Key Document 40

Email forwarding extract from 2005 CROP Annual Report
I hope you don’t mind I gave Hilary Wilmer your number. She was referred to me by [Redacted] who oversees our strategy on safeguarding children who are drawn into prostitution. She has worked with 200 families of girls who have been abused in this way and describes an organised criminal network of mainly Asian Gangs who are grooming and then bonding and trafficking girls within the UK. As with trafficking there have been next to no prosecutions – Maybe CEOP can change that!

Regards

[Redacted]

Police Leadership and Powers Unit
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P4DF
Tel no: [Redacted]

-----Original Message-----

From: Hilary Willmer
Sent: 21 September 2006 10:22 AM
To: [Redacted]
Subject: CROP information

Thank you for your time and for your suggestions which we will follow up. I am attaching the article which I mentioned. I will see if we can send you the research report electronically - but otherwise I will send it to you by snail mail

All good wishes

Hilary

[Redacted]

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Key Document 41

Email forwarding CROP Research Report
From: [redacted] (PPPU PPOD) <[redacted]@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk>
[mailto:[redacted] (PPPU PPOD) <[redacted]@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk>] On Behalf
Of [redacted] (pppu ppod) <[redacted]@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk>
Sent: 25 May 2007 12:21
To: [redacted]@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Subject: FW: CROP report

-----Original Message-----
From: [redacted]
Sent: 25 September 2006 4:20 PM
To: [redacted][Internal - ceop.gsi.gov.uk]; 'Rees Lynn Insp'
Cc: [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]; [redacted]
(PLPU)
Subject: FW: CROP report

Lynn / [redacted]
Please see section on police response in this paper

[redacted]

Police Leadership and Powers Unit
Home Office
2 Marsham Street
London SW1P4DF
Tel no: 0207 035 6047

-----Original Message-----
From: [redacted] [mailto:crop@inbox.com]
Sent: 25 September 2006 11:08 AM
To: [redacted]@homeoffice.gsi.gov.uk
Subject: CROP report

Dear Mr. [redacted]

Apropos to your telephone conversation with our Chairperson Mrs. Hilary Willmer, I am forwarding you a copy of our research report titled: “Parents, Children and Pimps: Families speak out about sexual exploitation” launched in November 2005. Hope this will give you an insight into issues surrounding sexual exploitation that CROP has been working over the past few years.

Thank you for your interest.

Best wishes,

[redacted]

Ms. [redacted]
Policy Research & Development Worker
Coalition for Removal of Pimping (CROP)
34, Second Floor
York Road
Leeds LS9 8TA
United Kingdom

Phone: [redacted]
www.crop1.org.uk
Alternative email: crop1@freeuk.com

CROP is a national charity working to end the sexual exploitation of children and young people by pimps and traffickers. CROP supports parents so that they become active agents along with agencies working to safeguard children and young people subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation. CROP offers a national telephone helpline; provides one to one support; organises network days for parents; undertakes research and disseminates information; participates in government consultations and reviews; facilitates public awareness through conferences and mass media programs; and undertakes training for agencies highlighting the need for multi-agency working with families as equal partners.

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A work in progress

Parents, Children and Pimps: Families speak out about sexual exploitation

A research report by

CROP

Coalition for the Removal of Pimping
A voluntary organisation to end the sexual exploitation of children and young people by pimps and traffickers
Acknowledgements

It is said that gratitude is the highest virtue and thanks is the only way to express it. I am extremely grateful to all the parents for sharing their experiences with me and for allowing me to bring out this research paper based on their experiences.

My thanks are due to the CROP team for their support and encouragement. My sincere thanks to Jalna for her expertise, guidance and support all through. I am extremely delighted to record my thanks to Hilary and Haddon for their support and encouragement. I particularly thank Alan and Jenny for their support and contribution. My thanks are due to Barbara for her timely help with finances. I shall be failing in my duty, if I do not record my thanks to my colleague Carole for being there and without whose effort this research would not have been successful.

- Aravinda Kosaraju
  Researcher
# Contents

**Acknowledgements**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>I. INTRODUCTION</th>
<th>1—4</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. CROP's work</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. CROP's approach to the problem of sexual exploitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. CROP's services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. CROP's research</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| II. DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY CROP | 5—7 |

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>III. SEXUAL GROOMING AND EXPLOITATION</th>
<th>8—15</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Phases of sexual grooming and exploitation</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Phase – I</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Phase – II</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Phase - III</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Categories of perpetrators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1. Older men exploiting underage girls</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2. Individual pimps/perpetrators</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>3. Pimps/perpetrators operating in networks</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Vulnerability factors</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Warning signs of grooming</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Magnitude of violence</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>IV. IMPACT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION</th>
<th>16—20</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Impact on the young girl</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Impact on siblings</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Impact on parents and those with parental responsibilities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>V. PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND PROSECUTION - INTERVENTIONS TO END SEXUAL EXPLOITATION</th>
<th>21—30</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>A. Efforts by the family</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. Educational authorities</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Health agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Police</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Social services</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Courts</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>G. Other agencies</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| VI. CONCLUSIONS | 31—33 |

**References**

**Appendix: Parents' voices**
List of figures

- Figure -1: Number of families supported by CROP by year
- Figure-2: Type of referral by number of families
- Figure-3: Number of families by geographic representation
- Figure - 4: Ethnic background by number of families
- Figure-5: Age of girls/young women sexually exploited by number
- Figure – 6: Phases of sexual exploitation
- Figure – 7: Issues confronting parents
- Figure – 8: The 3 P challenge
- Figure – 9: Issues around missing girls
I. INTRODUCTION

A. CROP’s Work

CROP is a national charity working to end the sexual exploitation of children and young people by pimps and traffickers. CROP was founded in 1996 by Irene Ivison. Irene’s daughter Fiona Ivison, was targeted by a pimp, groomed into prostitution and was murdered by a punter at the age of 17. Since its inception CROP’s work has developed on three major lines. First, along with many others, it argues that the law should be updated and strengthened and more effectively used. Secondly, it works with families, considering them as a key potential resource in any holistic response to the complex realities of pimping and prostitution. To this end, CROP supports and empowers families which, whatever their underlying strengths, find themselves alone, shocked, and disoriented by activities of pimps. The third line of CROP’s work is to contribute to research and training, especially learning from the experience of families.

CROP supports families when a family member is subjected to sexual exploitation, by a third party outside of a family circle through providing practical, emotional and non-judgmental support. CROP’s work expanded geographically and numerically with the appointment of the Parent Support Worker with financial support from Home Office in 2002 and later from the Department for Education and Skills (DfES). As the number of parents seeking support increased, CROP gained a deeper and up-to-date knowledge of the problem. It recognises that,

- an increasing number of children and young people are being targeted by criminal pimps for purposes of sexual exploitation;
- networks of pimps are operating across many regions in the country;
- activities of the pimps and their networks not only disadvantage young people who are exploited but also their families; and
- parents and others with parental responsibilities can contribute effectively to the work of other agencies, such as schools, health services, police, social services, courts and voluntary agencies.

B. CROP’s approach to the problem of sexual exploitation

Recognizing the complexity and the challenges in attempting to unravel the problem of sexual exploitation by pimps and their networks, CROP adopts a multi-agency collaborative approach to its work in order to meet the 3Ps challenge (i.e. prevention, protection and prosecution) to intervention. The effectiveness of a multi-agency approach is derived from the experience of working with families disadvantaged by the activities of criminal pimping networks. CROP believes in partnership working with families. Parents find themselves in relationship difficulties, not only with their children due to their sexual exploitation, but also with other children in the family and their partners. Children can be groomed to make false allegations of abuse against their parents or siblings or to set one parent against the other which strains relationships within the family. CROP works with parents and other family members to respond appropriately when relationship difficulties surface in the family.

Families affected by sexual exploitation often feel disempowered and marginalized. They may experience lack of trust and acceptance in relationships with their children and also with others such as friends and professionals due to stigma and marginalisation. Working in partnership with parents has the potential to increase parent’s self-esteem by gaining awareness of the operation of the criminal networks and by challenging their perceptions of themselves, their children and the perpetrators.
Reducing the severity of the identified problem, decreasing levels of parental stress and emotional difficulties can facilitate positive relationships among family members, and proactive support to girls and boys subjected to sexual exploitation by pimps and their networks. CROP offers non-stigmatic and non-judgmental, practical, emotional support to families and reiterates at every stage of its support that parents and families disadvantaged by the activities of criminal pimps need support, advice and involvement in agency discussions on ways to achieve the 3 Ps of prevention, protection and prosecution.

CROP presses for increased collaboration among different agencies and actively engages in promoting a holistic approach to intervention by supporting families that are often ignored and considered irrelevant in interventions. CROP shares with other agencies its experience of working with families to ensure that families are given due recognition as part of the solution to the problem. CROP seeks equal partnership for families in interventions by other agencies and empowers family members to contribute meaningfully to these interventions.

C. CROP’s services

CROP supports families enabling them to provide active support to the positive development of their child or children subjected to sexual exploitation. CROP responds to the needs identified by families. Its service users are mothers, fathers, partners of parents, siblings, and extended family members, including grandparents, in-laws, aunts, uncles and cousins. In addition, those with parental responsibilities, such as carers from care homes and foster parents of the girl or boy subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation also use CROP’s services. CROP provides telephone advice, one to one support, advocacy services, training and awareness raising.

**Telephone advice**

CROP offers telephone support and advice to parents and other family members through a national telephone help-line. This service is partly one of our means of referral and partly an aspect of the one to one support. It works in close partnership with other voluntary and statutory agencies that refer parents to CROP. It supports parents by listening to their concerns, by diffusing their crises and by providing them with options. Parents that CROP has been working with have identified the need for support out of normal office hours and the timing of the telephone help-line is extended beyond normal office hours in response to the recognition that crises in families may occur any time.

**One to one support**

CROP offers one to one support to parents/families. It includes initial home visits and long term follow up responding to the unique and specific needs of each family. One to one support is aimed at listening actively to family members, exploring their difficulties, empathizing and diffusing their crises, providing appropriate information, advice and support, clarifying and challenging myths and misconceptions about the working practices of criminal pimps and their networks. The core of one to one work with families consists of:

- early identification of the child’s association with exploiters, including criminal pimping networks;
- developing a clear view about the problem;
- enabling the parent(s) or other family member(s) to identify their strengths/weaknesses;
- provision of personal and emotional support to family members;
- advising the family on practical and legal issues involved in prevention of sexual exploitation and the prosecution of perpetrator(s);
- empowering parent(s) through sharing information and experience about the operation of criminal pimps and their networks;
- support and advocacy for the equal participation of families in the activities of child protection agencies.

**Self-help among parents**

CROP facilitates networking and promotes self-help among parents/family members. Parent telephone support networks facilitate self help among families. CROP also organizes, subject to available resources, parents’ days twice a year, with the objective of providing an opportunity for parents and other family members whose girls and boys are in a sexually abusive or exploitative situation, to come together and share their concerns and draw support and strength from each other. Parent network days expand the support base available to families beyond the regular services offered through CROP.

**Advocacy and awareness**

Since its inception CROP has advocated policy and legislative changes. CROP responds to government consultations and participates in policy reviews and debates. It organizes national and regional conferences. Since 1995, although a small organisation, CROP has organised three national conferences which had significant impact and has published reports. It undertakes advocacy on behalf of the parents. It frequently contributes to radio and television programmes to raise the profile of sexual exploitation by pimps and their networks and to voice the concerns of parents and families affected by the problem.

**Training and awareness raising**

CROP offers training and awareness raising programmes to voluntary and statutory agencies. The aim is to share the experience of working with families in order to broaden the understanding and perspectives of other agencies working to promote the welfare of children and families. CROP has developed specific training packages to suit the needs of other agencies, such as police, social services, health professionals and voluntary agencies.

**Research and documentation**

CROP undertakes research into issues concerning child sexual exploitation, produces information materials in the form of leaflets, flyers, booklets and extensively disseminates information through CROP’s website, other agencies and parent networks. *Advice to Parents and A Guide to the Sexual Offences Act, 2003* are two examples of information produced by CROP. As part of its research CROP initiated a study into specific aspects of the problem of sexual exploitation. The study is CROP’s response to the need for an improved understanding of the complexity of sexual grooming and exploitation.
D. CROP’s research

Need for the study

Child sexual exploitation in various forms is a serious problem. Accurate data at both national and international levels is seldom available on the extent and its various forms. In England 22,200 children and young people were placed on child protection registers under the category sexual abuse from 31 March 1999 to 2003. Sexually abused children on average contributed to 15% (10% during 2002-03) of the total number children on the child protection register during 1999-2003. More girls (12%) than boys (8%) were placed on the child protection register during the year 2002-03 [DfES, 2004]. A survey by the Department of Health indicates that 76% of the Area Child Protection Committees (ACPCs) in England dealt with children involved in prostitution [Swann, 2001]. These statistics amalgamate various types of sexual abuse, but dealing with the problems requires disaggregation.

Sexual abuse is so damaging, and such a fundamental violation of the humanity of the victims that the issue should not be ignored. The study by Melrose highlights that the young people become vulnerable, socially isolated and struggle with self esteem and worth. In research on the effects of abuse on behavioural changes, Conte & Schuereman emphasize that children are profoundly traumatized by sexual abuse, some exhibiting milder or transient problems, and some appearing as if they are not affected by the abuse. While children vary in their reaction to sexual abuse, there are common factors, such as poor self-esteem, aggression, fearfulness, low confidence, withdrawal symptoms, and anxiously to please. In addition to overtly observed consequences, there may be “sleeper” effects, of which the child or others are unaware, but which emerge with dramatic impact in adulthood. Romero-Daza et al. highlight that prostitution plays a significant role in substance abuse, violence and AIDS. Roberts et al., using a sample of parents and their children from Avon studied relationship difficulties, impaired social functioning, and intergenerational effects of child sexual abuse. However, the impact of sexual exploitation on families is an under researched issue.

Objectives and methodology

The present study examines the impact of sexual exploitation on girls and their families and also highlights the processes through which they are exploited. The study examines the interventions made by different agencies in safeguarding children and in promoting their welfare. The emphasis is on sexual exploitation by third parties through activities such as grooming, procuring, pimping and trafficking for purposes of prostitution and other allied activities. The study presents the trends emerging from data available within CROP and explores the realities of sexual exploitation. It is based on the 106 cases recorded by CROP between June 2002 and 2005 and supplemented by in-depth interviews with ten parents. Each case is a family and not an individual person. In some families, more than one girl may be subjected to sexual exploitation.

In this study, the term ‘child’ is guided by the definition from the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, 1989. Article 1 of the convention defines the child as ‘every human being below the age of 18 years unless, under the law applicable to the child, majority is attained earlier’. The use of the terms ‘children and young people’, are consistent with the sentencing scheme for offences against children under the Sexual Offences Act, 2003 [Sentences for offences against children differ depending on the age of child against whom the offence is committed] and also with the working practices of the local authorities under the Children Act 2004 [See Sections 65(1) and 9(2) of Children Act 2004].
II. DEMOGRAPHIC DETAILS OF FAMILIES SUPPORTED BY CROP

Figure -1 below shows the number of families supported by CROP over the last three years. In the first six months of its work in 2002, CROP supported 19 families. In the year 2003 a total of 38 families were supported of which 33 were new referrals and 5 were referred during 2002. The number of families supported during 2004 increased to 48 with support to 34 new families and 14 families from previous years. In the year 2005, CROP support extended to 42 families, including 20 new families in the first six months of its work. The number of families being supported by CROP is greater during the first six months of 2005 than during the past three years. The support needs of some families are long term. Of the 106 families, 88 had one or more family members affected by sexual exploitation. Of the remaining 18 families, three are concerned about intra-familial sexual exploitation and 15 approached CROP for advice on various issues including advice on custody orders, Anti Social Behaviour Orders (ASBOs), children’s eating habits, impact of lap dancing clubs.

Figure -1: Number of families supported by CROP by year

* Number of families supported over a period of six months

Figure-2 below presents the type of referrals that CROP received over the last three years. Out of 106 families supported, over seven out of ten (72%) self referred. These families learnt about CROP’s services in a variety of ways; through other agencies, articles in print media, and radio and television programmes. The second largest numbers of referrals (20%) are from other voluntary agencies. Referrals from statutory agencies account for 5% of the families supported. Families assisted by CROP also referred other families (3%).
Figure-2: Type of referral by number of families

Figure-3 below presents the geographical distribution of families. Families accessing CROP’s services are primarily from West Yorkshire (40%) and South Yorkshire (18%), accounting for over one-half (58%) of CROP’s work. Families from London (4%) and West Midlands (4%) are followed by Bristol (3%) and Essex (3%). The remaining known family geographical locations are from 19 other counties or boroughs within the UK (21%).

Figure-3: Number of families by geographic representation

Figure -4 below presents the ethnic background of the families supported by CROP, all of whom are UK nationals. Their ethnic backgrounds are varied including white, Asian and mixed race origins. However, the largest number of the families that sought CROP’s services are white (82%), with a small number of Asian families (3%) and those with mixed origins (2%). The ethnic background of the remaining families is unknown (13%).
Figure 4: Ethnic background by number of families

- White: 87 (82%)
- Asian: 3 (3%)
- Mixed race: 2 (2%)
- Unknown: 14 (13%)

Figure 5 below presents the ages of sexually exploited girls/young women. Classification of ages into groups is based on those used in the Sexual Offences Act, 2003. Under the Act, punishment for offences varies depending upon the age of child against whom the offence is committed. A person who commits rape against a child under the age of 13 on conviction can be sentenced to imprisonment for life and when the child is between 13 and 16 years to a maximum of 14 years. In CROP’s study, a total of 100 girls/women from 88 families were either subjected to or at risk of being subjected to sexual exploitation. Nine families had more than one person in the family subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation. The lowest age of the girls being groomed was nine years. Of those groomed and exploited, 19% were girls below the age of 13 years. The largest number of the girls were in the age group of 14 – 16 (47%), followed by girls in the age groups of 17-18 years (10%), and those aged over 18 years (13%). Ages of those remaining are not known (11%).

Figure 5: Age of girls/young women sexually exploited by number

- Not known: 11
- Over 18: 13*
- 17-18: 10
- 14-16: 47
- 0-13: 19*

* This includes two boys/young men aged 13 and 22 years
III. SEXUAL GROOMING AND EXPLOITATION

Children as young as nine years old are targeted for sexual purposes by men outside the family. Non-familial sexual exploitation occurs in various forms and through different means, such as paedophiles targeting young children for sex, or pimps grooming girls for prostitution or pornography. While there are some similarities between different forms of abuse, their differences stem from the perpetrators’ intentions and working styles (modus operandi). CROP’s analysis confirms the findings of other agencies that grooming and exploitation occur in different phases.

A. Phases of sexual grooming and exploitation

Figure 6 above depicts the phases and varying consequences of sexual grooming and exploitation for young girls. The process of grooming for sexual exploitation goes through gradual phases of initial contact, befriending, exchange of favours, control and exploitation. CROP’s work shows that a few perpetrators have access to young girls at their homes and are known as ‘family friends’. These perpetrators often groom young girls gradually over a period of few years.

In cases where the perpetrator is a stranger, and this would be true in the majority of the families with whom CROP has worked, association with the young girl usually starts at a place that the young girl frequents. These perpetrators target unsuspecting young girls at places such as schools, shopping malls, entertainment arcades, sporting clubs, cinema theatres or bus and train stations. Some perpetrators gain access to young girls through the telephone and the internet. Unlike the old days, these perpetrators use new technology as a means to gain access to young girls. Increasing use of mobile and other communication technology by young girls and boys, make it easier and quicker for exploiters to connect to the potential victims. It also contributes to their secretive operation. The time taken to

Figure 6: Phases of sexual exploitation
groom a young girl by a stranger is gradual and may vary from few days to two or more years.

1. Phase – I

In the initial phase of grooming the perpetrator behaves seductively and deceptively, buying all the things the young girl dreams of, making promises and being extremely attentive to her.

The perpetrator is usually older than the girl in age and, in befriending her, uses both non-coercive and coercive means. Some of the non-coercive methods used by the perpetrator(s) include gifts, excessive attention, misconception/deceit, exploiting a girl’s infatuation. As he befriends the girl, the perpetrator preys on her vulnerability. The perpetrator also uses coercive means such as force, violence, causing fear, attributing guilt or damaging her self esteem.

“She always wanted to know more about her natural parents. It was when he met her at McDonald’s that she saw a hope in finding her true identity. He promised he would find her real father.” – A Parent

Some perpetrators operate in groups or networks. Criminal networks have a typical pattern of targeting and grooming young girls. The process begins with a girl being targeted and befriended by a young boy usually known to her as an equal. For example, a class/school mate, a friend of a sibling or a neighbour. The boy later introduces the girl to either one or more older men, who pose as the young boy's older brother or cousin. Once the girl is introduced to the older men, promises, gifts, attention in terms of cars, attractive men and night clubs form part of the grooming process. Attention from an older man (e.g. 25 years) sustains her interest and prolongs her association with criminal groups. She is given a taste of an expensive and/or often exciting life style. She is gradually inveigled into using alcohol and drugs. She starts to truant from school, becomes secretive, returns late at home and spends increasingly shorter times with family and old friends. She is also groomed on what to say and how to behave in the wake of any intervention from the family or any others who may be concerned.

“They (perpetrators) make the girls feel more grown up than they actually are. When some one shows interest in you, takes you around in these cars – it’s a trap to catch you. It is like throwing small fish to catch the big fish and it is nothing but grooming.” – A parent

2. Phase –II

In the second phase of grooming and exploitation, the friendly association turns into exchange of favours. Once the perpetrator’s seductive behaviour is interpreted as love in the girl’s mind he then seeks sexual favours for himself and for others, including oral sex and group sex. Sexual responses also are sought as a means to pay back the money spent on her cigarettes, drinks, drugs, lifts in cars and mobile phones. The girl is expected to return favours as a proof of her love for these men. In the initial stages of their association with the criminal networks the young girl is unaware of the money that changes hands. When the young girl expresses unwillingness to return sexual favours, she starts receiving threatening messages and calls and is often made to feel that she is being stalked by the perpetrator(s).

“When I look back what surprise me is the amount of time it took for the perpetrators to get to her (the daughter). She met them (pimps) in January when she went to watch movies at the shopping mall and in a space of 16 weeks; they groomed, controlled and exploited her.” – A Parent

“She was groomed and he took over her as her boy friend. He became her MAN. Her boyfriend... who loved her, bought things for her. They did love each other, but in damaging ways. They appeared as if they really loved each other. My daughter specially felt she found her soul mate.” – A Parent
She starts going out at odd hours and days and goes missing as she is held in flats owned or controlled by the perpetrator(s) or trafficked to nearby towns/cities or to areas that are new and considered dangerous for young girls to frequent.

The process of swapping sex for drug can also begin at this stage. One tactic used by the perpetrators is to hand pouches of powder that appear like drugs to young girls and then put them in fear of being reported to the police. As her association with the perpetrator continues, she is given different working names. Her response to abuse and her coping mechanisms may develop symptoms of split personality disorder. As exploitation increases so does her alienation from her family and other support systems such as friends and teachers. She complying with the perpetrator’s demands out of fear for her own and her family’s safety. The perpetrator makes the girl feel that it is impossible to go back to her family or others for help.

“She was truanting and going all round Manchester and there was a network of people going round different cities. Then when she was 16 she moved out and got into a homeless hostel. I don’t know how she got into it. She must have told people that we had thrown her out, which obviously was never the case.” — A parent

How does the perpetrator achieve control over the young girl?

A girl’s vulnerability due to her age is a fertile ground for the perpetrator’s tactics. Perpetrators manipulate a young girl by turning her vulnerabilities and fears to his advantage. The tactics that the perpetrator employs vary as the grooming process progresses from one phase to another. In this phase, the perpetrator—

- encourages her to truant from school and then causes her to fear reprisal from parents and school authorities;
- allows her to see the weapons he has in his car or on his person and keeps her under constant threat;
- actively encourages her addiction to cigarettes (e.g. spliffs), alcohol and drugs finally making her dependent on him for the supply of these substances and consequently amenable to his exploits;
- photographs her during the sexual activity and uses those images as a tool to control her body and sexual activity;
- involves her in criminal activities and threatens her with police action. Fear of criminal action from the police makes the young girl participate in sexual activities; and
- uses actual physical violence and threats to her life and to that of her family.

3. Phase – III

In the third phase the perpetrator attempts to completely sever the young girl’s relationship with family and other support systems. Girls aged 16 and over often seek to live on their own and as a result become easily accessible to the perpetrator(s). The perpetrator exploits the distance that is developing between the girl and her parents, and seeks to not merely to widen the gap but to make it irreversible. The perpetrator actively facilitates the girl’s estrangement from her family by helping her in accessing housing from both the private sector and from the
city council. For example, a young girl was made to accuse her brother of sexual abuse at home as a means to access separate housing. Once the girl is away from her family and parental control the perpetrator’s activities go unhindered. They successfully lead the young girl into a life of violence, exploitation and crime by drawing them into prostitution to earn money to support either her own needs or that of her perpetrator(s).

**How does the perpetrator achieve control over the girl?**

The girl in this phase is often in a state of confusion. She is caught in an emotional pendulum of love and hatred. The perpetrator showers her with love and attention on the one hand and causes harm and physical/mental torture on the other.

The perpetrator encourages teenage pregnancy. Teenage pregnancy tightens the perpetrator’s influence in two distinct ways. If she decides to terminate her pregnancy, the perpetrator supports her through the decision and often facilitates the process, thereby attaining her trust and gratitude. The perpetrator then proceeds to manipulate the post-abortion trauma that a young girl might face.

> "It was the trauma of the abortion that led her into a life of danger and violence. She suffered from Post Traumatic Stress Disorder (PTSD) after abortion. She became self-destructive through meeting the wrong people." – A parent

If she decides to go through the pregnancy, the perpetrator acquires new forms of control over her. She may be forced to remain under his control due to threats of violence to her child. In one instance, the perpetrator forced a young girl to prostitute herself by kidnapping her three month old daughter. The young girl was horrified, but she refused to seek help from the police for fear that the police and social services might take her child from her.

The longer the girl remains under the control of the perpetrator(s), the more difficult it is for her to break free. Her inability to cope with and change the situation causes her to remain under the control of the perpetrator.

> "It’s like as if he (perpetrator) is inside me, controlling me and telling me what I am allowed to say or do and what I am not allowed." – A girl

Unable to reconcile between feelings of love and hatred; between protection and exploitation; between guilt and innocence; between her entitlements and duties creates a dilemma in relation to the perpetrator(s).

> "He was both loving as well as abusive. There are two parts to their relationship. On the one hand he is kissing her, holding hands and cuddling her and on the other hand he is punching, abusing and torturing her. She attempted to break free from him around six times. But always he used to beg and make up and she used to return to the life of abuse and violence." – A parent

If she manages to break free from her perpetrator(s), reversion back to the exploitative situation is not uncommon. While one reason for reversal is the intimidation and abuse from the perpetrators, others include fear of sustaining herself in
the absence of the ‘protector’ and hope of rescuing the ‘good’ part of their relationship. A girl’s dependence on the perpetrator(s) makes her exit difficult and almost impossible.

B. Categories of perpetrators

While there are similarities in the means and methods adopted by both individual and network(s) of perpetrators, non-familial sexual exploitation of girls can be classified into three main categories depending on the characteristics of the abuse and the perpetrator.

1. Older men exploiting underage girls

Older men use girls below the age of consent for sexual gratification. The difference of age between the girl and the older man can be extreme. Age difference facilitates the older man’s control over the girl not only in terms of physical power and knowledge, but also in her access to resources. In a situation of power disequilibrium, older men befriend girls through non-coercive and coercive means. Perpetrators in this category groom young girls and use them for personal sexual gratification. Their activities fall in the category of sex offences against children i.e. sexual activities with girls below the age of consent, but may not use girls for financial gratification, as with pimps and their networks. CROP’s work shows that the lowest age of those exploited in this category is nine years. Over one-half (55%) of girls were targeted between 14 and 15 years and came from different parts of the country; Bristol (12%), Essex (12%), Leeds (12%) and Rotherham (12%). Other areas include Edinburgh, London, Sussex, Reading, Wakefield, Norfolk and St. Austell.

2. Individual pimps/perpetrators

In this category of exploitation, the difference of age may not be extreme. However, there exist a power imbalance between the perpetrator and the girl. The perpetrator befriends her, identifies her vulnerabilities and manipulates them to his advantage. For example, one way of attracting the girls is by assuring them easy money through escort services in foreign countries. As the girl succumbs to the manipulation of the perpetrator, he soon becomes her ‘boyfriend’ and attains complete control over her life. The perpetrator’s intention is primarily economic, although personal sexual gratification is not always absent. A majority of the individual pimps are drug abusers and use girls and their vulnerabilities as a means to fulfil their needs. Often girls are targeted by different pimps, which also make them the target of abuse and violence (physical/mental) from their former pimps. The majority of individual pimps are male although involvement of female perpetrators is reported in a few cases.

The ages of the young girls targeted and groomed by individual pimps ranged from 14 to 22 years. Perpetrators come from different ethnic backgrounds; white, Asian, Eastern European and Afro-Caribbean. A few children are at risk of being targeted by their family members (e.g. father, sibling). In one instance, a parent reported risk to the younger daughter from her son who was groomed to prostitute and subsequently pimp for his perpetrator. In another instance children were reported to be at risk of being targeted by their father who is alleged to be running a brothel.

3. Pimps/perpetrators operating in networks

In this category of exploitation more than one perpetrator is involved. They operate in networks and are spread across many geographical areas. A large number
of young girls are targeted by these networks. They operate in specific styles and conduct their operation in progressive phases. Their intention in targeting and grooming the girls is both personal and commercial sexual gratification. They groom and abuse the girls and then pass them onto others in their network. Girls targeted by these networks do not recognise the exploitative element before the damage is done to their physical, sexual and social wellbeing.

The networks operating in the Yorkshire area consist largely of British Pakistani men. In a few cases involvement of White, Afro-Caribbean and Eastern European men is also observed. 34% of those families supported by CROP are targeted by these networks. Girls targeted by the networks are aged between 11 and 17 years with one half (50%) in the age group of 14 and 15 years. The families known to CROP victimised by the activities of these criminal networks come from Rotherham (24%), Keighley (24%), Bradford (10%), Sheffield (10%), Skipton (7%) Halifax (3%), Huddersfield (3%), Leeds (3%), Pontefract (3%), Bingley (3%), Shipley (3%) and Wakefield (3%).

C. Vulnerability factors

CROP has no evidence that a particular factor or a combination of factors triggers a young girl’s association with pimps. However, certain factors are identified by parents as contributing to a young girl’s vulnerability:

- Change of school or changes in the immediate environment at school. When a child moves to a new school, she may move away from her friends and support systems. She may find it difficult to make new friends and may feel lonely, alienated and vulnerable. She may even become vulnerable if moved to a section different band or group in the school away from most of her friends.

- Bullying faced either at school or in the neighbourhood.

- Not being accepted by their peer group.

- Adoption, fostering or childhood in care homes. Anxiety about origins is at its peak when a girl has ethnic origins different from those of her foster or adoptive parents.

- Teenage pregnancy may cause fear, anxiety and depression, self-destructive behaviour, alcoholism, depression and feelings of guilt.

- Personal trauma, for example due to death of a parent or grand parent.

D. Warning signs of grooming

The process of grooming impacts young girls in different ways. Behaviour that may indicate an association with criminal pimps and their networks is identified by parents and others with parental responsibilities. While these signs are not exhaustive, girls may:

- tend to be secretive and stop engaging with others, including siblings and old friends;

- prefer to remain in their bedrooms most of the time and try to avoid spending time with the family;

- seem very unhappy, lonely or bored and tend to become withdrawn from either one or both the parents;
- become friendly with older men;
- start turning up late at night or even stay out all night;
- not reveal their whereabouts and tend either not to answer the phone or to turn it off when contacted by family members;
- go missing from home at odd hours or days and ring parents with requests to be collected from places which the girl has no reason to visit;
- refuse to shower and change clothes after returning home;
- start to lie frequently and be always ready and quick to provide answers when questioned or confronted by parents;
- start using telephones, mobile phones and internet (at home and other places) more frequently;
- tend to sleep at unusual hours and receive odd calls and messages on their phone from strangers;
- often lose their possessions such as mobile phones, credit cards and other valuables;
- start possessing new items such as clothes, mobile phones, accessories and other expensive items that cannot be accounted for;
- start truanting from school;
- start being disruptive at school and other places;
- become frequently confrontational with parents, teachers and fellow students;
- appear drunk or exhibit signs of drug use;
- become volatile and exhibit an extreme array of mood swings;
- exhibit behavioural changes including use of abusive language, physical aggression to family members and pets.
- indulge in delinquent or anti-social behaviour such as stealing and/or shoplifting;
- exhibit changed attitudes towards her own self, her family and old friends;
- exhibit a sudden change in their dressing patterns (e.g. wear clothes that cover arms, legs and neck to hide bruises, stay in their night cloths all day) and in their body grooming/hygiene (e.g. shaving off body hair).

E. Magnitude of violence

Girls and their families can face severe abuse and violence at the hands of perpetrator(s). Girls are often violently beaten, burnt, harassed, and robbed of all their money and belongings. Some perpetrators abduct girls at gun point and force them to indulge in sexual activities with themselves and others in their network. Family members can be taken hostage as means to force girls to indulge in prostitution.
Girls are put under constant threats of death to themselves and their family. The perpetrator(s) may torture a young woman by abusing her physically and sexually in front of her children. In one instance, a girl was locked up along with her dog in the house for two days until rescued by her parent.

The scale of sexual abuse faced by girls is severe. The acts of abuse are grotesque and most often invisible. Girls are raped (gang raped in some cases) and sexually assaulted. In one case the perpetrator penetrated a girl’s vagina with objects. In another case the perpetrator tied the girl’s arms and legs to the bedstead during intercourse to derive sadomasochistic pleasure. While the primary motive for violence is commercial, another is personal sadism. A 17 year old girl in an exploitative relationship with an older man was severely battered and attacked by the perpetrator. She was hit over the head with iron rods, burnt on the sides of her head with a hot iron and strangled with her hands tied together and a plastic bag over her head. The perpetrator also attempted to pour boiling water over her body. Fortunately, she was found in an unconscious state and rescued.
IV. IMPACT OF SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Sexual offences against children are terrible crimes, with profound, damaging and long term effects on the lives of girls and their families. The impact of sexual exploitation extends into all spheres of a girl’s life and her family. Its effects go beyond physical scars and impacts on a girl’s behaviour, education, economic well-being and social life. Girls suffer adverse consequences on their physical, sexual, mental and social health.

A. Impact on the girl

Impact on physical health: Young girls subjected to sexual exploitation suffer from general poor health due to drug abuse, physical and sexual violence and trauma. Some physical health injuries and harmful outcomes include bruises, cuts, broken teeth, anorexia, thrombosis and epileptic attacks, alcoholism and addiction to crack, cocaine, cannabis, heroin and ecstasy and other drugs. Perpetrators offer drugs free of cost to girls in order to make them amenable to sexual exploitation. Perpetrators inject drugs such as cocaine into girls leading to serious health risks. Of the 100 girls subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation, 15 are reported to be abusing drugs. In several families girls took drug overdoses resulting in serious health risks.

Impact on sexual and reproductive health: A majority of the girls subjected to sexual exploitation reported complications relating to sexual health. Sexually transmitted diseases such as chlamydia or pelvic inflammations were frequently reported. One young woman became HIV positive. Teenage pregnancy is a particular cause of concern, not just in terms of its impact on the girl’s physical and reproductive health, but also in terms of its role in tightening the control of the perpetrator. Out of 100 girls subjected to sexual exploitation, seven reported teenage pregnancy or miscarriage. Severe sexual abuse to one girl affected her reproductive health making her infertile for life and subsequently led to serious psychological and psychiatric problems.

Impact on psychological health: The impact of sexual exploitation on psychological health is manifested both in minor psychological disturbance and major complications requiring clinical intervention. These include suicidal tendencies requiring in-patient psychiatric treatment, severe depression, manic depression, hyperactivity and excessive fear. One girl used to wet herself at the sight of the perpetrator, while others exhibited far more serious ailments such as split personality disorder, borderline personality disorder and attention deficiency syndrome.

Other negative psychological health outcomes include becoming moody, withdrawn, sad, self-harming, and extremely aggressive with violence to others including siblings, parents and pets. One girl painted the walls and furniture in her room black. Another made deep stab marks all over a wall with a knife. These girls often find it difficult to control their anger and direct it at their family members through physical and verbal abuse. In one instance, on being refused a mobile phone, a young girl ransacked the whole house. Severe abuse from men whom they trusted and considered as friends make young girls very volatile, reflecting the suffering and confusion they face. They often become highly dependent, demanding, disruptive, defensive and defiant.

Impact on social life: Grooming and exploitation affects young people’s civic and social life. As part of the grooming process, perpetrators induce young girls to indulge in criminal activities and encourage addiction to alcohol and drugs, which indirectly contributes to their indulgence in criminal activities such as theft (e.g.
stealing cars, cash from punters and other valuables), shoplifting, forgery, fraud, assault, drug abuse and sexual offences (e.g. soliciting for prostitution).

**Impact on life skills and coping mechanisms:**

- Trust is lost in people and relationships, after the bitter experience of being abused by a trusted 'friend.' Girls cannot even trust individuals and agencies that offer support. Everyone is viewed with suspicion and they think everyone is trying to trick them. Girls become extremely volatile with mood swings and outbursts that continue through to their adult life.

Lynn for example was severely abused and exploited at the age of 13 by a network of perpetrators. These perpetrators befriended her as part of their grooming and subjected her to multiple rapes. Two years after she cannot be friends with people of her own age. Her confidence is affected to an extent that she only feels safe and comfortable in the company of younger children.

- Chaotic life styles develop that include dropping out of school and lacking any educational qualifications and being unable to enter the competitive job market. If they are able to attain employment, mistreatment at the hands of their employers due to the stigma, criminal background and their inadequate coping skills often force them to return to the life of exploitation and abuse.

**B. Impact on siblings**

Sexual exploitation of one child affects the wellbeing of the other children in the family. Association of one girl with criminal pimping networks may lead to the association and exploitation of the other children. Involvement of one girl in the family places younger siblings at significant risk of being groomed and exploited. In 8% of the families known to CROP more than one girl is subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation by perpetrators.

Siblings are faced with difficulties at school, work place or among friends due to the activities of the girl subjected to exploitation. Some siblings experience low self-esteem due to the activities their sisters and are subjected to name calling and goading by their peers. Siblings suffer serious threats of abuse, intimidation and assault at the hands of perpetrators. They often feel insecure and unsafe due to the threatening calls from unknown individuals. In two families, siblings reported actual physical assault from the perpetrators. In another family, the social services assessed the younger sibling as being at risk of significant harm from the perpetrators and placed her on the child protection register. Siblings constantly face instability in their family life and fear for the well being of their sister(s) and the family as a whole.

Siblings can be forced to go through the processes of the criminal justice system due to the criminal activities involving their sister(s) and/or the perpetrators. Siblings’ rooms are searched by the police for stolen goods and possession of drugs. In one case, an older sibling was implicated in driving offences because her exploited sister gave her name when arrested by the police.

Sexual exploitation can also affect siblings in other indirect ways. Parents end up concentrating time, energy and finances into protecting their daughter(s) from the exploitation by perpetrators. Consequently, other children in the family are forced to lose out financially and emotionally. Excessive attention to one child can result in feelings of loss and isolation in the other children. It can make the siblings...
It was horrendous for my older daughter. She felt she had to be this good child all the time. She felt pressurised. She was also extremely resentful that all our energy is going to our younger child. She just had to get on with it, in the sense that we did not even notice that she was doing well. It has been years ago, but she is still furious.

- A parent

I (father) sat and cried, not being able to stop my child being abused. We were so frustrated. Sometimes you want to get out and shoot him (perpetrator). Then you cannot do that, can you? Then you feel like a coward. Don’t you? I felt like a coward. You are so helpless.

- A parent

.crave for parental attention. Some begin displaying bad behaviour as a means to attain their parents’ attention. Others suffer from additional pressure to be ‘good and well behaved.’

Parents also tend to keep sibling(s) out of the problem, with the intention of protecting them from harm and freeing them from the effects of the problem. However, siblings may feel they are not part of the problem confronting the family and feel excluded and alienated.

Girls subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation lie frequently. As a result, parents find it difficult to trust their other children and tend to follow strict disciplinarian styles of parenting. Parents also tend to become over-protective with other children in the family.

Older siblings may be in a state of denial consistently blocking the reality. Though such denial may not affect siblings in any overt manner, they can develop a tendency to become over-protective parents themselves. A few siblings left their homes after arguments over the girls’ association with the perpetrators. In one case a sibling experienced false allegations of sexual abuse made against him by his younger sister who was groomed by a pimping network. The experience was traumatising for the sibling and disrupted his family life as the allegations forced him to leave home.

C. Impact on parents and those with parental responsibilities

It is rarely acknowledged that grooming and sexual exploitation of children can affect their parents. On the contrary, fingers are pointed at parents as responsible for the child’s situation. However, this study shows that child sexual exploitation has a serious negative impact on family members including parents and extended family members with consequences for their health, work life, family cohesion, economic stability and social life. The following section covers a wide range of issues and difficulties that many families face.

Parents are often distraught, traumatised and undergo major stress on knowing that their daughters are severely abused by criminal perpetrators. They feel helpless and guilty for not being able to protect their children from sexual predators. While all parents whose daughters are groomed or/and exploited face verbal abuse, some of them face physical aggression involving bodily harm to themselves and to others in the family. They face physical violence not only from their daughter, but also from perpetrator(s). In two instances, girls were taken into police custody for assaulting their parents. In three other cases, parents reported criminal assault by perpetrators to the police.

Parents may be forced to keep all their valuables locked in their bedrooms. Houses of some families were burgled or their windows were smashed. Many more faced threats of burglary and that their homes would be torched, both directly from perpetrators and indirectly through the girls.

Parents often feel isolated with no help from any one, including other extended family members. Parents cry in anguish, frustration and experience a strong urge to take the law into their own hands to end the exploitation process. Some parents suffered from depression and were put on anti-depressants. A few parents resorted to alcohol as a means to cope with the situation.

Parents constantly worry, experience emotional turmoil and exhaustion. They often suffer from sleeplessness which affects their physical and mental health. Some parents also self harm or threaten suicide.
The problem places strain on relationships between parents leading to additional stress and trauma, although some felt that their relationship with their partner strengthened. There can be constant tension between children and parents when the girl subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation lives with one biological parent and another partner.

Grooming and exploitation process can disrupt peaceful family lives by causing arguments, stress and by recurrently taking one family member away.

“**We all used to sit to eat and then the car honking and she used to run and we did not know when she would be back.**” - A parent

Parents are sometimes forced to leave work that has been built for years and move to other places to release their children from the grip of the perpetrators. It has forced some families to move to different towns/cities and one family relocated to another country as a last resort to protect their daughter from sexual exploitation. Parents feel that the situation puts their life on hold. When a girl goes missing, for instance, a parent is left in a dilemma whether to leave for work the next morning or to wait for the child and the situation is far more difficult for a single working parent.

Taking time off to meet the school authorities, police, solicitors or social workers and to attend court hearings can push parents into a state of joblessness causing economic instability and heightened pressure. Many face economic instability not only due to job loss, but also due to extortion from the perpetrators and other expenditure incurred on telephone calls and travel costs.

The life style choices girls are forced to make brings additional responsibilities for grandchildren. Parents can experience inter-generational effects of sexual exploitation. They may end up caring full time for their grand children or performing other parental responsibilities.

In addition, the attitudes of agencies that view families as dysfunctional and thus a source of the problem add to their distress.

“It was when I complained to the police that my daughter is missing and that she is vulnerable –

A detective inspector and two uniformed police arrived at my door and checked if it was a case of suicide. Then they checked my daughter’s flat for any missing items to determine if she had left in a hurry. I was helping them, but I could see they were presuming she was dead. I rang every place I was aware of, but in vain. The police felt that she was dead, because they knew what he was capable of and how dangerous he could be. When they reached the flat, they went in first and checked the flat for 10 minutes before letting me in. They said: ‘It is now safe to come in’. They were looking for a dead body. I am sure they were. They took her photograph and asked for identification marks on her body. The whole ordeal was horrendous.” - A parent

Figure- 7 on the next page depicts the issues parents and families are faced with in relation to girls subjected to sexual exploitation, other family members and agencies.
Figure-7 Issues confronting parents

Mental Health
- Demanding
- Verbal abuse
- Confrontational
- Depression
- Anorexia
- Bulimia
- Suicidal tendencies
- Split personality
- Self harm

Sexual Health
- Teenage pregnancy
- Abortion
- Assaults
- HIV
- Sexually transmitted infections
- Internal injuries

General Health
- Susceptible to illness
- Lack of period
- Loss of weight
- Personal hygiene
- Death

Legal Issues
- Court orders
- Legislatio
- Court guardian
- Ward of court
- In care
- Moving house

Substances/Crime
- Aggression
- Epilepsy
- Personality changes
- Swearing
- Theft
- Deception
- Fraud
- Violence
- Abscesses
- Missing from home
- Overdose
- Death

Education Authorities
- Truancy
- Low achievement
- Lack of qualifications
- Threats of legal action
- Home tuition
- Change of schools

Health Agencies
- Visits to A&E, GU clinic
- Attitudes of staff
- Approach to child's problem

Voluntary & Semi-governmental Agencies
- Drugs
- Connections
- Young persons
- Housing
- Social security
- Parent support
- YOT
- Probation

Courts
- Court orders
- Unknown procedures
- Legislation
- Court guardians
- Immigration

Social Services
- Familial enquiries
- Family assessments
- Threat to break up family
- Involvement of estranged partner
- At risk register
- Care homes
- Secure unit
- Foster carers
- Case conferences
- Financial pressures
- Transport issues
- Human rights – 13, 16 yrs
- Lack of commitment
- Lack of information
- 'Out of hours' issue

Police
- Familial enquiries
- House searches
- Investigations
- Family enquiries
- Video recording
- Different officers
- Missing persons
- Vice squad
- Drug squad
- Protection issues
- CPS
- Lack of convictions
- Loss of evidence
- Human rights concerns
- Lack of commitment
- Lack of information

General Woes
- Fear of/for –
  - Abduction, abuse, violence, death, other children
  - Not knowing where she is
  - Lack of trust
  - Lack of sleep
  - Paranoid
  - Keeping safe
  - Other siblings
  - Urgo to lock her in
  - Her going out
  - 'Trending on Egg shells'
  - Time running out
V. PREVENTION, PROTECTION AND PROSECUTION - INTERVENTIONS TO END SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

The problem of sexual exploitation is very complex and calls for a coordinated intervention from all stakeholders, such as family, school, police, health service, police, social service, prosecution, courts, voluntary groups and the community at large. Figure-8 below depicts the three crucial elements in stopping sexual exploitation of children and young people.

This 3P challenge of prevention, protection and prosecution highlights the need to enhance access to justice by protecting children from exploitation, preventing their victimisation and re-victimisation and by successfully prosecuting criminal elements. It highlights the need for a problem-oriented approach and strategic action from all stakeholders. Efforts are made relentlessly by families and other agencies to achieve effective intervention.

Family interventions can either yield positive results releasing girls from perpetrator control or contribute to the complexity of the problem. A major element of grooming and controlling is the estrangement of girls from their families. Parents who are unaware that this is a major aim to be achieved through grooming may unintentionally intensify the process of estrangement through angry responses to aggressive behaviour from their daughters.

A. Efforts by the family

Families (parents, siblings, extended family members) in contact with CROP try to stop their children from being influenced by perpetrators, but they face countless problems. In attempting to deal with the sexual exploitation of their child, one issue that surfaces prominently is the difficulty the families have in acknowledging that their children are being groomed into prostitution.

Due to the alienation and stigma attached to prostitution, initially families may be unwilling to discuss the problem with anyone else. Stigma makes the problem more complex. A dominant perception about child sexual exploitation is that a girl is a ‘child prostitute’ and is willingly on the streets or in a brothel. Families are blamed for the lifestyle of their daughters. Unaware of the operation and activities of criminal pimps and their networks other people make assumptions about children and the role of families. Myths that ‘dysfunctional families’ or ‘bad parenting’ is the root cause of a child’s unhealthy life style and that children indulge in prostitution by choice, cause additional trauma to families.

Some parents also feel responsible for their daughter’s behaviour and blame themselves and their parenting for what has happened. Due to their lack of knowledge about the operation of perpetrators and their networks, parents tend to develop feelings of guilt and can brand themselves as ‘bad parents’. A few parents also conclude that their daughter is responsible and fail to recognise that the child is crying for help.

Another issue confronted by parents is the impossibility of breaking the communication channels between the girl and the perpetrator. Attempts made by parents

“We sort of moved out, we never asked for any help. We felt ashamed. Why have they picked our daughter? It is only her that things are happening to. We were shocked, upset and we were vulnerable.”

- A parent

“It’s like - sometimes I could have knocked down our daughter. Sometimes we blamed her. We felt she wanted her to be with these people.”

- A parent
to stop the perpetrator’s access to their daughters include taking away mobile phones and other communication devices, attempting to keep girls locked up in the house and removing her from school. These attempts can be futile, as girls break the locks, climb through the windows, assault their parents in their efforts to get out of the house and meet their perpetrators. Some parents have attempted to change the physical environment of their daughters by sending them away to far off cities and even countries. Despite these attempts, very few parents succeeded in dismantling the perpetrator’s control over their child. With hindsight many parents feel that they could have been more effective in their efforts if they had known how these criminal networks operated. A few parents felt that they failed to take necessary action.

In relation to other agencies, almost all families seek help from the police. Many parents contacted the police to report:

- their daughter has not come home as expected;
- physical assaults either on their daughter or on another member of their family;
- rape or multiple rape;
- harassment or intimidation;
- detention without consent;
- threats to life; and
- complaints against the police in an effort to establish accountability for police action or inaction vis-à-vis their complaints.

Some of the families have gone through court proceedings to obtain –

- a care order;
- an order to restrict a perpetrator from meeting the girl;
- custody of grandchildren; and
- to assist daughters through criminal charges involving drug offences, shoplifting, soliciting for prostitution, criminal assault.

Parents regularly approach health agencies for the treatment of their daughters or themselves. Families come in contact with school authorities owing to issues such as truanting, disruptive or anti-social behaviour. CROP acknowledges that many national and local statutory and voluntary agencies have been making innumerable efforts to achieve effective interventions. The following section highlights some common problems faced by parents vis-à-vis different agencies, they sought help from.

**B. Educational authorities**

Educational authorities play a vital role in meeting the 3P challenge. CROP’s study highlighted that 66% of those targeted by perpetrators and their networks are in the age group 9 to 16 years. All attended school when they were first targeted by
the perpetrators and schools can be a location targeted by perpetrators. They often camp in their cars outside the school gates, befriend young girls and gradually groom them into commercial sex. Young girls subjected to bullying and alienation at school can be vulnerable to the tactics used by the perpetrators.

The effects of grooming and exploitation are often visible among children in their interaction with each other and with staff. Truanting and/or decreasing levels of attainment, changes in attitude, behaviour and appearance should alert teachers to the possibility that these new behaviours are the outcomes of grooming. Many perpetrators targeting and grooming girls are also involved in other organised criminal activities such as drug dealing. As grooming proceeds drunkenness, drug use and disruptive behaviour often indicate the involvement of girls with criminal perpetrators.

In the experience of CROP school authorities are often unable to respond appropriately to the situation, primarily because they lack knowledge about the operation of pimping networks, but also because they are concerned about the school’s reputation. School authorities may not want to acknowledge the problem, which may result in parental concerns being ignored.

A few parents have had bad experiences with the school authorities. When the first symptoms of grooming surface, educational authorities may blame the girl and thus add considerably to her disadvantage.

“The school was pretty awful. It was always the child’s fault. They were worried about their reputation. They did not understand her needs, they were inappropriately moralistic. They said she is old enough and must own responsibility for her behaviour. I thought and still think that the tendency among some teachers to deal with young people and treat them in an adult way and not recognise that they are children is unrealistic and unhelpful.” - A parent

There is an urgent need for school authorities to understand the underlying causes of a girl’s behaviour. In one case, a parent was taking her daughter into school to ensure that she attended. She then received a letter from the head teacher stating that she would face court proceedings if her daughter continued to miss school. She attempted to talk to the school authorities, but they were not prepared to listen to her, which caused additional distress to the parent. Blaming either the parents or the children does not lead to effective intervention. It is important for school authorities to understand the reasons behind truancy in order to develop a coordinated response with other agencies and parents, to stop the grooming process, and to enhance support for young girls who are being gradually estranged from all their support systems, including family, school and friends.

A multi-disciplinary approach to the problem in an educational setting poses considerable challenge calling for equal participation of all stakeholders, including children, parents and other carers, teachers and other agencies that may be involved. Efforts of school authorities have sometimes had negative outcomes. For example, in one situation school authorities placed a child abusive to others away from the main group of pupils. This exclusion further disadvantaged the girl and led to increased association with those involved in the pimping network. In another incident school authorities called for a planning meeting on the school premises. The girl expressed her unwillingness to attend the meeting on the school premises as she was terrified of the perpetrator’s younger brother who attended the same school. However, the school authorities insisted on meeting at school without any consideration for the girl’s fears and apprehensions.
Educational agencies usually are very supportive to children facing disabilities or disadvantage. The disadvantage experienced by girls through grooming and exploitation should also be recognised and other possible help explored; this could include extra efforts such as arranging home tuitions, apportioning personal tutors to support girls and multi-agency planning and interventions to promote the girls' educational and general welfare.

C. Health agencies

Where girls are sexually exploited all the families known to CROP seek help from health agencies in relation to their own and their child's health. Health concerns of girls and parents are serious and wide ranging from physical health to sexual and psychological health. While some families received highly effective, positive and compassionate responses from health agencies, a few faced problems associated either with the working practices or attitudes of health staff.

Children and young people could fall through gaps in service provision. In the past the Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services provided for the mental needs of children from infancy to the age of 16, or 18 if the young person was still attending school at the time of the referral. One girl groomed for sexual exploitation did not fit this criterion as she was 17 years old and not in school, but recent policy changes, Every Child Matters – Change for Children, means all children below the age of 18 are now eligible.

Attitudes of agencies towards girls in exploitative situations can aggravate their vulnerability. For example, when a sixteen year old girl approached the health service for termination of her pregnancy, she was treated without compassion which led to post traumatic stress disorder. Remarks by medical professionals, such as 'so...she is consenting to murder' and 'has she learnt her lesson?' reflect limited understanding about problems faced by girls subjected to sexual exploitation.

When children and their families are being treated for attempted suicide and self harming behaviour, compassion can be lacking. Practitioners may not be prepared to inquire about a girl's history of abuse, which can be crucial to successful medical treatment. A few parents ended up fighting at every stage to ensure effective intervention in their child's health, both physical and mental. Girls and their family members often lack access to counselling services which could be effective in reducing the long term effects sexual exploitation causes.

In many cases health service needs more knowledge of what is actually going on in order to develop a child-centred and holistic approach to be able address all the exigencies resulting from the disadvantage caused to girls by the activities of perpetrators. Coordination of the efforts of multiple agencies working with girls and families is also required.

D. Police

Intervention by the police in relation to girls being groomed or exploited occurs on many significant occasions. The role of the police in achieving the 3 Ps - prevention, protection and prosecution, is vital. Parents identified major difficulties in responses, attitudes of the police to themselves, their daughters and in police approaches to sexual exploitation, methods of investigation and law enforcement.

Response from the police

Although there are some examples of good policing practice, more commonly parents feel their allegations are not taken seriously. Response to complaints made to
the police by parents about their daughter’s safety could be slow and marginal. Parents had to call the police many times before their complaints received attention. For example, one parent contacted the police numerous times (150 times including contacts over the telephone) and as a result was accused of being vexatious.

Parents can feel that the service offered is below the expected standards and can be frustrated that police do not investigate and gather evidence for use in the prosecution of perpetrators. Other parents feel that effective police responses can only be achieved by approaching or threatening to approach the media. Parents can be distressed that police are aware of the criminal activities of pimping networks and yet do not act on their complaints. Parents also feel frustrated that police fail to take sufficient evidence of criminal offences to the Crown Prosecution Service.

Delay in response to accusations of child sexual exploitation can lead to serious consequences. Firstly, girls lose confidence in the criminal justice system which reinforces a perpetrator’s control and supremacy. Secondly, girls are often at serious risk and a timely intervention; for example, issuing a protection order, referral to secure accommodation, investigating and collecting physical evidence of assault or rape could save the life of a girl and lead to the prosecution of perpetrators. Placing girls on a 72 hour police protection order proved very successful in case of four girls from families supported by CROP.

Communication between the police and the victim(s)

Intra-familial child abuse is investigated by child protection units, but they do not deal with child sexual exploitation by men outside the family. On every occasion parents approached the police, they had to deal with a new police officer.

Even when specialist police officers were appointed, few attempts were made to talk to the victim(s) and their families. Families were often shocked by the end result of the investigation process. Active communication channels between police and the families are needed.

Investigating missing girls

Girls groomed and exploited stay out late at night or go missing for hours, for days and even for weeks. Missing girls frequently return home safe. As the process continues, the police either lose interest or consider the situation normal.

Figure – 9: Issues around missing girls

- Police lose interest;
- Officer changes each time;
- Girl is warned;
- Role of perpetrator is ignored.

To investigate sexual exploitation it is important to concentrate on different aspects of the case:

⇒ Where was the child found?
In whose company was she found?
What has she been doing during the time she was missing?
Are there any signs of physical or sexual abuse on her body?
Is this the first time she went missing? If not, where, when and with whom was she found in the earlier incidences?
Does she require any medical examination or assistance?
Is she facing a crisis and does she need support?

If a young girl goes missing repeatedly, information on all the above aspects can be useful in understanding her behaviour and that of the perpetrator. Collecting and compiling this information on repeat occasions is part of a thorough investigation and calls for coordination between forces across regions. The initiative to appoint ‘Missing Persons Coordinators’ in the West Yorkshire police district is a very positive step in this direction.

**Approach to policing extra-familial abuse**

Responses from the police such as ‘your daughter is safer with him (paedophile) than walking the streets’ underline the myths and assumptions informing their approach to sexual exploitation of girls.

An acknowledgement that children are victims of sexual exploitation would advance greatly the work of the police. Contrary attitudes can result in parents not reporting cases as they fear police action against their daughters. One of the tactics used by perpetrators to control girls is to involve them in criminal and antisocial activities. When girls are accused of criminal activities, it is essential for the police to look beyond the crime and the girls to ensure that the actual culprits who force girls to commit crimes are brought to justice.

But more commonly the response is -

“Look! You plead guilty. They will be very lenient with you. Especially when they know what has happened with your life.”

Another tactic used by perpetrators to distract police intervention into his criminal actions is to groom the girls to make accusations of sexual abuse against their family members. While these accusations are not always false, it is vital for the police to balance their efforts and resources in the investigation of allegations of intra-familial and extra-familial abuse.

When the child is over 13 years parents are told that the police cannot do anything until the girl makes a complaint. Counter allegations have been made against parents. Parents pursuing their attempts to remove girls from the company of perpetrators received warnings from the police and in some instances were also threatened with arrest. For example, in one case police acted on the perpetrator’s complaint of trespass and warned the parents that they could be arrested if they approached the perpetrator again, when in reality parents went to the perpetrators home in search of their missing daughter. These responses from the police can jeopardise the efforts of parents and can further the perpetrator’s efforts to isolate the girl from her family.
Attitude of the police
The attitude of some police officers and their approach in dealing with victims of sexual exploitation can add to a victim’s agony. Parents feel there is a complete lack of understanding of the issue amongst the police. For example, in one case the parent and daughter were taken hostage by a perpetrator. This resulted in serious offences such as illegal confinement, harassment and hostage taking. Despite the seriousness of the problem, the victims felt that the police were not on their side. The police failed to show any empathy and responded aggressively to the victims. They thought that the police always attempt to be politically correct and were apprehensive of being accused of racism if they investigated the perpetrators.

Compassion to victims and their families is needed at every stage of investigation into rape and sexual assault. While pursuing an investigation, police also have an additional duty to assure the victim of her safety and security. A few parents said that the police reinforced their fear by cautioning them about the dangers involved in pursuing a complaint and testifying against the perpetrator.

Process of investigation
Police tend to project the problem either on to the family or on to the girl which leads to additional trauma to the family and delays the victim’s access to security and justice. In the process of police investigations family homes are searched, intelligence supplied by the family, such as details of telephone calls, messages on the girl’s mobile phone can be considered irrelevant. In one case police took a girl into custody for attacking her parent and a police officer. She was accused of assault and possession of drugs, but the police showed no interest in the mobile phone messages with clues about the supply of drugs and illegal sexual activities.

Parents feel that the police do not class pimping as child sexual abuse. Complaints of severe abuse and rape of girls can be reduced to trivial complaints by the way these cases are handled. In one incident, the police investigation was negligent through losing bags of clothing containing forensic evidence. In other instances, the process of investigation did not attempt to protect the identity of the victims and the family’s complaints of intimidation from the perpetrators were not taken seriously.

Parents feel that the police expect girls to appear in a particular way on the video evidence for the cases to proceed further. Each victim/survivor of sexual exploitation has a unique response to the crisis. A hard and joking front often conceals deep fear and pain. Putting a brave face on can result in the witnesses being discounted. But stereotypical responses, such as appearing highly disturbed and emotionally distressed, cannot be expected of all victims.

Parents feel that the police often place the responsibility on girls of 13 and 14 years rather than making the criminals accountable for what was done. On several occasions the police showed no interest in details such as the description of the man that put a gun to a girl’s head, the description of the car used to abduct her and so on. Delay in interviewing witnesses may cause the witnesses to retract evidence due to threats and intimidation from perpetrators.

"All they said was how dangerous the defendants were. Nobody could offer us any protection. Nobody sat down and talked to us about what was happening."
- A parent

"Every single thing - no matter what we said - they just did not want to know - THEY JUST DID NOT WANT TO KNOW."
- A parent
In one incident, the girl recognised one of the perpetrators from a photograph in the local newspaper. The police concluded it was a mistaken identity. Requests from parents for an identification parade or photo identification were not heeded. Parents were informed that the police have no time or resources for such procedures.

On another occasion a criminal case was stopped from going to the court on the advice of the police. A caution was recommended and implemented. The perpetrator was made to sign the sex offenders register for five years. While the police treated the intervention as successful, it was not effective. The perpetrator re-offended and the girl remained in the same exploitative relationship. Other parents said that the police failed to enforce a court order, which damaged the chances of rescuing their daughter.

E. Social services

Problems associated with social services again relate to the working culture, practice styles and attitudes of the professionals. Families often are viewed as ‘dysfunctional’ and the source of the problem. While it is true that factors within the family can contribute to the vulnerability of girls to sexual predators, it should be recognised that girls from all kinds of families are being targeted and exploited by those outside the family, who may operate in organised criminal gangs. The tendency to blame the family for triggering inappropriate behaviour from the girl makes it more difficult for the parents and families to deal with the situation.

Professionals working with these families are often unaware of the working styles of perpetrators. Lack of knowledge can place the staff of social services in a disadvantaged position with the result that their advice and support to children and families can become either inappropriate or ineffective in ensuring the safety of the girl. One example is of parents who were advised to pay the perpetrators that were threatening to kidnap their child.

Another parent said the intervention of social workers complicated the situation by telling his daughter that there is nothing her father could do to stop her from seeing the perpetrator (a known paedophile). This parent feels that social services need a complete reorganisation and staff dealing with child sexual exploitation require re-education that emphasizes the processes of grooming, exploitation and its immediate and long term consequences for girls and their families.

At times, girls fall between the gaps of services offered by social services which are guided by the age of the child. The impact of grooming on girls is long lasting and after reaching adulthood may still be in dire need of support from agencies. Parents also feel that social services need to extend their out of office service.

Girls are often placed in care homes with the intention of ensuring their safety, but contrary to their intentions, girls are put at additional risk as they are easily accessible to perpetrators. Staff at care homes have no legal authority to make girls stay in the home or to stop telephone calls to their perpetrators or ‘boyfriends’. When girls are placed in foster care homes, parents may be subjected to disrespect and harassment from the child’s foster parents. Many workers deem secure accommodation for girls as a violation of their human rights and hence to be used only in extreme circumstances. CROP’s experience highlights that long term secure accommodation has proved effective in protecting and promoting girl’s basic human rights. In one case, the girl placed in secure accommodation continued to be at risk from the perpetrators.
Parents or those with parental responsibilities are not treated as part of the solution. They are not always welcomed as part of case conferences about their children. Even when parents are invited to take part, their participation can be more like window dressing rather than a meaningful and equitable working partnership. Parents’ occupations, lifestyle or previous behaviour is often judged as prejudicial to their daughter’s welfare. Parents are also concerned that social services deny them information about their children recorded in case reports and minutes of case conferences.

In one incident where a child accused her brother of sexual abuse, social services placed her on the child protection register and continued with their intervention into issues of familial abuse. The concerns of parents about the involvement of a network of pimps were put on the back burner. Social services can perceive the relationship between the girl and the perpetrator as normal, while police say that their hands are tied and they cannot investigate issues of grooming and sexual exploitation until and unless they are referred by social services. Another response when parents sought help from social services was to decide that the onus of protecting the girl lay with her parents, as they were her legal guardians, and that nothing could be done to help the family. Understanding the complex processes of grooming into prostitution and its long term consequences on girls and their families can contribute to effective interventions by social agencies.

F. Courts

Families victimised by the sexual exploitation of their daughters sometimes go through court proceedings. Parents usually approach the court for orders to stop the perpetrator from accessing their daughters or to stop the perpetrator from harassing them. In one case, the court made a girl a ward of court and directed the police to return the child to her parents or to a place of safety. The girl refused to leave the perpetrator’s house and the police did not remove the child. Later, the perpetrator approached the court and succeeded in getting the order quashed. The parents felt that the court guardian acted in support of the perpetrator. The court guardian failed to make a comprehensive report to the court, and details such as illegal detention of the young girl in the perpetrator’s home as well as the use of violence and drug abuse were left unreported.

Another issue confronting parents is their access to legal aid. Parents said they incurred huge sums of money in trying to protect their daughter and preventing her exploitation by perpetrators. But they were told they were ineligible for legal aid despite the disadvantage caused to their underage daughter. In another case, a girl’s application for criminal injuries compensation was rejected as her claim lacked sufficient evidence.

Other concerns are related to the admissibility of evidence. Children aged 14 and above can be called as prosecution witnesses under the Youth Justice and Criminal Evidence Act, 1999. The Act provides scope for children and vulnerable witnesses to give evidence through video and TV links. However, in one particular case the video recording of evidence of a 14 year old girl was mishandled resulting in refusal by the Crown Prosecution Service to prosecute the accused. Very few of those subjected to sexual exploitation come forward to give evidence of their abuse. They often face intimidation from the defendants making them extremely vulnerable and thus unable to go through the proceedings of the court.
G. Other agencies

Timely intervention, accessibility and availability of services offered by voluntary agencies are commended by parents. However, a few parents felt that some voluntary and community sector agencies treat parents as insignificant and irrelevant in protecting their children from the harm caused by perpetrators. Decisions regarding their child’s welfare are some times made without any consultation with parents. In one instance staff from a hostel providing accommodation for young girls refused to give any information about the whereabouts and wellbeing of the girl until CROP intervened. Parents often find themselves under stress and trauma by not knowing the whereabouts of their daughters. In another case, the probation services reported to the court that the parent’s address was unstable and was not suitable for the purposes of her daughter’s probation. At the time the daughter was placed on probation, the parent informed the probation services that she was likely to be away on holiday on specified dates. Despite the parental efforts to clarify when she would be at home, the professional view that the parent’s address was unsuitable offended the parent very significantly.
CONCLUSIONS

This study of the work of CROP with families and girls and the agencies they are in contact with identifies the impact of sexual exploitation and both ineffective and good practice by agencies.

Effects on families and girls

► An increasing number of young girls are being targeted, groomed and sexually exploited by pimps and their networks.

► A majority of the girls (66%) subjected to sexual grooming and exploitation is under the age of consent.

► Organised, hierarchical networks of pimps are operating across regions and are using sophisticated methods to groom girls into prostitution. Girls from 34% of the families supported by CROP are targeted by networks of Asian men operating in Yorkshire area.

► Sexual exploitation occurs in gradual phases of initial contact, grooming (including befriending, exchange of favours and estrangement from support systems) and exploitation.

► Girls are introduced to drugs as part of the tactics of pimps to increase their compliance and their acceptance of the harsh realities and trauma caused by sexual exploitation.

► Truanting, aggression and antisocial behaviour among young girls often result from sexual grooming and exploitation by pimps, rather than bad parenting.

► Sexual exploitation can cause severe disadvantage not just to those subjected to exploitation, but also to their family members, particularly siblings and parents.

► Families and parents unaware of the activities of the pimps and their networks feel helpless, guilty and distressed.

► Widely held attitudes and perceptions that girls willingly enter into prostitution or that they emerge from dysfunctional families serves to stigmatise families and inhibit their seeking active support.

Ineffective agency responses

Agency interventions that make their responses ineffective include:

► Failure to acknowledge and understand that grooming is the source of the family’s trauma.

► The lack of a compassionate response with an understanding of the psychological impacts of sexual exploitation on girls and their family members.

► Unsympathetic and delayed responses, absence of communication with victims and their families, a lack of coordination and intelligence sharing amongst agencies, attitudes based on incorrect assumptions and negligence in investigation.
Rigid times of service, lack of knowledge among professionals about the operation of pimps and their networks, the effects of exploitation on girls and families, a tendency to view families as dysfunctional, and a sole emphasis on familial abuse.

Absence of legal aid and advice for families, non-admissibility of evidence by parents of underage children, problems faced by child victims when witnesses in court.

Non-recognition of the role and importance of family as a potential resource to assist the girl resist grooming for sexual exploitation.

**Good practice**

To successfully implement interventions for prevention, protection and prosecution requires coordinated, long term multi-agency strategies and responses. A coordinated strategy targets all those involved in the prostitution of children, not just the girls, but also the punters, pimps and their criminal networks. Sexual grooming followed by sexual exploitation is a complex issue threatening the child’s safety and challenging professional and governmental resources. Good practice interventions by voluntary and statutory agencies (education, health, criminal justice system, social services) include:

- Recognition that children are victims of sexual exploitation and not truly consenting parties to sexual activity and prostitution, but abused, in need protection and have multiple needs.

- Zero tolerance of sexual exploitation by pimps, paedophiles, procurers and punters.

- Recognition of child prostitution as a response to deception, threats, control, confinement and dependency.

- Preventing access of perpetrators to children, by increasing awareness of girls and parents and ways to protect children from abuse.

- Recognition that children from any family can be at risk of being groomed and exploited.

- Understanding that families need support to be able to counter the activities of perpetrators.

- Adequate allocation of resources to agencies in order to investigate and collect sufficient evidence for the prosecution of sexual exploiters of children.

- Active and creative use of existing legislation.

- Training for professionals to dispel incorrect myths and assumptions and on good practice interventions in the complex relationship between abuse, symptoms, and re-victimisation.

- Develop evidence gathering techniques to avoid girls being required to make a statement against her perpetrators.

- Overcoming the impact of intimidation and fear of repercussions on a victim complainant by offering adequate protection.
- Interventions to both sexual exploitation and domestic violence as many prostituted girls face both.

- Avoiding the revolving door approach that consists of girls and parents being passed from one agency to another without effective intervention by any.

- National guidelines and procedures for multi-agency approaches to the sexual exploitation of children, and to punters and pimps.
References

REFERENCES


- Melrose, Margaret "Young people abused through prostitution: Some observations for Practice" Practice, Vol. 16 Number 1 (March 2004).


Parents' Voices

I do not have many suggestions. Because I do not have any answers yet. The authorities have to wake up to this problem and do something about it before too many children's lives get ruined.

When I was in the thick of it, nobody understood me or my daughter. Not even my husband and the other child. As a mother I wanted to do everything that is possible.

General opinion is that if a boy is thirteen he is a YOB and if a fourteen year old girl is walking in Chapeltown, it is her choice. We need to recognise it is NOT.

Statutory agencies know these things are happening. If it had been familial abuse they would have got involved. They cannot pick and choose in what they get involved and what not - it is child abuse. It is worse than familial. Any abuse is - but if it was dad or someone in family - there won't be guns put to their heads, no passing from gang to gang, no risk to life...

We tried all sources of help. What is the point of court orders with no affirmative action? These kinds of activities outweigh what we have achieved so far for us, our kids and our future.

Statutory agencies know these things are happening. If it had been familial abuse they would have got involved. They cannot pick and choose in what they get involved and what not - it is child abuse. It is worse than familial. Any abuse is - but if it was dad or someone in family - there won't be guns put to their heads, no passing from gang to gang, no risk to life...

Parents have got to understand how they work. You got to understand their (perpetrator's) work to help your child. My daughter used to try and ring them. You cannot keep your child a prisoner. But if that's what it took, we would have done. We took mobile phones off her. We stopped all communication channels. It is not beating and isolating them, but it is stopping communication and watching your kid.

Nobody has done anything, police, social services... that is why we are leaving the country. There was only CRISP and hospital and educational agencies have been good.

I wonder sometimes if I have had some counselling. Sometimes it is hard for a man to accept that I am the one who needs help here. But it would have helped me.

Issues changed from being exploitation of children to parents being racially and religiously discriminative. But, never the issue of the human rights of the child and parents. Parent's right to family life without any conflict, right to psychological support in the face of such conflict has no value.

After a while, the pimp did eventually move away from her due other reasons. But, all the violence, physical and mental, has completely scarred her for life. And all through this we felt that we did not receive any support from any...

People must take the hold these men have over the girls seriously. The approach that the girls must take responsibility should be discarded. One has to target the men and prosecute them and remove them from the scene and then offer some help to the girls that is acceptable to them.

Judicial system gets developed if they are not able to carry out the order. People would lose faith in the judicial system.

Enough damage has already been done. They cannot bring it back... we have to move forward. You will never get over it. You have to learn from it and turn it into something positive. You should not feel like a victim or else you can be a victim all your life. You have to get up, dust yourself and go on. You feel so angry when you hear about such exploitation on the television... but now the pain has gone from being 26x7 to once a while.

At the age of 41 she is now away from her pimp. Since she went away from him, she did not have to go to any psychiatric ward. This is crucial for all health agencies and police to recognise...

What made me feel good and helped to come out of depression was the fact that there are people who think alike, people who have similar problems and are willing to listen.

Nowadays all agencies measure their success through targets. So it's not a trick that all children from 0-18 must be protected from all kinds of exploitation.

We won't trust the police anymore... because of how we are being treated and how our child is being treated. We talk of international trafficking. We are not saying we should not do anything about that. But look here, nine and twelve year olds being raped. Pimps passing these children from gang to gang just like they are doing with girls brought from abroad. Girls are not seeing money changing hands. That's what is happening.