

## Sarah's Story

### Good Practice Case Study

#### The Background

Sarah (not real name) was referred into RISE in October 2019 due to the significant concerns in regards to her welfare, safety and risk to Child Sexual Exploitation. Sarah was frequently missing overnight, associating with gang members, using Class A drugs such as cocaine, and regularly using cannabis. Sarah was associating with older peers, having unreported missing episodes, and struggling with her mental health. One particularly older guy she was hanging out with recognised her vulnerabilities and befriended her, making her believe they were in a loving 'relationship and went on to sexually exploit her.

#### Agencies Involved

Sarah was quickly allocated a RISE engagement worker, a dedicated police officer a specialist CSE nurse and intervention was started. All agencies were actively involved in supporting Sarah over a sustained period of time in relation to CSE investigations, disruption, safeguarding and delivering a programme of targeted intervention work.

#### Good Practice

Sarah's engagement was limited initially, she didn't want to discuss any worries or concerns as she felt everything was fine. Sarah engaged with RISE for a year and a half. All agencies recognised engaging and trusting professionals can be really difficult and therefore we spent time building a relationship upon Sarah's interests. A non-judgemental approach was adopted, eventually Sarah did open up as she started to build trust. Sarah was supported to engage with a number of professionals, and she was able to recognise the push and pull factors within her case and together, we were able to plan a way forward.

#### Outcome for the Child

There is no consensus or common set of indicators that suggest what 'success' looks like. Prosecutions are only one measure, but these do not always align with what success looks like from a victim's perspective. In Sarah's case she was adamant she did not want to support a police prosecution, so it was important not to just look at this matter via the judicial process in isolation and consider how we look at achieving this through safeguarding and fully understand the vulnerability of the Sarah and the impact to her.

Sarah has completely turned her life around. She is no longer associating with the peers she once was, she no longer uses drugs and she is building bridges within the family network. Sarah is now training to be a lawyer and is exploring the possibility of joining the police.