



Bath & North East Somerset  
Local Safeguarding Children Board

# Multi-Agency Protocol for Children and Young People at Risk of Sexual Exploitation

Date approved by LSCB	26 <sup>th</sup> January 2016
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Date reviewed	3 <sup>rd</sup> May 2016 by PPPG April 2017
Detail of review amendments	Jan 2016 - 2014 policy amended in Line with Early Help Strategy 2016 and single point of contact (SPOC). May 2016 - Email addresses added to SERAF form April 2017 – Section 7 under review
Date for Review	January 2019

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## **1. Introduction**

This protocol addresses local multi-agency working arrangements agreed by B&NES Local Safeguarding Children's Board. This protocol draws from the guidance and is consistent with National Guidance and the Bath and North East Somerset LSCB CSE Strategy. It has also adopted the South West Child Protection guidance for Exploitation and Trafficking and Safeguarding Children and Young People at risk of Sexual Exploitation.

## **2. Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation**

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

## **3. Purpose of Protocol**

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

The aims and purpose of this protocol is:

- To identify and coordinate support to those young people that meet the criteria of being at risk of or being sexually exploited
- To promote the need to take action against those intent on abusing and exploiting children and young people
- To provide awareness raising and preventative education for the welfare of children and young people who are or may be sexually exploited
- To provide timely and effective interventions with children and families to safeguard those vulnerable to sexual exploitation
- To recognise the links between children missing from home and care and sexual exploitation, and the importance of effective multi-agency procedures in relation to missing children

The multi-agency partnerships will seek to work with young people to reduce the risk of sexual exploitation in accordance with the policies, procedures and guidance of the B&NES Local Safeguarding Children Board and the South West Child Protection Procedures

## **4. Scope of Protocol**

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

### **4.1 Sexual Exploitation and links to other types of crime**

This includes:

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

### **4.2 Significant Factors**

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

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

### **4.3 Attitudes of children and young people**

It is very common for children and young people not to recognise that they are being abused due to the grooming methods often used by the perpetrators. The needs of children and particularly of young people aged 13 to 17 years are likely to be overlooked for this reason. Although faced with limited choice, they may believe themselves to be acting voluntarily. It may take many weeks or months for practitioners who work with young people to build up their trust, and help them to recognise that they are being sexually exploited. It is important to know that not all victims are girls and not all perpetrators are men.

## **5. The role of multi-agency partners in challenging sexual exploitation**

Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) takes place in local communities and information known to partners could be used to highlight the threat and establish risk. It is anticipated that an improved intelligence picture will enable effective action in a greater number of cases of child sexual exploitation, thereby reducing the harm which would otherwise be caused to the young victims and their families.

Specialist multi-agency partners will conduct meetings/discussion to share relevant intelligence and information and co-ordinate responses. This will result in greater ability to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators and provide early intervention to reduce harm and promote wellbeing. This information will be shared as appropriate at the regular CSE MARAC (formerly the Risk Management Panel) so that agencies can share intelligence on adults of concern, consider developing themes/concerns that are developing from data and agree plans to reduce risk for young people. This meeting/discussion will **not** take the place of a Section 47 investigation/strategy discussion if it is felt that the age and/or circumstance of the young person warrant the need to proceed under Child Protection procedures.

This improved intelligence picture will inform partners of the extent of the risk posed by perpetrators. All key agencies will work together to keep children and young people safe from harm. These agencies will be drawn from the statutory, voluntary, and community sectors and their work will follow the principles outlined in the B&NES CSE Strategy.

The multi-agency panel will have the potential to call upon the diverse skills and experience available from its members. In conjunction with sharing information to increase the understanding of the risks posed by CSE they will bring together a range of specialist knowledge and partnership agreement to ensure that each organisation plays its role to address the needs of young people considered to be at risk. The panel will also draw up a multi-agency plan that confirms the actions to be undertaken by the respective agencies.

## 6. Advice and Referral

**Professionals in all agencies** should be alert to the possibility that a child/young person they are working with may be being sexually exploited. The professional may already have concerns about the child/young person e.g. missing school, missing from home, self-harming. The professional should discuss their concerns with their agency's designated safeguarding lead and complete a Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Form (SERAF) including the professional judgment section. **If the score is under 16 and the child/young person is NOT considered to be at risk or likely risk of significant harm a referral to the single point of contact should be made. Once the discussion has taken place the completed SERAF should be sent to [CSE.Referrals@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:CSE.Referrals@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk)**

**Note:** Where a child/young person is considered to be at risk or likely to be at risk of significant harm or if the agency's designated safeguarding lead is not available, a referral must be made immediately to Children's Social Care Duty Team 01225 396313 or via the secure e-mail address; [childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk)

### 6.1 Children's Services

**If the score on the SERAF is over 16 and OR the child/young person is considered to be at risk or likely to be at risk of significant harm or if the agency's designated safeguarding lead is not available, a referral must be made immediately to Children's Social Care Duty Team 01225 396313 or via the secure e-mail address; [childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk)**

**It is essential that if the score is under 16 but the child/young person is considered to be at risk or likely to be at risk of significant harm or the designated safeguarding lead is not available a referral is made to Children's Social Care duty team.**

On receipt of a CSE referral, the Duty social worker will consider the need for completing a Single Assessment. If the child/young person is considered to be at risk a Strategy Meeting/Discussion will take place and a S47 investigation may be initiated with appropriate steps taken to secure the safety of the child/young person.

As part of the Single Assessment (or s47 investigation) the Social Worker must contact the Police for any information they might have, and notify them of the concerns. If the notification is sent via email, the referring social worker must always check that the email has been received. If there are concerns that an adult working with children is involved in the exploitation of children, these concerns must be shared with the LADO, in the same way that other Child Protection concerns are shared.

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

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

**ALL completed SERAF assessments need to be sent to the email address above. (if you believe the young person to be at risk or likely risk of significant harm then you must send the SERAF and a completed C2 to duty). When the SERAF is received at the single point of contact they will be looked at by the CSE operational lead and they will decide whether they agree with the score on the form. The professional judgement will also be taken into consideration and a discussion will take place with the referrer. The risk category will then be finalized and one of the following will occur:**

### **Scoring and Risk Level**

**ALL completed SERAFs must be sent to the Single Point of Contact (SPOC). When it is received the CSE operational lead will contact you to discuss the SERAF with you. It is essential that you fill in the professional judgement section of the SERAF.**

#### **Score 0-5 – not at risk of sexual exploitation (Level 1)**

No change in previous level of intervention (universal, targeted, specialist services) required. No multi-agency forum required if not already in place to address other needs. The worker who carried out the CSE assessment should ensure the child/young person has education to stay safe.

The CSE risk assessment should be repeated if there is any significant change in circumstances that might affect the level of risk of CSE.

#### **Score 6-10 – mild risk of sexual exploitation (Level 2)**

Targeted services through CAF and team around the child should be considered and informed by the CSE assessment (SERAF) if not already in place. The CSE assessment (SERAF) should inform planning and review if child already worked with by social care.

The lead professional or a member of the team around the child who has a good working relationship with them should do a specific piece of work on risk awareness and staying safe.

Or

Where applicable the young people who fall into this category may be referred to the Willow Project for a specific piece of work to be completed with them to ensure the risk does not increase

### **Score 10-15 – Moderate risk of sexual exploitation (Level 3)**

Children and Young People who fall within this category will be referred into the Willow Project for further work to be done with them. They will have an ongoing piece of work completed with them (there is not a time limit on this).

Or

If appropriate the young person will be referred in to BASE (Barnardo's Against Sexual Exploitation) project where the risks are applicable for a BASE service

All children who fall into the moderate category will have the CSE risk assessment repeated every 8 weeks

### **Score 16+ - Significant risk of sexual exploitation (Level 4, a copy must be sent to [childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk) & [CSE.Referrals@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:CSE.Referrals@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk))**

Children who fall into this category will be referred into the BASE project

## **6.2 Perpetrator response when aged under 18**

Where evidence identifies the perpetrator of CSE is under 18 years, consideration will be given to what would be the appropriate response. The CSE MARAC will consider any young person who is associated with procuring young people (male and female) who do not understand the concept of consent or are reckless to the abusive nature of their behaviour. The attitude of some young men towards young women reflects societal behaviour that contains elements of domestic abuse and which often expresses itself in terms of sexual violence. For some young women they will not always identify their boyfriend's behaviour as abusive as their expectations are distorted.

There are different levels of intervention suitable to different audiences. At universal level, schools are encouraged to address issues of consent within PHSE. But where intervention needs to be more targeted and are identified within the CSE Panel a specialist approach will be adopted.

A service is being considered that makes links between the work in B&NES that responds to harmful sexual behaviour and the service relating to domestic abuse programme (New Way). Details of this initiative will be circulated in due course. The focus will be on "consequential learning" for them and their victims.

## **7. CSE MARAC (the CSE MARAC is currently under review)**

## **8. Children in Care**

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

- The risks to other children in placement

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

## **9. Working with Parents/Carers**

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

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



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Appendix A

**Child Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Form (SERAF)**

<b>Child's name &amp; address</b>			
<b>Date of Birth</b>		<b>Gender</b>	
<b>Ethnicity</b>		<b>Languages spoken</b>	
<b>Specify any SEN or disability if child is disabled</b>		<b>Date of this child sexual exploitation risk assessment</b>	
<b>Name, agency and contact details of worker completing assessment</b>			
<b>Known to children's social care?</b>  <b>If so, since when?</b>		<b>Is child in care?</b>  <b>If so, start date and legal status</b>	

<p><b>Is child on CP plan?</b> <b>If so, since when?</b></p>		<p><b>Involvement with the Youth Offending Service?</b> <b>If, since when?</b></p>	
<p><b>Is the child receiving support or services from any other agency?</b></p> <p><b>Please list them here e.g. CAMHS, CMES, etc.</b></p>			
<p><b>Vulnerabilities</b></p>	<p>Please tick Score 1 for each ticked</p>	<p><b>Vulnerabilities</b></p>	<p>Please tick Score 1 for each ticked</p>
<p>Emotional neglect by parent/carer/family member</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Family history of mental health difficulties</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Physical abuse by parent/carer/family member</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Low self-esteem</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Sexual abuse</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Unsuitable/inappropriate accommodation</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Breakdown of family relationships</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Isolated from peers/social networks</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Family history of domestic abuse</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<p>Lack of positive relationships with a productive/nurturing adult</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Family history of substance misuse</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>		
<p><b>Moderate risk indicators</b></p>			<p>Please tick if present on date of assessment or during the past 6 months (Score 1 for each ticked)</p>
<p>Staying out late</p>			<input type="checkbox"/>

Multiple callers (unknown adults/older young people)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of a mobile phone that causes concern		<input type="checkbox"/>
Expressions of despair (self-harm, overdose, eating disorder, challenging behaviour, aggression)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Exclusion from school or unexplained absences from or not engaged in school/college/training/work		<input type="checkbox"/>
Disclosure of sexual/physical assault followed by withdrawal of allegation		<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexually Transmitted Infections (STIs)		<input type="checkbox"/>
Peers involved in clipping/sexual exploitation		<input type="checkbox"/>
Drugs misuse		<input type="checkbox"/>
Alcohol misuse		<input type="checkbox"/>
Use of the internet that causes concern		<input type="checkbox"/>
Living independently and failing to respond to attempts by worker to keep in touch		<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>Significant risk indicators</b>	Please tick if present between 6 and 12 months ago (Score 1 for each tick)	Please tick if present on date of assessment or during past 6 months (Score 5 for each tick)
Periods of going missing (most of day, overnight or longer)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Older "boyfriend"/relationship with controlling adult	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Physical abuse by controlling adult/physical injury without plausible explanation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Emotional abuse by controlling adult	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults ( <b>Not</b> taking and driving away: car theft)	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Unexplained amounts of money, expensive clothing or other items	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Frequenting areas known for on/off street sexual exploitation	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
<b>CSE risk assessment score</b>		<b>Risk Category (1-4)</b>
<b>Referral to children's social care? If so, give date.</b>		
<b>Principal area of concern (please state in here any names of possible perpetrators and/or locations if known:</b>		

**All completed SERAF forms must be sent to:**  
[CSE.Referrals@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:CSE.Referrals@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk)

**All forms with a score of 16+ must also be sent to:**  
[childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk](mailto:childcare.duty@bathnes.GCSX.gov.uk)

This form was originally devised by Barnardos

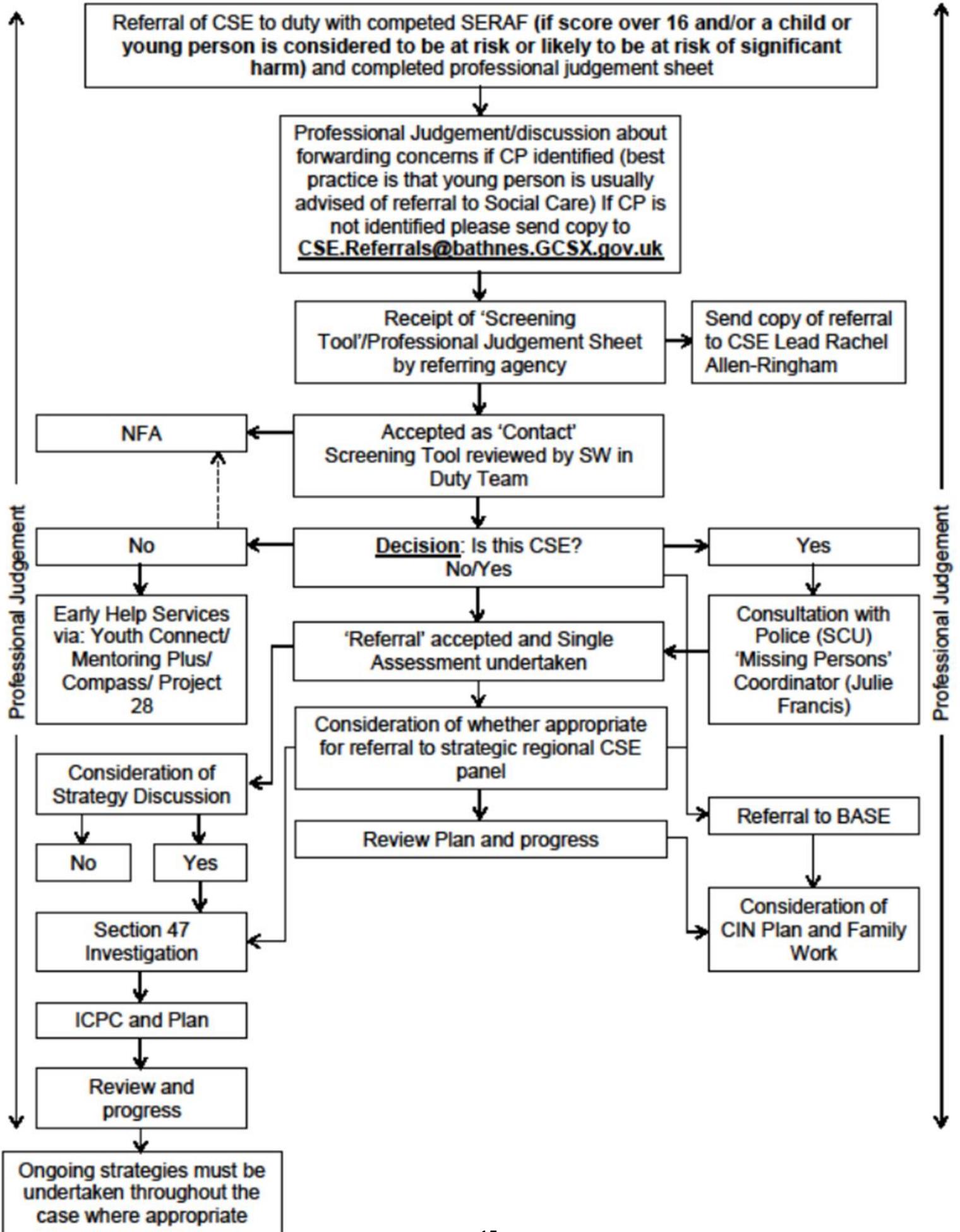
Revised May 2016

**Professional Judgment Sheet**

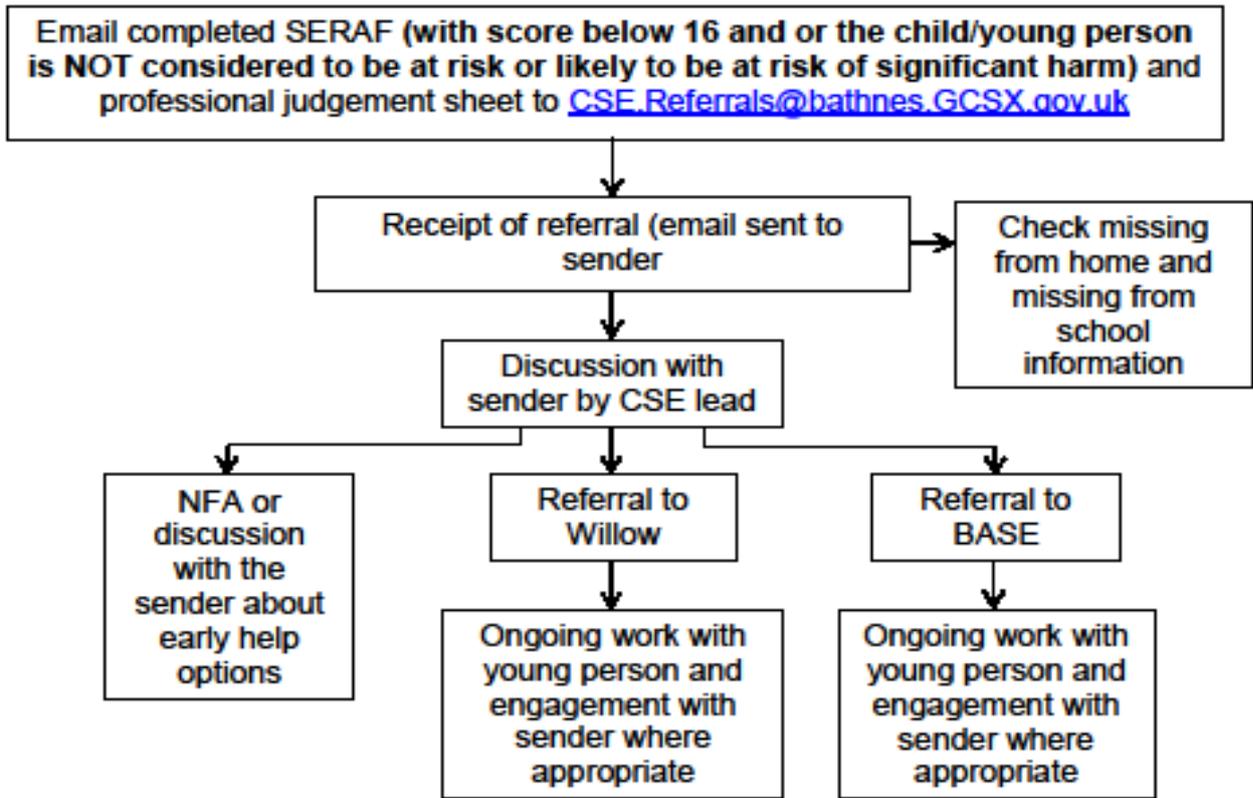
Please provide any additional information in the box below. This box is for you to provide any relevant information that increases your concerns regarding CSE. It is essential that you pass on any relevant information.

This form was originally devised by Barnardos. Revised May 2016

**CSE Workflow for Duty**



**CSE Workflow for Single Point of Contact**



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Professional Judgement

Professional Judgement