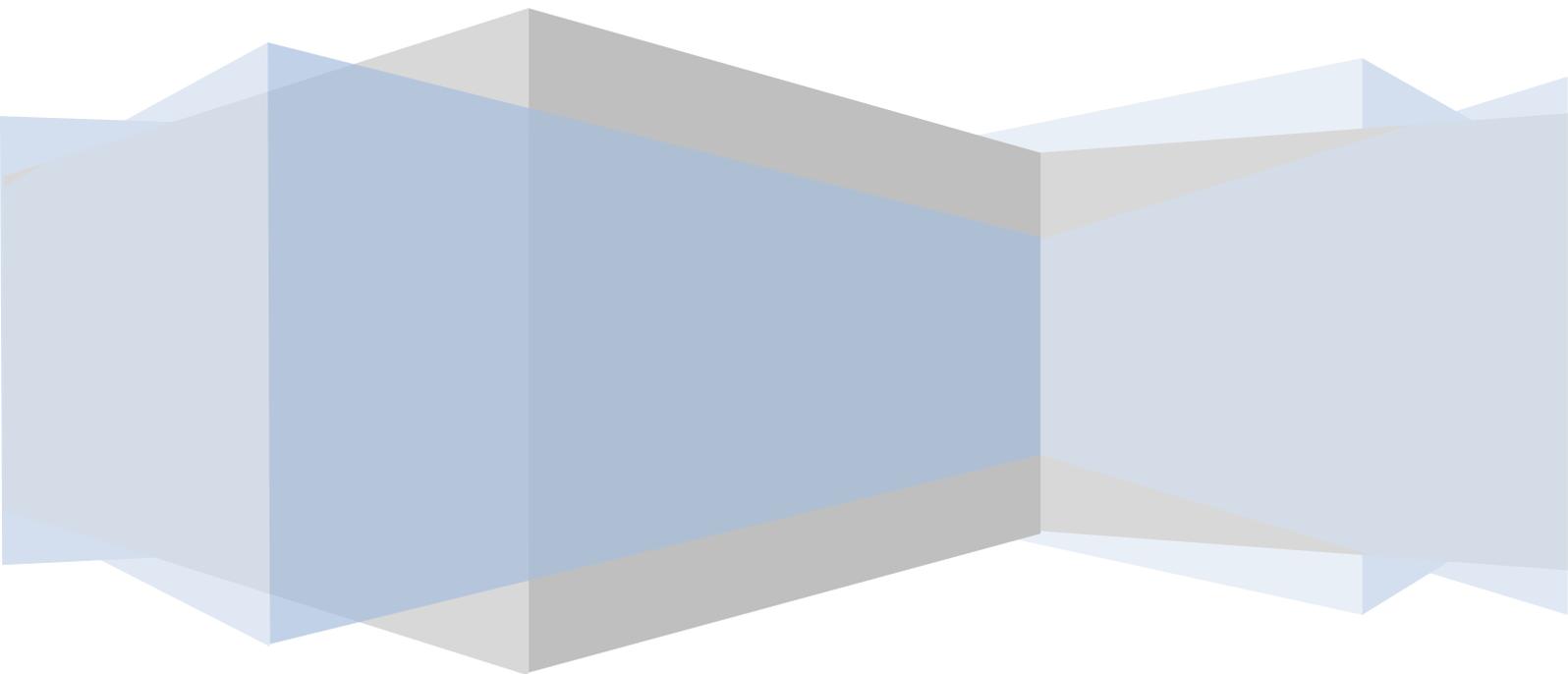


Craig Barlow Consultancy & Training Ltd

# The Adapted SIPPS for CSE

Evaluation of a Pilot Project in a South London  
Borough

Craig Barlow Msc.FPC, BA Hons, Dip.SW



## Contents

Summary	3
Introduction	4
Description of The Adapted Systemic Investigation, Protection and Prosecution Strategy (Adapted SIPPS)	5
Using the Adapted SIPPS for CSE	6
Scope	7
Key Principles	7
User Qualifications	8
The Theoretical Framework	8
Preparatory Work	10
Validity	11
Roll Out Across The Borough	14
Impact	18
Discussion	19
Future Directions	21
References	22



## **The Adapted SIPPS for CSE: Evaluation of a Pilot Project in a South London Borough.**

**Craig Barlow Msc.FPC, BA Hons, DipSW**

### **Abstract**

**The Systemic Investigation, Protection and Prosecution Strategy (SIPPS) has been developed by the author and colleagues within the criminal justice system, responding to Modern Slavery and Trafficking of Human Beings. The positive impact on the process of prosecution of such cases has led to a large number of convictions of Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) and individuals. The principles were developed for practical use by Social Workers responding to Child Sexual Exploitation in the South London Borough. The adaptation of the theoretical principles of the SIPPS for CSE is described and the impact of the pilot project is discussed along with proposed future directions.**

### **Summary**

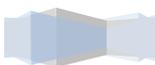
The Systemic Investigation, Protection and Prosecution Strategy (SIPPS) was initially developed by Craig Barlow as a pathway for the investigation and prosecution of cases of Modern Slavery and Trafficking of Human Beings and has supported the successful prosecution of 20 offenders in the past year. It has also contributed to effective assessments of risk, safeguarding plans and applications for Slavery and Trafficking Prevention and Criminal Behaviour Orders (STPOs and CBOs).

The lack of an effective risk assessment framework for Child Sexual Exploitation in the London Borough, led the Head of Safeguarding to commission an effective, research based tool and an accompanying training programme. This led to the Adapted SIPPS for CSE.

An initial training course was run for 14 managers in February 2015 who provided positive feedback and suggestions. This feedback was used to develop the current three day programme that was rolled out between May 2015 and January 2016.

Feedback forms were returned by 72 participants between September 2015 and January 2016 with which they rated the utility of the SIPPS Tool, their satisfaction with the tool and the training and detailed evaluation of the content of the training programme. Almost all respondents rated the tool and training as Excellent or Good and as being Extremely Satisfied or Very Satisfied.

Direct feedback from practitioners using it “in the field” is equally positive as the SIPPS model has been used to inform direct work, professional meetings, case conferences and to structure supervision meetings. In one case, practitioners identified a vulnerable adult as possibly being a victim of Human Trafficking and /or Sexual Exploitation with sufficient evidence to warrant a referral to the National Referral Mechanism, or Home Office Notification (under s51 The Modern Slavery



Act), indicating practitioners' ability to apply the model to other areas of safeguarding.

## Introduction

The Systemic Investigation, Protection and Prosecution Strategy was developed by Craig Barlow, initially to provide a pathway to the prosecution of cases of Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery and had its roots in Operation Dorvalla (2013), a complex case of Child Sexual Exploitation. Although successful, Investigators noted difficulties at the prosecution stage. Live Monitoring of prosecutions raised questions about the way in which evidence was presented and the way witnesses and defendants were treated and behaved in Court. Of particular interest was the way in which juries responded to the evidence and examination of witnesses.

The founding principles were established and then refined in the course of the prosecution of Operation Rastrelli in 2014 - 2015. Central to the offending were the multiple rapes of a young (18 year old) female sex worker who had come under the control of an Organised Crime Group (OCG) controlling prostitutes in brothels in South London.

The SIPPS Model was developed at this stage as a framework for (i) obtaining the evidence from the complainant that reflected what had happened to her and (ii) the cross examination of the defendants in the most effective and compelling way possible. The approach resulted in across the board convictions of the entire OCG.

In the course of 2014 work was completed on the Family Risk and Safety Assessment (FRaSA), a risk assessment tool designed for the London Borough Children and Families Service. The tool was a response to concerns among Safeguarding Social Workers concerning the lack of a robust model for risk assessment. The FRaSA is a structured professional judgement tool that is designed to tap risk of physical abuse, emotional abuse and neglect. The tool was well received by Social Workers and Supervisors and Managers who reported on its utility as a risk assessment framework, supervision tool and report structure.

An area of growing concern for the safeguarding department was the issue of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and a lack of risk assessment protocols in this area. A number of risk assessment tools were reviewed and found to be inadequate. All examples were based substantially upon the Banardos Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework. This framework had been criticised by Baroness Jay in her Serious Case Review of Child Sexual Exploitation cases in Rotherham between 1997 and 2013 (Jay, 2014). Based upon the feedback concerning the FRaSA and the success of the emerging SIPPS Model in Operation Rastrelli, a similar risk assessment protocol for CSE was commissioned by the Head of Safeguarding services in December 2014. By February 2015 the first draft of the Adapted SIPPS for Child Sexual Exploitation was produced (so called as it was adapted from the developing SIPPS for Trafficking and Modern Slavery). This draft was agreed and a training programme was designed and rolled out across all operational Children's Services.

## Description of The Adapted Systemic Investigation, Protection and Prosecution Strategy (Adapted SIPPS)

The Adapted SIPPS for CSE provides practitioners with a new approach to the investigation or assessment of, and intervention in, cases of Child Sexual Exploitation. It draws on the Systemic Investigation, Protection and Prosecution Strategy (SIPPS) for Modern Slavery (Barlow, and Haughey 2015 - unpublished) and supports the Government's Modern Slavery Strategy (the central principles being Pursuit of offenders, Prevention, Protection and Preparation to reduce further harm, proactive identification of victims and enhanced victim support) and the UK Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner's Strategy for 2015-2017 (Independent Anti-Slavery Commissioner, 2015).

It begins with the approach to collecting and, importantly, analysing information in order to develop the next relevant question towards a theory of what has been, or is happening. This approach enables practitioners to account for the unpredictable dynamics of the abusive and exploitative relationship.

The model has 4 fundamental tenets:

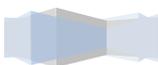
1. Minimising preconceived ideas about the case and its characteristics.
2. Simultaneously uses information gathering and analysis to inform each other.
3. Remains open to varied explanations and/or understandings of the information
4. Focuses on information analysis to construct middle-range theories (Charmaz, 2008)

When a systematic, comparative, and interactive approach is taken to the initial part of the investigation or assessment (gathering the immediate information and identifying the main concern) open ended strategies begin to emerge: The assessor / investigator can make conjectures and check them against empirical data, with colleagues and with witnesses. This inevitably leads to abductive reasoning as the investigation or assessment proceeds. It prompts early analytic thinking and keeps practitioners interacting with their information and sources as well as their initial, loosely formed analysis.

The Adapted SIPPS for CSE approach to Risk Assessment, Intervention and Management does not provide a rigid list of "Signs and Signals" and numerical rating systems or risk categories as were criticised by Baroness Jay. Rather the items should be used as an *aide memoir*, prompting thought and analysis of the available information and using this to undertake the next step in their enquiry (finding gaps and questions, identifying the next relevant source of information).

The SIPPS Worksheet facilitates the assessor / investigator in writing progressively analytic (as opposed to purely descriptive) notes and records.

The Adapted SIPPS model emphasises that CSE can be placed upon both a temporal and developmental continuum.



- **It presupposes a past:** Child Sexual Exploitation does not happen in a vacuum, it exists because there is a demand for children and young adults to abuse sexually and some children may be more likely to be exploited than others. Therefore it is crucial to make sense of the context from which the child and abuser have come. The context provides the “Conditional” Factors that contribute to the existence of a situation in which abuse can occur.
- **It assumes the immediacy of the present** and the situation or context in which all the protagonists now find themselves: How do they make sense of their predicament, what are their beliefs and relationships to and with each other? In this regard direct interaction with children, their support networks and even the perpetrators is essential to understand their respective constructs. This requires us to listen to and analyse the discourse of Child Sexual Exploitation.
- **Finally, this model implies a future:** What will happen in the short, medium and long term both with and without intervention? What are the most likely scenarios? What needs to happen in order to keep the child or children safe and reduce the likelihood of re-victimisation or transition from victim to perpetrator.

### Using The Adapted SIPPS For CSE

CSE incorporates acts of sexual and non-sexual violence and intimidation. The acts can vary with respect to such things as relationship to the victim(s), severity of physical or psychological harm, use of weapons and implements, motivations etc.

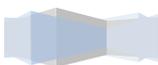
Child Sexual Exploitation Assessment is defined as the process of evaluating individuals in order to:

1. Characterise the risk / threat that a child is being or is likely to be sexually exploited
2. Develop interventions to manage and reduce that risk

It is the task of professionals to understand how and why a person has come to be harmed or to harm others in the past in order to determine whether the antecedents to that event might lead to similar events re-occurring.

The ultimate goal is the prevention of CSE and resultant harm. This assessment and investigative procedure aims to be reliable in terms of replicable, consistent results. It should be used to identify, evaluate and prioritise health, social care and law enforcement / legal services that can work together to manage the risk of child sexual exploitation.

This process is one of structured professional judgment, reflecting the growing consensus of support for such models in safeguarding risk assessment work (Barlow, Fisher, & Jones, 2012); it helps professionals make explicit, as far as possible, the basis for their opinions, decisions and interventions.



## Scope

The SIPPS for CSE is not a test or scale in the usual sense of the terms. Its purpose is not to provide a measure of risk using cut-off scores or norms as do actuarial tests and non discretionary scales. The Adapted SIPPS for CSE is designed to be accessible and useful to practitioners engaged in the assessment of risk in the child safeguarding arena, investigation and prosecution of suspected CSE cases and recovery programmes that reduce the risk of re-victimisation or transition to a perpetrator or recruiter role.

The SIPPS is a structured assessment protocol intended principally for use in the assessment of risk of CSE and can be used to contribute to Single Assessments, ABE Interview Strategies and disruption and prosecution strategies when there are CSE concerns.

The assessment items are based upon empirically-derived risk factors. It contains 26 items that are supported by clinical research and consensus of practitioner experience. The Adapted SIPPS for CSE Assessment and Intervention training programme has been developed to establish reliability and consistency of approach to implementing the assessment.

It works especially well in the context of multi-disciplinary or team settings and is well suited to the Systemic Unit Model of Social Work and Joint Police and Social Care investigations. Nevertheless it can also be an effective tool for individual practitioners. It can be used as an initial assessment tool, or as a method of monitoring and measuring progress by applying and coding the items periodically during the implementation of safety plans and direct working with children and families.

The Adapted SIPPS for CSE is a set of guidelines that have been developed to reflect current knowledge within the disciplines of Social Work, Policing, Civil and Criminal Law and Child Safeguarding. The guidelines attempt to define the risk being considered; discuss the necessary qualifications for conducting an assessment; recommend what information should be considered; identify a set of core risk factors that, according to academic and professional literature, should be considered as part of any comprehensive assessment. By so doing, this tool will improve the consistency and usefulness of decisions, as well as improve the transparency of decision making.

## Key Principles

1. The assessment / Investigation gathers information concerning multiple domains of the child and their family's functioning. It reflects the fact that families that are troubled or at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation are not a heterogeneous group. Child Sexual Exploitation is itself is a multi-faceted problem.
2. The procedure uses multiple methods to gather information: Over-reliance on a particular method can result in an incomplete or biased assessment.



3. The procedure gathers data from multiple sources because people minimise or deny the harm they have caused or experienced, are under pressure to present a positive self image or significantly over-estimate their strengths and abilities. Over-reliance on a particular source can result in an incomplete or biased assessment.
4. The procedure addresses vulnerability factors in children but also addresses risk factors associated with predatory adults and victim accessing behaviours.
5. The procedure allows practitioners to judge the credibility of various sources of information, reconcile contradictory information and judge whether information is sufficient to permit a valid decision.
6. The status of conditional and consequential factors fluctuates over time and such fluctuations can occur rapidly. Investigations and assessments should be re-evaluated at regular intervals or whenever there is a change to the status of the case.
7. The procedure aims to be comprehensible to people who must use the findings of the assessment.
8. The prevention of child sexual abuse through CSE is the primary goal of risk assessment. This procedure goes beyond making static predictions to develop responsive, flexible interventions

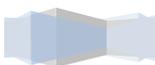
### **User Qualifications**

The CSE Risk Assessment tool is designed to assist in making clinical judgements and formulating safeguarding plans. Administration and Coding requires professional skill and judgement. It is anticipated that the CSE Risk Assessment Tool should be used only by professionals with qualifications, training and experience of working within statutory child safeguarding services.

The CSE Risk Assessment Tool is supported by a specific training programme. Practitioners should undertake the training prior to administering and coding the tool to ensure rater-reliability and consistency.

### **The Theoretical Framework**

Information concerning CSE has been generated from quantitative and qualitative research, news reports, practice experience of professionals and the personal accounts of victims. There is a great deal of knowledge available to us about CSE but it is rather like having all the pieces of a jigsaw in a bag; the whole picture is in there somewhere but no-one knows quite what it's meant to look like. Thus, knowledge alone is not enough. Theory is required. Theory goes beyond description to provide explanations, it provides a framework that develops understanding and make sense of observations, helps to find explanations and make informed judgements and interventions (Coulshed & Orme, 2012) .



## A Systemic Perspective on CSE.

At present there are difficulties associated with how CSE and trafficking cases are identified and differentiated from other crimes such as prostitution. This problem has been reflected internationally. Due to the fact that Trafficking and exploitation involves hidden communities, it has been extremely difficult for researchers to obtain sample groups that are representative of trafficked and exploited groups as a whole. The lack of research in general could be attributable to a lack of agreement concerning what exactly should be studied (Tyldum & Brunovskis, 2005).

In the UK The Modern Slavery Act 2015 has finally offered a statutory response to the trafficking of human beings, slavery, servitude and exploitation of children and adults. It provides a legal process by which we can identify, prevent, investigate and prosecute these crimes. However, to do so requires some understanding of the complexities of such cases; the varied forms of exploitation, vulnerabilities, interpersonal dynamics, roles, responsibilities and environmental contexts.

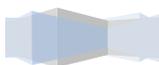
The exploitation of vulnerable children does not happen in a vacuum. A single case of CSE happens in the context of a sophisticated system that is made up of many people with different roles and functions. Protective agencies are also a part of that system. Tackling CSE therefore requires that we understand the nature of the problem from a systemic point of view: actions in any part of that system or network will have an effect throughout the whole of the network.

Reliance upon traditional methods of investigation and safeguarding of children in the context of any kind of organised exploitation is inadequate to the task. Existing methodologies are reactive; they are dependent upon the identification of or disclosure of abuse, an identifiable victim and perpetrator – the abuse has been detected and investigation and intervention follows an inductive or “top down” process to explain what happened, how it happened and how it will be remedied.

CSE, by its nature is covert and its victims are often hidden. Children and young people that have been sexually exploited do not necessarily know that they have been, and if they do, may feel embarrassed about their predicament and do not trust law enforcement or social care agencies enough in order to report their situation. Indeed, some children and young people that are victims of sexual exploitation have been arrested numerous times for other offences such as prostitution, public order offences and petty crime before their real status has been recognised.

The level of violent coercion used by those that traffic and exploit children and young people is often under-estimated. Fear of retribution from perpetrators prevents disclosure and often causes victims to deny that they have been trafficked, falsely imprisoned or forced into sex work. The hidden nature of trafficking and sexual exploitation means that victims are kept in isolation and are often trapped by or dependent upon the abusers. Those trafficked from outside the country may be trafficked illegally and find themselves treated as illegal immigrants by police and border agencies before their real situation is realised. Other vulnerabilities, such as physical, cognitive and emotional disabilities, as well as language barriers have in some cases precluded trafficked people seeking help.

CSE is a wide reaching term that is essentially about the varied exploitation of vulnerable children, from and within a variety of contexts. It is a conduit to abuse but



one that relies upon the mutual co-operation of those that trade and use children, the utilisation of legal loopholes, the inherent weaknesses and gaps within organisational structures and protocols, the corruption of officials and coercion of the victims.

As a secret or hidden phenomenon it is surrounded by myths, assumptions and false perceptions. All these elements coalesce to form complex eco-systems in which abuse and exploitation is maintained. Like any ecosystem, CSE is constantly changing, adapting to new pressures and opportunities but at the same time maintaining a coherence: changes in the various elements fit together to meet the needs and goals of the group that is perpetrating the abuse. This therefore has implications for all agencies working to identify, prevent, investigate and prosecute cases of Child Sexual Exploitation.

Instead of simply focusing upon the victim there needs to be recognition that the victim, their abusers *and* those agencies form a larger system. An effective response to CSE therefore cannot be one that “Gives” an intervention to the victim but rather one that promotes movements or perturbations in the entire system, identifies the effects and reveals the next relevant step in the enquiry (Dallos, 1992). What this comes down to is a change in our approach whereby we become more exploratory, looking for connections, themes and dependencies. Gradually, as the reality and extent of the case becomes clear, key members and mechanisms of the network are identified (whether they are perpetrators or victims), relationships and dependencies become understood and motivations and modus operandi emerge. By so doing we can simultaneously protect actual and potential victims, identify, disrupt and remove offenders and improve safeguarding and prosecutorial outcomes and reduce the risk of re-victimisation.

When a systematic, comparative, and interactive approach is taken to the initial part of the assessment (gathering the immediate information and identifying the main concern) open ended strategies begin to emerge: The assessor / investigator can make conjectures and check them against empirical data and with colleagues and witnesses. This inevitably leads to abductive reasoning as the assessment / investigation proceeds. It prompts early analytic thinking and keeps practitioners interacting with their information and sources as well as their initial, loosely formed analysis.

In summary, It is an Emergent Constructivist Model of Assessment and Intervention: it provides a new approach to the assessment of, and intervention in, cases of Trafficking, Slavery and Exploitation. It begins with the systematic, inductive approach to collecting and, importantly, analysing information in order to develop the next relevant questions towards a theory of what has or is happening. This approach enables practitioners to account for the unpredictable dynamics of the abusive and exploitative relationship.

### **Preparatory Work**

An initial scoping exercise was carried out by Craig Barlow in consultation with Caroline Haughey, Barrister at Law, Furnival Chambers and DC Mickey Hafford of the Metropolitan Police Trafficking and Kidnap Unit.



A Literature review was undertaken and the formulation of a theoretical framework to underpin SIPPS for Modern Slavery had already been completed. This foundation was then adapted to focus specifically on CSE. Relevant case law was been identified with the assistance of Caroline Haughey and Former DI (Metropolitan Police Child Protection Unit) Alec Love.

### Validity

The first draft of the Adapted SIPPS Worksheet was given to two social workers who were engaged in assessing risk of CSE in two cases. Feedback was positive and their experiences and suggestions were taken to continue the developmental work and inform the training programme. The Adapted SIPPS for CSE training programme was designed and delivered to the London Borough’s Practice Group Leads (PGLs) by Craig Barlow and Alec Love in February 2015. Training led to the initial validation of the Adapted SIPPS for CSE and implementation across all operational children’s services. Feedback was positive with constructive suggestions and comments for the ongoing development of the tool and the training programme.

Table 1. Evaluation by PGLs of The Adapted SIPPS Tool at the end of the first training course

Please score the following questions from 1-5 where 1 is lowest and 5 is Highest	Range of scores	Average Scores
To what extent did this training meet your hopes and expectations?	3-5	4.3
Please score and comment on the presentation style of the course and the trainers	3.5 -5	4.2
The Adapted SIPPS, like any other assessment tool remains a work in progress. To what extent do you consider it to be useful in assessing children’s vulnerability to CSE?	3-5	4
To what extent to you consider it useful in assessing the likelihood of CSE Occurring?	3.5 -5	4.3
How helpful is the Adapted SIPPS in developing knowledge and evidence based safety plans?	2-5	4.1

n=14

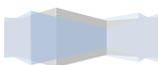


Table 2. Comments from the PGLs following the first training course

Questions	Comments
<p>To what extent did this training meet your hopes and expectations?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Learnt a lot</li> <li>• Just Completed the on-line training* and thought it would be more of the same – very informative</li> <li>• Should have been 2.5 – 3 days</li> <li>• Exceeded my expectations</li> <li>• Largely – good to get right assessment tool</li> <li>• More info on hierarchical structured exploitation</li> <li>• More info on CSE and Indicators</li> <li>• To a high extent was very informative</li> <li>• Really liked the additional focus on perpetrators which I did not expect</li> <li>• I think the tool will help us develop a considered approach to potential CSE</li> </ul>
<p>Please score and comment on the presentation style of the course and the trainers</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Trainers were engaging. Day 1 was a lot of didactic delivery – maybe would be helped to break this up into other activity</i></li> <li>• <i>Very professional, good balance between group work and teaching.</i></li> <li>• <i>The course was well presented and interaction with the group was good. Good- enjoyed group discussion and [illegible].</i></li> <li>• <i>Informative and interesting.</i></li> <li>• <i>Very clear and concise, not too powerpoint heavy.</i></li> <li>• <i>Presentation style was very good.</i></li> <li>• <i>Presentation style was very good. More time could have been given for the course to run to 3 days</i></li> <li>• <i>Right pace, full explanations and examples</i></li> <li>• <i>Both trainers were knowledgable and experienced. The training style was informative and quite entertaining</i></li> <li>• <i>Very knowledgable, responded to participants, included everyone</i></li> <li>• <i>Thorough, interesting</i></li> </ul>
<p>The Adapted SIPPS, like any other assessment tool remains a work in progress. To what extent do you consider it to be useful in assessing children’s vulnerability to CSE?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Have learnt it is a guide only</i></li> <li>• <i>Very useful</i></li> <li>• <i>My only concern is how to get frontline staff to incorporate it, not view it as another assessment that has to be done</i></li> <li>• <i>Need further training</i></li> <li>• <i>It would help to shape our service</i></li> </ul>



	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>This can clearly be adopted as part of an assessment framework for children’s services – not necessarily as a separate tool but to be included / adapted to the Single Assessment</i></li> <li>• <i>Quite useful, especially breaking down into historical and current factors</i></li> <li>• <i>Interesting insights and useful guide</i></li> <li>• <i>Yes – fits in well with signs of safety and systemic models</i></li> <li>• <i>It felt quite relevant to the work and gave a good focus on the assessment of risk – discussion was helpful</i></li> <li>• <i>Will definitely help see through the fog of panic!</i></li> <li>• <i>I think it will help to guide judgement in a balanced and considered way</i></li> </ul>
<p>To what extent do you consider it useful in assessing the likelihood of CSE Occurring?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Very helpful</i></li> <li>• <i>Need to practice and top up training</i></li> <li>• <i>Very useful</i></li> <li>• <i>Good if you have plenty of information about the child, maybe harder if they won’t disclose information</i></li> <li>• <i>Probably useful</i></li> <li>• <i>Very useful although intervention might be difficult</i></li> <li>• <i>To a very high extent and the course enabled me to think about what that might look like</i></li> <li>• <i>Will definitely help</i></li> <li>• <i>[again] I think it will help to guide judgement in a balanced and considered way</i></li> </ul>
<p>How helpful is the Adapted SIPPS in developing knowledge and evidence based safety plans?</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Very helpful, thought provoking</i></li> <li>• <i>Need to put in practice and there should be an avenue for feedback into its development</i></li> <li>• <i>It looks like a good risk assessment and it was useful in the examples, so look forward to trying it out and get used to it.</i></li> <li>• <i>It keeps you focused on factors and areas that are actually impacting on the young person’s vulnerability and risk</i></li> <li>• <i>Helpful – helps looking at historical and gathering evidence</i></li> <li>• <i>Helpful to have a format for laying out the information available</i></li> <li>• <i>Helpful</i></li> </ul>



confirmed its face Validity. Subsequent consultations took place with Mr Hyland, Fiona Cunningham of the Centre for Social Justice and Former Special Advisor to the Home Secretary, Christopher Ansell at the Office of the Independent Anti Slavery Commissioner and Police Colleagues at Northamptonshire Police Training and Development Team and West Midlands Police Training Department. The Concept was presented to Robbie Kent, Home Office Head of Modern Slavery Unit 10<sup>th</sup> March 2015 following an introduction by Kevin Hyland.

A Meeting with Graham Richie at the Office of the Children’s Commissioner took place on March 24<sup>th</sup> 2015 to present the Adapted SIPPS in response to the OCC’s criticisms of Social Workers and their failure to detect Child Sexual Exploitation. At the conclusion of the meeting, Mr Richie stated that the Adapted SIPPS for CSE was “An example of excellence in practice”. The Adapted SIPPS for CSE has also been presented to Dr Helen Becket at Bedford University, Deputy Joint Director, International Centre: Researching child sexual exploitation, violence and trafficking. Her views were sought with regard to the validity of the SIPPS and its use in comparison with the Banardos Sexual Exploitation Risk Assessment Framework (SERAF). Dr Beckett confirmed the appraisal that there were significant floors in the SERAF and its validity was questionable and was supportive of the SIPPS model and the assessment tool in its application to CSE.

Based upon these interviews and direct expert feedback, the Adapted SIPPS for CSE has strong face validity i.e. it appears to do what social workers need it to do.

### **Roll Out Across The South London Borough**

The South London Borough commissioned training for all social work practitioners and managers in the application and administration of both The FRaSA and The SIPPS. A three day training programme designed for Police officers and Social Workers was prepared, and ran from June 2015 (Barlow and Love) to January 2016. To date only one Police officer has attended but, in addition to social workers there have been non-social worker practitioners from Youth Services and Primary Health Services within the borough.

The training was supported by Surgery Days at the Safeguarding Team Offices once a month for 6 months during which practitioners could discuss issues, problems, provide feedback and obtain advice and guidance in relation to risk assessment. Up to 8 Hours per month remote access was also offered. As anticipated, the need for support and advice reduced as the methods became more established. The consultant put practitioners in touch with their colleagues who had previously encountered similar issues and resolved them, encouraging a learning environment.

Attendees of the training between September 2015 and January 2016 (n=72) returned completed course evaluation forms. At the start of the Training and as an introductory discussion, participants were asked what they hoped to gain from the training. Overwhelmingly, practitioners felt that they lacked knowledge and understanding concerning the nature of Child Sexual Exploitation. Many felt pressured by their professional networks to “do something” despite very little or circumstantial evidence that any child was being sexually exploited. The hopes and expectations of participants is presented below in Table 3

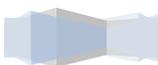


Table 3. Hopes and Expectations

Hopes and Expectations	Comments
Develop / Improve Knowledge	Participants were keen to discuss the difference between Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Sexual Abuse (CSA). Establish a theoretical underpinning and apply a systemic approach. Improve knowledge of theory and legislation.
Improve Multi-Agency Working	How to work with Police Colleagues Identify Services Improve work with other professionals and manage anxiety in the professional network Develop multi agency perspectives on current casework
Assessment / Investigation	How to assess risk Identify appropriate resources to assist investigation and safeguarding /protection How to present evidence Build evidence and understand networks
Practice	How to engage young people and offer support How do we work with young people who do not self identify as victims? Improve skills in supporting parents Work with families that are stigmatised and isolated How to protect in the absence of a criminal prosecution Consolidate tools and resources to safeguard children Interventions for recovery Overcome resistance and work forward to investigation and evidence
Reflective Practice	Better ways to support social work practice Think about systemic approaches

At the end of the training participants were asked via the evaluation form to rate the usefulness of the Adapted SIPPS for CSE and the quality of the training. The feedback has been overwhelmingly positive and is presented below:



Table 4 Feedback Section 1 Overall Rating for the SIPPS Tool

<b>Overall, how would you rate The Adapted SIPPS for CSE Tool?</b>	<b>%</b>
EXCELLENT	<b>65.3</b>
GOOD	<b>34.7</b>
AVERAGE	-
POOR	-
TERRIBLE	-

Table 5. Feedback Section 2 Satisfaction

<b>How satisfied are you with the training that supports use of the Adapted SIPPS?</b>	<b>%</b>
EXTREMELY SATISFIED	<b>58.3</b>
VERY SATISFIED	<b>40.3</b>
NEUTRAL	<b>1.4</b>
VERY DISSATISFIED	-
EXTREMELY DISSATISFIED	-

Table 6. Feedback Section 3 Recommendation of Tool and Training

<b>Would you recommend The Adapted SIPPS for CSE tool and training to a friend?</b>	<b>%</b>
YES	<b>98.6</b>
NO	<b>1.4</b>



Table 7. Feedback Section 4 Utility for Practice Rating

<b>How Helpful do you think the Adapted SIPPS for CSE Model will be in your Practice?</b>	<b>%</b>
VERY HELPFUL	<b>75</b>
SOMEWHAT HELPFUL	<b>22.2</b>
NOT SURE	<b>2.8</b>
SOMEWHAT UNHELPFUL	-
VERY UNHELPFUL	-

Table 6. Feedback Section 5 Evaluation of Training

<b>Please rate the following elements of course content from 1 (low) – 5(High)</b>		
<b><i>Element</i></b>	<b><i>Score Range</i></b>	<b><i>Average Score</i></b>
Theoretical Framework	3-5	4.2
Definition of Terms	2-5	3.5
Legislation and Legal Structures	2-5	4.7
Victim Characteristics	3-5	4.4
Offender Characteristics	4-5	4.7
Victim Impact	2-5	4.4
Risk Assessment	3-5	4.6
Intervention	2-5	4.1
Protection	2-5	4.9
Prosecution	3-5	4.5



Table 7. Feedback Section 6 Evaluation of Training Materials

<b>Please rate the quality of the Training Methods from 1 (low) – 5(High)</b>		
<b>Element</b>	<b>Score Range</b>	<b>Average Score</b>
Presentation	3-5	4.6
Course Handouts	2-5	4.7
Video Vignettes	2-5	4.6
Small Group Activities	2-5	4.8
Case Studies	3-5	4.5
Facilitated Discussions	2-5	4.4

## Impact

The Adapted SIPPS has been used by Social Workers in the South London Borough and direct feedback has been obtained from three practitioners. Two managed to rule out CSE using the tool and one used the model to clarify concerns, and conduct an investigation under S47 of the Children Act 1989 (Child Suffering or Likely To Suffer Significant Harm) and develop a proportionate safeguarding plan. In a facilitated workshop session practitioners used the tool to assess risk in two active cases and two co-working social workers were able to identify one adult female as a possible victim of trafficking with sufficient evidence adduced to warrant a referral to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and local authority notification to the Home Secretary.

The Head of Safeguarding Services provided written feedback of her observations of the impact of the training and the use of the Adapted SIPPS Tool.

*“The SIPPS has been invaluable in the complex area of Child Sexual Exploitation. The SIPPS links with the FRaSA in the methodology of organising information to identify gaps and meanin, however the SIPPS has the multi-faceted dimension of drawing the practitioners attention to issues of trafficking, exploitation, modern slavery in addition to risk of or actual sexual exploitation.*

*The SIPPS enables the objective analysis of behaviour and information to create multiple hypotheses for a young person. The SIPPS training provides an advanced level of knowledge regarding the legal options that the Police might use to disrupt the behaviour and encourages Social Work staff to make suggestions using this knowledge to their Police colleagues. Having a former Police Officer experienced in this area for part of the training brought that agency perspective to life and in my own view joint training with the Police would optimise the application of the strategy leading to greater impact on the protection of children.*

*I would also add that I have noticed recently in conversations with staff they are naming indicators of the trafficking aspects within disclosures i.e. young person*



*going missing and turning up a significant distance away (South London to far North London) which is not usual behaviour. Connections between groups of young people are being made and the SIPPS theory to analyse extent of behaviours and relationships with suspected perpetrators are being made. Reference has also been made to 'using the triangle to understand CSE' showing that the teaching provided was being applied to practice."*

Further Feedback regarding the SIPPS came from a Social Worker via e-mail:

*"I found the CSE risk assessment tool very useful. It helped me to organise the information that I already had about the case and highlighted areas that I did not have any/ enough information about and needed to explore further; for example it helped me to recognise that I needed to find out more information about the social networks of the other girls in the same foster placement as my young person."*

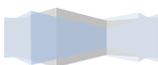
*Exploring the different possible risk factors for CSE enabled me to identify which areas of my intervention with the young person should be prioritised. The tool also helped in working with other professionals on the case, I used the tool to structure a strategy meeting and I think that this eased the anxiety of some of the other professionals because it enabled them to understand what Children's Services were doing and why, it also helped in being clear about the level of current risk to the young person rather than speculation which had previously led to professionals anxiously seemingly over-estimating the current level of risk to the young person."*

## Discussion

Many of the participants in the training reported feeling under confident and lacking knowledge in relation to child sexual exploitation. Over the course of the three day training programme, confidence improved as they often discovered that they knew more than they, or other professionals, gave them credit for.

A significant area of uncertainty was the criminal justice system which undermined their authority when engaging in discussions or requesting co-operation with Police colleagues. This was a particular problem when there was a need to question or challenge Police decisions. Hardly any of the participants in the training had undergone Achieving Best Evidence Training and joint investigative working between Police and Social Workers is sometimes limited though generally relationships with Police colleagues were described as good.

The enthusiasm and degree of participation in the training was impressive and this seems to be reflected in the positive feedback. Participants were relieved that SIPPS is not simply another assessment form, rather a pragmatic tool to assist them in collating, organising interpreting and presenting evidence in a variety of contexts. Having the SIPPS Worksheet as an *aide memoire* has been useful for practitioners enabling them to speak and present evidence with confidence in professional meetings, strategy meetings and case conferences.



Those that have supervisory responsibility, such as Advanced Practitioners and Practice Group leads have utilised the SIPPS worksheet as an effective tool and structure for group supervision; they have found that it helps to focus discussion on the most plausible hypotheses and develop clearer objective decision making and action plans.

Two co-workers found that SIPPS led them to identify an adult as a possible victim of Trafficking and / or Sexual Exploitation. The worksheet was also applied to a separate case of Domestic Servitude by the authors. Both applications showed that the worksheet itself has utility for Child Sexual Exploitation and other forms of Modern Slavery suggesting that it is the Training that needs to be adapted to different contexts but the framework and tool has multiple applications e.g. domestic violence. This raises the possibility that SIPPS has potential utility as a general model for child safeguarding practice across all domains.

The high average scores indicate that the course and structure is considered effective but can be improved in some areas. The Legislation section has been found by some to be too didactic. With some minor restructuring this can be better distributed so that key legislation is linked directly to separate topics and learning activities. This will have a cost implication. The current structure allowed for the number of trainers to be reduced from 2 to 1 on day three. An alternative structure would require both trainers to be present in the class room on all three days. As well as responding to the suggestions by participants, it would enhance the case study and safety planning exercise.

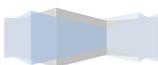
The course also needs to reflect the fact that Online Exploitation is now the greatest type of child sexual exploitation. The restructuring referred to above would develop this and offer the opportunity to apply SIPPS specifically to this challenging child abuse arena.

The satisfaction rate for the Training Course and the SIPPS model are extremely positive with over 98% of participants prepared to recommend the SIPPS tool and Training to a friend or colleague.

Opportunities are being sought to replicate the South London Project in another local authority or authorities. It would be useful to work with Police investigators to test the utility of the model in the context of criminal investigations.

Funding has been awarded for PhD Research with regard to the exploitation of children in the context of the compulsion of children to engage in criminal activity. This work will begin in September 2016. This will be a Three year Project developing typologies of offenders and organised crime groups.

The SIPPS for Modern Slavery has been now been successfully applied in four Criminal Trials: Three cases of Trafficking of Human Beings for Sexual Exploitation and one case of Domestic Servitude. The latter resulted in the first conviction for Servitude in a marriage context. In the past year the SIPPS in the context of the Criminal Justice System has assisted in the successful prosecution of 20 offenders, application for protective injunctions including a Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Order (STPO), Public Interest Intervention to safeguard an intimidated witness and Civil Child and Vulnerable Adult safeguarding referrals beyond the criminal



prosecution. The SIPPS for Modern Slavery is currently being applied to three more criminal trials in the coming 12 months.

### **Future Directions**

The SIPPS, as with any risk assessment and management tool, is a work in progress and perhaps always will be. Since its inception, Child Exploitation via the internet has grown as the major form of child sexual exploitation.

The Exploitation of Children for Criminal Activity remains under researched but is a domain to which the SIPPS Model of assessment, intervention, prosecution and safeguarding appears to be well suited.

The model would appear also to have utility in safeguarding children and vulnerable adults from radicalisation and other effects of extremism (of any form) and interest in this application has been found abroad in Central Asia.

It is envisaged that the next stage of development is to refine the risk items within the SIPPS with regard to Trafficking and Slavery of children and Adults and formalise a set of professional parameters for the effective prosecution of offenders and safeguarding of vulnerable and intimidated witnesses.

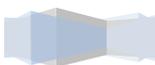
This will inform the development of guidance for the evaluation of evidence and greater knowledge and advice concerning victim and perpetrator behaviour, educational programmes for advocates and the judiciary as well as investigators and allied support agencies.



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