

‘We’re not an emergency service. It’s not what people want. If it’s in the moment they’ll ring the out of duty team, or the police. What they do want is to speak to someone to fact check, once something has happened.’ CSE Response Unit

Refining and improving services to members

Both interviews and survey asked respondents to consider how the CSE Response Unit could refine or improve services to members. On the whole, respondents were very positive of the support they had received and struggled to think of anything specific. Where we received responses, they have been reported thematically below.

A clear identify

Reflecting perhaps the difficulty of members to distinguish between support from the NWG Network and from the CSE Response Unit, there was a request for greater clarity of the work of both. As one survey respondent suggested, the CSE Response Unit could be linked in at CSE strategic level, to create a coordinated network across the UK:

‘The distinction between the CSE Response Unit and the NWG itself is not clear. The Response Unit should be linked in with each area at a strategic CSE lead level, e.g. through

¹ We had hoped to produce a case study to showcase the work of the Youth Engagement lead and the Plymouth Youth Panel but unfortunately were unable to schedule the interview with the lead during the research window.
the LSCB CSE group. This would provide a SPOC in each area to initiate a co-ordinated local approach to queries/ request for support, which is mindful of existing local services.’ Survey respondent

A wider remit

The context and definition of CSE is constantly changing, and practitioners are at different points in the journey to tackle CSE locally. Within this picture, interviewees and survey respondents both described the need for the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit to be flexible and adapt to these wider circumstances. A flexible approach refers to both the subject matter (specific CSE focus) as well as broadening out the focus – namely, beyond the age of 18, to incorporate young people at the point of transition. As one survey respondent explained:

‘The remit should be wider. The support and interest stops at 18, but the risk of abuse and the impact [of abuse] does not.’

Survey respondent

The survey asked respondents whether there were any specific CSE areas that concerned them, or which they would like to learn more about. The issue of transitions was of greatest concern for respondents, with 51% (n=43) selecting this as an area, followed by 48% (n=41) expressing interest over information on county lines and 35% (n=30) interested in gang violence. This is illustrated in Figure 13 below.

Figure 13: Are there any specific CSE areas that concern you, or which you would like to know more about?

As Figure 13 demonstrates, the same survey question also asks respondents to indicate specific process or areas of practice that interest them. Engaging children and young people in planning and decision-making is of interest to 45% (n=39) of respondents, whereas 34% are interested in engaging parents in the process. Just under a third of respondents indicated further interest in workforce development and training (29% n=25). Finally, around a quarter of respondents are interested in strategic CSE development (24% n=20) and implementing CSE action plans (27% n=23).
Impact findings

The evaluation framework identified the following key questions that explore the impact of the CSE Response Unit on the practitioners it works with. These questions are:

1. What has been the impact of the CSE Response Unit on raising the profile of CSE and how to tackle it?
2. How has the CSE Response Unit helped build the capacity of practitioners?
3. How has the CSE Response Unit helped practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action?

Findings against these areas are presented thematically in this section of the report.

Raising the profile of CSE and how to tackle it

Interviews with practitioners described their different starting points to tackling CSE and how that drove very specific workstreams to meet their individual, organisational or local needs. Part of this picture were individuals who had no experience of CSE and who needed to quickly grasp the key issues, and other cohorts who were highly experienced in CSE but looking to target specific or burgeoning areas of local concern, such as county lines or trafficking. One of the challenges of the CSE Response Unit – not to mention the NWG Network more widely – is to be able to consistently respond to these differing levels of awareness and interest.

Raising the profile of CSE

The survey asked respondents to consider the extent to which their awareness of CSE-related issues had increased as a result of their work with teams. As shown in graph 14 below, of those who had worked with the CSE Response Unit directly, two-thirds (66% n=6) either agreed or highly agreed that their contact with the team had increased their awareness of issues relating to CSE. This finding was broadly echoed by the wider membership, with 67% (n=49) reporting this to be the case.

Figure 14: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that your contact with the team has increased your awareness of issues relating to CSE?
Survey respondents particularly valued the work of the teams to raise awareness of relevant CSE resources and the latest research and training. Survey respondents described how this information could help them inform and shape their practice. As one respondent commented:

‘They informed me about help that I didn’t know existed and made me much more aware of the problems that many children face.’ Survey respondent

There are different ways that the CSE Response Unit can raise awareness of CSE issues. It can either be through direct contact, or it can be through the various communication structures put in place by the wider NWG Network. This ability to feed into the NWG Network, so that experiences can be projected on a national level, is seen as a hugely valuable resource, as the following respondent explained:

‘[The biggest impact has been that] issues identified locally have been fed through the NWG to the national forums.’ Survey respondent

Increasing understanding about how to tackle CSE

Survey respondents were asked to reflect whether their contact with the CSE Response Unit had supported their understanding of what to do if they needed to tackle an incident or incidences of CSE locally. As graph 15 below illustrates, responses to this question were much more mixed, potentially reflecting the complexity of tackling CSE and the journey that many are on to shape these plans.

Of those who had worked directly with the CSE Response Unit, 44% (n=4) either agreed or highly agreed that their contact with the team had increased their understanding of what to do when tackling CSE locally. Again, this is broadly matched by the wider membership, with 48% (n=34) believing this also to be the case.

Figure 15: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that your contact with the team has increased your understanding of what to do when tackling an incidence of CSE locally?
Building the capacity of practitioners

The evaluation revealed the wide variety of ways in which the CSE Response Unit worked to build the capacity of practitioners. The case studies in the following section explore some of these examples in greater depth. The nature of the support – and practitioner needs – can vary over time, as the following quote suggests:

‘When I first managed CSE work in my area the network helped me develop good practice, but since then the expert knowledge has helped me with specific challenges in partnership work.’ Survey respondent

As graph 3 (page 10) demonstrated, two-thirds (68%) of all respondents have downloaded resources from the website. Almost a half have accessed information through social media and/or the website and the membership (46% and 45% respectively), and a fifth (20%) have attended workforce development or training. These suggest various ways in which the wider membership draws upon NWG Network resources, even if they don’t have direct contact with a CSE Response Unit team member.

Building individual confidence

The survey probed the extent to which respondents agreed that contact with the team improved their confidence in developing high-quality action plans to address CSE. Of those who had direct contact with the CSE Response Unit, two-thirds (66% n=6) either agreed or highly agreed this was the case. For the wider membership, 55% (n=39) felt this was the case.

Figure 16: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that your contact with the team has improved your confidence in developing high-quality action plans that will address CSE?

As revealed by the following quotes, the work of the CSE Response Unit to review and audit plans is particularly valued by survey respondents.

‘[The biggest impact has been the] introduction of the CSE assessment tool and review of transition process.’ Survey respondent
‘The audit of our service led to improved systems, processes and therefore outcomes for children.’ Survey respondent

‘[The biggest impact has been] putting the correct action plan in place.’ Survey respondent

Building organisational capacity and skills

The survey also asked respondents to reflect on the extent to which contact with the teams had helped build organisational capacity and skills. Responses from both cohorts were positive here, with 66% (n=6) of those who had worked directly with the CSE Response Unit saying they either agreed or highly agreed that contact with the team helped build relevant skills and capacity of their organisation to tackle CSE. Just under a half (48% n=34) of the wider membership thought this was the case, which is significant given a quarter (25% n=18) did not think this question applied to them. This is presented in Figure 17 below.

Figure 17: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that your contact with the team has helped you build the relevant skills and capacity of your organisation to tackle CSE?

Survey responses reveal the significant impact of training upon their wider workforce, as illustrated by the following quotes:

‘[The biggest impact has been the] refinement of our service model, up-skilling of case workers.’ Survey respondent

‘We have developed an effective work programme aimed at the better identification and management of CSE.’ Survey respondent

Helping practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action

For practitioners looking to design new strategy and bring it to life, engaging a wide range of local partners was essential. This helped to fully scope out the local issues – as well as assets – to contextualise CSE, as well as map out the stakeholders who could support in mobilising the plan to action.
One of the key strengths of the CSE Response Unit to emerge through interviews was the way in which the team (and wider NWG Network) had a network of contacts upon which it could draw, both in terms of specialist areas but also across different parts of the country. The ability of the CSE Response Unit to support practitioners to bring together stakeholders from a range of local organisations – either as a facilitator, or directly drawing upon their own contacts – was hugely valued by interviewees.

This area was probed in the survey, which asked respondents to reflect upon the extent they agreed that their contact with the team helped them bring together stakeholders from across a range of organisations to tackle CSE together. Of those who had direct contact with the CSE Response Unit, 55% either agreed or strongly agreed with this statement. A significant proportion of the wider membership did not think this was relevant to them.

**Figure 18: To what extent do you agree (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) that your contact with the team has helped you bring together stakeholders from across a range of organisations to tackle CSE together?**
Impact case studies

This section presents a series of case studies drawn up from interviews with NWG Network and CSE Response Unit staff and the practitioners with whom they work. These case studies contain evidence against the following key evaluation questions:

- How does the CSE Response Unit help build the capacity of practitioners?
- How does the CSE Response Unit help practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action?
- What is the impact of the CSE Response Unit on raising the profile of CSE and how to tackle it?
- What is the impact on the national context, i.e. transition work, end gang violence, other government priorities?

A short summary of each case study is provided below alongside the CSE Response Unit objective it maps against (although there is overlap across all strands).

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>No.</th>
<th>Summary</th>
<th>Objective</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td><strong>Supporting the future workforce:</strong> The CSE Response Unit has supported Sheffield University to design a module focused on understanding the perpetrator from a criminal justice perspective, which has also helped students reconcile the impact of CSE within their own communities.</td>
<td>Raising the profile of CSE and how to tackle it</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td><strong>The two-way relationship with the Met police:</strong> The two-way relationship between the NWG and the Met police has meant that they have each been able to draw upon the networks of each other, to meet their own separate and mutual objectives.</td>
<td>Raising the profile of CSE and how to tackle it, Helping to build the capacity of practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3</td>
<td><strong>Supporting a local system (in the West Midlands) to tackle CSE:</strong> The CSE Response Unit has supported a local authority public health colleague (new to her role and to CSE) in bringing together local stakeholders to assess the effectiveness of the West Midlands’ response to CSE, and to design a framework that brings together local partners and clearly articulates the role of public health.</td>
<td>Helping to build the capacity of practitioners, Helping practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4</td>
<td><strong>Building tools to improve future practice – the Assessment tool:</strong> The CSE Response Unit has designed the Assessment tool in direct response to key concerns coming out of scoping work with members and practitioners. This tool moves practice away from tick-based or indicator-led approaches to a tool with children and young people and adults at its heart.</td>
<td>Impact on the national context (good practice in assessment), Helping to build the capacity of practitioners</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>5</td>
<td><strong>Building tools for the future – the Benchmarking tool:</strong> Recognising that parents are rarely treated as equal partners in CSE cases, the CSE Response Unit Parental Engagement Lead worked with parents to design a Benchmarking tool to support frontline</td>
<td>Impact on the national context (good practice in engaging parents), Helping to build the capacity of practitioners</td>
</tr>
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practitioners to consider how they engage parents in the overall process.

| 6 | **Designing an action plan and turning it into a reality (through the Liverpool forum):** The CSE Response Unit has supported the North West CSE coordinator lead in bringing together key stakeholders from across partners, to generate an action plan and support the implementation in practice over four meetings. | Helping to build the capacity of practitioners  
Helping practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action |
|---|---|---|
| 7 | **Shaping the local public health response to CSE in the East Midlands:** The NWG Network and CSE Response Unit designed and facilitated a regional event, to understand what CSE looks like in an East Midlands context and the role of different stakeholders in tackling it. This led to a public health commitment to support practitioners to spot signs of CSE in their daily work. | Helping to build the capacity of practitioners  
Helping practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action  
Impact on the national context (public health) |
| 8 | **Understanding transitions:** Local authorities are increasingly contacting the CSE Response Unit with concerns over the risk of CSE at the point of transition between children and adult services. Drawing upon the Skills and Knowledge Register, the CSE Response Unit has a ‘facilitated learning’ approach, to support local areas identify the issues and put a multi-agency plan in place to tackle them. | Helping to build the capacity of practitioners  
Helping practitioners put new operational practice/strategy into action  
Impact on the national context (transitions) |
| 9 | **Giving survivors a voice:** The Voice project, funded by the EU and managed by Edge Hill University, puts the voices of survivors of CSE in sport at the heart of its work. By giving survivors a platform to tell their stories the project has acted as a therapeutic network for those who have participated. Sports England has funded follow-up activity, meaning the survivors are now directly shaping future policy and safeguarding processes. | Raising the profile of CSE and how to tackle it  
Impact on the national context (CSE in sport) |
Sheffield Hallam: supporting the future workforce

Reason for contact

Sheffield Hallam is an applied university, which aims to deliver courses that integrate theory with practice. A senior lecturer in criminology, with a background in probation, was developing a module called Simulating Justice Practice as part of a third year module for students studying criminology, criminology and psychology, criminology and law and criminology and sociology. This module was to address a gap in the current course about the role of the perpetrator in CSE:

It came mainly from my frustration on how little the perpetrators are talked about in relation to CSE. Lots of talks of roles of agencies and council, but not a lot of talk about why are people doing this? And what do we do with people who have committed these offenses? What happens next?

This increased focus on the perpetrator was designed to improve students’ understanding of a range of preventative, rehabilitative and probation approaches. And yet the course also had personal objectives, particularly as many of the students attending Sheffield Hallam came from communities which have had direct experience of high-profile CSE cases:

We’ve got people coming to us from Rotherham who talk of the Far Right and the EDL and how they’re recruiting in their community.

As such, the module was also designed to air and address student concerns surrounding CSE in their communities, as well as broaden representation of a ‘typical’ perpetrator beyond what is typically portrayed in the media.

CSE Response Unit support

The senior lecturer did some research on CSE and through that found the NWG. The NWG put him in touch with the CSE Response Unit Operational Lead to discuss the module and the ways in which they could support the work. This included:

- Support with the module’s content: particularly around the knowledge base and the social model of consent
- Support to write a range of case studies: four cases studies of different individuals serving their sentence for CSE
- Identifying speakers for the course to run weekly workshops: this included both CSE Response Unit staff and others identified through the NWG Network including a journalist and psychologist

This support not only shaped the course content, but also uncovered different angles to explore, including the role of the media in covering CSE cases:

I sent all these case studies to [CSE Response Unit] and received some feedback and comments on them and some feedback on how they might appear in the newspaper and how they might be portrayed. Which made me think we should have some media focus in the module as it really shapes how people in society see these offenses.
The module was designed in 2017 and started in January 2018.

The impact of the work

While the module is still in delivery, early feedback of the students has been very positive. Anticipated impacts include:

Impact on the future workforce: Wicked combination of theory and practice:

The module has integrated academic learning with current professional practice, which is quite a wicked combination for students. They’re motivated to engage because it’s current. They’re listening to people who have engaged in CSE. They get that up-to-date insight but also take it away and relate it to theory and models to understand critically what’s happening in the field relating to CSE.

Impact on student’s personal lives: Supporting students to make sense of the impact of CSE in their communities:

Having NWG involved has supported the students to make sense of what’s happening in their own communities, whether that’s around consent or dealing with family members who express sympathies with extremist groups, or coming across other divisions within their communities… So, it really has had an impact on supporting students to make sense of their own experiences of CSE.

Impact on NWG: support for CSE Awareness Day:

I think the approach is if you’re working with an organisation you want to give something back… We’re not allowed to pay charities [for speakers] so I look at other ways to collaborate. One idea was to support the CSE Awareness Day, so we’ll have a mini conference with three key speakers.

Should student feedback be positive, it is anticipated that this module will become a regular part of probation training in the future.
The MET: a two-way relationship

Reason for contact

The MET police have had a long relationship with the NWG. The Detective Inspector who is responsible for the CSE team has attended several NWG conferences, most recently presenting the key findings of a Marginal Gains project at the 2017 event. He has also supported the CSE Awareness day and accessed resources through the website.

The Detective Inspector is responsible for identifying and sharing best practice and running development sessions for his team, and also delivers professional bespoke CSE training to borough officers twice a year. At the 2017 conference he was introduced to the CSE Response Unit police lead where they discussed the different ways the CSE Response Unit could support the MET in future.

At the same time, the police lead was trying to support a specific case in London and was looking for an introduction to the right person at the MET. The Detective Inspector was able to open the right doors to allow this contact to happen. This is described as a two-way relationship between the MET and NWG.

Our relationship was borne through both ways. The CSE Response Unit identified some issues they were able to assist with, and we got the CSE teams to engage with them. And then they came down to London to support us.

CSE Response Unit support

The CSE Response Unit police lead delivered multiple events to borough CSE teams. These events included: an overview of the Response Unit and background; the different ways it could support officers in their day-to-day work and investigations; access to the specialist teams; and more general materials and resources on the website. As well as finding the sessions full of relevant information, the Detective Inspector also felt that it was important that the CSE Response Unit police lead came from a police background, as it helped engage the police offers and answer their questions:

[The police lead] was engaging, an ex-copper [so he] understands the language, he was well received. Officers get bombarded by information, so conveying messages around CSE in a language with credibility helps them to understand it. And he was able to understand the context of the questions that comes back from officers too.

In addition to the events, the Detective Inspector also values the on-going partnership between the NWG and, in particular, given that the CSE agenda runs across stakeholders, the ability to exploit their networks beyond the police:

We work for a number of partners because of the work that we do. CSE is a wider problem than law enforcement and NWG has access to wider contacts in health and education. We go when we need them.

The impact of the work

The primary impact of the face-to-face sessions has been to increase awareness of borough CSE officers of what is available through the CSE Response Unit. This is seen to be more effective than simply signposting teams by email:
Many officers are therefore able to know where to go –
people to speak to and library of material. We’ve always
shared information but in the flood of emails it doesn’t work
the same way as an awareness session.

In addition, the two-way relationship between the Met and NWG has been strengthened
through the work. This has allowed the NWG to meet other objectives, from supporting
an individual case to gaining access to police networks and resources, e.g. the Detective
Inspector helped find a venue for the London launch of the risk assessment tool.

I value everything [about the NWG]. Knowing the NWG
exists, and I have a point of contact to get things done [is
invaluable]. And it works both ways, when they need me I
help. That’s communication that’s been able to make that
happen.
West Midlands: supporting a local system to tackle CSE

Reason for contact

In May 2015, the director of a West Midlands public health department asked:

Is this department doing everything it should in supporting the local system in tackling CSE?

New to her role, and to CSE, a locum Public Health Consultant spent several months researching a response. She read national and local reports and talked to colleagues, to tease out the issues and get a broader sense of the local challenges in tackling CSE. At that time there was no guidance covering the role of public health in CSE.

Over that summer two different colleagues signposted her to the NWG, which put her in touch with the CSE Response Unit’s health lead. She emailed him and set out her challenge:

I’d thought of how public health could contribute across the CSE pathway through partnership working, prevention and, in evaluating evidence… but that needed to be tested out. What could we actually do? What was needed?

CSE Response Unit support

The health lead ‘responded very positively’ and agreed to support the development of a public health response to the CSE agenda. He also offered her the opportunity to use the NWG Health Forum in January 2016, providing a means by which a conversation could be had with a wide range of health professionals from across the country who were actively working with those experiencing or at risk of CSE. Colleagues from Public Health England (West Midlands) also contributed to this discussion. The forum was an opportunity to focus on a theoretical framework and to ask health professionals about the challenges they faced in tackling CSE:

That was one thing which was really helpful in terms of that initial workshop, to tease out from frontline health professionals their thoughts on the scope of what they were able to do and what public health could to do help.

The forum produced some key themes and issues. Working alongside NWG and Public Health England, these were explored at a West Midland-wide workshop in April 2016, for public health and local CSE teams. Each LA was invited to bring along relevant people, to understand the areas where CSE teams needed support and to ‘start to have a dialogue’ about where public health could help. This event was hugely popular and benefitted from the profile of NWG’s support:

The [health lead] and [NWG CEO] actively participated in that event. The CEO gave the keynote address and the health lead gave a presentation and supported some of the group discussions. That was really very helpful.

The impact of the work

As a consequence of the local event, the Public Health Consultant had the right relationships – including West Midlands Public Health teams, CSE coordinators, police coordinators – to develop a self-assessment framework that addressed the different aspects of what the public health role in CSE could be. This included: strategic partnership working; improved collection and interpretation of data; prevention; roles in
primary prevention and secondary prevention (and evidence to support different types); and roles in commissioning services. The self-assessment framework is now the blueprint for a ‘massive piece of work’ in understanding and improving the screening and referral processes of identifying CSE across NHS and public health commissioned services in the sub-region.

This framework and subsequent activity has built upon CSE Response Unit support but is now led by Public Health England (West Midlands), the Public Health consultant and key partners:

I don’t know where we’d have gone or where we’d have got to if we hadn’t had them… Their willingness to support our work was really welcome. They directed us to info and support and actively engaged in our initial work. We’ve got what we needed and are now able to develop it on our own.

The self-assessment framework is having an impact beyond the West Midlands area. Through their relationship with Public Health England, colleagues in Yorkshire and Humber have asked to use the framework with their local stakeholders. The tool has been adapted in East Midlands, Bristol and Sandwell. Feedback on the framework will be used to refine the assessment tool before potentially disseminating it more widely. There are also conversations on widening the scope from CSE to include modern-day slavery, drug exploitation and the wider context of abuse.
Building tools to improve future practice: the Assessment tool

Reason for tool

In March 2015, in the aftermath of coverage of the CSE case in Rotherham, the chief social worker wrote to all children’s services to ask that local risk assessment tools were reviewed to ensure they were fit for purpose. This letter included reference to caution around scoring methods in assessment tools.

Around the same time, the NWG was consulting its membership, scoping out their common challenges as they were setting up the CSE Response Unit. As part of this they held three scoping events across the country. One of the consistent challenges fed back by practitioners was in relation to assessment tools, and how effective they were in supporting the workforce to exercise professional judgement, as they were often tick box tools. The particular practice of describing children as low, medium and high risk was a concern for NWG. As the Skills Registry consultant, engaged to support the assessment tool, reflected:

I remember the NWG CEO being child-focused in the initial discussion. She asked, how can you use ‘high risk’ to describe a child being exploited?

What happened?

The Skills Registry consultant was commissioned to work on the tool alongside one of the CSE Response Unit specialists. At the time the NWG used an indicator led tool, but research from Early Intervention Foundation (completed by Coventry University) challenged the indicator-led approach for having little evidence behind the indicators and for weighting the indicators the same. As chair to one of the NWG forums, the consultant sense-checked an approach with the forum and, together with the CSE Response Unit lead, drafted up a framework across three domains: the child/young person, family and living environment and locality and wider community, which are explored as prompts against a triangle model.

During the early drafts, the team consulted young people who had been sexually exploited at a residential unit, to gather their views on the proposed tool. Additionally, a piece of research commissioned by the Centre of Expertise (delivered by Coventry University) on the use of assessment tools was released. The research findings complemented the approach of the CSE Response Unit, particularly in terms of working to mitigate challenges faced by supporting frontline staff to engage with new approaches. As the Skills Registry consultant commented:

Many of the findings (raised in the research) are addressed by the tool. The tool is not indicator led, and it focuses on the perpetrator and parents are involved which means that it is not blaming the child. The next step is getting the frontline to adopt this new approach.

Once designed, the assessment tool was put through a series of additional consultations including:

- Consultations with parents connected to the Parents Against Child Exploitation (PACE) charity
- Piloted in 10 cases with follow-up with practitioners who completed the tool across the UK
This series of consultations has generated a tool that has children and young people and parents ‘at its heart’. As the CSE Response Unit CYP lead commented:

And in the end, they came out with a tool with children and parents at the heart of it. What young people had to say was embedded into it, and it was live, and they were proud of it. Credit to the people that did it properly.

The tool was launched at 12 sites across the UK, where the team presented the tool and asked areas whether they would be interested in piloting the tool in more depth. It is currently undergoing depth piloting at three sites involving five Local Authorities. Each site is piloting the tool in a way that supports their local CSE pathway.

The CSE Response Unit lead and the Skills Registry consultant have done some staff training in relation to the tool as well as embedding some principles of the approach, particularly in terms of trauma informed practice, engaging children and young people and parents, and in taking a strengths-based approach to ‘pull’ the victim away from the perpetrator. This training was evaluated and feedback is very positive. Train the trainer sessions will also be provided to the pilot sites.

**Next steps**

The vision is that the tool will be available on the NWG website, and available for free download. Pilot sites have the option of up to 100 staff trained for free out of the CSE Response Unit budget, but sites beyond these will be asked to fund the training themselves. Training is seen to be key, to ensure the assessment tool is properly adapted across sites, and can take place through a range of formats with both frontline practitioners and senior policy groups.

The framework can be applied for other forms of exploitation beyond CSE. The prompts under the three domains of children, family and community are seen as relevant for other forms of exploitation, for example gangs or county lines.

Increasingly there is recognition of other forms of exploitation like County Lines... Local areas are grappling with how to respond to it? But it doesn’t need to be any different [to tackling CSE]. The principles the same, engage the young person and their families and work to disrupt of the perpetrators.

A lecturer from the University of Gloucester has offered their research students to evaluate the phase 1 roll out and frontline workers’ early experiences of using the new tool in July 2018. There is a question of how to fund the longer-term impact of the tool in to the future.
Building tools to improve future practice: the Benchmarking tool

**Reason for the tool**

Parents are rarely seen as equal partners within the CSE context. Child protection and safeguarding approaches are primarily designed to deal with risks inside the home. When abuse is happening outside the home, parents report feeling blamed and put on the offensive during child protection procedures.

When scoping out her role, the CSE Response Unit parent lead went to the membership. She asked NWG Network members to get in touch about what was working well when engaging parents, as well as gaps to consider. Of all the responses she received it became clear that consistency of approach is a concern, and that parental leads can feel isolated when trying to improve practice across the system. This suggested the potential of developing a consistent benchmarking tool for local areas to evaluate their approach to working with parents.

**What happened?**

Together with a member of the CSE Response Unit Skills Registry consultant, the parental lead devised a benchmark tool based on 10 standards focused on strategic leadership, commissioning and frontline practice. It includes indicators and a self-assessment tool, with action planning templates. The tool has been designed in consultation with parents and a group of specialist parent workers.

This process of parental consultation generated some very recent examples of parent blame, further supporting the need for frontline workers to review their approaches. As the Skills Registry consultant commented:

> A mum whose child was on a child protection plan wanted to reschedule a meeting, as she had to work on that day. She asked for it to be on a different day. The [frontline workers] decided the meeting would continue without the parent. In the case notes it said that the parent chose to put her work over her family. In another case, a parent was given new sensitive material about their child’s exploitation at a meeting. The parent reacted angrily and was asked to leave. The action from the meeting was to put the parent on the anger management course.

Once the benchmarking tool was designed and reviewed by parents, it was disseminated for pilot testing to four Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) across the UK. These sites were selected as they have very different levels of parental engagement. The pilot is designed to understand their experiences of using the tool, how easy (or not) it is to use, how long it takes to complete, whether sites engaged parents in the process, what worked well and areas for future development. It also asks sites to reflect on the action plans and whether they anticipate they it will lead to improved outcomes for children and young people. As the parent lead commented:

> Parents have contributed, professionals have looked at it, it’s gone out to pilot, for LSCB to see how they get on with the process. We know the questions are fine but how does it work as a document? Does it make them generate evidence and understand their impact? Does it give them an action plan at the end, with an overview of strengths and weaknesses?
Early feedback from sites has suggested that the tool is holistic, and frontline staff have commented how it made them realise the importance of positive parental engagement.

The next steps

I am passionate about it – it will help organisations and it will help me. This is the first part of the journey, I say to frontline workers, take the tool and benchmark yourself.

Parent lead

The plan is for the benchmarking tool to be an online tool available for download to NWG Network members. While there are 10 standards, practitioners will be encouraged to focus on their specific areas of interest. The aim is to launch the tool at the CSE Awareness Day or during the workshop on ‘Making Meetings Work’ at the NWG national conference, in order to enhance its reach and profile.

Once the tool is launched, the CSE Response Unit parent lead will focus on the next steps, particularly in terms of turning action plans into reality and then in evaluating the longer-term impact. As she commented:

Once a LSCB does this online, what would happen next? Generate an action plan to discuss? Come into NWG so we can help them further on their journey? Go into health check afterwards? That’s the bit that needs looking at now, what next...? And how do we evaluate the effectiveness of this tool as well?

While there is no official evaluation of the pilots so far, the Skills Registry consultant has some positive reflections on how the tool has been received by frontline workers:

The tool ‘challenges’ people to think about current arrangements/practice, helps them reflect on what needs to change/gaps and gives a voice to the needs of parents. So, in summary it works – and I would say very well.
Reason for contact

Working to support forces in the North West to tackle CSE, a regional CSE coordinator began to set up local CSE disruption meetings, to improve processes around disruption at both a practice and policy level. As part of this activity, all regional CSE coordinators went on a course in Cambridge attended by the NWG. As such, and having previously attended NWG training at their Derby head office, the CSE coordinator had links with the NWG before the CSE Response Unit was formally launched.

When the CSE Response Unit was launched, the regional CSE coordinator informed representatives at strategic governance groups and sent out emails to forces and partners to raise awareness of the Unit. She invited the CSE Response Unit police lead to attend regional groups to talk first hand to the forces, and then arranged some smaller meetings with strategic partners in other local authority regions.

Through these meetings it became clear that the CSE coordinator’s Liverpool contacts were keen for further CSE Response Unit support, to help facilitate a series of conversations about different elements of CSE – links to criminal exploitation, county lines, drug dealing among others – with a range of partners across the region, including police, education and social care.

CSE Response Unit support

In response to this request for further support, the CSE Response Unit police lead designed a series of four meetings. The first session, occurring in February 2018, was a forum to examine victim blaming for CSE and different legislation on county lines, with invites extending to a range of partners including staff from children’s homes, the local authority rep for exploitation, school officers, probation and YOT, and not to mention other CSE teams. As the CSE regional coordinator commented:

> After two days, every place was booked up. And I had to turn people away. It was really successful and the feedback was good on the day.

The subsequent meetings are designed to build an action plan, to start problem solving across the partners. This action plan will serve as commitment from partners. As the police lead commented:

> The forum was so successful – now we need to keep momentum and build relationships. I’ll facilitate the first four meetings and then they own them. This will help develop the resilience in the area and then the key people can go and influence the influences such as city leaders.

The impact of the work

Feedback from the first action plan session was very positive, and subsequent sessions are in the process of being set up.

Alongside this strategic work, the CSE Response Unit has been supporting other strands of related activity in the local authority. This includes a forum and strategic activity around the issue of transitions. As the regional CSE coordinator commented:

> I’ve always found transition to be a gap and everyone who works in Child Protection will agree. The CSE Response Unit lead has been doing a lot of work in the northwest,
mostly with my force but has also involved children’s services trying to teach them and get them better around dealing with transition. [The lead has] been to the strategic governance group to do an overview of the work and I’ve arranged for him to go to the local safeguarding children’s board group to put him in touch with the partners there. So, he’s hitting all sorts of levels.

The coordinator also described how she contacts the CSE Response Unit with queries or issues that fall outside her knowledge base. She particularly values the wide range of specialisms held by the team and described support from the education and communities lead when trying to engage schools around a specific issue:

We had one case where young girls were being groomed and set up for drug dealing. There was nothing standing out around CSE but I had concerns that CSE might be there and not detected. So, I spoke to the CSE Response Unit education lead about children with disabilities and education, as I had a problem getting schools on board.

We went to meeting with police and LSCB partners about what was happening and to educate schools. Some were receptive and some standoffish, so the education lead helped with legislation to get into schools. There have been lots of times where I’ve phoned them up and spoke to them about specific issues and they’ve given loads of advice and help.
Reason for contact

The East Midlands is a big and complex area. It incorporates a mix of inner cities and some very rural areas, from Northampton right up to the coast of Lincolnshire, and everything in between. While the West Midlands is known for having some well-developed responses to CSE, the East Midlands sexual health lead for Public Health England (PHE) wanted to review and improve their local approach, particularly as CSE was increasingly in the national and local spotlight.

There had been a couple of cases of historical child abuse in Nottingham, including the actress Samantha Morton who had been abused in foster care. Furthermore, a young person had been murdered in the region, which had been picked up as an education piece by Leicestershire police. The PHE sexual health lead wanted to understand the extent to which examples of local CSE was individual pockets of activity or signs of a systemic issue, as well as explore the ways in which different stakeholders were working together to address it. She contacted her West Midlands counterpart who told her about the NWG and put her in touch with them. As she commented:

That’s how I first got in touch. I was astounded [I hadn’t heard of them sooner]. They’re an organisation that fits in my home region. They were equally perplexed [but] they were delighted we were starting to engage.

CSE Response Unit support

The PHE sexual health lead was invited into the NWG to discuss the opportunity to engage the wider East Midlands around the topic and to meet with the Chief Executive. The initial idea was for the CSE Response Unit to facilitate a regional event, to bring together a range of stakeholders to discuss some focused CSE issues:

In the absence of anyone making a move on CSE in East Midlands, we needed to do it as a PHE response. One opportunity is to use the stakeholders we work with to get an understanding of what’s going on out there with our safeguarding colleagues, education and police… It was an idea of an event to pull people together which grew some long legs quite quickly.

The event quickly grew in size and scale. As well as wanting to address specific aspects of CSE – in particular how it varied subtly from other forms of abuse – the potential to link up different stakeholders became clear, particularly as some relationships needed support to re-engage with each other. In addition, there was a national policy angle, upon which they could capitalise, as the PHE sexual health lead explained:

We realised our event was going to coincide with the Public Health England public response to CSE, which was about putting a framework document out there… So, at that point it got ministerial.

The NWG CEO offered to chair the event, which ‘was brilliant, it gave us a little bit more credibility in terms of what we were trying to do’. As part of a mini-steering group, the CSE Response Unit health lead was described as ‘unstinting’ with his time, and always available to sense-check an idea or make suggestions about how to tackle a session. The PHE sexual health lead also talked about her access to the wider NWG networks,
particularly in terms of identifying and securing speakers for the day, including someone with direct experience of CSE:

To make it more powerful, we wanted a victim to speak, to make it real. And the best contribution on the day was having that contact. And she was really comfortable with [the NWG] and had a really strong story to tell.

The event took place at Notts County Football club in July 2017 and was seen to be a huge success. It had a waiting list of over 50 people to 100 delegate places. The day contained videos, very little PowerPoint and lots of opportunities for different practitioners to talk very openly about the issues they were facing. As the PHE sexual health lead commented, in relation to the draw of the event:

It was a phenomenally successful event – fresh and current. I think it was also the first time all of those people were invited to one place together.

The impact of the work

CSE is a fairly new agenda to me, and I just could not have done it without them.

As well as a successful event on the day, Public Health England committed to follow up the event and decide what their organisational response ought to be. Their particular focus is on spotting the signs of CSE, and working with police, local authority and health colleagues (including GPs, dentists and hospital clinicians) to disseminate information and deliver Continuing Professional Development (CPD) training. This strand of activity has been led by Public Health England but with the CSE Response Unit’s health lead input as and when is required.

In addition, the event launched the national Public Health England framework, in which the NWG is referenced.
Understanding transitions

Reasons for the workstream
The point of transition, where young people are transferred from children to adult services, can be a complex process. Not only does it involve a multi-agency approach, streamlining information across a wide range of stakeholders, but it is also at a point where young people are particularly vulnerable, as they test boundaries and seek greater independence. From a CSE perspective, this is a risky time for young people, exacerbated by the handover from one support structure to another.

These issues around transition are not limited to one area but are recurring UK wide. Recognising this as an increasing area of concern for NWG Network members, the CEO invited a Skills Registry consultant to work with the CSE Response Unit, to lead the team’s response. In doing so, the consultant teamed up with a Regional CSE coordinator for West Midland police who had been building the relationship between the NWG Network and forces in her region.

CSE Response Unit support
The Register of Skills and Knowledge consultant and the Regional CSE coordinator took the Benchmarking Tool to a number of local authorities that had got in touch with the CSE Response Unit to say they were concerned about CSE during transitions. This tool helped them scope out and explore in depth the key issues facing these areas. They also set up an electronic working group with around 50 contributors, to get a wider view of transitions. The consultant and CSE coordinator fed back the findings to the CSE Response Unit and highlighted the commonality of the issues facing local authorities, regardless of their size, population or the different transition processes in place.

Given the emerging need, the CSE Response Unit invited the Register of Skills and Knowledge consultant and Regional CSE coordinator to continue to work with local authority sites. Several areas asked for complete review of their transition process, to understand what was working well, who was involved, and to identify the risks in the current process. This was achieved by bringing together local partners, including those in senior strategic and practitioner roles, for a series of review meetings.

These sessions were used to identify shared concerns and objectives, review learning and best practice from across the UK and to develop joint action plans. As the consultant explained, the key to this work was a facilitated learning approach, which is particularly useful when partner relationships are strained or require some re-building. The approach is useful in effecting culture change, which is particularly important for an issue such as transitions, which requires multi-agency buy-in. As such, facilitated learning invites different stakeholders to work through the issues together and encourages greater ownership over the final strategy. As the Skills Registry consultant explained:

[Facilitated learning] is not telling people what to do, but how they could do it and what support you can give.

The impact of the work
Feedback from the transition activity so far is very positive. As the Skills Registry consultant commented:

Every person we took this to have all engaged and invited.
From Cumbria, to Cornwall, people have engaged at a strategic level.
What has been particularly effective is the close work with strategic leads, and the facilitated learning model in bringing stakeholders together to work through their issues and identify shared action plans. A number of areas have completely reviewed their entire transition process and are delivering new strategy as a result of their work. These are models that can help other local authorities review their process.

Indeed, the Skills Registry consultant explains how there is a snowball effect in the area of transitions. As he is working with the CSE Response Unit across a large number of local authorities, even more people are getting in touch to find out how they too can learn from the work and be supported. As he explained:

\begin{quote}
Word of mouth is spreading and people are now emailing me about transitions and how I can help.
\end{quote}

This increased demand suggests the scale of concern in relation to transitions across UK local authority areas, as more areas focus on an improved transitions process as an important means of keeping their young people safe.
The Voice project

Reason for contact

Edge Hill University runs the Sports Respect your Rights project, which works to empower young people in sport around the issue of CSE. The project coordinator, a Reader in Sociology with a background in researching CSE in sport, got in touch with the NWG Network to discuss the project. From these initial conversations, the project coordinator was invited to deliver a seminar at the NWG Network annual practitioners’ conference. In doing so he met the NWG Network CEO and they discussed an application for EU funding, for a piece of work that became known as the Voice project.

The Voice project was borne out of the sense that in the UK and in other European countries there has been a lot of policy development in Sport since 2001, but the voices of people who had experienced abuse had been shelved or sidelined or forgotten about. As a result, the project was about providing a platform for individuals who wanted to speak about their experiences, either in confidence in research interviews, or on a more public platform during an event. Aside from listening to these voices and responding within academia, a key aim was to provide and generate educational resources from the stories told across the seven participating countries. The project received funding in November 2015 and is scheduled to finish in May 2018.

CSE Response Unit support

The NWG Network played an active role throughout the project, engaging with UK and European partners over that period. They also offered advice and administrative support for a seminar held in the East Midlands Conference Centre for around 40 delegates. This event provided a direct platform for survivors and was attended by policy leads from a range of organisations including Sports England.

As the academic lead commented, NWG Network support went beyond the logistics and provided emotional support for the survivors of CSE that spoke at the event:

> The support [the CEO and the CSE Response Unit team] have given to the survivors involved in the project – we couldn’t have done it without them. [The CEO] spent a great deal of time supporting individual survivors involved in the project, talking them through the process and the difficult experiences of being part of the project. Those sorts of things really did go above and beyond [what was originally agreed].

Around this point, a survivor of CSE in sport – who since has become a member of Sport England’s Survivor’s Advisory Panel – was approached to be part of the project and to speak at the event in Nottingham. This individual particularly welcomed the NWG Network’s commitment to putting survivors’ voices at the heart of the project:

> It’s unusual [to be put at the forefront of work] as it doesn’t happen very often. Since November 2016 I spoke to many organisations responsible for affecting change to try to get the voice of people like me heard. I became very disheartened at the lack of real engagement.

The Survivors Advisory Panel member described how the NWG Network ethos of genuine engagement and co-production extends beyond the Voices programme and into all aspects of follow-up work, outlined in more detail below.
The impact of the work

Impact on survivors
The impact of the Voice project is manifold. Fundamentally, participation in the Voice project has given survivors the platform to tell their stories and to meet other people who have had similar experiences. In doing so, the Voice project has created a therapeutic network from which participants have personally been able to benefit. As the Survivors Advisory Panel member commented:

“It’s been an incredibly powerful force. It’s created a marvellous therapeutic network for people like me. I’m full of praise, it has made a huge difference to my life.

Impact on UK policy
The Voice project has had a distinct impact on a UK policy perspective. Sports England has embraced the recommendations and learning of the Voice project and committed to fund a number of initiatives outlined below:

A Survivors Advisory Panel: this is designed to bring together survivors to discuss safeguarding and policy, with a view to affecting practice. The funding enables members to meet three or four times a year. As the academic lead commented:

“I would never have hoped that it would be an outcome of this project. It’s the first time anything has ever happened like that in sport. It’s a big step forward in how sport deals with this issue. Really significant.

As the Survivors Advisory Panel member commented, the value of the board is in shaping policy to have an impact on future delivery. This is about moving beyond words:

The Survivors Panel scrutinises Sports England policy on safeguarding. So that’s a real result and it feels like that is going to have some teeth. It’s not just to help policy but to assess the impact of policy [so it doesn’t get left] on the shelf.

A one-year post to tackle CSE in Sport, to sit within the CSE Response Unit: this role is designed to ‘plug the gaps’ around safeguarding in Sport. For the academic lead, this funding is testament to a strategic relationship between Sports England and the NWG Network CEO:

[The funding has] come about as an impact of the Voice project but also come through the interpersonal relationship between Sports England and [the NWG CEO]. It’s obviously filling a gap with Sports England but it wasn’t something on their agenda before the Voice project or discussions with NWG.

As the Survivors Advisory Panel member commented:

It’s based on trust. We all trust each other. It’s garnered a real solid trustworthy group of people who are working with an organisation. Trust and respect. It’s so important.

Funding to extend the Voice project in the UK: the aim of this work is to support survivors who wish to take a more proactive role within safeguarding in sport. The new project will enable this activity within an appropriate forum and with the necessary
safeguards in place. It will also evaluate the experiences of those involved so that new learning can be generated and disseminated.

In these ways, Sports England has embraced the ethos of the Voice project, ensuring its momentum is sustained in the longer term.

**Impact on European policy**

In addition to these UK-based examples, the Voice project has had a positive impact on the European countries within which it was also delivered. While the evaluation of the project is ongoing, early indications are that countries that had not previously worked with survivors of CSE in sport have particularly benefitted from the project. As the academic lead suggested, bringing together survivors with a range of key stakeholders helped open doors and move relationships forward:

> The researchers in other countries say it has [had an impact]. The personal stories are the ones that make a difference. Hearing people from your own country and sports sector talking about these things is what affects people, make people change things.
Conclusions and recommendations

Conclusions

As a subject that transcends organisational boundaries, running across the police, schools, health, social services and the wider community, CSE is a distinctly complex and sprawling issue. What is clear from the evaluation is that practitioners have vastly different starting points, from their understanding of CSE, their relationships across different partners and according to their personal work objectives. And as such, when looking for support, they want to draw upon an organisation that is approachable and non-judgemental, independent and trusted, and one which will open up the resources and tailor the bespoke support they require to carve their journey in tackling CSE.

Hosting the CSE Response Unit within the NWG Network has helped the team meet their objectives. The NWG has opened doors and facilitated relationships. It has opened up its membership and networks – whether that’s scoping work with small pockets of close associates to containing general requests within the 14,500-strong e-communications. It has encouraged the CSE Response Unit specialist team to work closely with the practitioners that contact them and invest whatever time they need to gain traction and momentum. It has drawn upon the Register of Skills and Knowledge when needed to bolster capacity or for specific expertise. As a result, the CSE Response Unit has been able to meet the needs of the individual practitioners while also supporting them to take ownership of local CSE activity, maintaining a relationship without fostering a dependency.

Practitioners particularly value the open relationship and the generous investment in time that they receive from the team, regardless of whether they are experienced or new to the field of CSE. They respect the expertise of the specialists; particularly given they often have direct CSE practitioner experience and so implicitly understand their operating environment. As well as the opportunity to sense-check plans and approaches, legislation and guidance, practitioners value the open networks offered through the NWG, whether that is the chance to piggy back onto a practitioner forum to sound-out ideas or making direct contact with a potential partner to open a strategic door. Often practitioners value the support they receive so highly that they feel compelled to support the NWG in return, by encouraging a colleague to present at an event, sourcing a free venue for a presentation or encouraging students to contribute to the CSE Awareness day.

Setting up the CSE Response Unit hasn’t always been straightforward. Internal processes have had to adjust to a new team, leading to the recruitment of more back office support. Specialists are often out of the office, which has meant it has taken a little time to build up a collaborative team culture. There are new IT systems which still need embedding, and the team are so busy, it can be difficult to keep up with strategic planning, whether that is: follow-up for individuals who have attended events or training; consistently evaluating their practice and tools; or in planning new workstreams or activities. Despite this, practitioner experiences remain almost entirely positive, and both the NWG and the CSE Response Unit team feel that new team processes and culture are now bedding in.

There are some caveats to the research. Interviews took place with NWG Network and CSE Response Unit staff and a handpicked cohort of practitioners, selected to generate the range of case studies contained in this report. The survey, while completed by 122 respondents, only contained the views of 10 individuals who could confidently claim to have worked with the CSE Response Unit (the others were either unsure or didn’t think they had). Nonetheless, when triangulated, the different data sets echo the key themes and build a bigger picture of the impact of the CSE Response Unit so far.
Recommendations

Be clear about the identity and remit of the CSE Response Unit and NWG Network

The ability (or lack thereof) to clearly distinguish between the CSE Response Unit and NWG Network was a recurrent theme in this research. Interviewees and survey respondents both struggled to delineate the support they received, and this made it methodologically tricky to ensure the evaluation effectively attributed impact to the CSE Response Unit. As such, one recommendation is to clearly identify and articulate the identity and remit of each.

To some extent, a separation of the two might be unnecessary or worse, undermine what currently works about both strands. The evaluation certainly demonstrates how the work of the NWG Network is fundamental to the CSE Response Unit efficacy, not just in facilitating a quick set up and through the back-office support, but also through access to the membership and the network’s trusted brand. Similarly, the CSE Response Unit has enabled the NWG Network to raise its profile and broaden the organisation’s offer.

Nonetheless, NWG Network members and practitioners would like to understand the distinction between the two organisations and their relationships with each other, to help them understand who to approach, at what points, and for what forms of support.

The following recommendations emerged out of this request for strategic clarity, as explained in more detail in the following subsections.

Raise awareness of key workstreams in key policy areas

Building on the previous point there is the potential to sharpen the CSE Response Unit profile against some of the key areas of interest to NWG Network members. The evaluation suggests a number of areas upon which it might be useful to focus.

For example, the Unit is leading national activity in relation to transitions – and 51% of survey respondents would like to learn more about CSE in the context of transitions. Similarly, both the Assessment and Benchmarking tools have a strong focus on engaging children, young people and parents in decision making and planning, and survey respondents register interest in both these areas (engaging children and young people at 43% and parents at 34%).

‘Closing the feedback loop’ whereby the CSE Response Unit shares learning and best practice to be disseminated through the NWG Network membership is one way to raise the profile of work in these key areas. Another way would be to target strategic leads directly and offer a review session to explore their local issues. However, the one caveat to this lies in the capacity of the CSE Response Unit and the Skills Registry consultants to meet any increase in demand.

Building a strategic team culture

CSE Response Unit staff describe how there is an increasing sense of a team culture, whereby they go to each other for advice or support and have a greater understanding of each other’s roles. This is seen to be hugely valuable, particularly in terms of improving their own practice, for example being able to articulate the need to engage children and young people and parents across all aspects of planning. As such, one recommendation is to protect time for the regular team meeting and any other opportunities for the team to bring their different approaches to a problem and brainstorm an issue.

Staff are incredibly busy and travel a lot to sites across the country. While being confident of the quality of their day-to-day work, staff feel less sure that they have the time or capacity to think or act strategically. Some interviewees described a rolling agenda as
helping pin the team down to certain workstreams, as well as helping them to plan across the team. Interviewees suggested that a team strategy, which helps the team to focus their time and prioritise, would help them work together and more strategically to meet the organisational objectives of the NWG.

Raising further awareness of the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit

Practitioners are sometimes surprised not to know about the NWG (or the CSE Response Unit) and wonder whether there are other ways for the organisation to shout about their work and knowledge to a wider audience:

‘They do such brilliant stuff, so they need to be more shouty, [to raise awareness] of what they do. It’s one of those things where they are so good it’s very easy to get wrapped in the day to day.’ Practitioner

A few ideas include:

- ‘Closing the feedback loop’: encouraging the CSE Response Unit to regularly support the NWG with good practice to disseminate through the network newsletter, also acting as a thank you to members who are often consulted for their views.
- Hosting a larger number of forums: again, taking the learning gathered during work with practitioners, of both practice and new themes emerging in CSE, and hosting forums to bring the key messages to a wider audience.
- Increasing social media voice: Having a clearer voice on policy or practice as it emerged, to further increase profile, potentially through a marketing campaign across key partners. As one practitioner interviewee commented, it only takes one initial bit of contact to be ‘smitten for life’.

‘The people that know them appreciate how good they are but not everyone knows them. I don’t know how they would do it but a better marketing campaign across forces and partners, particularly social services, might help. So, partners will go to them more and realise how great they are. Not everyone is aware of them until they go to one of their events – and then they’re smitten for life.’ Practitioner

Having greater clarity over the remit of the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit, and the relationship between them, will help drive this clarity.

Think strategically about sustainability

The CSE Response Unit has supported the growth of the NWG Network, largely around the recruitment of the specialist team and some back-office roles required to support it. There is some concern that this investment of the CSE Response Unit could be at the expense of the longer-term sustainability of the NWG Network, particularly as some services currently being offered for free through the CSE Response Unit would otherwise be paid income streams for the Network. Again, it can be difficult identifying where CSE Response Unit support stops and where the NWG should pick it up, particularly in some ‘grey areas’ such as training. Interviewees had a number of suggestions to support the longer-term sustainability of the NWG Network, including:

- Consider focusing activity on a smaller number of strategic objectives, for example transitions or health checks, where there is potential to have a big impact on current practice and raise the profile of the NWG in very emerging national priorities.
- Raise the profile of the NWG (as above) beyond the high-quality relationships already secured through the membership, and beyond into the wider sphere.
Appendix A: Theory of change

**Inputs**
- The National Expert Group (NEG)
  - Existing network of over 14,000 members
  - External profile and ‘voice’ in CSE debate through high profile events, campaigns (CSE Day, SSSE) and strategic input to policy (DE, PHE, NHSE)
- Existing body of resources, training packages
- CSE experts with deep understanding of practitioner needs
- Ethos of voluntary, collaborative engagement, independent support and ‘goodwill’ amongst members
- Back office with admin and finance support

**Activities**
- Build a team of professionals with experience and expertise across police and justice, health, education and community engagement, youth participation and parental support
- Provide bespoke operational and strategic support for organisations through workshops, attender meetings, training etc. drawing on a range of resources and networks
- Design, host and disseminate body of relevant resources
- Setup and manage Out of Hours help line
- Take and amplify learning and insight through wider membership and beyond
- Raise profile of CSE Response Unit at NEG conferences, workshops and other media activity

**Outputs**
- Register of skills and knowledge - 40 strong network of external experts
- Resource library on websites and disseminated through other social networks
- Out of Hours Help Line and Live Chat
- National conference forums, seminars
- Tailored workshops, meetings, training to support operation and strategic development

**Impacts**
- Practitioners have access to a rapid and effective response around CSE inquiries
- Practitioners strengthen their CSE operations and practice
- Practitioners implement and embed best practice around CSE in their day-to-day activity
- NWG consolidates and sustains its position as a leading, authoritative and experienced voice in CSE policy
- NWG gather and share knowledge on implementation and best practice to practitioners and strategic partners across England and beyond

**The NEG**
- Engagement with key national organisations to ensure alignment e.g. Barnardo's CSE campaign and policy makers e.g. DE, PHE, NHSE

**National organisations**
- CSE Response Unit Funding and governance
  - £1.24 million from DE
  - Advisory board joint chaired by HO and DFE

**Political and social context**
- Increased government focus
- Increased number of arrests
- Increased focus by practitioners
Key assumptions/logic chain steps

A. The NWG Network is able to effectively design, run and enhance the CSE Response Unit by utilizing existing knowledge, experience and resources around the CSE agenda (See ‘Evaluation of the impact of NWG Network’ (OPM, 2014) and ‘Evaluation support and benchmarking review’ (SCIE 2017) for evidence of existing reach and penetration)

B. Central government funding and governance is at an appropriate level to deliver CSE Response Unit activities most effectively

C. The wider social and political environment – a greater awareness of and the need to tackle CSE - means that a larger number of practitioners are ready to seek out the CSE Response Unit for advice or are receptive to the NWG if approached

D. Organisations and practitioners that approach the CSE Response Unit:
   ▪ Receive a rapid response and find the information they receive to be useful and relevant to their specific enquiry
   ▪ Are able to use this information to affect or strengthen their operational or wider strategy around CSE activity
   ▪ Are able to put their new operational or wider strategy into practice

E. The CSE Response Unit team gather information from the field, including new areas of challenge and good ways of tackling issues, and disseminate this information through the wider NWG network

F. Together, the rapid response of relevant information, the revised operational activity and strategy and the changes to daily implementation means there is a positive impact on the national context e.g.
   ▪ The successful identification of young people at risk of CSE and effective preventative action taken
   ▪ Improved support for victims of CSE
   ▪ Successful conviction of perpetrators

G. The NWG Network takes the insights from their work with organisations and practitioners and share them across their wider network and beyond (e.g. through NWG conferences and workshops, in reports to commissioners etc). This further raises the profile of CSE and best practice to tackle it and consolidates the NWG position as a leading voice in the debate.
Appendix B: Online survey

Introduction

The CSE Response Unit

In March 2015 the government published a report into tackling child sexual exploitation (CSE), which included plans to develop a national taskforce – the CSE Response Unit – to assist practitioners to tackle this form of child abuse. The government funded the NWG Network to deliver the CSE Response Unit over the next three years. The NWG Network is a charitable organisation that supports professionals who are working to tackle CSE and trafficking in the UK.

The CSE Response Unit team comprises of specialists in: safeguarding, police and justice, health, education and community engagement, young participation and parental support. The CSE Response Unit was formally launched in September 2016 and is responsible for:

- Providing support and guidance to practitioners at an operational level.
- Assisting local authorities, police forces, local safeguarding boards and other organisations with strategic planning and responses to CSE.
- Supporting professionals through a resources library, containing a wide range of tools aimed at addressing CSE.
- Operating an out-of-hours helpline for professionals who require immediate assistance.
- Developing a register of skills and knowledge consisting of practitioners and agencies that can be deployed to assist professionals and agencies in tackling CSE.
- Helping agencies to ‘operationalise’ recommendations from reviews, inspections and operations.

The CSE Response Unit operates on a voluntary basis and works with professionals and agencies following a request for assistance; there is no mandatory requirement to work with the unit, maintaining the ethos of the NWG to work in collaboration with partners.

The evaluation

At this interim point, the NWG Network has commissioned the Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE) to evaluate the work of the CSE Response Unit so far, to understand its impact upon practitioners and the ways in which it could improve its support over the next few years. As NWG Network members, your views are vital to the evaluation and so we would like to invite you to take part in this short survey.

The survey should take less than 10 minutes to complete and will remain open until 16 March. There are no right or wrong answers; we are simply interested in your experiences and thoughts. Participation is voluntary and your responses are anonymous – we will not identify you or your name in any reporting. Data will be stored in compliance with the Data Protection Act, and responses will go directly to SCIE for analysis.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact Linda Jackson, SCIE consultant on linda.jackson@scie.org.uk
# About you

1. Which of the following best describes your role? Select one from the list.

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<tr>
<td>Health professional</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please state in box below)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

2. How did you first hear about the NWG Network? Select one from the list.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Source</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>As a NWG Practitioner network member</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NWG Network website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attending a NWG Network conference, seminar or forum</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the practitioner's network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Word of mouth</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through a workforce body/representative group/TU</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From traditional media, e.g. radio, television, newspapers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>From social media, e.g. press, twitter, blogs</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Through the CSE Response Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please state below)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

3. Have you ever accessed the following NWG Network resources or materials? Please tick all that apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Resource</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Downloaded resources from the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the Live Chat function on the website</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Used the Out-of-Hours helpline</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessed information through the membership (newsletters etc.)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Accessed information through the website/social media</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended the NWG Network national conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Attended NWG Network events and/or forums</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Contact with the CSE Response Unit</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>-----------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4. Have you ever worked with the CSE Response Unit?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Yes</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- No</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>- Don’t know – I can’t make a distinction between the NWG Network and CSE Response Unit</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

*If YES the respondent is asked questions 5–11 in relation to CSE Response Unit support. If NO/DON’T KNOW, the respondent is routed to questions 5–11 but asked in relation to NWG support. Respondents are regrouped at Question 12.*

5. Why did you first get in touch with the CSE Response Unit? Please tick all that apply

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>For immediate assistance to address an emergency problem or issue</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>To discuss training or other forms of workforce development</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To download specific resources or tools</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For support and advice relating to my organisation’s approach to CSE, for example reviewing internal guidance or operational plans</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>For assistance with strategic planning to tackle CSE, for example bringing together stakeholders across the local area</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To learn more about good practice in tackling CSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>To sign up for an event, forum or conference</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The CSE Response Unit approached me</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

6. What support have you received from the CSE Response Unit? (open question)

**Quality of the support you have received**

7. Thinking of your experience of the CSE Response Unit, to what extent on a scale of 1–5 (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) do you agree with the following statements:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I received a prompt answer to my initial enquiry</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The information I received answered my initial question</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The on-going support I have received is appropriate and relevant
The specialist I spoke to had the right skills and knowledge to answer my question
The website resources are up to date and easy to find
The team draws upon a wide range of skills and knowledge across the CSE field
The team are accessible and approachable
I trust the team to give me independent and objective advice
The workshop development and training I have attended have helped me improve my practice
The team are good at sharing best practice around CSE
I will get in touch with the CSE Response Unit if I have questions on CSE in future
The team are the one-stop-shop for CSE resources and support

8. What has been the most useful resource or form of support you have received from the CSE Response Unit and why? (open question)

**Impact of the support you have received**

9. To what extent, on a scale of 1 – 5 (where 5 is highly agree and 1 is highly disagree) do you agree with the following statements?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>My contact with the CSE Response Unit has…</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Increased my awareness of issues relating to CSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Increased my understanding of what to do when I need to tackle an incidence of CSE locally</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Improved my confidence in developing high-quality plans and actions that will address CSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me build the relevant and specific skills and capacity of my organisation to tackle CSE</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Helped me bring together stakeholders from across a range of local organisations to tackle CSE together</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

10. What has been the biggest or most important impact upon you or your organisation as a result of CSE Response Unit resources and support? (open question)

11. What would you like to change about the resources or support you receive from the CSE Response Unit in future? (open question)
Looking forward

12. Are there any specific CSE areas that concern you, or which you would like to learn more about? Please tick all that apply:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Area</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Transition to adulthood</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling gang violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Tackling CSE in a specific sector, e.g. sport, education etc.</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>County lines activity</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Perpetrator profiling and management</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging parents and families in planning and decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Engaging children and young people in planning and decision making</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Workforce development and training</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Strategic development across partners</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Implementing action plans</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Interested in all CSE issues</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>None</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Other (please specify)</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

13: If you would like the NWG Network to get in touch to discuss any particular aspect of CSE and other related children and young people safeguarding issues, please leave your contact details and areas of interest in the box below (open text).

*Thank you and close the survey*