

# RISE Highlands

Initial views from  
Young People &  
Professionals  
Dec 2020

Prepared By:  
Hollie Drever  
CSE Project Advisor



# 1. About RISE Highlands



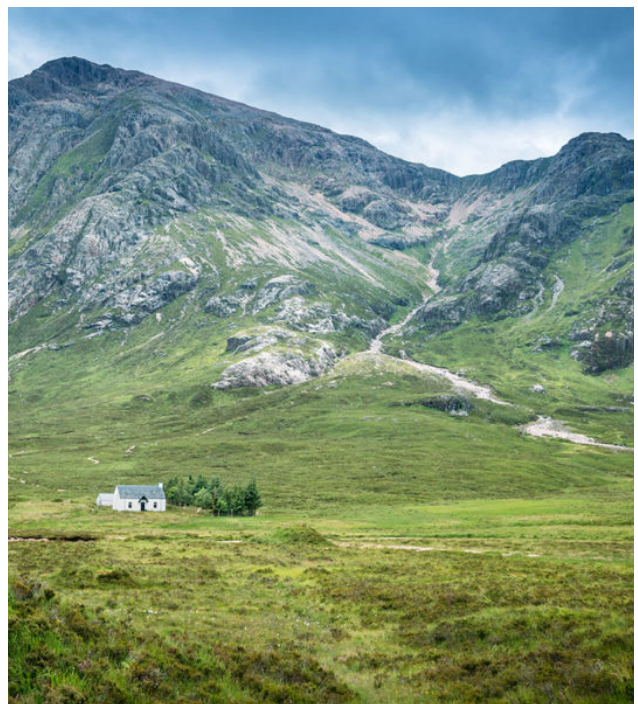
The wider Barnardo's CSE service has been operational since 2016. However the service in Inverness is separately funded and represents an evolution of similar posts elsewhere in that it is locally (Highland) supported, locally managed and overseen and supported by a local senior stakeholder group consisting of Barnardo's Scotland, Police Scotland, Highland Child Protection Committee, and the Highland Council. The CSE Project Advisor came into post in November 2020 and will be based at Police HQ.

**"THE POST WILL BENEFIT FROM A BROADER CSE ADVISOR NETWORK WHICH CURRENTLY INVOLVES SIMILAR POSTS CO-LOCATED WITHIN 4 OF POLICE SCOTLAND'S 14 DIVISIONS"**

RISE Highlands aims to:

- 1) Reduce risk, harm and impact of exploitation for CYP & families.
- 2) Provide support, training and consultancy to agencies.
- 3) Assist the identification & disruption of criminality via intelligence sharing

A small group of young people and over 60 professionals from a broad range of sectors were consulted and asked to share their views around CSE either personally or via an anonymous survey.



# The views of young people

## 2.

Young people who participate in key Leadership-style forums - such as Highland Youth Parliament, Youth Forums, StandUp!, and Highland CHAMPS - were told about the service, with the assistance of surrounding professionals. Some of this work is still ongoing. Some young people did peer research and provided feedback on how the service should look, whilst others were contacted directly to gather views.

### UNDERSTANDING EXPLOITATION



Interestingly, multiple young people did not recognize the word "exploitation" but as discussions went on, they recognized that this had happened to them or to peers, and that investigations had been carried out in all instances. It should be noted however that some young people used exploitation interchangeably with "abuse", "assault", "rape" or "molesting". Some young people cited PSE lessons which included definitions of exploitation.

"PSE lessons made exploitation seem obvious and like it was easy to stop - but it's not, the people doing it are manipulating and smart and use their power over time so you don't see it happening"

"It's confusing and hard to understand because there are many layers to it"

"I know so many friends who have been exploited, it was that common in my placement. But they wouldn't always tell you directly, because they were worried they'd look stupid"

"I probably wouldn't want to tell someone if I was being exploited, because the exploiter would be really powerful and I might not even think it was not normal."

"They target you if you're in care because they think you are desperate for attention and will be grateful"



## AWARENESS RAISING



Young people were passionate about how messages were framed, and shared negative examples of previous exploitation awareness raising work.

"When you tell teenagers they *can't do something* it just makes us more rebellious. Instead tell us why, and what might happen to us."

"Knowing how the law works would be more useful than just telling us that something is illegal"

"I would like to know that a service could help me even if I was doing something like taking drugs - when their message is just "anti-drugs", I don't think they'll help"

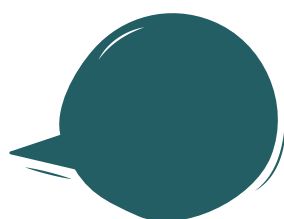
"*'Don't let yourself get into this situation'* is the worst message and just blames the victim. [Exploitation] happened to me in my own home, I couldn't avoid it. My friends might work when it's dark outside, or live down side streets, so they can't avoid that. It's not our fault."

"If you launch an app or something, don't oversell it or lie and tell us it's brilliant - we want to know the downsides too"

"We are all on Snapchat, and maybe Instagram. If you wanted to reach young people, that's where I'd go!"

"It's a sensitive subject so messages shouldn't feel personal or try to scare us. I don't like watching videos that are gory or graphic."

"Finding a balance between good interaction for young people and keeping it professional is important"





## SUPPORT SERVICES



Young people mentioned good and bad examples of when they had disclosed exploitation, and what they thought would help. There were vast differences in experiences, with some young people completely trusting their carers and others not, demonstrating the importance of relationship-based practice.

"If I tried to talk my friend out of being involved with drugs, they would just think I was boring. They need to have that 1 person they trust and can tell."

"Services could show us how to keep safe or be 'a bit safer' without blaming us. It would be good to know what to do if I was attacked or something... like self-defence"

"I only got on with 1/10 of my social workers. Just knowing I could speak to someone who wouldn't judge me if I did tell them would be good - and that person probably wouldn't be my parent, social worker or my foster carer"

"If you have had a bad experience with police in the past, you won't trust them. I just want them to be nice to us, listen, and let us speak"

"I wish I could of spoken to other people about it, like my Dad, but I didn't want to worry him. My sister wasn't supportive and told me it was my fault for running away"

"Because I've been under supervision [limited mobile use], I know what it's like and can tell friends that it's weird at first but it's for the best. I told them to share their messages with staff and to stop having contact with [the exploiter's] friends."

"I got to speak to a female police officer who knew my family, and that was helpful"

"I told [residential staff about exploitation] because I wasn't myself and I was running away. They were really supportive and I trusted them."

# The views of professionals

# 3.

## 3.1 TRAINING & AWARENESS

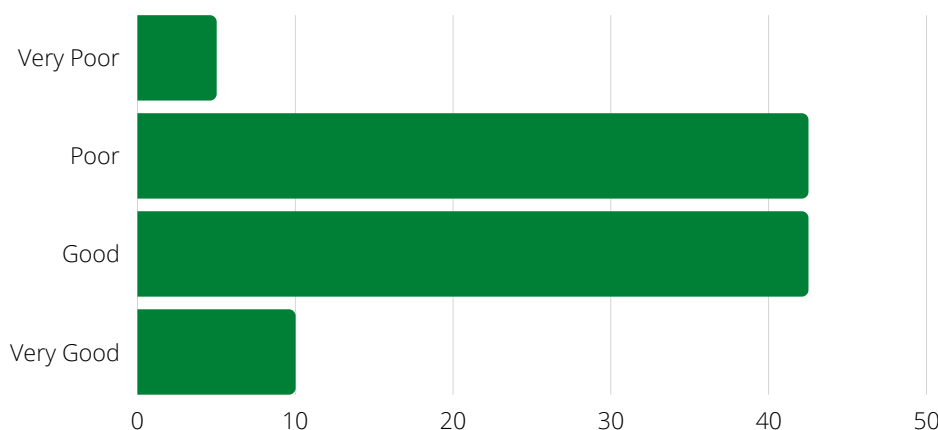
Many professionals noted that they had undertaken some form of CSE training, often as part of the internal induction to their role. CSE is included as an element of the HCPC's introductory child protection training, mandatory for many professionals. HCPC also promotes use of CALA's CSE E-Learning module. Some professionals will have attended workshops or online seminars from third sector agencies - such as WAVE Highland, Zero Tolerance, and RASASH - which include brief CSE elements. In previous years, a Barnardo's CSE training module has been delivered by HCPC.



**Survey Question:** What knowledge would you hope to gain by undertaking CSE training or awareness raising? *Answers grouped below*

- Complex CSE indicators and "how to spot it" (most common answer)
- Compliance with statutory/professional obligations & reporting
- Forms of CSE and perpetrator strategies (including online)
- Local prevalence and local data/trends
- Potential support options, partnerships, resources & practical tips for victims
- How to support carers and families

**Survey Question:** How would you rate your current knowledge of CSE, including the indicators & risk factors?



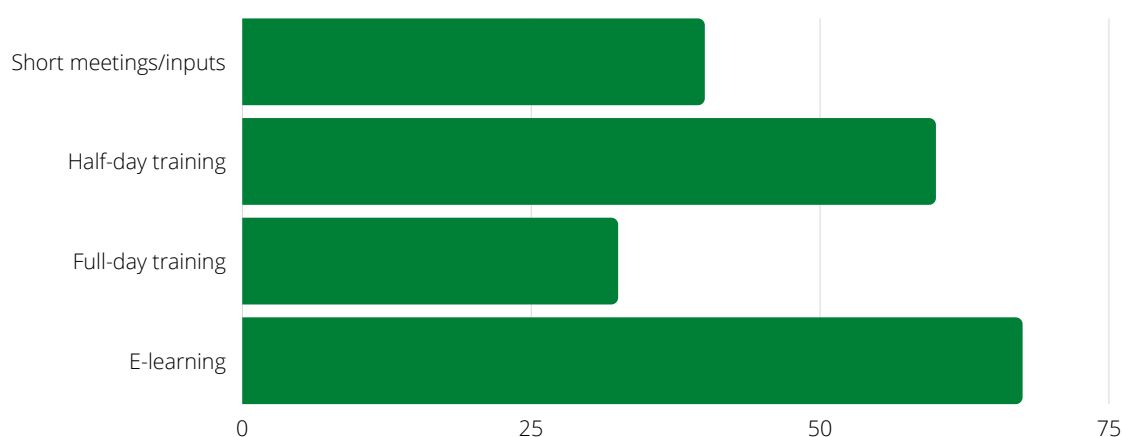


With almost half of all respondents rating their current knowledge of CSE as "Poor" or "Very Poor", it is clear that current training & awareness options should be reviewed and updated. Those who felt their knowledge was "Good" or "Very Good" often still noted areas for improvement and the need for continuous updates - particularly regarding local trends and responses.

**Survey Question:** Are there any current challenges in accessing CSE training, awareness-raising or consultancy? *Answers grouped below*

- Rural locations find it particularly hard to access local training
- The current COVID-19 impact
- No
- Unsure of where to access external training - internal training can be high quality
- Staff/capacity shortages
- Overload of online options, not enough in-person
- Cost/funding challenges
- Training does not include the voices of young people
- Training does not seem relevant to specific role

**Survey Question:** What would be your preferred method/s of CSE training or awareness raising for professionals in your organisation? (Select all that apply)



Respondents often highlighted multiple preferences regarding method of training sessions, suggesting that one method alone is not enough and perhaps E-Learning or short inputs can compliment half-day training. With cost and staffing issue limiting the time that professionals can 'afford' to give to training, consideration should be given to combining quality CSE input with existing offers.

Some agencies highlighted unique or bespoke needs regarding CSE training in their workplace. RISE Highlands is mindful that these agencies are not necessarily priority groups, but provide helpful examples of needs. Furthermore, it may be beneficial to consider initial training for such agencies where there is already a "buy-in" from management.



### **Training Case Study: Children's Hearings System Panel Members**

Although not frontline workers, volunteer panel members must understand the information provided to them and make legal decisions in the child's best interest. It is therefore important that they understand what CSE is and the associated risks. CSE information is included in their standard training pathway, but supplementary awareness raising would be useful.

- Given that panel members are volunteers, training should fit into the established development calendar.
- Training should be bespoke given the unique role of panel members.
- Panel members are keen that training has a *local* focus
- Training should combat stigma or myths relating to CSE, and also consider ongoing work to make hearings a better experience for young people.

### **Training Case Study: Preventions & Interventions Officers**



P&I Officers work with vulnerable people, who may be at higher risk of exploiting or being exploited. They often provide inputs to schools and other agencies to increase awareness, intelligence gathering, and reporting. They have received internal CSE-specific training, but this was last done 2.5yrs ago. Officers in similar roles (e.g. CROs, Custody Links Officer) could also benefit from training & awareness raising.

- P&I Officers may be very confident in the criminal element of CSE, but would benefit from an increased understanding of complex vulnerabilities and adverse childhood experiences, and how this relates to elements such as coercive control and the lasting effects of exploitation.
- P&I Officers have a good knowledge of external services available, but would benefit from knowing more and increasing partnership working - a service directory was thought to be beneficial in future.
- Training and awareness would benefit from a *local* context

**"People keep thinking about Rotherham, and how huge that was. Then they don't consider that CSE is also happening here and that we need to take action"**

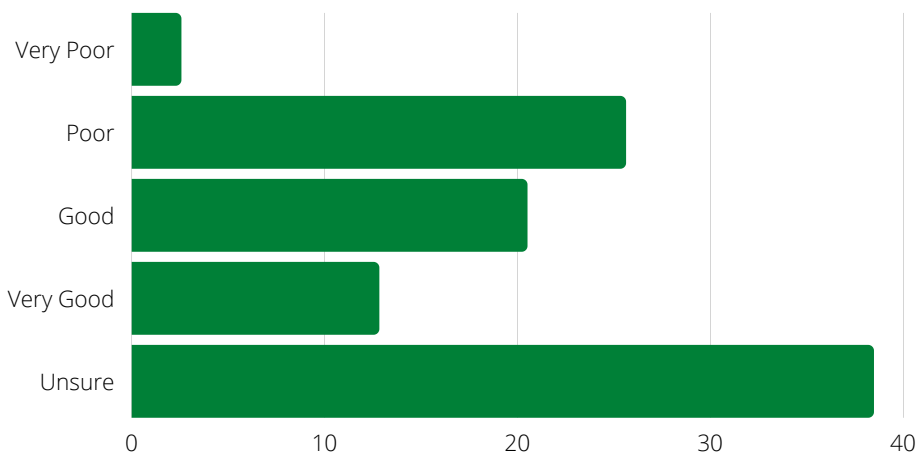


## 3.2 SUPPORT FOR PROFESSIONALS



Professionals presented a sense of confusion around what professional support was available and how to access it - where survey respondents did not choose "unsure", most rated services for professionals as "poor". The majority were very happy to hear that RISE Highlands would likely introduce a consultation service, noting this would build their confidence and act as a "middle man" when they did not feel they should/could contact Police, HCPC, or Social Work. There are concerns around this which must be managed, but the introduction of a new avenue for sharing hypothetical concerns or queries is seen as positive.

**Survey Question:** How would you rate the current services around you, in terms of professional support and escalating CSE concerns?



**Professional Consultation/Survey:** Are there any concerns regarding your access to CSE services or raising concerns?

"Limited awareness of who to turn to in these situations, so professionals 'sit on' information"

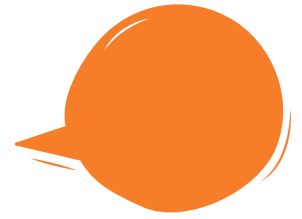
"Social workers are often unavailable, do not return calls, and make matters more unsafe when they do intervene"



"Being heard properly is a challenge. It feels unsafe for young people. We aren't kept in the loop and we never know if a perpetrator has been 'caught'""

"The police seem unwilling to work with services to share concerns and information."

"Overwhelming sense of 'what to do?' - perhaps unclear safeguarding issues and confusion as to where to access information"



"I am aware of local child protection policies but not aware of any specific policies for raising CSE concerns"

"Limited sharing of information - which is appropriate, however informing relevant others may lead to identification of possible CSE"

"I was really surprised when I found out there were exploitation concerns in the Highlands - I felt like nobody had talked to me or made me aware that this was a local problem"

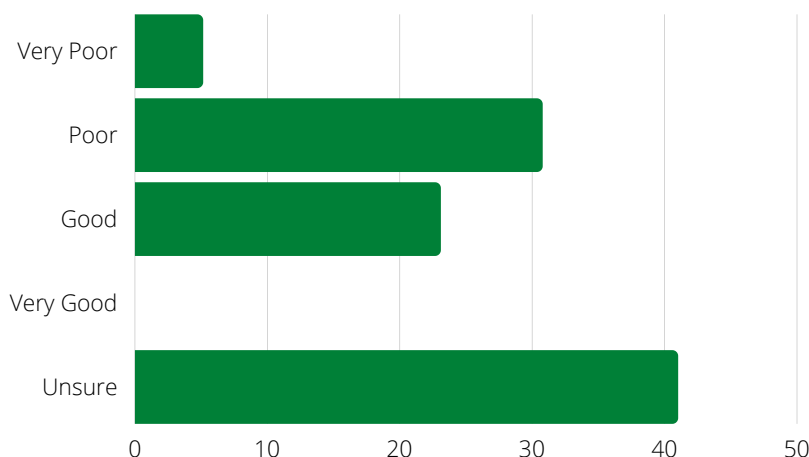
"Staff need good supervision and opportunities for containment. The current climate around CSE is very tense and frustrating"

**Some professionals noted that if they had concerns or intelligence, they would share with their line manager - but weren't sure where this would go to next. Some support services noted an increase in service users wishing to share intelligence anonymously and were familiar with PORTAL, and liked the idea, but there have been delays with rolling out this service and making it accessible. Police Scotland have noted professionals need to understand the difference between concerns and intelligence, and be confident in using internal concern procedures as well as contacting police when appropriate.**



### **3.3 SUPPORT FOR YOUNG PEOPLE**

**Survey Question:** How would you rate the current services around you, in terms of their support for young people experiencing/at risk of CSE



There is not a specific CSE support service for young people currently in Highlands, but they may be already supported by a social worker, CAMHS worker, or Springboard (TCAC) worker if vulnerable. There may also, of course, be wider support available.

For example, young people who are vulnerable due to crime/going missing, or are thought to be exploiting, may be supported by various police departments. The Youth Action Team also have dedicated social workers who can work with young people who are at risk of/are offending, or who have substance misuse concerns. Action For Children's ISS service works with 11-18 year olds on the edge of care or experiencing placement difficulties whilst Highland CHAMPS host a social events and an Opportunities group to share information on activities that CEYP can be referred to. However, the sexual abuse element of exploitation cannot be ignored - 22% of people who accessed RASASH's rape & sexual abuse support are under 19, but face waiting lists of over 1 year for in-person support. Some schools mention CSE in PSE sessions, but this could be improved. There are some online resources for young people regarding CSE, but may be difficult to access, poorly received or deemed 'too national' - an issue RISE Highlands hopes to improve.

**Survey Question:** Are there any concerns regarding young people's access to CSE services?

"Services are not designed around young people and their needs"

"Issues around the local area - people all know one another. Lack of safe spaces for young people and specialist support services"

"We can support them, but only if the person knows about us"

"Being online [due to COVID-19] makes it hard to check the safety of our students"

"Sometimes the person they trust the most is someone they are already working with - they might be wary of using an external service"

"Not within our team, but there are challenges accessing external support"

"Services should sustain key relationships with adults, beyond narrow professional roles"

"We need to be aware of what is available locally, and what resources are around"

# Concluding Note 4.

Professionals and young people contributed examples of where the current CSE response is working well, but cited many concerns and areas for improvement which should drive the focus of RISE Highlands. Young people want an awareness of, and support around, CSE that is **non-judgemental, non-patronising, and is relationship-based**. Professionals would benefit from enhanced CSE training and awareness raising that considers **accessibility issues** and **gives practical, local advice**. Professionals also require support to to feel **listened to** and respected. They require clearer guidance to **reduce current tensions and confusions** in practice and ultimately to **increase the safety of young people**.

## I hope that RISE Highlands...

**"Helps protect vulnerable young people and sees a reduction in CSE cases"**

**"Creates a more joined up and collaborative Highland-wide approach, forming better relationships between professionals"**

**"Increases public awareness of CSE and how to protect our children"**

**"Ensures all professionals have access to CSE training and that CSE is consistently 'on the agenda'"**



*Thank you to all professionals and young people who devoted time to sharing their views in this initial consultation.*