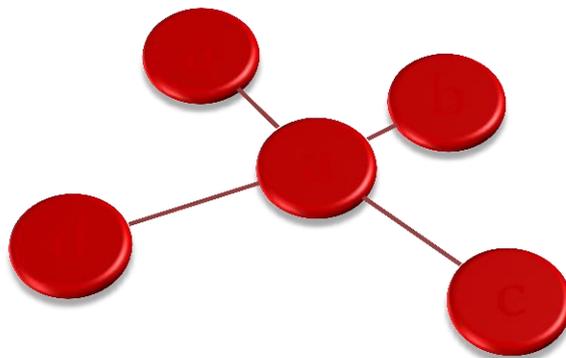


CSEFA HUB AND SPOKE EVALUATION

YEAR TWO PROGRESS REPORT AND INTERIM FINDINGS 2014-15
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY



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1. INTRODUCTION

The Child Sexual Exploitation Funders' Alliance (CSEFA) was created in 2013 in order to coordinate a three-year funding programme that would extend the reach of voluntary sector Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) services within England. A key aim was to catalyse a shift that would see CSE treated as a child protection issue by all relevant authorities.

CSEFA adopted a particular model for utilising the expertise, resources and infrastructure of an established CSE service (known as a 'hub') in order to extend that service by locating new project workers (known as 'spokes') into new service delivery areas. The Hub and Spoke initiative is a phased funding programme, aiming to develop a total of 16 CSE services in this way over a three year period, with each service being funded for three years. To date, three services have been funded in phase one in 2013-14, five services in phase two in 2014-15 and a further eight services are planned for the final phase in 2015-16.

2. AIMS OF THE EVALUATION

The project is being evaluated by a team of researchers at the University of Bedfordshire led by Professor Jenny Pearce and managed by Dr Julie Harris as Principal Investigator. The overall aim is to provide knowledge about the potential of the 'Hub and Spoke' model of service development to trigger cultural and systemic change in the way that services supporting children and young people respond to child sexual exploitation. Specifically it considers the impact of the Hub and Spoke model on:

- a) Safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation through service delivery
- b) Supporting and equipping specialist CSE workers to work effectively in host agencies
- c) Promoting stable CSE policy frameworks in new areas by raising awareness, developing procedures and advancing cultures of support from local policy makers responsible for CSE.

3. METHODS

In the second year of the evaluation the research team has completed fieldwork visits with eight participating Hub and Spoke services and undertaken exploratory research regarding their practice in young people's participation. In total the research team has interviewed 97 participants (September 2014 to August 2015). Additional data collected include annual monitoring returns from

the three Phase One services and quarterly returns from three of the five Phase Two services relating to the characteristics of the service user population, referral pathways, service activities, outputs and intervention outcomes. In addition, we have collected practice case studies, job descriptions and person specifications for Spoke workers; Local Safeguarding Children Boards (LSCB) reports and police problem profile reports addressing CSE; local strategy documents and CSE action plans, for each of the Hub and Spoke areas.

Background

National policy focussed on child sexual exploitation (CSE) has gathered pace and momentum in the wake of several important criminal cases dominating the headlines in recent years. These developments are clearly impacting and influencing structures, strategy

and service responses at local level with a renewed focus on the ways in which key agencies with responsibilities for children's safeguarding work together to combat CSE.

Knowledge about CSE is developing, and services increasingly recognise that CSE is more than the 'boyfriend' or 'street grooming' models, and includes online grooming, gang-involved and peer on peer exploitation. At the same time we understand more about how risk and vulnerabilities overlap for some populations of young people, and emerging safeguarding structures and services have a widened remit to include young people who go missing or are trafficked.

The Hub and Spoke programme is developing voluntary sector CSE provision at a time when both the nature of the issues being addressed, and the means of addressing them, change shape within a new funding and commissioning environment. As the local service landscape becomes ever more complex, Hub and Spoke relationships with local police forces and other lead agencies increase in importance and underline the value that the voluntary sector can bring to this work. The Hub and Spoke interim findings report begins to define that contribution.

Below is a summary of the messages and key themes to emerge in the second year of the evaluation

4. The impact of the Hub and Spoke Model

The evaluation aims to identify the impact of the Hub and Spoke model on:

- Safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation through service delivery;
- Supporting and equipping specialist CSE workers to work effectively in host agencies; and
- Promoting stable CSE policy frameworks in new areas by raising awareness, developing procedures and advancing cultures of support from local policy makers responsible for CSE.

The report has highlighted some themes in the research data related to each.

1. Safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation through service delivery

The effectiveness of the Hub and Spoke model

A key question for this evaluation is whether the hub and spoke model is effective and sustainable when rolled out in new areas. The arrival of specialist CSE workers bringing knowledge, expertise and new resources has been timely and well received by LSCBs and agencies for whom CSE is a new strategic priority. In turn, increased local resources aimed at addressing multiple and overlapping vulnerabilities have provided fertile ground for Hub and Spoke services to be effective in increasing identification and service responses to CSE, supporting young people directly and preparing the way for sustainable funding sources in the future.

2. Supporting and equipping specialist CSE workers to work effectively in host agencies

The relationship between statutory and voluntary sectors

The impact of Spoke services largely depends on the ways in which the voluntary sector is valued locally and the relationships that exist between statutory and voluntary service providers. Statutory service responses to CSE, the organisation of local services, safeguarding structures and cultures are all important factors in determining how the Hub and Spoke development is embedded into the local service landscape. Police operations may accelerate partnership working, and the role of the voluntary sector in these can determine how their contribution is received locally. In order for Hub and Spoke services to attract sustainable sources of funding from statutory commissioners they should provide evidence of their effectiveness and contribution.

Maintaining a voluntary sector identity and approach

A key contribution of Hub and Spoke services at local level is improved access to support for young people alongside relationship based approaches to the work and the ability to engage young people over a long time period. Other evaluative research has shown that these approaches have a positive impact on outcomes for young people¹. Maintaining a voluntary sector identity and approach is important for staff in Spoke roles and requires strong support from the central Hub particularly where Spoke workers are placed into statutory settings.

3. Promoting stable CSE policy frameworks in new areas by raising awareness, developing procedures, and advancing cultures of support from local policy makers responsible for CSE.

Multi-agency perceptions of Child Sexual Exploitation

The national agenda has established a new emphasis on the police as a lead agency in responding to CSE and this brings increased resources, improved local knowledge and identification, more active targeting of offenders and increased partnership working between agencies. However, there is a need to ensure multiple perspectives are taken into account when conceptualising CSE, including CSE services, young people, mental health and children's services. Hub and Spoke services can contribute a broader understanding of the wide spectrum of CSE and of the overlapping vulnerabilities experienced by distinct groups of young people.

Driving up quality and expertise in the sector

The Hub and Spoke programme is proving an effective vehicle for bringing specialist voluntary sector expertise, understanding, tools and resources to the issue of CSE at local level. In this respect, CSEFA funding directly contributes to the upgrading of skill levels and responses amongst a range of agencies. Some Hub and Spoke services have contributed to a regional overview of strategic development, identifying models of CSE and gaps in service responses. They are well placed to provide independence and challenge and can act as an important bridge between policy and practice. However variation in voluntary sector organisational size, stature and financial resources can also inhibit this role.

¹ Scott, S and Skidmore, P (2005) Reducing the Risk

4. Messages for practice

The report focuses on the ongoing operation of the three Phase One Hub and Spoke services and the set-up and early development of the five Phase Two services. It identifies key messages about what is working well alongside some of the challenging aspects of establishing the Hub and Spoke model in practice, summarised as follows.

Practice challenges

- **There is a lack of well qualified and experienced CSE workers in many areas; recruitment to Spoke posts can take some time.** Most sites found it difficult to recruit Spoke workers with the appropriate level of skills and experience needed for the role. Many had to undertake more than one round of recruitment, and struggled to meet all the job and person criteria they required.
- **Other agencies place high demands on Spoke workers' time, and Spoke workers have a significant and challenging workload.** Host organisations and other agencies are keen to refer young people to Spoke services and there is high demand for awareness-raising and training. This, in turn, leads to increased referrals as participants recognise levels of risk amongst young people. The combination of direct work with young people (requiring evening and weekend work) and training professionals means that Spoke workers have a challenging role.
- **There is little agreement about whether Spoke workers should primarily support young people considered to be at 'high risk' or whether they should also undertake preventative work and early intervention.** Several of the statutory agencies involved in Hub and Spoke projects wanted Spoke workers to fulfil a specialist role in taking on 'high risk' cases. However, there is a tension between managing this kind of caseload and being able to undertake preventative and early intervention work which is an important feature of the voluntary sector contribution to combating CSE.
- **If CSEFA funding is replaced by statutory contracts, this may impact on Spoke worker's independence and working practices.** Hub and Spoke projects maintained their independence by having dedicated funding for their work. This could conflict with the approach of host and other agencies who wanted a higher degree of management and control over the Spoke workers, for example in relation to referrals and risk levels of young people on their caseloads. Having dedicated funding from an external and independent funder enabled services to resist this pressure. Lessons about the importance of worker autonomy and the capacity to engage in critical thinking need to be shared. As the voluntary and statutory sectors work more closely together, and in situations where the statutory sector contracts voluntary sector services, consideration may need to be given as to how the independence and autonomy of Spoke workers can be maintained.
- **'Embeddedness' in statutory organisations takes a number of different forms. More clarity about how this best works will enhance engagement between voluntary and statutory sector providers.** There is an inherent tension in Hub and Spoke work between being both 'part of' other organisations (through co-location,

hosting arrangements, etc.) and being a specialist worker with a separate voluntary sector identity and way of working. Spoke workers took a variety of approaches to being both embedded in, and separate to, their host settings, with varying degrees of success. In the next stage of evaluation we will consider these varying forms of embeddedness and their implications for the success of Hub and Spoke.

- **Outcomes for young people are variably measured and recorded across Hub and Spoke services.** The issue of outcomes measurement and recording arose repeatedly in the evaluation. Outcomes were both defined and recorded in different ways by voluntary and statutory services, and between CSE services. Recording methods were also variable. This is reflected in the quantitative data gathered by the evaluation and the lack of information about some key characteristics of young people (e.g. gender, ethnicity and sexuality) as well as an absence of consistently measured outcomes from the work with them. These issues might be addressed through the provision of training and more clearly defined roles regarding the recording and monitoring of service data.

Key messages for practice in Phase Three

- **Formal agreements between the Hub and the host organisation need to be negotiated and agreed.** This enabled both the Hub and the Host service to agree location and desk arrangements alongside the practicalities of providing management and support. Where there were difficulties in the Spoke arrangement, this was often because of a lack of clarity and agreement about the key features of the role.
- **Host services (or other key stakeholders) should be invited to be part of Spoke worker recruitment.** This ensures that there is discussion and agreement about the backgrounds and experience required for Spoke workers, and clarification in advance about their role and relationship to key agencies. It also gives Host services a sense of involvement and ownership in relation to the spoke service and supports the aims of embeddedness and sustainability.
- Hub services and other stakeholders need to agree **whether a social work or a youth qualification is essential for the work.** Some felt that this was the case in order that they might engage effectively with statutory services. Others considered that Spoke workers primarily needed a genuine commitment to young people and the interpersonal skills and experience to engage with them. Other aspects of working in the CSE sector could then be learned as the role developed.
- One Hub and Spoke site recommended that **experienced CSE workers from the Hub should transfer to become Spoke workers rather than recruiting new staff into Spoke roles.** This ensures that Spoke workers can 'hit the ground running', and have the knowledge, experience, and local connections that enable them to work effectively in multi-agency settings.
- **Spoke workers need to maintain a separate and distinct voluntary sector identity,** even when co-located with statutory teams. It was seen as important that Spoke workers could articulate and demonstrate a distinct voluntary sector role, both

to young people and their partner agencies. They perceived the key features of this role to include relationship-based approaches with young people, providing support for as long as necessary rather than adopting an arbitrary time limit, and being flexible about times and locations for their work. They also felt that a strong voluntary sector identity enabled them to safely challenge other professionals, including those in more senior roles.

- **Spoke workers need regular and ongoing support and supervision.** The Hub and Spoke model can lead to the isolation of Spoke workers. It is important that they receive appropriate support and supervision including regular visits and contact from Hub managers. Formal clinical supervision was also suggested by most of the Hub and Spoke staff, due to the nature of the work.
- **Funding needs to be provided for a Spoke manager or manager at the Hub,** as well as for Spoke workers themselves. Some of the services had a separate Spokes Manager to support the workers and represent the service in local strategy forums in their area. Other services had a generic manager at the Hub providing this role. Either way, this is an essential role to support the Spoke worker given that they may be located some distance from the Hub.
- **Funding for three years (or more) gives Spokes time and capacity to undertake specialist work and embed good practice.** Many CSE services have traditionally received their funding for short periods, often one year or less. This can lead to job insecurity and a consequent high turnover of staff. Having three years funding from CSEFA, enables Spoke workers to develop relationships, undertake casework, raise awareness and support the embedding of good practice across a range of agencies.
- **Separate and independent funding for Spokes enables workers to maintain their independence.** Where Spoke workers were part-funded by other agencies or local authority contracts, there was greater pressure on them to take on particular referrals, or work in particular ways – such as undertaking time-limited work with young people. Having independent funding from the CSEFA enables Hub and Spoke services to undertake work that adheres more closely to their values and ethos and to have more influence in how that work is undertaken.

5. The next stage of evaluation

In the third year of evaluation (Sept 2015 to August 2016) we will stay in touch with the three Phase One services and undertake our second fieldwork visit to each of the five Phase Two services. We will ensure that the eight services joining the programme in Phase Three are in receipt of learning from the evaluation to date in order to inform their set-up activities. Fieldwork visits are planned for these services later in the year. We will continue to collect monitoring data re: activities, outputs and outcomes from each of the participating services on a quarterly basis.

As a result of evaluation activity in year two we have identified the following key outcome measures which will frame our data collection and analysis as we move into the next year of evaluation:

Key outcome measures

Outcome 1: Services secure a source of sustainable funding for the continuation of Spoke services

Outcome 2: Spokes become successfully embedded into existing services / CSE service landscape

Outcome 3: Spoke workers retain a distinctive identity and role focussed on CSE

Outcome 4: The reach of specialist CSE services is extended

Outcome 5: Skill levels in partner agencies regarding identifying and responding to CSE are improved.

Outcome 6: Outcomes improve for young people supported by Spoke services.

6. Evaluation outputs and reports

This report is the third publication produced as part of the evaluation in order to inform the Hub and Spoke development. Preceding this are:

- A literature review of Hub and Spoke models of service development and delivery undertaken in 2014.
- A progress report at the end of Phase One, in September 2014.
- Learning Exchange events are held on an annual basis for participating services so that learning from the evaluation can be shared and inform future service developments. The next event will be on 2nd December, 2015.

Final outputs will include:

- A series of briefings identifying key themes and findings from the Hub and Spoke evaluation and aimed at policy, practice and funder/commissioner audiences (2016 and ongoing)
- A report for young people aimed at increasing and supporting their access to specialist CSE services (2017)
- A final report describing the overall impact and effectiveness of the Hub and Spoke development (2017).

For further information or access to previous evaluation reports please contact Dr Julie Harris at Julie.harris@beds.ac.uk



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