What Works *for* Children's Social Care

Transitioning from Child to Adult:

Safeguarding Practice for Young People Who Have Experienced Child Sexual Exploitation

SYSTEMATIC REVIEW

September 2022

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CONTENTS

CONTENTS

For clarity and consistency, the authors have provided a list of terminology used throughout this review (see Table 1).

Table 1 provides disambiguation of terminology within the reviewed literature, often used by young people themselves. It is presented without judgement or comment over suitability, accuracy or appropriateness.

In addition to this novel review and resulting recommendations regarding CSE during the transition from childhood to adulthood and beyond, the authors consider a major contribution of this 'International Qualitative Systematic Review of Safeguarding Practice for Young People Who Have Experienced Child Sexual Exploitation' to be discussion of the lack of terminology available to describe these phenomena. To assert one definitive term for any of these would be to dismiss the first-hand accounts of young people describing their own experiences and overriding the main aim of this review: to understand CSE (lived experience, routes in and out, desired support) in their own words.

To use a definitive term means denying the multiplicity and complexity of this phenomenon, that often terminology is reflective of what is "best available" for young people and the terms arise from diverse situations and sociogeographical contexts.

Throughout this systematic review, terms surrounding 'CSE', 'childhood', 'adulthood', 'survival sex' and 'the life' are utilised as they had been by young people describing their own experiences. For example, the term 'transition' took on a number of meanings within this review. It referred to the multifaceted trajectory from childhood to adulthood. However, transition also took on a number of other meanings. For example, 'transitioning out of CSE' reflected the reality that, for many, exploitation ceasing was a process as opposed to a finite point.

'Transitioning out of CSE', like 'transitioning out of childhood' and 'transitioning out of care', invites closer examination of the shifts (gradual or abrupt, supported or unsupported) which occur for any of these phenomena to be said to have ended and provokes deeper consideration of what is currently or ought to be in place to support these. 'Transition' connotes that these are not finite liminal spaces but continuous processes with many sites of influence, intervention and support possible. This review intends to relay, for researchers, practitioners and policy-makers, what some of these transitions and opportunities for intervention might look like.

Table 1: List of terminology

Term or Issue	Meaning
Child	Anyone who has not reached their 18th birthday (sometimes alternately referred to as a young person/youth/adolescent)
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Outside of the UK the sexual exploitation of children and young people was alternately referred to as: Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY), or Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC). In the absence of a global or UK definition, for the purposes of this review the Department for Education England and Wales (2017) definition was used.
Extra familial sexual abuse	Sexual abuse/exploitation which takes place outside of the family context.
Intra familial sexual abuse	Sexual abuse which takes place in the family or in the family context
Risk	Aspects of behaviour or circumstances that are perceived to be worrying, problematic or harmful, alerting professionals/adults to the possibility that a child or young person is being exploited.
Safeguarding (of children)	(Alternately known as 'Child Protective Service'[US] or 'Child and Youth Protection'[AUS]) *Working Together to Safeguard Children, Department for Education (2018)* says that the Police, Clinical Commissioning Group and Local Authority must work together to promote the welfare of all children: To protect children from maltreatment; Preventing impairment of children's mental and physical health or development; Ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care; Taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes.
Safeguarding (of adults)	Embedded in The Care Act (2014) 6 key principles in adult social care: Empowerment; prevention; proportionality; protection; partnership; accountability. Safeguarding can also mean generally taking care of or protecting.
Specialist services	Organisations serving intersectional communities who may need additional

	support to access CSE services or other targeted services that are designed to meet their needs. (e.g., LGBTQ+ young people's services)
Survival sex	Sex engaged in by a person because of their extreme need. It describes the practice of people who are homeless or otherwise disadvantaged in society, trading sex for food, a place to sleep, or other basic needs, or for drugs or alcohol.
Targeted services	Services with specific remit for children or young people identified as being at risk of negative outcome
'The Life'	The Game/The Life — The subculture of prostitution, complete with rules, a hierarchy of authority, and language. Referring to the act of pimping as 'the game' gives the illusion that it can be a fun and easy way to make money, when the reality is much harsher. Women and girls will say they've been "in the life" if they've been involved in prostitution for a while.
Thresholds/eligibility	Criteria for action used in assessment of need for safeguarding services.
Transactional sex	Sex that is seen as being exchanged for something the (young) person wants or needs.
Trading sex	Exchanging sex for financial or other benefits
Trafficking	The movement of people by means such as force, fraud, coercion or deception, with the aim of exploiting them. It is a form of modern slavery. Human trafficking is a crime. It does not always involve international transportation. Trafficking in the UK includes commercial, sexual and bonded labour.
Transition	Refers to a process, there are many transitional periods throughout the life-course. One key transitional period is moving from the legal or perceived status of child to that of adult (defined here as between 16-25 years). Transition also involves moving between settings and contexts, including services with a remit for responding to children and those with a remit for responding to adults – this can be through the transfer or referral of a young person as a 'case'.
Universal services	Services that anyone can access or anyone in a particular age range (e.g., school).
Young person/youth/adolescent/young adult	Referring to young people primarily in the age range of 16-25 years.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Introduction

Child Sexual Exploitation is a pressing issue of social injustice about which professional learning is urgently needed. It is now recognised that sexual exploitation can continue beyond the age of 18 and that its impact can stay with young people well after they turn 18. Many welfare services are organised in response to the perceived needs of either children or adults, and this can mean that the needs of young people of a 'transitional' age fall between the two. It is timely to draw together what is currently known about safeguarding children, young people and young adults aged 16-25, from the past 20 years of research on sexual exploitation. The voices of children and young people who have experienced CSE and recognition of the complexity of their lives needs to be central to understanding what are appropriate responses and interventions from services, communities and support networks.

Objectives

The overarching question which guided this systematic review was:

What does the literature say about safeguarding practice for young people and young adults (aged 16-25) who have experienced CSE before or during transition?

Four further sub questions helped to guide the review:

- Research Question 1: *How is safeguarding from 16 years onwards organised and how is risk assessed in this age group?*
- Research Question 2: *What do we know about continued need for services and support post 18 years amongst young people who have experienced CSE?*
- Research Question 3: *Is the evidence clear about thresholds for action across universal, targeted and specialist services?*
- Research Question 4: *What facilitates or constrains a successful transition for young people who have experienced CSE?*

The aims of this review were to provide evidence which could inform improved responses to young people and young adults in need of support through transition. Implications for practice are drawn out from this review, with an overarching focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and young adults. This review provides:

- Clear and succinct extraction of the key messages from international qualitative research about safeguarding children, young people and adults aged 16-25;
- A robust assessment of transition experiences and outcomes for young people that have experienced sexual exploitation, including the identification of obstacles to successful transition;
- Increased understanding of challenges in this area of social care practice and opportunities for change, through identification of challenges in organising safeguarding and support for children, young people and young adults;
- Recommendations for practice that close gaps and increase the success of safeguarding and support.

Methods

This report presents the findings of a qualitative systematic review conducted with meta-aggregation to synthesise findings. This research was guided by benchmark methodology in qualitative systematic review research, the Joanna Briggs Institute (JBI) approach.
Five databases were searched, utilising key words and strings developed in relation to the research questions (see **Appendix 1** for search terms). Further search of UK-based online repositories and snowball sampling located additional articles to review. Studies were screened against inclusion criteria (detailed in full in Section 4.2).
The review implemented standardised appraisal tools to assess the risk of bias (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme, 2017) and present a measurement of confidence in findings (GRADEcerQual). Finally, the review used meta-aggregation in order to construct a series of synthesised findings. This technique is designed to offer robust, well-supported synthesised findings for qualitative systematic reviews, which can serve as evidence for practice and policy.

Findings

A total of 2,746 studies were found which, after screening, were reduced to 57. A further 47 were excluded after detailed full-text review, often because they failed the methodological or content criteria upon closer reading, resulting in 10 included studies.

Half (five) of the studies were conducted in the USA, followed by three in the UK, and the remaining two studies originated from Australia and New Zealand respectively. The studies were relatively recent, with the clear exception being Hines et al (2005). All included studies were qualitative and employed semi-structured interviews as the main data collection tool. The majority of the studies (eight) reported research based on data collected directly from

young people, and they were interpretive studies which drew on the voices of young people who had experienced or were regarded as at risk of sexual exploitation. A total of 598 young people's views are reported, along with 176 professionals/practitioners. One parental guardian was also noted as being present at a focus group (Beech et al., 2018).

The review found that significant gaps remain in what is known about young people who have experienced sexual exploitation and their needs during the period of transition from child to adult and children's to adults' services. For instance, data on prevalence of CSE in this population is lacking and research which captures experiences across the diversity of the youth population is needed. However what research exists can be characterised as follows in terms of synthesised findings (SF).

As this report documents in full, our method produced six such synthesised findings. In sum, they are:

- **SF1: CSE is often associated with girls and young women yet can be experienced by any young person.** Gender, age, sexuality or other aspects of identity (self and social) can be sites of vulnerability from which CSE can occur and be subsequent spaces of social meaning by which victimhood can be conceptualised. However, individual attributes can act as strengths and protective factors. Age plays a key role in defining access to services and in limiting opportunities for continued support.

- **SF2: Insufficient relational support or experiences of abuse in the home (physical or emotional) adversely affect young people and can leave them vulnerable to those who might coerce, control and exploitation**. Relationships with family and peers could create avenues for CSE recruitment, but also provide avenues for support. Insufficient family support limited routes out of CSE. Relationships with peers were important to promoting emotional wellbeing and avoiding isolation which could make young people vulnerable to exploitation.

- **SF3: The instability young people experience in their home lives is also mirrored in social care, exposing them to risks and vulnerabilities.** Early life experiences of CSE-experienced young people included economic hardship, parental substance use, mental ill health and violence, such instability in informal supports often led to early and sometimes extensive interactions with formal systems. These were a part of their journey in social care as well. Young people's search for acceptance and community at a time of transition made them susceptible to exploitation. Stigma surrounding sexuality and involvement in sex for basic needs

impacted their psychological and physical security and hindered the development of social relationships outside of CSE networks.

- **SF4: Mental Health is an important consideration contextualising the lives of young people who have experienced CSE.** Being affected by mental health challenges and/or those of family members created a conducive context for CSE to occur. CSE also had a mental health impact. Professionals' focus on mental health, trauma and on-going support was seen by young people to be helpful and necessary (services meeting their material needs) to successfully leaving and 'recovering' from sexual exploitation.

- **SF5: The quality of relationships that young people form with professionals impacts their relationships with services.** Reliable, trustworthy and stable relationships with professionals were important to young people experiencing transition, especially for boys and young men who were hesitant to express feelings and fully engage with systems. Relationships strengthened when young people felt professionals cared and helped practically. However, feeling judged produced negative impacts for young people and the resulting loss of trust affected their relationship with service/s. Professionals need to be patient, realistic and recognise the impact that trauma history has on the relationships service users build with them. Systems need to recognise how vicarious trauma can impact the wellbeing of workers and service users (since quality and continuity of service can be affected).

- **SF 6: Familial, social and systemic environments that create conducive contexts for CSE lack necessary resources, social capital, and care to offer routes out of CSE.** Such resource-depleted environments were also ill-equipped to support young people in transitioning out of CSE, and this was particularly so for LGBTQ+ youth. Lack of formal and informal support was exacerbated by transition between settings. However, where there was support from education, fostering services or specialist 'safe spaces', young people were able to form trusting relationships with non-abusive adults.

Conclusion

This was the first international systematic review of the qualitative research base. It has demonstrated that the limited research nevertheless offers important messages. Among these, the key conclusions we highlight are:

First, that the effective safeguarding of young people relies on identifying factors that increase their risk of sexual exploitation. Many factors which influenced a young

person's risk of sexual exploitation related to family and peer relationships, social and material conditions, the development of identity and gendered power relations. Deprived and under-resourced communities can be conducive to harm and exploitation. Thus, our first conclusion calls for action beyond safeguarding services, in relation to policies that seek to remedy conducive contexts by tackling entrenched inequalities and deprivation (e.g., housing, tax, benefits, the cost of living, relative poverty).

Second, that there is a wide range of evidence concerning what facilitates or constrains a successful transition between services, and this evidence suggests that a young person's transition is benefitted by: i) supporting young people to build relationships with professionals who show care and patience without judgement, ii) supporting young people to build relationships with other young people, iii) ensuring that professionals and the services they work for understand how traumatic experiences may affect later relationships, including between service users and providers; but may be constrained by i) young people not being recognised as victims of sexual exploitation, ii) stereotypes surrounding young people, on the basis of gender, class, culture etc., as well as iii) an overall lack of transition services.

Third, age and gender can produce inequalities in safeguarding practices. In particular, ageing out of eligibility for support can create vulnerability to a range of risks, including exploitation. There is a lack of continued, long-term support. Thus, our third recommendation calls for services to have longer term perspectives and commitment.

Fourth, young people can be both a victim and capable of making decisions, and research found that young people emphasised how much they valued respect for their agency to make decisions on their own terms about their transition. Understandings need to evolve to allow for such complexity and the potential for tensions between frameworks, such as that of protection and that of empowerment. Our fourth recommendation is thus for further research on this to improve support to professionals in how they balance safeguarding and granting autonomy, and this in turn will help multi-professional teams to better understand each other's priorities.

This review has identified evidence that should inform professional and service level responses to young people and young adults who have been sexually exploited. In particular, we identify the following recommendations for practice and for research.

Recommendations

We believe that there is evidence that improved outcomes for children, young people and young adults will be produced from the following:

- Accurate recognition and reliable perception of the experience of sexual exploitation through understandings of risk, need and protection that move away from individualising risk and vulnerability and recognise a complex interplay of factors.
- A patient, realistic approach from professionals that recognises the impact trauma history has on the relationships service users build with them.
- Recognising that when sexual exploitation is regarded as a form of *child* abuse (when impacting on children under 18 years old), it can fail to include young people who are reaching adulthood in the collection of data, evaluation of need, or in promoting rights to protection.
- More understanding of what tends to increase young people's vulnerability to sexual exploitation.
- Increased attention paid to structural inequality in the lives of young people, since many 'push' or 'pull' factors relate to family, relationships, socio-economic circumstances, social and material conditions and gendered power relations.
- Avoiding making (gender or other) assumptions about young people regarding their need for protection since this leads to overlooking some, deeming them not vulnerable or in need.
- Avoid organising service provisions around age eligibility to prevent service gaps and cliff edges of support, since services designed to meet the need of either children or adults creates a site of vulnerability to abuse, coercion and exploitation.
- An increased understanding from services on how trauma may impact the way service users relate to professionals and engage with services.
- Systems need to recognise vicarious trauma among professionals for the wellbeing of workers and for the quality and continuity of service provision.

1 INTRODUCTION

Problem description:

Knowledge of the complexity of the lives of children and young people who are exploited sexually is crucial to understanding the need for appropriate responses and interventions from services. Whilst there has in recent years been a policy focus on the sexual abuse and exploitation of children, defined as under the age of 18, it is increasingly recognised that sexual exploitation can continue past the age of 18 and/or the impact of sexual exploitation can be ongoing for young adults. Social care, health, education, criminal justice and welfare services are often organised in response to either children's or adults' needs. This can mean that the needs of young people as they approach adulthood fall between, creating a gap in provision. Moreover, transitions for young people are often taking place simultaneously: the end of formal educational provisions during this period removes a context of support and familiarity just as they might be 'ageing out' of services. As young people move from childhood to adulthood, they are met with mixed or contradictory messages (social, cultural, legal, psychological) about their rightful status within either of these categories. As definitions and understandings of exploitation expand and current UK policy trends move towards wider classifications of exploitation, it is timely to draw together what is currently known about safeguarding children, young people and young adults aged 16-25, from the past 20 years of international research focused on child sexual exploitation.

Study rationale:

The matter of children being sexually exploited is not new and has been understood variously over time and across cultures. Asynchronous evolutions of popular understanding have proposed it, for example, as: a form of child abuse occurring outside of the family home, as under the umbrella of violence against women and girls, and, as 'child prostitution'. Children and young people affected by sexual exploitation have been viewed and responded to differently than children abused in the home (Pearce, 2006), regarded as having an active role in their abuse in a way that victims of child sexual abuse are not. Work has taken place in the UK and internationally to reframe children and young people subjected to exploitation as victims, moving away from historical associations with child prostitution and leading to a paradigm shift in understanding.

The prevalence of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE), both nationally and internationally, is difficult to establish. Research on the scale and nature of child sexual abuse states that there is no globally-recognised or UK definition of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) (Kelly and

Karsna, 2017; Karsna and Kelly, 2021). In England, Department of Education guidance says that CSE should not be considered separate from Child Sexual Abuse (CSA) or from trafficking, gendered violence or going missing (DfE 2017). The definition of CSE currently guiding practice in England focuses on an 'exchange', that the perpetrator gives the child something that compensates or benefits the child for a sexual act:

> 'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs of wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual' (Department for Education, 2017: 5)

In the UK, there has been government interest in the sexual exploitation of children and young people for over 20 years and a policy focus for over a decade. Under the Children Acts 1989 and 2004, Local Authorities are responsible for safeguarding all children in their care, and statutory duties ensure that Local Authorities have a duty to safeguard children experiencing or likely to experience significant harm (Section 17 and 47 of The Children Act 1989). Local agencies are also required to ensure that the welfare of children and young people is safeguarded and promoted (DfE, 2017).

Over time, different forms of abuse and contexts of abuse have been recognised and come to the fore, which have driven practice and policy responses (Karsna and Kelly, 2021). Internationally and nationally, the field is currently and somewhat understandably fraught with issues of definition, language and conceptual variation, with a range of acronyms in use to describe the activities known as 'sexual exploitation', such as CSE, CSEC, and CSEY (see Table 1: List of Terminology). The problematic issues of definition and terminology arise partly because the broader field of research, policy and practice has developed within a relatively short period of time, and this growing field has influenced ways of understanding and also responses to CSE. For example, the existence of CSE as a concept is contested (Phoenix, 2019), as is the separation of child and young person exploitation from that of adult women (Coy, 2016). The notion of 'exchange' being at the centre of the definition in order to qualify as being exploitation is often also challenged (Hallett, 2015, 2016; Eaton 2019) and the terminology of victimhood, assumption of inevitable harm and denial of developing sexuality in young people has been questioned (Smith and Woodiwiss, 2016; Beckett, 2019).

Whilst there has been an increasing practice and research focus on sexual exploitation of children, it can be argued that the challenges which are present in responding appropriately to CSE for adolescents or young adults have not received the same attention. Holmes (2018) argues that the challenges become more complex as young people progress towards adulthood and beyond the legal remit of child safeguarding systems. This coincides with changes in young people's lives as, alongside the transition from child-focused to adult-focused services, children also transition from child to adult. This is a process that all children go through, although this transition is highly relative to cultural and historical understandings of childhood, in terms of biological age and generational position (Mayall, 2002), and ages at which children are perceived competent and capable of a level of independence are variable. One example of the contradictions of who is included or excluded from being considered 'a child', is where race and gender influence perceptions. For example, Black girls are perceived to need less protection, to be "knowing" about sex, to be less innocent and have more agency than their white counterparts; a process termed 'adultification' (Epstein, Blake, Gonzalez, 2017; Davis, 2019). A further example of the arbitrary application of age boundaries is evident in recent legislation introduced by the English government in Autumn 2021 which prevents local authorities from housing children under age 16 in unregulated accommodation. Unregulated accommodation can be independent or semi-independent (e.g., hostels) without provision of care or guardianship. Children aged 16 and 17 are not included within the policy change and their housing providers have no duty to provide care or guardianship with accommodation, despite being considered to be minors in law, in need of support to recover from past trauma (Blackwell and Samuel, 2021).

Both of these examples draw attention to the social construction of children and childhood, the ways in which we come to know what constitutes 'childhood' and 'adulthood', which, in turn, has implications for understandings of notions of 'vulnerability' and 'risk', at the forefront of practice when safeguarding children. How do we identify who is at risk of sexual exploitation? Who is perceived as vulnerable and in need of protection? So, whilst chronological birth dates are significant milestones in terms of legal status, autonomy, eligibility and thresholds for service responses, they may not coincide with competence and capacity or be applied equally to all young people.

A focus on **transition** from child to adult- and from children's to adults' services- is quite recent in the field of CSE, however, other sectors have a longer history of attempting to address the needs of young people in transition. For example, in the UK: i) young people in receipt of services from Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services (CAMHS) transition to adult mental health services; ii) young people who are cared for by the state can be offered

pathway planning when leaving care; iii) disabled young people and young people with identified Special Educational Needs have transition planning addressed within their Education Health and Care Plans; iv) young people in youth offending transition to probation. However, whilst a transitional approach to providing services exists in these other areas of health, social care, education and criminal justice, eligibility for statutory adult care or safeguarding services is still geographically variable, piecemeal and can leave needs unmet. Often, young people are making multiple transitions simultaneously and needing to navigate pathways into services. The period of transition concerning sexually exploited young people is currently less understood and less documented (Holmes, 2018). Taking this existing learning from other fields as a point of departure, there is recognition that any transition to adult-focused provision or cessation of service response should be well planned, with an exit strategy from the previous provision and a clear pathway provided and appropriately managed.

In the UK, for example, transition planning by and between children's and adults' social care services varies, with different statutory duties and protocols. When young people reach the age of 18, the hours of support that they have been eligible for is reduced, often to just a few hours a month or even less. There is a lack of specialist support for victims of CSE who are aged 16-18 and beyond. Some young adults aged 18 and over are vulnerable to exploitation or were being exploited before turning 18 and the exploitation has continued. Eligibility for support from Children's Services ceases and there is no legal duty to support young people, unless they have care and support needs (Care Act, 2014). The influential Jay Report (2014) and a number of case reviews involving fatality and also Inquiries have recognised a gap in statutory services where young people were experiencing violence, abuse and exploitation but were left without adequate support. Without a planned transition into adult focused services (statutory or other), young people are open to significant issues. Karsna and Kelly (2021) recently reported that international studies have shown that prevalence of almost every kind of sexual abuse – by adults, peers, family, acquaintances and strangers – increases with age between 15 and 17 years.

Support for this age group of young people takes place across a range of organisations. Professionals working nationally in England in the field of CSE are keen to improve practice (including the Association of Directors of Children's Services; British Association for Social Workers; Chief Social Workers for Adults and Children, the National Working Group on Exploitation (formerly on CSE), Research in Practice, and many children's charities). All have recognised that there is room for improvement in identifying and responding to sexual exploitation in this group of young people.

Kelly and Karsna (2017) argue that whilst it is appropriate that CSE should be 'nested' within child sexual abuse more generally, it is important to delineate boundaries when turning to measurement and identification. The identification of children and young people at risk of or subjected to CSE is a contested area. Brown, Brady, Franklin, Bradley, Kerrigan and Sealey (2016) published the first peer reviewed evaluation of CSE risk screening and assessment 'toolkits', used across practice in England and Wales for identification of sexual exploitation. This research included a review of evidence for identifying and appraising indicators for risk of and protection from CSA/E. The research found a lack of robust evidence of risk factors for becoming a victim of CSE, that screening and assessment tools were not validated and, contained indicators that were stereotyping of girls, along with being limited in their conceptualisation of CSE. This suggested that the knowledge on which to base practice needed to be improved. Referring to Brown et al's (2016) research, Eaton (2019) states that creating scales or hierarchies of exploitation severity of 'low, medium, high risk' young people, against which service provision is then prescribed, has become normalised practice and is overly relied upon in the UK. Categorisation of risk, based on perception rather than evidence, has implications for *which* young people are regarded as in need of safeguarding and protection.

The variation in conceptualisation of risk and vulnerability between services charged with identifying 'at risk' young people, including child and adult statutory services and other agencies, has been further highlighted as problematic (Brown, Brady, Franklin and Crookes, 2017). In addition, the *way* in which some young people present to services can mean that they may fall through gaps and do not receive an appropriate response. There are limits to how 'risk' is conceptualised that renders certain groups of young people invisible and fails to adequately respond to their needs. For example, disabled and neurodiverse young people can wrongly be assumed to be too disabled (impaired) to be subject to abuse or not disabled enough (without a diagnosis) to receive an appropriate response (Franklin, Brady, Bradley, 2020). Dominant notions in research and practice leave the reality of CSE in intersectional communities further obscured. Therefore, the scale and nature of the experience of CSE for Black and minority ethnic young people is little known. Simultaneously, the structural disadvantage of race and oppression may create vulnerability to exploitation (Bernard, 2019). Failing to present to services within imagined parameters for CSE victimhood (as the "ideal" victim) can cause disparity in accessing support and limit routes out of CSE through services.

As noted above, researchers have challenged the concept of 'exchange' within the UK definition (Hallett, 2016; Eaton and Holmes, 2017; Eaton, 2019) and others, including the Office for Children's Commissioner (2017). Eaton (2019) adopts a rights-based approach to

exploitation and frames ‘the sexual exploitation of girls as a deliberate form of harm, violence and oppression that mainly affects girls and is mainly perpetrated by adult males’. It is argued that the concept of ‘exchange’ ‘neutralises the power dynamic and harm done to girls by adult and peer perpetrators, positioning rape and abuse as a ‘sex act’ that the girl engages in to get something she ‘needs or wants’ (Eaton, 2019: 3). Coy (2016) has been clear that the paradigm shift that has framed sexual exploitation as a form of child abuse, rather than as part of the sexual exploitation of girls and adult women, has led to the disappearance of both a gendered analysis and a focus on structural inequalities.

Hallett’s qualitative research with young people led her to argue that care responses beyond narrow child protection responses are needed (Hallett, 2016). Little attention is paid to the ways in which care and the practices of child protection might feature in the problem of CSE (Hallett, 2016). Before 2009, the UK guidance still referred to ‘children involved in prostitution’ (DoH, 2000), since that time the matter has been reframed. The reframing has also been problematised, as it can be argued that CSE has become synonymous with ‘grooming’ (Melrose, 2012) and much media attention has been on what are regarded as racially-coded ‘predatory gangs’ (Cockbain and Tufail, 2020), further proscribing the intersectional and racialised dynamic to perpetratorhood and victimhood.

Children’s charities have been at the forefront of raising awareness of sexual exploitation, developing an analysis of the nature of the problem and campaigning to influence government guidance (Barnardo's, The Children’s Society), some for over 20 years. This included campaigning to have young people who are abused through prostitution recognised as victims of sexual violence, not ‘young prostitutes’, however changes in terminology have not always reflected changes in understanding and practice (Scott and Harper, 2006). As well as being at the forefront of change in relation to child sexual exploitation, UK charities have recently also combined their efforts to highlight the need for appropriate support for young people who are at a transitional stage of life at age 16 and 17 (Children’s Society, Transitions to Adulthood, 2019). Taking a wide-ranging view of needs and support, the call for a cross-departmental task force by The Children’s Society and key partners highlighted that young people aged 16 and 17 often fall between the gaps in terms of service provision, including in terms of government departments. This relates to the way in which services are currently provided, differentiating between children’s and adult’s services. Whilst young people in this age group may be experiencing intersecting issues at 16 and 17 which continue when becoming 18 years old, as stated above, their eligibility for services is different as an adult and they may not meet the criteria for support from services designed to meet adult needs. Where this happens suddenly and has not been planned for, transition to adult life and independence happens abruptly and can be difficult to cope with without

support. Whilst the focus of this review is on ‘safeguarding’ and child protection, it is also recognised that social issues and disadvantages are often not experienced in isolation, which is evident in the research reviewed here. The Children’s Society ‘Crumbling Futures’ (Pona and Turner, 2018) research report also notes that it is rare for children’s services to transfer or refer to adult services. Unmet need and limited transition support can lead to poor outcomes for young people in this age group.

Alongside critiques of the current definition of CSE in widest use are challenges to the overall model of child protection which overarches CSE procedure and practice (Featherstone, Gupta, Morris and Warner, 2018), claiming that the social determinants of many of the harms that children and young people experience have not been recognised, as child protection procedures focus on individualised risk factors.

Relevance to social care practice and professional development:

Various forms of exploitation can continue into adulthood (Coy, 2009; Holmes, 2018; Berelowitz, 2012) and some young people, for a range of reasons, may be more vulnerable to extra-familial exploitation than others. There is a need for collaborative, multi-agency working across all partners to address this issue as professionals wish to enable young people to fulfil their potential. They also wish to access appropriate channels of support so that no young person who needs it is left unsupported. However, whilst moving between statutory services that are focused on children and those focused on adults is often problematic and this is widely known, there is no one source of social work led evidence which can be drawn on currently, although there is some evidence of proactive work in localities.

The focus of this systematic review, therefore, was on interpretive studies that drew upon the experiences and voices of young people/young adults (16-25) who had experienced sexual exploitation and their engagement with services of support, in the UK and internationally. The review was guided by a published protocol which was adhered to throughout. As a result, the aims and research questions were consistent throughout the process. Additionally, this review focused upon an area which is considered under-researched and has largely presented first-hand accounts and experience of young people, giving additional voice to a marginalised group while providing much needed insider perspectives. The review drew together a number of articles on a very finite topic and established that peer reviewed publication on this topic is currently limited. This is important because practice on the ground is developing, in recognition that on both national and international scales young people are ‘falling through the gaps’ yet published evidence on which to base new developments is lacking.

This variation in definitions, terminology and conceptual complexity of the field has shaped the evidence, in that it is disparately located, crossing disciplinary boundaries and largely qualitative. **'Transition**', therefore, in this review was characterised as both the transition between services (either brought about by 'ageing out' of services or by instability) as well as the 'transitional period' of adolescence (as a period of personal development and life changes) and how this reflects changing support needs. All young people participants included had undergone one or multiple kinds of transition.

Whilst there are a number of issues relating to the organisation of transition for young people who have been subjected to sexual exploitation, the range of studies, reports, practices and responses remains largely undetected, being disparately located, inter-disciplinary, spanning both academia and practice. This review highlights complexities and contradictions in safeguarding and support provided to children, young people and young adults. A qualitative systematic review in this field aims to improve responses to young people and young adults in need. Implications for practice are drawn out from this review, with an overarching focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and young adults. The international scope provides opportunity to learn from different understandings, procedures and practices in addressing issues of exploitation and harm.

2 OBJECTIVES

This review had both an overarching question and four specific research questions. The review question asked:

What does the literature say about safeguarding practice for young people and young adults (aged 16-25) who have experienced CSE before or during transition?

- How is safeguarding from 16 years onwards organised and how is risk assessed in this age group?
- What do we know about continued need for services and support post 18 years amongst young people who have experienced CSE?
- Is the evidence clear about thresholds for action across universal, targeted and specialist services?
- What facilitates or constrains a successful transition for young people who have experienced CSE?

Objectives

Professionals working in the field of CSE and all professionals and practitioners who have a remit for working with children, young people and young adults are keen to improve practice responses to those aged 16-25. They often recognise that young people in this age range are under-served and their experiences not fully understood. An important first step of this review was to collate what was currently happening for young people in this age group, particularly those that continue to need support post 18 or disclose previous CSE after 18.

The objective of this review was to identify, appraise and synthesise the available qualitative evidence on safeguarding practice for young people and young adults who have experienced CSE before or during transition. This review presented the existing evidence and highlighted complexities and contradictions in safeguarding and support provided to children, young people and young adults. It aimed to increase understanding of this field of social welfare with a view to making recommendations to enhance support.

3 METHODS

3.1 Protocol registration

The study protocol was agreed with WWCSC and registered on the Open Science Framework (OSF), reference https://osf.io/78edk/ on 10 December 2020. It was also registered on PROSPERO on 18 December 2020, reference number CRD42020225298. No current or in-progress systematic reviews on the chosen topic were identified.

3. 2 Study eligibility criteria

3.2.1 Participants

Studies that focused upon young people and young adults (aged 16-25) who had experienced CSE before or during transition to adulthood were considered.

The focus of the studies was child sexual exploitation (CSE). As the scope of the review was international it was considered important to be inclusive of terminology, therefore studies that included 'sexual exploitation', but did not use the term 'CSE' (more associated with the UK) were also considered. Please see **Table 1: List of Terminology**. Forms of sexual exploitation which were not specifically defined as CSE were identified within the abstract, title or content and a decision made whether the abuse was closely associated enough to CSE to be included, or describing CSE by a different name, more familiar to an international audience. Additional terms found in the included literature were: 'Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Children (CSEC)', 'Commercial Sexual Exploitation of Youth (CSEY)', 'trading sex', 'trafficking', 'survival sex'. The different international policy contexts bring to fore that the language used to describe the abusive activity places emphasis on different aspects. Therefore, the difference is more than a difference in terminology and influences thinking about the group and the act. For example, CSEY, originating from the US context, indicated that transactional sexual abuse was not unique to children but, rather, that these forms of abuse can take place at older ages. Both CSEC and CSEY emphasise the 'commercial' or profit-making aspect of the sexual exploitation of young people.

We took the position that the studies that we included must focus upon young people/young adults aged 16-25 years. The age groupings within studies that addressed sexual exploitation and transition did not neatly align with this defined range, and the search identified samples where younger and older were included (the youngest aged 10 and oldest aged 35). The vast majority were in the age range of 13-21 years. Some studies had an age

range of up to 35, however this was a small proportion of the participants within the studies and within the review overall. We regarded it as important to keep the studies in the review as they all had key findings relating to the transitional period, so the criterion was expanded to reflect the various conceptualisations of 'young people' in relation to age across the various national and international contexts covered by the literature.

3.2.2 Phenomena of interest

As this systematic review explored the experiences of safeguarding for young people and young adults who have experienced sexual exploitation before or during this transitional age, we aimed to include lived experiences, voices and narratives of young people, drawn from the included studies. Author descriptions of experiences were also included.

3.2.3 Context

This review was inclusive of papers published in English language from the UK Europe, Australia, New Zealand and North America. It focused upon safeguarding practice in relation to the sexual abuse of young people before or during the period of transition from child to adult.

3.2.4 Type of studies

This systematic review considered interpretive studies that drew upon the experiences of young people/young adults (16-25) who had experienced sexual exploitation and their engagement with services of support, in the UK and internationally. Only studies reporting research data were included, however both peer-reviewed journals and 'grey literature' were accepted to create a robust review relevant to both research and practice. Systematic reviews were retained for investigation of the primary studies included.

Study designs were qualitative, although there were no further restrictions upon types of methodologies employed. Quantitative studies were not included. For studies reporting quantitative and qualitative data, only the qualitative data was reported. As the review focused upon safeguarding practice in the widest sense it was important to include empirical studies that collected the voices of young people, young adults and also professional views. While quantitative studies may also have value, they were not the focus of this review. Quantitative studies were unable to provide detailed responses in relation to the safeguarding of young people/young adults who had experienced sexual exploitation, nor could they provide insight from young people in their own words.

This field is emerging, therefore, not an ample enough body of published literature exists to determine the ultimate shape the evidence in this field will take. This review identified only 3 studies which matched all of our other criteria; however, it is worth noting that our search

was designed specifically to exclude quantitative studies. Therefore, the extent of quantitative research is not known.

As key findings in this research area are often not published in peer-reviewed articles but, instead what is termed ‘grey literature’ (e.g., policy reports, case studies, evaluations, internal memos, research reports and other documents published by public, NGO and charity sector organisations and other organisations whose primary activity is not publishing), the research was designed to capture both peer reviewed and grey literature articles.

Considering that six of the included studies were published reports, known as ‘grey literature’, it is fair to say that most of what is known about CSE transitions for young people has been located within and generated from professional practice knowledge. Even within those contexts, literature on this subject is limited, in part related to the conceptualisation of sexual exploitation being related to children, rather than young adults.

3.3 Search strategy

The search strategy aimed to include published peer-reviewed studies and grey literature that reported research data. The first stage of the search focused upon academic peer-reviewed articles. A strategy was developed and then adapted across the databases searched (see **Appendix 1**).

To answer the review questions only qualitative studies were included, whilst all quantitative studies were excluded. Due to the nature of the research, any research deemed to have been carried out unethically was to have been excluded (although in practice, this did not occur). All studies, except for Hines et al (2005), had obtained ethical approval. Searches took place on 21/12/2020. The following databases were searched: ASSIA, PsycINFO, SSCI, PubMed, Google Scholar. As the review was qualitative, we used PICo (Population, the Phenomena of Interest and the Context), aligning with the approach outlined by the Joanna Briggs Institute.

Following this stage, a search for grey literature was conducted focusing upon UK-based online repositories. Simple browsing or searching using keywords (abuse, transition, children, young people) took place. Researchers on the team (CR and ER) searched the following websites on 17/02/2021: NSPCC, Barnardo's, Children’s Society, SCIE, NICE, Children and Young People now, Action for Children, NCB, Office of the Children’s Commissioner, BASPCAN, ISPCAN, DfE, Fatherhood Institute (see PRISMA for results of

this approach). We also contacted key networks and searched relevant university websites, although no additional studies aligning with our criteria were found using this method. Two unpublished papers, used for context, were located using this method. We were constrained by Covid-19 restrictions and did not consult, as we had intended at this stage, with young people who were ‘at risk’ or had been subjected to CSE or a wider group of relevant professionals from practice.

3.4 Study selection

The inclusion/exclusion criteria for the studies were:

- Studies focused upon young people/young adults
- Studies focused upon CSE before or during transition
- Studies exploring safeguarding practice within social work
- Studies written in English
- Studies published from January 2000, in order to be relevant to the contemporary UK social work landscape

Following the searching process, all citations (including abstracts) were imported into EndNote v.X9 (Clarivate Analytics, PA, USA). Citations were initially screened by two reviewers (AT and GB) against the inclusion criteria and any duplicates were removed. AT and GB assessed the inclusion based upon titles and then abstracts, using the inclusion and exclusion criteria and research questions to guide this screening process. After completion of this stage, full article information was transferred to an Excel spreadsheet. At this point the articles were screened by the entire team using the full-text. Studies that were excluded from the Excel spreadsheet at this stage have been further detailed in **Appendix 2**. Further search of UK-based online repositories and snowball sampling located additional articles to review. All studies were screened against inclusion criteria (detailed in full in Section 4.2).

3.5 Data extraction

The data were extracted from each study using an extraction sheet which remained consistent throughout the process. The sheet allowed the reviewer (and subsequent second reviewer if required to add or edit) to record key aspects of the study in a replicable manner. Extraction data included: the phenomena of interest in relation to the research questions, the population, key findings, objectives, methods. Extraction was conducted by a member of the team and then verified amongst the team by at least one second reviewer. As a result, all extractions were cross-checked for consistency and accuracy. The first and second reviewers convened to resolve any issues, working to achieve agreement over all aspects of the extraction.

The entire team also met throughout the extraction process to ensure consistency and a focus upon the research questions and the wider objectives. It is important throughout the

meta-aggregation process to align findings with illustrations/evidence as this formed the basis of the synthesised findings (see 3.9).

For this review, meta-aggregation, a JBI method of synthesis was adopted. This method sought to represent in synthesised statements the summary of the subjective accounts of participants. Three key steps were followed in the meta-aggregative approach employed in this review-data: extraction, categorisation, and synthesis. First, findings were extracted from included studies. This was done by repeatedly reading and highlighting texts that represented CSE in the included studies. In a JBI systematic review, findings are usually extracted verbatim and aligned with one or two illustrations from the study. Illustrations were either direct quotations from the participants or any form of information from the included studies that strengthened and supported the respective findings. The second step, known as categorization, involved the grouping of findings based on similarity of meanings. From each finding, a key concept and theme emerged, and these concepts were grouped and aggregated to form categories. See **Appendix 4** for the categories and synthesised findings. The next step involved synthesising the categories into synthesised findings. A synthesised finding in a JBI review is a statement or group of statements that represent the evidence pooled together in each category. Two or more categories make up one synthesised finding.

While the categorisation was carried out in a rigorous manner, key themes emerging from the findings were often interrelated, which posed some challenge in forming distinct categories. However, categorisation was carefully approached to ensure that the categories accurately represented the evidence and findings.

3.6 Risk of bias assessment

To critically appraise the studies included in this review we used the CASP (Critical Appraisal Skills Programme) Checklist for Qualitative Research (CASP, 2018). The CASP Checklist featured three sections which allowed the review team to assess bias within studies and, if required, produce a table which detailed responses to the checklist and formed a percentage (the closer to 100%, the stronger the quality).

Section A of CASP explored the validity of results and focused on the clarity of aims, appropriateness of methodology and the overall research design. The section allowed reviewers to examine recruitment, data collection and to record any anomalies in relationship between researcher and participant (if the researcher had reflected and reported on this relationship). Section B allowed for the results of the study to be examined. This enabled the reviewer to explore any ethical implications of the research. This also included

consideration of whether the data had been accurately analysed and presented. Finally, Section C allowed the reviewer to examine the impact of the research findings and whether they were likely to be valuable. Upon completion of the CASP Checklist, a summary table was produced. The table recorded the positive and negative responses entered onto the Checklist and in turn generated a numeric representation of the methodological strength of the included studies.

The risk of bias assessments were conducted by the first and second reviewers (predominantly HG and ER, but also GB, AT), after they had carried out the data extraction of each study. The first and second reviewers convened to discuss the risk of bias assessments and resolved any disagreements through collaborative discussion. Each CASP checklist was then cross-checked by another member of the team in order to ensure consistency, before completing the summary table.

Of relevance here is that awareness and understanding of CSE are biased towards the Global North and less is known, through research, about experience of sexual exploitation specifically in the Global South. It can be argued that this may be because the phenomena is understood as part of the wider issue of Violence against Women and Girls (VAWG) or Gender Based Violence (GBV) or Gender Related Violence (GRV) (Alldred and Biglia, 2015). As girls and women are disproportionately more often the victims of sexual exploitation then cis men, it is important that exploitation is regarded as a violation of human rights, part of the wider matter of violence which is influenced by gender as a structure, although this does make international comparisons of prevalence of sexual exploitation more difficult.

3.7 Assessing the certainty of evidence

This systematic review used GRADE-CERQual (Lewin et al, 2018) to assess the confidence in findings. The toolkit is specifically aimed at qualitative evidence synthesis. GRADE-CERQual assesses review findings in relation to four components: Methodological Limitation, Coherence, Adequacy of Data, and Relevance. The approach allows reviews to present tables detailing findings alongside the confidence in each finding (in relation to each component and an overall assessment and explanation for the assessment). This approach was rigorously carried out by three researchers on the review team.

The GRADE-CERQual (Confidence in Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative Research) approach was used to determine certainty of our assessment of the research. Some 68

findings and 16 categories were drawn from 10 studies included in this systematic review. Findings and categories were then synthesised into 6 ‘Synthesised Findings’ (see section). Of these 6 synthesised findings, 4 were determined through the GRADE-CERQual method as being supported by the evidence with a high degree of confidence (‘High Confidence’) and 2 found to be supported by the evidence with a moderate degree of confidence (‘Moderate Confidence’). These assessments, indicating the level of certainty in the evidence from the literature supporting our synthesised findings, were determined by a composite score of 4 subscales: Methodological Limitations, Coherence, Adequacy of Data and Relevance.

Methodological Limitations of each study comprising a particular finding is assessed for integrity individually and together with the other studies in that finding. Coherence pertains to how well the data sit together to clearly form the synthesised finding. Adequacy of Data is assessed by determining if there is sufficient evidence to produce a finding (for example: two studies with two participants, for our purposes, could not have been considered ample enough data to ensure Adequacy of Data). Relevance defined as the extent to which the body of data from the primary studies supporting a review finding is applicable to the context specified in the review question. Each synthesised finding was exhaustively assessed against the GRADE-CERQual method by a minimum of two reviewers (CR, HG, ER).

3.8 Data analysis and synthesis

Please see **Appendix 4** for the full results of the synthesis.

We used meta-aggregation (see Lockwood et al, 2015) to produce synthesised findings which should be seen as strong statements that not only answer the research questions and fulfil the aim of the review, but also provide guidance for practitioners and policy makers. In order to arrive at such robust statements, the data is first extracted with a specific focus upon exploring the findings from the study and relating this to evidence provided by the authors (including direct quotation, fieldwork observations, and illustrations). Findings are then assigned with levels of credibility. Lockwood et al (2015) suggest that there are three levels of credibility, namely:

- Unequivocal - referring to evidence which is ‘beyond reasonable doubt’ (p183) most likely in the form of direct participant quotations with regards to the current review
- Credible - referring to evidence that could potentially be challenged and unsupported,

- Unsupported - where there is no link between findings and illustration. The result of such a task is a list of findings with associated evidence directly related to the research questions and overall review aim.

In order to focus the findings and evidence we undertook a process of categorisation. In practice, this resembles repeated reading and grouping of related findings into categories, which then can be seen as themes or key concepts. Two or more findings can be used to form a category.

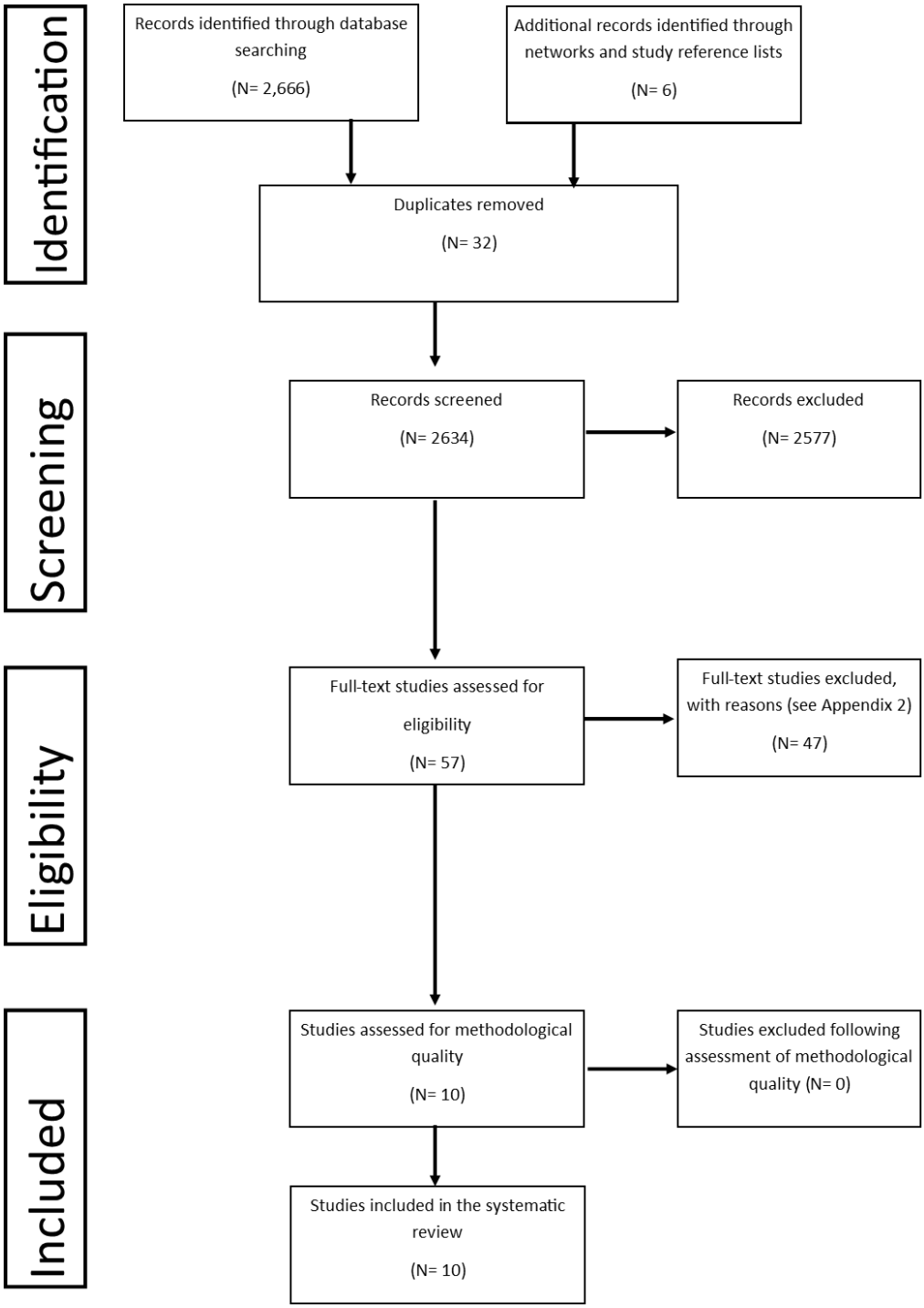
Following this categorization, the team embarked on the process of synthesising. This involved grouping categories together under an overarching synthesised finding based upon similarity. The synthesised findings represent the totality of the categories enclosed within, which in turn represent the findings. This logical and rigorous process results in findings which resemble statements and give a conclusive response to the research questions.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Search Results

The PRISMA flowchart (Figure 1) details the search process from the identification, screening, eligibility and final inclusion numbers. Initial searches yielded a total of 2,666 titles from 5 databases (ASSIA, 344; Google Scholar, 199; PsychInfo, 892; PubMed 270; SSCI 961) (see **Appendix 1**). At this point, 32 duplicates were removed. As a result, 2,634 studies remained and were screened by AT and GB based upon titles and abstracts. With close reference to the study protocol, 2,577 studies were excluded. Data at this point was moved to Excel, for ease of management, a total of 57 studies were added to a study Masterlist and the full-texts were obtained. Of the 57, 47 did not meet the inclusion criteria and would not be able to answer the research question, resulting in a final total of ten studies to be included in the review. See **Appendix 1** for more details regarding search strategy. See **Appendix 2** for detailed reasons for excluding studies.

Figure 1: PRISMA



4.2 Characteristics of included studies

This systematic review included 10 qualitative studies. A full description of the included studies is presented in **Appendix 3**; however, this short section will summarise key aspects of the included studies.

The majority (5) of the studies took place in the US, followed closely by the UK (3), and the remaining two studies originated from Australia and New Zealand respectively. The studies were published relatively recently, with the clear exception being Hines (2005). All of the studies used interviews as the main method of data collection. In general, most adopted face-to-face interviews which aimed to capture rich and detailed data. Some studies used multiple methods, including an additional focus group stage (Thomas & Speyer, 2016, Beckett et al., 2013) or series of methods (Beech et al., 2018 for example conducted a systematic review, interviews with young men and workshops with professionals).

There was variation with regards to the context of the studies. Although a number focused upon social work practice and reflecting current workplace practice (Hampton, 2020; Beech et al, 2018), the remaining eight of the studies solely reported research findings obtained directly from young people themselves. This of course means that findings and recommendations come directly from those who have experienced abuse and sexual exploitation. Key findings included:

- Transition - both between support contexts and from ‘child’ to ‘adult’ - represented uncertainty, upheaval, disruption and risks to safety.
- Needs (both material and emotional) of young people who have experienced CSE often remained unmet, both by professionals and in the greater context of their lives.
- Young peoples’ descriptions and experiences of sexual exploitation varied widely. Young people qualified different aspects of ‘transaction’ and ‘exchange’ with wide-ranging perceptions of what it meant to them.
- Being involved in multiple services (criminal justice, foster care system, exclusions) implied complex challenges which can both be caused by and create a conducive context for CSE, indicating need for inter-agency collaboration for screening and treatment.
- A need for specialist services (which address, for example, the needs of: LGBT, boys, girls, disabled young people, care-leavers)
- Stereotypes prevailed in terms of “justice” served and services received.
- Relationships were key to feeling supported and less isolated (with family, friends, professionals, services)

In total, the voices of 598 young people are reported here along with 176 professionals/practitioners. One parental guardian was also noted as being present at a focus group (Beech et al., 2018). While a critique could be made that the included reports are non-uniform, the diversity within the included reports of age, geographic location, and care or criminal justice experience also are the strength of this research. Demonstrating ubiquity across what could be viewed as a heterogeneous sample indicates further the universality of the key finding of this research: that young people who have experienced CSE struggle in transitions.

4.3 Risk of bias within studies

The Risk of Bias assessment process is detailed in Section 3.6. Table 2 clearly displays the results of the appraisal; however, it is worth noting the high scores (low chance of bias) in all but questions 6, 7, and 8. This suggests that researchers were not always clear in the consideration and expression of their ethical approach (although all were ethically sound). In five of ten studies the relationship between the researcher(s) and the participants was reflected upon, whilst in four studies it was not clear or evident and in one study it was absent. All studies apart from one (Hines et al, 2005) adequately addressed the ethical considerations of their research. Five of the ten studies adequately addressed data analysis, whereas four were not clear and one (Simmons-Horton, 2020) did not address it. Whilst the researchers could have considered the relationship between themselves and those they were researching more and could have expressed their data analysis methods in a more robust fashion, on the whole, the risk of bias was shown to be relatively low.

Table 2: CASP Checklist for qualitative studies

Study	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	Q5	Q6	Q7	Q8	Q9	Q10
Abel (2017)	U	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	U	Y	Y
Beckett et al. (2013)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Beech et al. (2018)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	U	Y	U
Dank et al. (2015)	Y	U	Y	Y	Y	U	U	Y	Y	Y
Ellem et al. (2020)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Hampton (2020)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	Y	Y	Y
Hines et al. (2005)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	U	U	Y	Y
Simmons-Horton (2020)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	Y	N

Thomas & Speyer (2016)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	U	Y	Y
Williams & Frederick (2009)	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Total %	**90**	**90**	**100**	**100**	**100**	**50**	**60**	**50**	**100**	**80**

Y= Yes, N= No, U= Unclear, Critical Appraisal Skills Programme (CASP) Checklist for Qualitative studies

Q1- Was there a clear statement of the aims of the research? Q2- Is a qualitative methodology appropriate? Q3 Was the research design appropriate to address the aims of the research? Q4- Was the recruitment strategy appropriate to the aims of the research? Q5- Was the data collected in a way that addressed the research issue? Q6- Has the relationship between researcher and participants been adequately considered? Q7- Have ethical issues been taken into consideration? Q8- Was the data analysis sufficiently rigorous? Q9- Is there a clear statement of findings? Q10- How valuable is the research? (Note- Q10 does not require a yes/no answer. However, if the reviewer has responded positively this has been assigned as Yes, and conversely if the reviewer has responded negatively this has been assigned to No. If the review was undecided (or saw clear positives and negatives), U has been assigned.

4.4 Certainty of evidence assessment

The GRADE-CERQual (confidence in Evidence from Reviews of Qualitative research) approach was used to determine certainty of our assessment of the research. Some 68 findings and 16 categories were drawn from ten studies included in this systematic review. Findings and categories were then synthesised into six ‘synthesised findings’ (see Section 4.5).

Of these six synthesised findings, four were classified by the GRADE-CERQual method as being supported by the evidence with a high degree of confidence (‘High Confidence’) and two were found to be supported by the evidence with a moderate degree of confidence (‘Moderate Confidence’). These assessments, indicating the level of certainty in the evidence from the literature supporting our synthesised findings, were determined by a composite score of four subscales: Methodological Limitations, Coherence, Adequacy and Relevance. Each synthesised finding was exhaustively assessed against the GRADE-CERQual method by a minimum of two reviewers.

Table 3: GRADE-CERQual

Summary of review finding	Studies contributing to finding	Methodological limitations	Coherence	Adequacy	Relevance	CERQual assessment of confidence in the evidence	Explanation of CERQual assessment
CSE is often associated with girls and young women yet can be experienced by any young person. Gender, age, sexuality or other aspects of (self and social) identity can themselves be sites of vulnerability from which CSE can occur and subsequent spaces of social meaning by which victimhood can be conceptualised. However, individual attributes can act as strengths and protective	Beckett (2013), Beech et al (2018), Dank et al (2015), Hines (2005), Simmons-Horton (2020), Thomas & Speyer (2016), Williams & Frederick (2009)	No or very minor methodological limitations (seven studies with no or very minor methodological limitations)	No or very minor concerns about coherence	No or very minor concerns about adequacy	No or very minor concerns about relevance	High confidence	Seven studies with no or very minor methodological limitations. Rich and robust evidence from testimony across hundreds of young people. No or very minor concerns about coherence, adequacy, relevance.

factors. Age plays a role in defining access to services and limiting opportunities for continuing support.							
Insufficient relational support or experiences of abuse in the home (physical or emotional) adversely affect young people and can leave them vulnerable to those who might coerce, control and exploit them. Relationships with family and peers could create avenues for CSE recruitment, but also provide avenues for support. Insufficient family support limited routes out of CSE. Relationships with peers were important to promoting emotional wellbeing and avoiding isolation which	Beech et al, (2018), Dank et al (2015), Simmons-Horton (2020), Thomas & Speyer (2016), Williams & Frederick (2009)	Minor methodological limitations (five studies with no or very minor methodological limitations [no reflexivity])	No or very minor concerns about coherence	No or very minor concerns about adequacy	No or very minor concerns about relevance	High confidence	Five studies with little to no methodological limitations. Data from a young people who had experienced CSE and transition in care and/or life stage. No or very minor concerns about coherence and adequacy.

could make young people vulnerable to exploitation.							
The instability young people experience in their home lives is also mirrored in social care, exposing them to risks and vulnerabilities. Early life experiences of CSE-experienced young people included economic hardship and parental challenges of substance use, mental ill health and violence, such instability in informal supports often led to early and sometimes extensive interactions with formal systems. These were	Beech et al (2018), Dank et al (2015), Ellem et al (2020), Hampton et al. (2020), Simmons-Horton (2020), Williams & Fredrick (2009),	Minor Methodological limitations (five studies with no or very minor methodological limitations, one study with moderate methodological limitations[sampling strategy lacked justification]).	Moderate concerns about coherence (some concerns about the fit between the data from the primary studies and the review finding)	No or very minor concerns about adequacy	Moderate concerns about relevance (four studies with no or very minor concerns about relevance. Two studies with moderate concerns about relevance	Moderate confidence	Six studies with minor methodological limitations. The wide scope of themes led to varying focus across the articles, challenging coherence. However, the articles had sufficient evidence to support (all components of) the synthesised finding. There were moderate concerns about relevance.

a part of their journey in social care as well. Young people's search for acceptance and community at a time of transition made them susceptible to exploitation. Stigma surrounding sexuality and involvement in sex for basic needs impacted their psychological and physical security and hindered the development of social relationships outside of CSE networks.					[partial relevance])		
Mental Health is an important consideration contextualising the lives of young people who had experienced CSE. Being affected by mental health challenges and/or those of family members created a	Dank et al (2015), Ellem et al (2020), Hines et al (2005), Simmons-Horton (2020)	Minor Methodological limitations (three studies with no or very minor methodological limitations, one study with	No or very minor concerns about coherence	Minor concerns about adequacy (four studies together that offered	Moderate concerns about relevance (studies contained a diverse representation	Moderate confidence	No or very minor concerns about coherence. Minor concerns about methodological limitations, coherence, adequacy. Moderate concerns about relevance, one study

conducive context for CSE to occur. CSE also had a mental health impact. Professionals' focus on mental health, trauma and on-going support was seen by young people to be helpful and necessary (services meeting their material needs) to successfully leaving and 'recovering' from sexual exploitation.		moderate methodological limitations [sampling strategy lacked justification]).		moderately rich data)	of the population described in the review question. One study included young people with complex support needs who had experienced severe yet undefined trauma)		includes unspecified trauma.
The quality and value of relationships that young people form with professionals impacts their relationships with services. Reliable, trustworthy and stable relationships with professionals were important to young people	Abel & Wahab, 2017; Beckett et al, 2013; Beech et al, 2018; Dank et al, 2015;	No or very minor methodological limitations (eight studies with no or very minor methodological limitations, one study with moderate	No or very minor concerns about coherence	No or very minor concerns about adequacy (nine studies together that offered very rich data)	No to very minor concerns about relevance (seven studies with no or very minor	High confidence	Nine studies with no or very minor methodological limitations. Robust number of studies supported the synthesised finding in a large number of participants. No or very minor concerns about

experiencing transition—especially for boys and young men who were hesitant to express feelings and fully engage with systems. Relationships strengthened when young people felt professionals were caring and made practical contributions to their lives. However, feeling judged or uncared for produced negative impacts for young people and the resulting loss of trust affected their relationship with service/s. Professionals need to be patient, realistic and recognise the impact trauma history has on the relationships service users build with them. Systems need to care for their	Ellem et al, 2002; Hampton, 2020; Hines et al, 2005; Thomas & Speyer, 2016; Williams & Frederick, 2009	methodological limitations [sampling strategy lacked justification]).			concerns about relevance. Two studies with moderate concerns about relevance[partial relevance])		coherence, adequacy and relevance.

workers and to recognise and manage vicarious trauma for the wellbeing of both workers and service users (quality and continuity of service can be affected).							
Familial, social and systemic environments that create conducive contexts for CSE lack necessary resources, social capital, and care to offer routes out of CSE. Such resource-depleted environments were also ill-equipped to support young people in transitioning out of CSE, and this was particularly so for LGBTQ+ youth. Lack of formal and informal support was exacerbated by transition between settings. However, where there was support	Beech et al (2018), Dank et al. (2015), Hampton (2020), Hines (2005), Simmons-Hortons (2020), Williams & Frederick (2009)	No or very minor methodological limitations	Minor concerns about coherence (5 articles no or very minor concerns about coherence and 1 article with severe concerns about coherence)	No or very minor concerns about adequacy	Minor concerns about relevance (five studies with direct relevance and one study with partial relevance)	High confidence	Six studies with no or very minor methodological limitations. Extensive evidence from 368 young people experiencing a range of housing situations from homelessness, foster care to home settings. No or very minor concerns about adequacy. Minor concerns about coherence and relevance stemming from one partially relevant article.

from education, fostering services or specialist 'safe spaces', young people were able to form trusting relationships with non-abusive adults.							

4.5 Synthesis of results

This section of the systematic review introduces each synthesised finding and explains how each was formed, through unification of categories. There were six findings. The findings are further discussed in Section 5, Discussion, following on from the synthesis of results.

Synthesised Finding 1

CSE is often associated with girls and young women yet can be experienced by any young person. Gender, age, sexuality or other aspects of identity (self and social) can be sites of vulnerability from which CSE can occur and be subsequent spaces of social meaning by which victimhood can be conceptualised. However, individual attributes can act as strengths and protective factors. Age plays a key role in defining access to services and in limiting opportunities for continued support.

Synthesised Finding 1 was formed from unifying three categories: 'gender', 'age' and 'self-identity' from 16 findings. The findings originated from seven studies (Thomas & Speyer, 2016; Beckett et al., 2013; Beech et al, 2018; Dank et al., 2015; Hines, 2005; Simmons Horton, 2020; Williams and Frederick, 2009).

Synthesised Finding 1 identified that CSE is associated more with the lives of girls and young women, and it is young women who are more likely to experience sexual exploitation (Dank et al., 2015; Beckett et al., 2013), yet young men can also experience sexual exploitation. Studies found that there are barriers, often relating to gendered stereotypes, to being identified as at risk (Thomas & Speyer, 2016; Beckett et al, 2013) and that young men were less willing to report being a victim of sexual exploitation, as was evident from more third-party reporting rather than victim reporting (Beckett et al., 2013). One participant explained why it is less likely that boys report sexual abuse: "*Obviously if it happened to a person they'd be too embarrassed to say this happened to me… Cos like if a boy got assaulted by another boy … sexually, he would never report it cos he'd be like, obviously you're always gonna be labelled …a homosexual*" (Beckett et al., 2013: 40).

Gendered stereotypes were also evident as, amongst professionals, boys were also more likely to be regarded as perpetrators of abuse rather than victims (Thomas and Speyer, 2016). In addition, professionals were less likely to look past boys' negative behaviour than girls' (Thomas & Speyer, 2016). Professionals were more likely to view boys as more able to

protect themselves than girls (Beckett et al., 2013; Thomas & Speyer, 2016): "*There's a sense that boys should be able to protect themselves more, whereas with girls…there's a societal view that they need protecting*" (Thomas & Speyer, 2016: 27). Stereotypes also played out in relation to engagement. Perspectives of specialist professionals revealed that the process of engaging boys who had experienced CSE took longer in comparison to girls. It was noted that practitioners should be aware of stereotypes and how they may impact on boys' feelings of self-esteem and identity (Thomas & Speyer, 2016).

Whilst the experiences of boys and young men were less known about and associated with assumptions about what boys or men are like, gender stereotyping was evident in double victimisation, whereby young women were harmed and also apportioned blame for the harm. This was a strong theme in research by Beckett et al., (2013). Participants commented that "*she knew what she was getting into; boys have to act that way because girls are untrustworthy and cause trouble; or her actions and attitudes brought it upon herself*" (Beckett et al., 2013: 21). Such double standards were applied to young men and women's sexual behaviour, justifying sexual violence and abuse. Group or gang based CSE is part of a wider pattern of sexual exploitation, exposing young women to levels of violence in order to control their behaviour, '*a young woman's risk of exploitation varies according to status within the gang*' (Beckett et al., 2013).

Educational tools lacked a gender perspective and this impacts on messaging regarding healthy relationships (Thomas & Speyer, 2016). Suggestions were made by boys and young men of interventions that might work with boys, such as computer games, protected Twitter accounts, and texting. However, there was no support for an App because it would be visible to a perpetrator if they checked the phone (Beech et al., 2018). How professionals engaged with boys was crucial, such as not using materials biased towards girls which depicted exploited girls only, or other less appropriate relationship education resources (Thomas and Speyer, 2016). Undertaking education and training in informal settings was reported to be a way of engaging with boys and young men. Both Thomas and Speyer (2016) and Beech et al (2018) were UK studies; one limitation was that education was not a strong feature of other included studies so it is not possible to comment on international differences in approach to Relationship and Sex Education programmes or policy.

The age of young people was a defining factor in eligibility for services. Termed 'ageing out of the system' (Williams and Frederick, 2009: 26), studies reported young people describing how they were no longer able to access services: "*Once you turn 18-- well, it wasn't even when I turned 18 'cause when I turned 17 I got emancipated-- (you) become adult. Legally. When I was 17. And um, they/you can't call/you can't have contact with* (the social workers)."

The average age CSE began was 16-17 years old and this coincided with being forced to leave the family home or ageing out of foster care (Dank et al., 2015). It was identified that young people could be experiencing ageing out of the system at the exact point that their risk of exploitation was growing. There was an absence of continuing services for youth who age-out of the system. This was not only a problem for young people in foster care settings, it was also an issue for young people on probation (Williams and Frederick, 2009): "*Our participants provided many examples of how the system failed them as they got closer in age to legal adulthood. As juveniles they were either not viewed as "at risk" or their vulnerability was misjudged"* (Williams and Frederick, 2009: 30).

Pathways to positive achievement were identified, reflected in the self-identity of young people. Individual attributes such as independence, ability to accept help, determination to be different from abusive adults, and persistence were key factors in the ability of care leavers to achieve academic success (Hines et al., 2005: 391). All 14 of Hines' respondents were also extremely independent and self-sufficient. They explained that they were generally left on their own from a young age and felt that if they wanted something, they had to do it for themselves. (Hines et al., 2005: 387). Hines et al. also illustrated how young people may determine to be different to their parents, as one young woman said: "*I began experimenting, I guess like most teenagers do, you know. But I never really got into it because I knew that my mom, you know, alcohol was getting ready to almost take her life, so, and it had definitely made ours hell, so I decided not to do that*." (Hines et al., 2005: 388).

There were limited opportunities in rural and urban settings for gay, bisexual and questioning boys to socialise with other LGBTQ+ young people in safe environments, local to where they lived. Risk of exposure to sexual exploitation can be increased when young people are trying to find acceptance but are being met with discriminatory social attitudes. With the provision of safe places, boys were given the opportunity to seek support and to think through their sexual feelings and experiences (Thomas & Speyer, 2016).

Personal narratives and perceptions of foster care were influenced by the pathway by which the participants became dually involved in foster care and criminal justice systems (Simmons-Horton, 2020: 1) and by previous ideas: "*I needed to be better than the image I had in my own head of a foster youth*"' (Hines et al., 2005:388), which could also be motivating.

Synthesised Finding 2

SF2: Insufficient relational support or experiences of abuse in the home (physical or emotional) adversely affect young people and can leave them vulnerable to those who might coerce, control and exploit them. Relationships with family and peers could create avenues for CSE recruitment, but also provide avenues for support. Insufficient family support limited routes out of CSE. Relationships with peers were important to promoting emotional wellbeing and avoiding isolation which could make young people vulnerable to exploitation.

Synthesised Finding 2 was formed by unifying two categories: 'Relationships with Families', and 'Relationships with Peers' from seven findings (**Appendix 4**). The findings originated from five articles (Thomas & Speyer, 2016; Beech et al., 2018; Dank et al., 2015; Simmons-Horton, 2020; Williams & Frederick, 2009).

Many young people had experienced unstable family relationships, including experiences of neglect, physical and emotional abuse, as well as a lack of being taught life skills. These unstable relationships adversely affected young people in a number of ways, potentially contributing to them becoming vulnerable to exploitation. "*For kids who are used to growing up in dysfunctional, unsafe environments, who are used to sofa surfing…not having a secure family base, giving somebody a blowjob for £20 is actually an exchange they can live with at least. And I think there is a degree of denial about it*" (Thomas & Speyer, 2016). *"[A] bad relationship with parents is certainly one of those things er it can make you feel – and certainly if you've got no outlets like I had it can make you feel incredibly isolated, you know, I felt that until I found those outlets I was incredibly just uh, lonely I guess, an' you know as a fourteen fifteen year old you don't wanna be feeling like you've got nobody*" (Beech et al., 2018: 14).

Lack of family support was identified as detrimental to a young person's ability to transition out of CSE: '*Familial supervision, support, and protection are often weak or operate in just the opposite direction, to damage and harm the teens more*' (Williams & Frederick, 2009: 55). Additionally, family relationships were sometimes directly related to the beginning of CSE in the young person's life, as they often met exploiters through personal relationships. "*One young woman explained how she met her exploiter after her sister was initially involved with him after leaving the child welfare system: "My sister met him…It was one of those. Met through a friend and she got hooked on him*" (Dank et al., 2015: 49). Whilst lack of family support or families that were experiencing challenges was a finding, it is important to recognise that one limitation in the data was an absence of parent/carer representation

across the studies, and it is known that families can be a source of strength and support to some young people affected by CSE.

Forming stable relationships with peers positively affected young people, particularly as it helped them to avoid or even confront loneliness and social isolation, which could make a person more vulnerable to CSE. "*Not only did friends appear to provide a contribution to the emotional loneliness felt by an individual, for others they helped to combat it*" (Beech et al., 2018: 23-24). Forming friendships and having access to group activities also had many positive benefits in developing a young person's personal identity and wellbeing.

Lacking access to spaces where friendships could be formed was detrimental to young people's wellbeing: "*Peers facilitate the development of personal identity and social status. Partaking in sport and group activities is a part of this. Not having support to access these opportunities can mean a boy can be left exposed to risk as perpetrators identify and exploit this need*" (Thomas & Speyer, 2016: 16). "*Participants told the story of a range of missed opportunities for these individuals, and barriers to simple activities such as going to the movies, playing organised sports in school, or dating*" (Simmons-Horton, 2020: 12). Fundamentally, young people's personal relationships played a significant role in either conducing, directly facilitating or reducing vulnerability to CSE.

Synthesised Finding 3

The instability young people experience in their home lives is also mirrored in social care, exposing them to risks and vulnerabilities. Early life experiences of CSE-experienced young people included economic hardship and parental challenges of substance use, mental ill health and violence, such instability in informal supports often led to early and sometimes extensive interactions with formal systems. These were a part of their journey in social care as well. Young people's search for acceptance and community at a time of transition made them susceptible to exploitation. Stigma surrounding sexuality and involvement in sex for basic needs impacted their psychological and physical security and hindered the development of social relationships outside of CSE networks.

Synthesised Finding 3 was formed by combining two categories: 'stigma and instability' and 'risk', from eight related findings. The findings originated from six studies (Beech et al, 2018; Dank et al, 2015; Ellem, 2020; Hampton, 2020; Williams and Frederick 2009; Simmons Horton, 2020).

Synthesised Finding 3 identified that the challenging experiences of young people in the care system led to instability in their engagement in life milestones, such as education (Simmons Hortons, 2020). Young people reported difficulty in accessing the coordinated services they needed, feeling stigmatised, and experiencing differential treatment due to their involvement in two systems (the foster care and juvenile justice system) (Simmons-Horton, 2020: 12). Beech et al., (2018) noted that, within their sample, risk indicators and CSE vulnerabilities included: homelessness, coming from a 'broken home', being young and gay and, being in the care system. Indeed, while there was a diversity in youth experiences with CSEC – in terms of the length of time they were involved in CSE, and what was offered to them (money, a place to stay, drugs), many reported experiences fitted a similar pattern of abuse. Several factors such as violence within the young person's family, economic hardship, parental mental health and drug abuse were identified as contributing to young people's vulnerability to CSE (Williams and Frederick, 2009). A participant provided another angle on this family disruption and relocation in her statement: "…*my parents always have a hard time keeping apartments because of their drug and alcohol problems and I just got tired of going to hotels and motels and this and that and just travelling cause, you know, they never have, you know, the money to deal with me anyway*" (Williams and Frederick 2009: 25). They identified that in difficult times young people sought validation and acceptance, which in practice, meant illegal partying, drug taking and then subsequent exploitation, and so for older participants, drugs, alcohol, and parties were indicators of risk (Beech et al., 2018: 29-30). One young person stated: '"*I was, you know, being groomed and like manipulated and stuff like that and they knew I was from like a broken home and like I had issues and stuff like that and erm yeah it still affects me now to be honest like, but I just have to work through it*" (Beech et al., 2018: 29).

Ellem (2020) further identified that instability in young people's informal supports, such as removal from families of origin, often led to early contact with formal systems. There was evidence that study participants sought assistance from, on average, four formal service systems during transitions, and that many young people reported feelings of low self-worth and diminished agency during transitions, with more than three-quarters having been diagnosed with or seeking support for mental health issues (Ellem, 2020: p112). Many different services were mentioned by young people including mental health support, education and training, income support, homelessness and housing services, child protection (including out-of-home care and residential care), health, the justice system (including adult justice, youth justice and police contact), disability, alcohol and drug services, employment services, family and/or youth services, multicultural and refugee services (Ellem, 2020).

In conjunction with their life challenges and instabilities, participants reported feeling judged and described experiences of stigma surrounding 'survival sex' and its impact on their mental health and self-esteem (Hampton, 2020; Dank et al., 2015). One young person said: "*It makes me feel like less of a person...because, it's I was raised to treat my body as a temple and I don't do that anymore...Now I just, it's just an object of getting money…It's not something I encourage people to do. But you have to do what you must do to survive*" (Dank et al., 2015: 63). Another participant who had experienced CSE expressed her feeling of stigma stating: "*in a lot of households when parents find out, [they view] their child... as a victim. They don't see it that way… they see it as sexual promiscuity*" (Hampton, 2020: 6).

Synthesised Finding 4

Mental Health is an important consideration contextualising the lives of young people who had experienced CSE. Being affected by mental health challenges and/or those of family members created a conducive context for CSE to occur. CSE also had a mental health impact. Professionals' focus on mental health, trauma and on-going support was seen by young people to be helpful and necessary (services meeting their material needs) to successfully leaving and 'recovering' from sexual exploitation.

Synthesised Finding 4 was formed by unifying two categories: 'mental health impact' and 'mental health support' from four findings (**Appendix 4**). The findings originated from four studies (Simmons-Horton, 2020; Hines et al., 2005; Dank et al., 2015; Ellem et al., 2020).

Youth who experienced CSE often struggled with 'psychological functioning and emotional health', 'depression and sadness' (Hines et al, 2005: 390) and other impacts to mental health including hesitancy to form trusting relationships in adulthood (Simmons-Horton, 2020). Participants also described feelings of loss over missed childhood experiences (Hines et al., 2005: 90) and attributed their mental health issues to childhood trauma (Simmons-Horton, 2020; Hines et al., 2005). The range and complexity of both mental health impacts and experiences of maltreatment accompanying CSE created an intricate picture of their experiences (Simmons-Horton, 2020, Hines et al., 2005; Ellem et al., 2020). Indeed, participants laid emphasis on the need for ongoing mental health support following CSE into adulthood (Simmons-Horton, 2020; Dank et al., 2015; Ellem et al., 2020). Intensive and specific mental health support for the many complex mental health impacts of CSE were important to participants (Ellem et al., 2020; Simmons-Horton, 2020). However, many described a lack of mental health support for ongoing mental health impacts of CSE (Ellem et al., 2020; Simmons-Horton, 2020) and for some, an inability to reach out to family,

indicating a lack of available mental health support (formal or informal) for the ongoing mental health impacts of CSE in the transition through adolescence and adulthood (Ellem et al., 2020; Simmons-Horton, 2020). Mental health challenges were described by participants as having a persistent negative impact on their lives and future relationships, 'particularly when these traumatic experiences were left unaddressed and untreated' (Simmons-Horton, 2020: 11).

A subsection of participants described experiences of "*systemic traumas occurring whilst involved and placed in the juvenile or foster care systems*" (Simmons-Horton, 2020: 11). Abuse sequelae in care following CSE "*influenced their lives" and contributed to 'persistent complex trauma*' (Simmons-Horton, 2020: 10). One participant detailed that their positive experience with mental health support was a product of the professional's ability to follow them into their "*Dark Spaces*" through non-judgmental listening (Ellem et al., 2020). Another participant described mental health support, in addition to other practical and material support, as being necessary to the transition out of CSE (Dank et al., 2015).

Synthesised Finding 5

The quality and value of relationships that young people form with professionals impacts their relationships with services. Reliable, trustworthy and stable relationships with professionals were important to young people experiencing transition— especially for boys and young men who were hesitant to express feelings and fully engage with systems. Relationships strengthened when young people felt professionals were caring and made practical contributions to their lives. However, feeling judged or uncared for produced negative impacts for young people and the resulting loss of trust affected their relationship with service/s. Professionals need to be patient, realistic and recognise the impact trauma history has on the relationships service users build with them. Systems need to care for their workers and to recognise and manage vicarious trauma for the wellbeing of both workers and service users (quality and continuity of service can be affected).

Synthesised Finding 5 'Relationships with Services' was formed by unifying five categories: 'relationships with professionals', 'views of the care system', 'problems with the system', 'continuity of care', and 'education system' from 24 findings from nine studies (Abel & Wahab, 2017; Beckett et al, 2013; Beech et al, 2018; Dank et al, 2015; Ellem et al, 2002; Hampton, 2020; Hines et al, 2005; Thomas & Speyer, 2016; Williams & Frederick, 2009).

‘Relationships with professionals’ are crucial to offering support and/or interventions and positive experiences with individual social workers (rather than social services in general) are an important facilitator of engagement with a system, but these relationships need nurturing and patience (Abel & Wahab, 2017; Hampton, 2020; Williams & Frederick, 2009). Youth-provider relationships were good when young people felt their self-worth was reinforced, giving them a feeling of belonging and of being cared for (Ellem et al., 2020) and they were built up when workers made practical contributions to young people’s lives (Ellem et al., 2020). Professionals’ individual attributes were important to young people (Williams and Frederick, 2009) and they needed realistic expectations, for instance in the “honeymoon phase” of exploitation (Hampton, 2020).

One aspect of ‘views of the care system’, was that young people were sensitised to instability, and many argued for improving worker continuity, as it was difficult, frustrating and dispiriting to have to share deeply traumatic experiences over and again with new workers (Abel & Wahab, 2017). The high turnover of social workers limited the opportunity for young people to build a ‘long-term’ relationship (Abel & Wahab, 2017).

Young people wanted their self-identified wants and needs to be seen as legitimate, but some professionals followed guidelines without attending to young people’s interpretations or allowed rigid social work procedures to hinder relationship building with young people (Abel & Wahab, 2017). Professionals need to maintain healthy boundaries for self-preservation, but this can be challenging (Hampton, 2020). In particular, relationships with support workers during a period of transition are key to supporting boys and young men to express feelings, find identity, acceptance and to engage with someone who can be relied upon (Beech et al, 2018).

Young people also reported that negative interactions with workers affected them detrimentally. Feelings of judgement, lack of care and other negative experiences resulted in a loss of trust in workers, the system and reinforced young people’s sense of hopelessness and abandonment during transitions (Ellem et al., 2020). Similarly, some anticipated negative reactions from social workers who found out they were ‘trading sex’, resisted being labelled ‘at risk’ or seen as victims of sex work (Abel & Wahab, 2017). Professionals needed to recognise that young people might find it difficult to leave their situation (Dank et al., 2015) and to reflect on whether their approach or service criminalised sexually exploited young people (Hampton, 2020).

The risks to professionals of vicarious trauma from exposure to service users’ trauma, and from acute and chronic stress can lead to frequent staff turnover (Hampton, 2020). Training,

support and agency level leadership across service providers is needed in order to manage staff (Hampton, 2020) and to offer 'continuity of care'. A trauma framework could help staff to depersonalise defensiveness or resistance related to young people's trauma history and hence support the youth-professional relationship (Hampton, 2020).

'Problems with the system' identified included a lack of services for young people experiencing CSE, such as an absence of transition services (Williams & Frederick, 2009); of longer-term support services (Beckett et al, 2013); of inter-agency working, and of effectively identifying and tackling cases of gang-related CSE, leading to lack of reporting and difficulty estimating prevalence (Beckett et al., 2013). The need for improved identification methods given a reliance on observation and lack of universal screening (Hampton, 2020) led to missed opportunities to identify youth in the community. Improved identification and services might come from reflection on the feedback that previous, as well as current service-users could provide (Beech et al., 2018; Hampton, 2020).

School was reported by many young people as a positive place for them (Hines et al, 2005; Williams & Frederick, 2009), although many of the most high-risk boys and young men may not access mainstream education, and for this reason, educational programmes also need to be delivered in a more targeted way (Thomas & Speyer, 2016). School-based sex and relationship education was not meaningful or memorable, and for some it was non-existent or awkward. Limited knowledge of sex and relationships, including sexual consent among boys, meant that social media and pornography were influential (Beech et al, 2018). Transitional periods commonly lead to searching for new attachments, resulting in new social networks. The move from primary to secondary school was described by many young people as significant in terms of the new people they formed relationships with and for getting involved with 'the wrong people' (Beech et al., 2018). Exclusion from school was a further risk factor in CSE vulnerability, and the level of engagement in school at critical moments was crucial as a potential route to support services (Beech et al., 2018).

Synthesised Finding 6

Familial, social and systemic environments that create conducive contexts for CSE lack necessary resources, social capital, and care to offer routes out of CSE. Such resource-depleted environments were also ill-equipped to support young people in transitioning out of CSE, and this was particularly so for LGBTQ+ youth. Lack of formal and informal support was exacerbated by transition between settings. However, where there was support from education, fostering services or specialist

'safe spaces', young people were able to form trusting relationships with non-abusive adults.

Synthesised Finding 6 was formed by unifying two categories: ‘housing’ and ‘safe spaces’ from seven findings. The findings originated from six studies (Simmons-Horton, 2020; Beech et al., 2018; Dank et al., 2015; Hampton, 2020; Hines et al., 2005; Williams & Frederic, 2009).

Familial, social and systemic settings surrounding young people supplied many of the push-pull factors into CSE (Beech et al., 2018; Dank et al., 2015; Hines et al., 2005; Simmons-Horton, 2020; Williams & Frederic, 2009). Lack of necessities such as housing created circumstances of, often, unwinnable choice between the unsafety of life on the streets and the unsafety of ‘survival’ sex (Dank et al., 2015). Indeed, the majority of young people reported some positive aspects of ‘survival sex’, mostly with regard to it providing them with money and shelter (Simmons-Horton, 2020) although one young person commented: “*There’s only two positive things that I found, the fact that it helps you survive and the second thing is that I felt that it made me stronger*” (Dank et al., 2015: 56). Young people looked to CSE to escape family and care settings which were hostile, stressful, or lacked sufficient care and economic support (Hampton, 2020; Simmons-Horton, 2020). Familial supervision, support, and protection were ‘often weak or operate in just the opposite direction, to damage and harm the teens more’ (Williams & Frederick, 2009: 55). Additionally, congregate settings (multi-occupancy accommodation) for foster care youth often compels young people to seek independence from the care system which may sometimes push youth into CSE (Simmons-Horton, 2020). In each case, the context carried risks to young people.

Young people reported the inescapability of CSE in communities or jurisdictions with little statutory social support or services aimed at supplementing shortcomings of the family context (Hampton, 2020). The social, economic and legal contexts surrounding young people create either a safety net to assist young people in transitioning out of CSE or a treadmill of ‘survival’ or ‘transactional sex’ upon which they are otherwise dependent (Dank et al., 2015; Hampton, 2020). Participants noted that even in contexts where social support is legally enshrined, transition between contexts also contributed to being invisible to these services (Williams & Frederick, 2009). Therefore, transition between contexts led to vulnerability to CSE (Williams & Frederick, 2009).

Five of the ten participants in one study reported entering the foster care system first, and later becoming involved in the juvenile justice system. Common among this group was a

realisation that their dual-status involvement was brought about by circumstances occurring once they entered foster care, which they feel would not have occurred otherwise (Simmons-Horton, 2020: 7). The movement of youths from street to street and town to town due to changing placements is a crucial factor in their exposure to sexual exploitation, and these cross jurisdictional journeys have important implications (Williams & Frederick, 2009).

Communities with little or no support for LGBT+ youth create conducive contexts whereby LGBT+ youth were more likely to be both 'kicked out' without a place to live, as well as experiencing greater levels of hardship once homeless (Beech et al., 2018).

Overall, services that were commended were those that provided continuity of workers, allowing for relationships of trust to be built and to continue during transition periods. This also meant that young people did not have to re-share their sometimes deeply traumatic experiences with new workers (Ellem et al, 2020).

5 DISCUSSION

5.1 Summary of findings

The recommendations for practice emerging from this qualitative systematic review aim to support closing the 'gap' that young people at risk of or who have experienced CSE are currently said to 'fall through' as they approach and reach adulthood. The findings and conclusions of this systematic review point to essential evidence for practitioners and policy makers operating in this field.

5.2 Discussion of Findings

One of the challenges in research in this area is that 'transition' is a relatively new concept in the field of child-adult safeguarding relating to sexual abuse and exploitation, whilst more evidenced in other welfare settings, such as education, mental health, youth justice. CSE is also a recently formed and contested policy construct, with descriptions of types of exploitation of children and young people varying internationally. Whilst there is an increasing body of literature about CSE and separately on research which addresses transition in other fields, this review combined both terms in order to seek answers.

Whilst the notion of children and young people being groomed by adult male gangs is the image that has dominated practice within the UK (Melrose, 2012), and continues to do so in the media, the experience of sexual exploitation evidenced within this review was far more varied. It supports the conclusion which is emerging that CSE manifests in multiple ways

and through multiple mechanisms; it cannot be separated from wider societal factors (Appleton, 2014), in particular, from structures of gender, power and forms of inequality. In this section, we will return to the guiding questions of this systematic review in order to relate the six Synthesised Findings to the four questions which were posed.

Objective 1:

How is safeguarding from 16 years onwards organised and how is risk assessed in this age group?

First, a note about age categories. The review question stated 'how is safeguarding organised from 16 years onwards' yet at times the studies included slightly younger children, so an inclusive approach was taken, recognising safeguarding around transition as potentially beginning before age 16 and continuing afterwards. The following lessons were learnt from this review about what it means to protect and safeguard young people in this age range:

- Age was a clear defining factor in determining eligibility to be able to receive a service. The age at which services were no longer provided varied, across cultures, countries, and domains. Young people spoke of 'ageing out' of services, in that they were no longer eligible for support that they felt was needed. Young people appeared to experience this change as a loss, "they/you can't call/you can't have contact with (the social workers)".

- Concerningly, young people could be experiencing ageing out of the system or service at the very point when their risk of being exploited was increasing. This was because the average age that CSE began was 16-17 years old (Dank et al., 2015), this was also the age that some young people were leaving foster care. Once over the age of 16 the process of exiting services can start to happen, given that many services are age-defined. Indeed, inequality and discrimination become a feature of the risk produced for some young people.

- Welfare/protection of children 16 years and over is organised differently depending on the country or even within countries. The USA, UK, Australia and New Zealand have different approaches to the protection of children and young people in this age range and use different terminology to describe exploitation.

- Evidence indicated that younger children tend to be protected by child protection (USA) and safeguarding (UK) procedures when followed effectively. In moving to

adulthood, as young people's circumstances began to change, they can be less protected.

- The organisation of safeguarding in relation to CSE cannot be strictly interpreted as between children's and adult social care services, primarily because safeguarding is 'everyone's business'. The implication is that all adults and agencies have responsibilities to safeguard and protect children (defined as those under the age of 18). This application of the concept of safeguarding to the wider population (not just those subject to child protection policies and procedures) and broadening of responsibility allows for a wider perspective which incorporates aspects of well-being, safety from harm, feeling cared for by the wider community.

- Frameworks in policy and practice are geared towards the identification of risk, as opposed to needs or rights. Yet, the discourse of 'risk' can be a barrier to building relationships between young people and social workers. The process of identifying those 'at risk' is influenced by assumptions made about the likelihood of a child or young person being a victim. This includes bias and stereotype in considering who might be considered a victim e.g., varying dependent on age, gender, sexual orientation, ethnicity.

Objective 2:

What do we know about the continued need for services and support post 18 years amongst young people who have experienced CSE?

The need for services and support past 18 years of age was difficult to identify in the study evidence where participants' ages were not defined or distinguished as pre and post 18 Our interpretation of the question included continued need for services and support, including where pre or post 18 was not identified. Support needs can be complex and multi-layered, with areas of disadvantage often intersecting. Young people continued to have care and support needs yet were no longer going to be supported, as they may have been previously.

- Age plays a role in defining access to services and limiting opportunities for continuing support. As referred to above, young people could experience ageing out of the system at the exact point that their risk of exploitation was growing (e.g., average age CSE began was 16-17 years old and this coincided with being made homeless by family or ageing out of foster care). The system failed young people as they got closer in age to legal adulthood with their vulnerability to harm and exploitation being misjudged. Ageing out of services and no longer being able to

access support from the known service or caregivers can replicate an inconsistency, unreliability or rejection that for many young people has been experienced before.

- Gendered stereotypes and subjectivities led young men to be less likely to report sexual abuse. Ageing out of a service could mean closing a door to support before the step to disclosure had been taken. Boys and young men value reliable, long-term commitment from services and professionals in order to share feelings and vulnerability. Not having an absolute cut off age for engagement with a service is especially important where patience might be needed to develop the trust needed for engagement.

- Young people reported difficulty in accessing the coordinated services that they needed, feeling stigmatised, and experiencing differential treatment, sometimes due to their involvement in two systems (foster care and juvenile justice systems). Challenging or negative experiences of social care led to instability in their engagement in life milestones, such as education, likely to carry on post-18, hence it is senseless to close the offer from services at specified age bands.

- Transitional periods throughout the life-course can create new vulnerabilities and ageing out of services; this could often create a critical moment of risk for young people. Housing needs and lack of provision or economic independence can offer unwinnable choice between the unsafety of life on the streets and the unsafety of 'survival' sex. Some housing solutions are offered by congregate settings (multi-occupancy accommodation), but this context carried risks to young people and can be a push into CSE. LGBT+ youth might need specialist support or ongoing safe spaces or specialist housing where their sexuality is recognised but not simplified/reduced to an outcome. Human sexuality is not fixed and finalised at any particular age which makes it important to keep the door to support open.

- There was a lack of mental health support for ongoing mental health impacts of CSE in the transition from adolescence to adulthood, with particular difficulties transitioning from child and adolescent to adult mental health services. Being affected by mental health problems and/or those of family members created a conducive context for CSE to occur. Young people who experienced CSE often faced other impacts to their mental health, including hesitancy to form trusting relationships in adulthood. Positive mental health and professionals' focus on mental health support were seen by young people to be helpful to them in being able to successfully leave situations of exploitation.

- Some services criminalise or are seen to criminalise sexually exploited young people. This is even more problematic as young people fall outside of the social and legal compassion granted to (some) younger children. Young people anticipated negative reactions from social workers who found out they were trading sex, resisted being labelled ‘at risk’ or seen as victims of sex work. Professionals should recognise that they have the power to affect young people negatively if they make them feel rejected or judged within an interaction. Young people’s own views of their needs should be listened to and their perspective seen as legitimate.

- Because young people might find it difficult to find a route out of their situation, faltering attempts to engage with services or leave a problematic situation mean they need long term support to build lives outside of exploitative circumstances Young people who have experienced CSE might be particularly sensitive to instability and value a long-term relationship with an agency.

Objective 3:

Is the evidence clear about thresholds for action across universal, targeted and specialist services?

While literature within this review has placed emphasis on the significant *need* for services which support young people who have experienced CSE through care transitions, less is known about *how* thresholds for support are currently assessed in this population.

- This review included a range of countries (Five USA, three UK, one Australia, one New Zealand), and found that a universal lack of standardised and validated screening protocols or assessment tools exist to determine support needs for young people transitioning or ‘ageing out’ of care, and there is no consensus on best practices to identify CSE or youth at risk of exploitation in the community.

- ‘Being known to multiple services’ is useful as a dimension of care assessment. Young people’s mental health services (e.g., Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services [CAMHS] in UK) have formally acknowledged the ‘child-to-adult services transition’ as a critical time for support. Screening during this period is carried out as a matter of routine protocol and includes ‘being known to multiple services’ as a key threshold for support.

- This multiple presence across services of young people who have experienced CSE also indicated that there are numerous opportunities where screening (*formal or informal*) could and should take place. Training health, education, social service, and law enforcement professionals to use an appropriate screening tool shows great promise of identifying CSE.

- There tended to be a lack of early identification of male victims of CSE. Boys were overlooked until their behaviour (or the trajectory of their exploitation) meant they were progressing down a criminal route; indicating that even if there were standard screening tools or uniform thresholds, there needs to be special considerations - if not a separate screening and assessment tool - to identify CSE in boys and young men.

- When universal services such as schools take their responsibilities for pastoral support and referral to services seriously, they can be an important part of the overall system that identifies and then meets the needs of CSE experienced young people.

- There are broad misperceptions about the characteristics of victims of CSE. As there were no validated tools or standardised protocols in use, detection of CSE victimisation relied on the highly variable perceptions of service providers. Inconsistency in perception of CSE/CSE victims hindered provision of services and effective multiagency communication. Gaps in access to services for young people impacted by CSE clearly intersected with forms of inequality such as poverty, gender discrimination, racial oppression, sexual discrimination and ableism.

- Variations in who was perceived to be ‘a child’ were also inconsistent, prone to bias and stereotyping, and led to vastly disparate ascription of’ ‘innocence’ and need for protection or ‘culpability’. This greatly impacted some young people’s access to support services and even directly indicated their involvement with the criminal justice system.

- The lack of uniform thresholds for action meant that the decisions taken by service-providers were ultimately capricious. Service providers identified a lack of clarity and understanding about what their decisions should be based on. Without uniform thresholds for action at this age, service-users felt that service-providers' care decisions were too extreme, overwhelming and arbitrary (Williams and Frederick, 2009, p.31).

Objective 4:

What facilitates or constrains a successful transition for young people who have experienced CSE?

This review succeeded in capturing a range of evidence from research on what facilitates a successful transition for young people and also factors that can prevent or constrain such a transition.

- The nature of a young person's involvement in CSE is characterised by their gender. Shame and stigma were intimately tied to gender, constituting barriers to successful transition. Girls and young women were subjected to stereotyping, acting as a barrier to being identified as in need of support at transition, there were many examples of victim-blaming. Boys were disadvantaged when their externalising behaviours, as well as their anti-social or criminal activity in 'gangs', were not recognised as potentially masking sexual exploitation. There was also an expectation for boys to be strong.

- Young people with resource-rich environments (e.g., city transportation; a school performing well; parents who taught life skills like financial literacy, cooking, cleaning) had greater access to skills, abilities and resources, acting as protective factors to CSE.

- A successful transition was facilitated by the need for belonging and connection being met, through relationships with service provider supporters or facilitation to relationships with other young people, perhaps with similar experiences.

- Young people's own strengths and qualities were a facilitator of successful transition. This meant not accepting a 'victim' status, not wishing to fulfil a stereotype, e.g., of a 'foster youth' or kid in care, or, not wishing to be compared or likened to an abusive parent. The willingness to accept help was also key to moving forward. All of these could be motivating factors that created a positive pathway.

- There are a range of factors connected to services delivered by professionals and agencies that are conducive to successful transition through childhood to adulthood. Professionals that show care, time and patience reinforced the self-worth of young people. Since positive relationships are central to support and recovery, and young

people impacted by CSE can form positive relationships with professionals, the qualities of this relationship and individual attributes of professionals are important.

- Young people described how it was important to them to make the decision to transition out of exploitation on their own terms rather than on the terms of others. This involved professionals having realistic expectations of what that the process of transitioning out might look like and how and when it might be achieved.

- It was important for professionals to recognise that there were survival 'benefits' to CSE when young people were escaping from hostile environments (sometimes familial and other times in care settings) or gaining from the interaction, which created a barrier to exiting.

- Transition was influenced by notions of children being deserving of protection but decisions about protection of older young people became complicated by ideas about agency and self-determination.

- There were a number of ways in which a successful transition was constrained and made more difficult. Being a hidden victim of sexual exploitation, overlooked, as were some young people with disabilities or special educational needs and some boys and young men, constrained opportunities to receive support.

- A further limitation occurred when young people did not have support to transition between settings, new settings may have been unfamiliar and this could provoke anxiety. Transitioning between contexts contributed to the invisibility of young people, which can also heighten vulnerability at this time.

- The need for young people to keep repeating their story, sharing their trauma with others as they came into contact with new services or new professionals, was not conducive to a successful transition.

Summary Discussion:

This qualitative review was designed to find out about this important area of children, young people and young adults' safeguarding and welfare. The concept and definition of the term '*child sexual exploitation*' has increased professionals' understanding of extra-familial abuse and the abuse of young people by adults and other young people. The United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child states that all children under the age of 18 have a right

to protection (UNCRC 1989). Professionals have a duty to protect young people under the age of 18 from abuse, harms and exploitation, however, this can be complicated by the varying legal status of young people aged 16 and 17 in relation to laws and policies across jurisdictions. For example, young people in the UK can consent to sexual activity aged 16, get married at 16, but are not regarded as competent enough to vote until 18. Across the countries represented in this review there is variation in the age at which young people are legally old enough to consent to sexual activity; in the UK and New Zealand at 16 years whilst in Australia and the US the age of consent varies by State, between 16, 17 or 18 years.

Although we need to exercise caution in the interpretation of these findings because of the small number of studies, the findings appear to be largely in line with previous research into sexual exploitation. However, as a result of the synthesis, new insight has been gained and an evidence base provided which applies specifically to this age group (16-25). The methodology of a systematic review of qualitative evidence of CSE experienced young people's transitions has allowed us to be confident that the following are key to understanding, meeting needs and achieving a successful outcome:

Gendered experiences

Girls and young women are disproportionately impacted by CSE. Girls are most likely to be victims of CSE. The gendered stereotypes which are present in practice lead to stigma and judgement about 'risk-taking' behaviours and can result in victim-blaming or secondary victimisation. Gendered norms play out in the context of young people's behaviour and situations, for example, young men gain status from being overtly sexual whilst young women's status is often diminished through sexual activity. Gender stereotypes and imbalance in educational materials was observed as a risk as boys were perceived as being able to protect themselves, not as victims (Thomas & Speyer, 2016 :48). These stereotypes play a role in the interpretation and professionals' superficial response to boys' negative behaviour, rather than investigating such behaviour as a potential response to trauma from CSE (Thomas & Speyer, 2016:10). This implies that differences in approaches to working with girls/young women and boys/young men are required, with awareness of the different dynamic. Stereotypes about boys and young men, where they are regarded as strong and independent, mean that boys are slower to come forward for help and support, often not acknowledging that they can be victims or regarded by practitioners as more likely to be perpetrators. A strong identification with hegemonic masculinity (Connell 1995), a culturally idealised way of being a 'man', may mean that they do not identify with being a 'victim' and find discussion of the issues difficult. The service implication is that engagement with boys

and young men may take more time, particularly in the establishment of trust. This help-seeking relationship can be constrained by the shame and stigma felt by young men following sexual exploitation. Practitioners need to recognise that boys and young men may also be less used to sharing feelings than their female counterparts.

For young people who are questioning or coming to terms with their sexual orientation or gender identity, having a safe space to talk through sexuality and their experiences was important (Lowrey & Shepard, 2010). LGBT+ youth experienced rejection from the family home, poor treatment in society and a lack of specialist support. It was vitally important for LGBT+ young people to overcome social isolation and a lack of confidence with a need to 'find your people'. Taken together, evidence suggests that sexual exploitation can manifest differently for girls/young women, for boys/young men and for young people of different demographics, identity and characteristics (Barnardos, n.d.).

Ageing as a site of inequality

Ageing plays a significant role in how CSE is understood and how it is responded to. As the phenomena is termed '*Child* Sexual Exploitation', welfare services are geared towards the protection and safeguarding of children. Yet, as evidenced here, sexual exploitation is not only an issue affecting children, it continues into adulthood. Young people noted that support received from friends and family during transitional periods, which they linked to critical personal moments - such as change of living arrangements, moving between schools and declaring new sexual identity - was crucial to their stability. Where there was limited and no attachment to family and peers, young people felt anxious and emotionally lonely at the time of transition, leading them to seek acceptance elsewhere. (Beech et al 2018). This search for new social networks meant potential links with perpetrators of CSE were developed (Beech et al., 2018). Finding acceptance was part of the transition from child to adult, as was developing their own identity. Feeling socially isolated at this crucial time could facilitate exploitation, and such isolation resonated amongst LGBT+ young people, boys, young people with learning disabilities and other minoritised identities. This impacted their emotional wellbeing, sense of belonging and confidence and, exposed them to CSE (Thomas & Speyer, 2016: 44-45) when needs were unmet. These findings are consistent with research undertaken by Franklin and Smeaton (2016) who found that young people with learning disabilities who often felt isolated wanted to cultivate friendships and to have 'normal' relationships like everyone else. Not having access to information relevant to their needs or orientation meant that they sought it out, sometimes encountering adults that would coerce and exploit.

There was inconsistency in practice within countries as well as between as there is still no consensus on best practices to identify sexual exploitation or young people at risk of exploitation in the community. However, screening young people for polyvictimization (defined as experiencing four or more traumatic events in a one-year period; Finkelhor, Ormrod, & Turner, 2007) and involvement in multiple services (i.e., being 'known to services') were suggested as a proxy for identifying CSE/Y and was recommended as a screening method for young people across all youth service settings (i.e., schools, health settings, etc.) (Musicaro et al., 2017). Indeed, being present in multiple systems (criminal justice, foster care, exclusion, mental health, social services, etc.) has been suggested as a stand-alone proxy for CSE screening.

Future CSE threshold decision-making should consider the multi-expressive nature of CSE trauma across age groups, that the harms experienced are often intertwined and not possible to easily disaggregate, indicating that a multi-systems approach is needed when offering support for young people who have endured trauma. This is a reminder of the complexity of CSE as an issue and highlights the current lack of ability to sufficiently diagnose, let alone to house the support for CSE in any one service. This may require system change so that services work across age bands and are less 'issue' based.

Within current safeguarding systems there is an assumption that young people are both responsible and independent from the age of 18 years, and opportunities for continued access to formal support are limited so that, ultimately, age defines access to services. *Working Together to Safeguard Children* (DfE 2018) encourages multi-agency working to protect and support children, however, research has shown that whether this happens in practice for this age group is determined by willingness to more broadly interpret guidance from adult social care about young adults with care and support needs (Holmes, 2021) and to consider a 'transitional approach', rather than a static transition plan or no plan for any further support without thresholds for eligibility being met.

Need for on-going or long-term support

This systematic review provided relatively strong evidence that experiencing sexual exploitation as a child, young person or young adult can have a sustained impact on a number of psychological, emotional and socio-economic outcomes, indicating a need for on-going access to trauma informed support, if needed. However, not all children, young people and young adults subjected to sexual exploitation described their experience in traumatic terms.

Young people were shown to have complex support needs, this brought them into contact with various systems of support. CSE is complex yet many services do not deal with complexity; they do not respond holistically but instead are fragmented or siloed. Young people who had experienced CSE reported difficulty in accessing the coordinated services that they needed, reported feeling stigmatised, and experienced differential treatment due to their involvement in two systems (the foster care and juvenile justice system) and previous trauma (Simmons-Horton 2020). These challenging experiences impacted their engagement in life milestones such as education (Simmons-Horton, 2020). Hampton (2020) aptly identified that education, mental health and housing services were priority needs for young people who have experienced CSE. It was especially noted that there was a real lack of safe and affordable housing for such young people (Hampton 2020: 5). Emphasising the need for housing for young people post 18, Williams and Frederick (2009:38) reported that participants of the study who had experienced CSE and were aged 18-19 years considered themselves homeless as they did not have stable living environments. Housing intersects with a range of other needs for support but is often not regarded as fundamental to well-being or is overlooked. Clarke et al (2015) reported that in each of the four UK nations figures for hidden youth homelessness are high, yet administrative data fails to capture the true breadth of youth homeless situations and is overly relied upon in consideration of prevalence. According to Clarke et al (2015), available data has diminished as there have been changes to the way in which the government collects data, making it more difficult to assess and address youth homelessness.

In their review of the increasing significance of housing and homelessness to the provision of children's social care, Cross et al (2021) state that 'official statistics on temporary accommodation (TA) reflect only a small fraction of the total numbers of children that could be considered homeless or at risk of becoming homeless' (2021:6). They report that it is difficult to quantify the numbers of children who have not presented as homeless to local authorities, but do not have a permanent home. The Children's Commissioner (2019) estimated that in 2017-2017 there were 92,000 children 'sofa surfing'. It is likely that many of these would include children and young people who are in receipt of temporary accommodation from inappropriate adults who pose a risk of harm to them, including sexual exploitation.

Young people had their own ideas for how care could be more effectively organised, suggesting that one organisation takes the lead and co-ordinates access to services, advocating on their behalf. Such an arrangement should continue not just until a young person reaches a certain age but until the support is no longer needed. Some services and agencies do adopt this more long-term model of working, providing support over time, taking

a lifecourse approach, rather than support being time-bound. Approaches which are inclusive and holistic, responding to the needs of young people rather than the needs of a system are able to span the boundaries of child/adult, victim/perpetrator and different forms of exploitation. This resonates with the research of Firmin et al (2019) who state: 'Existing practices have, for the most part, been limited by safeguarding systems that are: siloed by issue and approach; focused on family intervention; and ill-equipped for working alongside young people and through the transition into adult services'.

Service response: from siloed to holistic

There is still limited research in the wider field of CSE that captures the experiences of children and young people who have been exploited and abused (Beckett et al, 2015; Franklin and Smeaton, 2018; Hallett, 2017; Pearce, 2019; Warrington, 2013) and the voices of particularly marginalised groups, such as disabled children (Franklin, Brady and Bradley, 2019). Of research that has included young people, a consistent finding has been that young people have not felt listened to by professionals, which can create vulnerability (Franklin, Raws and Smeaton, 2015). The preference from young people was for social workers to be more flexible, to listen to their requests and to see their needs as legitimate. Our findings showed that professionals were, at times, rigid in their following of guidelines and procedures. The findings of Kwhali, Martin, Brady and Brown (2016), from a study into social workers' knowledge and confidence when working with CSA/E, found that social workers felt conflicted because 'they were unable to offer the time or resources that were required' (2016: 2222). Less time for direct work was both a personal regret and a professional concern of theirs.

Young people provided many examples of how they experienced poor service and felt that the system failed them as they got closer in age to legal adulthood. Young people in contact with the criminal justice system were either not viewed as 'at risk' or their vulnerability was misjudged. 'Police, in many jurisdictions across the USA, were reported to make little or no effort to determine if a young woman was a minor at risk of abuse if she did not look like a "waif" lost on the streets" (Williams and Frederick, 2009: 31). Perceptions of young people as victims, by professionals and services, were often unreliable. Rather than being regarded as a child at risk some children and young people were regarded as a risky child. Jago et al. (2011) recognised this in their research, arguing that children and young people have been stereotyped as vulnerable and are constructed as 'a risky child' in and through the responses developed to identify and protect them.

Young people often experienced multiple transitions relating to their inter-related issues, intersecting with aspects of diversity such as age, gender, dis/ability, sexuality. This means that holistic and inter-sectional approaches are needed. Services need to be tailored to individual needs whilst recognising systemic issues of austerity and lack of resources for needed services.

'Deserving' and 'undeserving' victims

Whilst all young people under the age of 18 are defined as children, in law and under the UNCRC (1989), they are not all provided with the same protections. This is consistent with Gladman and Heal's (2017) finding that children aged between 16 and 18 years are less likely to be considered as subject to sexual exploitation and, consequently, are afforded less protection (Gladman and Heal, 2017). Children under the age of 16 are more typically granted a status as 'innocent' or 'passive' victims, where older young people are regarded as having agency, making choices about their lives, which leads to feelings or assumptions of increased culpability. Our findings showed that a child or young person can be both a victim and have agency, engaging in exploitative activities within extremely limited constraints and choices, in order to survive. Issues of exploitation may change as young people become young adults, for example, being pushed towards independence without access to resources, such as accommodation or employment, can leave young people vulnerable to those that would coerce, control and exploit them when they are in need (such as when needing somewhere to sleep).

Research that aims to address the tension between the victimhood of children and young people and their agency, or ideals of innocence versus culpability or blame, and ultimately whether young people who experience CSE are 'deserving' or 'undeserving' victims - worthy of sympathy and support – is highly relevant to our findings (Beckett and Pearce, 2020; Le Fevre et al., 2019; Franklin et al., 2020). Our findings showed that assessment and identification of CSE in young people depended on unreliable and highly variable perception of individual professionals and services. This assessment was often prone to bias around 'victimhood' and who presents as a 'worthy' or even plausible victim of CSE. Appraisals of 'victimhood' upheld the "ideal victim" mythology and often resulted in unjustifiable gaps in access and outcomes in young people who experienced CSE. Our finding indicated that gaps in access to services for young people impacted by CSE were inconsistent but were disproportionately high along lines of race, gender and sexual orientation. Similarly, Le Fevre, Hickle and Lucock (2019) note that a challenge was uncovered during the two-year evaluation of the Office for Children's Commissioner 'See me, Hear me' child-centred pilot study of a framework for addressing CSE in England. Practitioners revealed that they

experienced a dilemma in reconciling young people's rights to voice, privacy and autonomy with their rights to safety, guidance and protection. As with our finding, practitioners were concerned that they would not be protecting children if they did not act, whilst others were concerned that they over-reached into the private lives of children and young people with processes of assessment and intervention. The child-centred 'See Me, Hear Me' framework proposed that professionals should address young people's rights to protection through enhancing their participation, when assessing and addressing risk of CSE.

In a European context, Alldred and Biglia (2015) found similar tensions between protection and empowerment, dependency and autonomy. Children can sometimes have agency in relation to sexual activity, criminal activity and violence, and can be both a victim and perpetrator. Research here cited points to professionals struggling to promote children and young people's welfare alongside rights to voice, privacy and autonomy. Beckett (2019) states that 'the pendulum swing away from the 'active child prostitute' to 'abused passive child' has left little space for nuanced developmentally-informed discussion around the complex lived realities of young people's lives', referring to the 'developmentally-blind application of childhood ideals' (2019: 33) to young people in the field of child protection around CSE. Warrington (2013) notes that young people affected by CSE are either regarded as victims or active agents, it seems that they cannot be seen as both (Warrington, 2013), which is also consistent with our findings.

Transitional phase

Child protection systems have developed in response to protecting children from harm, abuse and neglect, within their family environments. They are not designed to address harm in extra-familial environments (Firmin, 2020). Operating with the child in mind, safeguarding practices are less appropriate for young people and young adults. The emphasis on independence and autonomy and the removal of care imply that young people are no longer regarded as being vulnerable or at risk of harm. The association of adulthood and transitioning with independence and autonomy, coupled with the removal of care, imply that young people are no longer regarded as being vulnerable or at risk of harm. Existing welfare services within the care system are often organised and defined by ages and young people aged 16 and over are left to survive on their own to meet their basic needs (Williams and Frederick, 2009). Surviving on their own meant greater vulnerability to CSE as several participants shared incidents of 'swapping sex' for basic needs, such as accommodation and money This indicates that age can be a site of vulnerability, and the needs of young people over the age of 16 have often been over-looked. These findings are also reported by Holmes and Smale (2018) and Holmes (2018; 2021). As with recent reviews (Jay Report, 2014;

Casey, 2016), young people had extensive experiences of violence, sexual exploitation, abuse but did not have the right support in place. As further articulated in Dank et al (2015), the average age of entry into CSE for participants was the age of 17, which corresponds with the time young people leave foster care. The absence of services and support for young people ageing out of the system indicates that age can be a site of vulnerability and the needs of young people over the age of 16 have often been overlooked, signalling the need for safeguarding approaches that are holistic, covering life developmental stages of young people (Williams and Frederick, 2009).

Innovations in Safeguarding: Recent practice developments in England and Wales

In the UK, work is taking place to address some of the identified gaps in provision for young people in this transitional age group. In recognition of the needs of young people as they transition from childhood to adulthood and of limitations in the organisation of support, new approaches and models have been proposed. The Chief Social Worker for England's annual report (2019-20) acknowledged that adult safeguarding services are often configured in ways that do not support young people beyond age 18, unless they have an identified disability or care and support needs. The Chief Social Worker for Adults committed to taking action to address adult safeguarding in sexual exploitation and has since combined efforts with a consortium of concerned organisations to publish a knowledge briefing, *Bridging the Gap: Transitional Safeguarding and role of Social Work with Adults* (2021), with a focus on sexual and criminal exploitation. This briefing for practice is 'aimed at all those committed to ensuring high quality social work with young adults' and includes examples from contemporary practice where agencies within localities have combined their expertise and experiential knowledge to address the needs for on-going support of young people and young adults who have been affected by forms of exploitation.

Transitional Safeguarding as originally conceptualised, is 'an approach to safeguarding adolescents and young adults fluidly across developmental stages which builds on the best available evidence, learns from both children's and adult safeguarding practice and which prepares young people for their adult lives' (Holmes and Smale, 2018: 3). It is critical of a narrow framing of transition as moving between children's and adult's services. Instead, it takes a broader approach to transition to adulthood, encompassing all young people who are transitioning to adulthood. It is argued that 'safeguarding' is understood as only a statutory duty, 'a threshold to be reached that many people cannot access despite their safety being undermined' (Holmes, 2021: 7). The authors resist a tight definition as it is designed to be flexible to locality. Transitional Safeguarding is an approach or perspective

that aims to change practice in safeguarding culture and, to bridge the gap between binary notions of child to adult in order to more effectively meet need. Being clear that the harms and effects of sexual exploitation do not stop at 18, it is argued that adolescents may need a distinctive response (Holmes and Smale, 2018). Principles are proposed to guide system reform in this area.

A further approach which has gained ground in practice is that of Contextual Safeguarding. This is a relatively new approach to extra-familial child protection, addressing significant harm beyond young people's families which, it is argued, child protection systems were not designed to respond to, being traditionally focused on identifying harm to children and intervening where families are not able to protect, for whatever reason. Contextual Safeguarding addresses the social conditions of abuse in the contexts where young people are to be found, with a particular focus on the extra-familial dynamics of peer-on-peer abuse. It is argued that younger children are rarely exposed to community risks of sexual and criminal exploitation, gang or networked abuse, abuse in intimate relationships and criminal exploitation in the way that some young people are, needing therefore to navigate such situations within school, neighbourhood and online contexts (Firmin, 2017; 2019). The model is part of an evidence base from which alternative policy structures can be developed.

The sector is currently innovating and investigating new ways of working, for example, via the *Innovate Project*, led by Sussex University, UK and their research, practice and policy partners and the *Tackling Criminal Exploitation* (TCE) project, led by Bedfordshire University, UK, with partners Research in Practice and the Children's Society. The TCE project reports how they are horizontally expanding CSE responses to include widely diverse forms of exploitation and extra-familial harm and also vertically expanding, where parts of the sector are expanding support beyond the age of 18 years.

Whole systems, whole community

Whilst it is often said that child sexual exploitation is complex, this review has truly captured this complexity by focusing on a broad issue (transition), rather than individual associated factors or risk indicators or only certain victim/survivor groups (e.g., young people leaving care). This has made evident that CSE manifests in multiple ways and each individual young person's experience is influenced by community, environmental and structural factors. Young people are not a homogeneous group, they are diverse. Familial, social and systemic settings surrounding young people supply the push-pull factors into CSE, findings show that they are unlikely to disappear upon turning 18. In resource deplete communities, economic and social support to prevent or address exploitation is limited. Therefore, availability of

practical and material support within the community becomes vital to protect young people during this transitional period child protection services are not the only location of intervention and support (Pearce, 2006). Whilst our findings highlighted a lack of family support, often from families that were experiencing their own challenges, a limitation in the data was an absence of parent/carer voices. Families can be a source of strength and support to some young people and, in recent practice developments, are increasingly regarded as allies in protecting young people from extra-familial harms. Yet, they can feel alone, not listened to and treated as inadequate by the practitioners that they encounter in seeking support (Pike, Langham and Lloyd, 2019).

Whereas this review has focused on child sexual exploitation and the transition period from child to adult, it is important to acknowledge that the landscape of child sexual exploitation is changing; a wider conceptualisation of exploitation which incorporates awareness of extra-familial and community harm and risk is leading to the integration of services to address sexual and criminal exploitation, including human and drug trafficking. There are implications for practice, issues which overlap and sometimes affect young people as both victims and perpetrators can be addressed together, with a more holistic response. This may involve pooling resources or sharing funding. As this field develops, it will be important to ensure that a broader focus on young men as well as young women and on different forms of exploitation does not risk becoming a more gender-neutral approach. An intersectional perspective (Hill Collins, 2000; Kelly, 2016; Bernard, 2019) on the topic of exploitation is needed, recognising structural inequalities in how gender, race and ethnicity, socio-economic status, sexuality and disability shape the likelihood and experiences of exploitation.

5.3 Strengths and limitations of the review methods

This systematic review has a number of strengths. A published protocol was strictly adhered to and the tools used to search brought together limited existing literature in an under-researched area. The inclusion of qualitative studies provided a focus on the lived experience of forms of CSE for a wide range of young people. In the studies they had expressed that they wanted their voices to be heard. The international perspective of the review provided a comparative advantage. Little is known about this subject, or population or the settings which were uncovered in this review.

The following limitations should also be noted. The overall question could have been more specific, containing as it did some conceptual ambiguity. This was mitigated by explaining each term used in the question in the early part of the review. Whilst rigorous searching took

place (including grey literature searches, contacting key networks and hand sorting through studies), it is possible that some studies were not found. This would most likely be due to lack of consensus amongst international researchers in relation to some of the key terms used in the search strategy. Additionally, some key terms were not used at all in research studies. The idea of ‘transition’ for example, could be described without reference to the word itself, making locating some articles difficult. Rigorous research which examined this issue was lacking.

This systematic review was completed in a short time frame from date of acceptance of protocol to date of report submission (November 2020 - March 2021). We did not therefore contact the study authors to confirm our interpretation with them. We are confident that the limitations here mentioned do not change the overall conclusions of the review.

5.4 Strengths and limitations of available evidence

This review has clearly shown that further research is needed in this area. However, the included studies show a diverse range of participants and a wide perspective on the topic, as a result of the inclusion of academic and grey literature. Overall, the risk of bias in the included studies was low with moderate or high confidence in the synthesised findings.

This review had a sufficient number of studies which adequately support a well-rounded first review of this area. While systematic review is an optimal method to capture phenomena with limited presence in literature, the relatively small number indicates that this is an area needing further research. The included studies also involved an ample number of participants, with some evidence of diversity in gender, sexuality, sexual identity and age and some limitations in diversity in terms of ethnicity and disability. Peer-reviewed academic articles and ‘grey literature’ capture a breadth of perspective on this topic of sexual exploitation and transition. Grey literature captures voices from a range of young people who are often less accessible to researchers. Only studies in English were considered and they were all conducted in Europe and the Global North so are not necessarily representative of all international experience. The international focus of the review and intended use for practice meant we were unable to be country specific about legislation and policy in relation to safeguarding of children and young people in the recommendations for practice and policy.

5.5 Recommendations for practice and policy

These are the overarching pointers for practice and policy, the recommendations are made applicable for international contexts, with scope for tailoring to local contexts as local service commissioners are best placed to understand need within their particular context. The starting point for those responsible for the development of practice and policy relating to CSE transition is to recognise that sexual exploitation does not only affect children. Young people aged 18 and above are also impacted. If young people had need for support before their 18th birthday the need is unlikely to be absent after reaching statutory adulthood, although support needs may change. Our recommendations aimed at informing and guiding practice and policy are as follows:

Direct work with young people

1. Statutory, voluntary sector and community services to work in partnership with young people, recognising that they have a right to participate in decisions made about their lives and to be listened to. Professionals to build positive relationships between young people and practitioners, families and wider community through relationship-based models of working, strengths-based approaches which value the lived experience of young people.

2. Services to recognise that experiencing CSE can impact on young people long term – having a detrimental effect on education, mental health, general well-being, relationships, self-confidence, and access to opportunities. Organisations, through working in partnership, should be responsive to providing for a range of needs of individual young people, not just needs relating directly to abuse and exploitation.

3. Young people to access support to sustain effective professional relationships where trust has been developed, including the opportunity to receive extended support, beyond 18.

4. As young people develop, services must balance the desire to protect them alongside young people's right to make active choices and participate in decision-making. Adults should ensure that no young person is blamed for their abuse, either directly or indirectly, by adopting a non-judgmental attitude and not labelling or stigmatising individuals or certain groups for their often constrained 'choices'.

5. 'Ageing out of services' and transition between contexts can create a clear point of vulnerability to sexual exploitation for young people. Carefully plan and manage any transitions between services, exiting from a service or ending of a professional support relationship to avoid harm to young people.

6. Changing safeguarding practices for young people aged 16-25 involves a range of agencies developing more flexible, less bureaucratic approaches. An analysis of local needs should inform the development of new holistic ways of working to support this age group.

7. Non-engagement or refusal of offers of support can indicate that young people have internalised messages that say that they should be independent at age 18 (or even earlier) or are not deserving of support. Professionals need to show patience and perseverance, recognising that it takes time to build a level of trust.

Cooperation, Partnership and Multi-Agency Work in Formal Systems of Support

1. Overly bureaucratic organisations can inhibit the development of positive professional relationships by limiting professionals' ability to demonstrate care, including by making practical contributions which can be particularly significant as a demonstration of care. This is a boundary that needs careful consideration.

2. Increase understanding of the challenges of working in this area of social care practice, and create opportunities for change by innovating ways of organising safeguarding and support for children, young people and young adults in practice at a local level. Invest in long-term support services, key features to include continuity of care, non-judgmental practitioners, more fluid and less time-bound approaches.

3. Co-ordinate multi-agency partnerships responsible for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, work with adult services to develop joint transition pathway protocols, clearly setting out good practice. Learning can be gained from models used in practice in pioneering local areas (e.g., Newcastle, England; case study examples in *Bridging the Gap*, 2021).

4. Jointly commission and deliver children's and adults social care services, statutory and voluntary sector, to ensure the provision of continued support and services for young people who are in need of care and support post 18.

5. Multi-agency bodies with responsibility for safeguarding and welfare to identify successful transition outcomes, good practice, facilitating factors and any constraints for young people and young adults who have experienced sexual exploitation.

6. Systems of support to be further integrated, as the needs of young people (emotional, practical, therapeutic, criminal justice, housing, educational or exploitation-related) always overlap.

7. Strengthen collaborations between systems of care for children and young adults to adequately meet the needs of young people who are dually involved in social care and other systems, such as youth offending.

8. Statutory and voluntary services to invest in their workforce, support them well, acknowledge their potential experiences of vicarious trauma and strive to retain them over time. Relationships with individual professionals are frequently the way into a service or agency for young people. Longer-term relationships are of benefit to workers as well as young people, being personally fulfilling when successful outcomes are achieved.

9. Ensure that training of professionals addresses fundamental and overlapping issues for young people, leading to genuine understanding of CSE as firmly embedded

within deep structural inequalities, rather than training being mere ‘awareness raising’. Training should also encourage openness to questioning of this area of evolving practice, adopting a broad perspective on what influences how we understand ‘CSE’.

10. All national governments to appropriately resource safeguarding and support work with the 16-25 year old age group as well as younger children; and to ensure that approaches in policy and practice are inclusive of young people who are often overlooked.

N.B. The original design of this review involved working with a project advisory group of young people with experience of CSE and practitioners, in order to shape the recommendations for practice and research. Due to Covid restrictions this phase of the review did not happen, the research team plan to facilitate an event to access the views of young people with lived experience.

5.6 Recommendations for research

Findings from this review suggest that the international body of research on child sexual exploitation and transition is fairly limited. It has raised important questions about how we conceptualise and understand definitions of: children and young people; the term child sexual exploitation; the act and process of safeguarding; and the process of transition (child - adult and between support services). Understanding in this field would benefit from further research in the following areas:

1. This method has identified that a focus on transition of young people who have been subjected to sexual exploitation is largely absent from the current international research evidence base. Further primary research is needed which explores young people and the transitional period of life from child to adult, in order to gain understanding from their lived experience of sexual exploitation and engage with the inter-related issues.

2. Having carried out GRADECERQual on the review articles, it is evident that there is a gap in empirical, peer-reviewed research in this field. Further research is needed to explore key intersecting issues experienced by young people, including: instability in family home and other living arrangements (social care), material needs (such as housing, employment), mental health and stigma, marginalised identity (e.g. sexuality, race, class, disability).

3. Research which highlights the relevance of debates in definitional language and conceptualisations - of sexual exploitation, of children and adults, of transition, of safeguarding - in an international context. Such research emphasises the socially constructed nature of professional discourses, knowledge and ways of

understanding, drawing attention to the social, political, historical and temporal location of the evolving concept of 'CSE'.

4. Research which captures the views and experiences of professionals and practitioners who are aiming to support the children, young people and young adults in their remit of care (often within rigid structures of services or limited support for taking a wider interpretation of rules and guidelines) exploring alternative, longer-term models of safeguarding and support.

5. Research with a particular focus on the tensions in acknowledging that older teenagers/young people/young adults can be both victims of coercion and exploitation *and* have agency and make (constrained) choices.

5.7 Conclusion

This qualitative systematic review asked: **what does the literature say about safeguarding practice for young people and young adults (aged 16-25) who have experienced CSE before or during transition?** It aimed to highlight the strengths of the existing research base and identify gaps in knowledge. It has provided evidence which can inform responses to young people and young adults who have been subjected to sexual exploitation. This was the first international systematic review of the qualitative research base. The review concluded that significant gaps remain in what is known about young people who have been subjected to sexual exploitation and their needs during the period of transitioning from child to adult and from children-focused to adult-focused services. Data on prevalence of CSE in this population is lacking and research which captures the experience of the diversity of the population is needed. This research rigorously searched and reviewed academic and 'grey' literature which presented the voice of young people. This report, therefore, not only pioneers the study of this area but successfully has done so from a comprehensive search of available literature whilst centring the voices of young people. The findings of this systematic review maintain the primacy of young people's voices and point to essential evidence for practitioners and policy makers operating in this field. The review has demonstrated that the limited research base has important key messages. Increased understanding of referral, identification, assessment and support and intervention processes of a range of international agencies concerned with children's and adults' social care of sexually exploited young people and young adults has been provided. The evidence across this body of studies has implications for policy and research, drawn out into recommendations, with an overarching focus on improving outcomes for children, young people and young adults. Findings showed that the provision of appropriate support to safeguard young people starts with recognition and reliable perception of young people who

have experienced sexual exploitation, being cognisant of what might increase young people's vulnerability to sexual exploitation. With high confidence we can say that age and being positioned at the interface of services designed to meet the needs of one group only (either children or adults) is a site of vulnerability to abuse, coercion and exploitation. The organisation of services around age-eligibility creates gaps and cliff edges. Assumptions regarding young people's lack of need of protection meant that they were overlooked and deemed not vulnerable or in need. Gender stereotyping and assumptions regarding who was likely to be a victim, potentially deserving of support and protection, was also evident and overlapped with assumptions regarding age.

With high confidence we can also assert that many of the factors that 'push' or 'pull' young people towards being sexually exploited are related to family, relationships, developing identity, socio-economic circumstances, social and material conditions and gendered power relations, demonstrating that attention should be paid to structural inequality in the lives of young people approaching adulthood. Relationships with family and peers that promote emotional well-being and prevent isolation and loneliness are valued by young people; abusive home relationships adversely impacted on young people.

The review pointed to challenges in this field of social welfare more generally and increased understanding of the organisation of practice internationally (albeit across four countries) of factors that constrain or facilitate successful transition outcomes for young people who have been subjected to sexual exploitation. As much research available to practitioners nationally is UK focused, this review has highlighted young people's exploitative experiences in international contexts. We can say with high confidence that reliable, trustworthy and stable relationships with the professionals that young people encountered when seeking or receiving help from services were crucial to young people at the time of transition. It is very important to recognise that relationship-building takes time, particularly when young people have a history of trauma, or are reluctant to seek help, to express feelings and/or have previously felt judged or uncared for by others. Whilst professionals show care to young people, organisations need also to show care to their employees, who hear and 'hold' or carry the traumatic life stories of young people.

Confidence is also high in acknowledging that familial, social and systemic environments that are resource deplete and where family are experiencing other challenges are less able to support young people at the time of age transition, including transition away from exploitative environments. This is not to say that families experiencing poverty are unable to look after their children, however, impoverished environments occur among families, within communities, and here especially, education, foster care, criminal justice and safe spaces can be lacking for young people. LGBT+ young people can experience marginalisation within any— and sometimes across all— of these environments, leading to a reduced

network of relational and material support to divert or transition out of CSE. How support is conceptualised within and between these environments for CSE requires the involvement of multiple services. Furthermore, specialist support needs to be provided across these environments for young people experiencing additional marginalisations (on the basis of sexuality, gender, race, ability) in a way that prioritises their specific needs and experiences.

Further development of existing service and professional capacities is important as young people often cited the relational aspects (with professionals, family, friends, peers, cohabitants) as being most impactful of their journey. Capacity-building in communities and other support networks is important to disrupt the conducive contexts of CSE and to create effective routes out of CSE.

Additional research which centres the voices of young people who have experienced CSE is needed to both develop specialist services as well as to improve the capacity of existing services and professionals to support the unique gaps and challenges of CSE-experienced young people in transition.

Indeed, the findings of this research demonstrated that not only do young people's voices need to be central to the research and development of these transitional CSE support services, but that the implementation of research findings must also focus on the knowledge and experiences of the direct stakeholders. The gaps identified through this young-person centred research indicated a need for similar in-group based research on this topic in the future. While the findings of this research were based on several universal themes arising from young people's own descriptions of their experiences across jurisdictional and geographic contexts of the Global North; the onward application of this feedback may vary by service structure, policy and cultural context and, therefore, require community-based knowledge and strategies to implement across these jurisdictions. To effectively implement the findings in this report within local policy structures, as well as social, political, societal, and cultural ones; future research and practice should be formed alongside young people within their own contexts.

In reviewing the international research evidence we acknowledge and draw attention to the variation in terminology relating to sexual exploitation. We do not favour the use of one term over another, however we stress the importance of recognising the contexts from within which the terms originate and the need to unpack the notion of 'exchange' and the association of the sexual with transactional gifts and rewards.

As sexual exploitation is regarded as a form of *child* abuse, impacting on children under 18 years old, there is a risk that young people who are reaching the defined adult threshold of 18 and those above will not be included. This lack of inclusion extends to data collection, in evaluating need, in rights to protection. The recommendations

for practice emerging from this qualitative systematic review aim to support closing the ‘gap’ that young people at risk of or who have been subjected to CSE are currently said to ‘fall through’ as they approach adulthood. The systematic review evidence can be utilised by researchers, commissioners of services, voluntary sector organisations, policy makers and all stakeholders to improve the experience of young people and young adults at transitional points.

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Pearce, J. (2019) (Ed) *Child Sexual Exploitation: Why Theory Matters,* Bristol: Policy Press.

Pearce, J. (2010) Safeguarding young people from sexual exploitation and from being trafficked: tensions within contemporary policy and practice. *Youth and Policy*, 104: 1-11.

Phoenix, J. (2019). Child sexual exploitation, discourse analysis and why we still need to talk about prostitution. In Pearce, J., *Child Sexual Exploitation: Why Theory Matters*, (pp. 43-60.) The Policy Press. ISBN: 144735141X, 9781447351412

Pike, N., Langham, M. and Lloyd, S (2019) *Parents' experiences of the Children's Social Care System when a child is sexually exploited* (PACE: Parents Against Child Exploitation) (November 2019)

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Scott, S. and Harper, Z. (2006) 'Meeting the needs of sexually exploited young people: the challenge of conducting policy relevant research', *Child Abuse Review,* 15, 313-325.

Simmons-Horton, S.Y. (2020) 'A Bad Combination': Lived Experiences of Youth Involved in the Foster Care and Juvenile Justice Systems. *Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal*, 1-15.

Smith, M., & Woodiwiss, J. (2016). Sexuality, innocence and agency in narratives of childhood sexual abuse: Implications for social work. *The British Journal of Social Work*, 46(8), 2173-2189.

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Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E. (2009) *Pathways into and out of commercial sexual victimization of children: Understanding and responding to sexually exploited teens*. Lowell, MA: University of Massachusetts Lowell.

7 APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Search Strategy

ASSIA

Search terms	Records retrieved 21/12/2020
noft((Child OR "young people" OR youth OR adolescents OR Juveniles OR teen* OR service user OR service-user) AND (abuse OR "sexual abuse" OR exploitation OR neglect OR violence OR justice OR prostitution OR trafficking OR "emotional abuse" OR pornography OR "abuse images" OR Maltreatment OR harm OR criminal OR trauma OR prostitution) AND (Transition OR transitional OR lifespan) AND (Safeguarding OR protection OR planning OR pathways OR support OR "welfare needs"))	344

Google Scholar

Search terms	Records retrieved 21/12/2020
Keywords (Child OR young OR adolescents OR teen*) AND (abuse OR exploitation OR neglect OR violence OR justice OR prostitution OR pornography OR harm OR criminal) AND (Transition*) AND (Safeguarding OR protection OR planning OR pathways OR support OR welfare)	First 199

PsychINFO

Search terms	Records retrieved 21/12/2020
(Child OR "young people" OR youth OR adolescents OR Juveniles OR teen* OR service user OR service-user) AND (abuse OR "sexual abuse" OR exploitation OR neglect OR violence OR justice	892

OR prostitution OR trafficking OR "emotional abuse" OR pornography OR "abuse images" OR Maltreatment OR harm OR criminal OR trauma) AND (Transition OR transitional OR lifespan) AND (Safeguarding OR protection OR planning OR pathways OR support OR "welfare needs") Filtered: English,Peer Reviewed	

Pub Med

Search terms	Records retrieved 21/12/2020
(Child[Title/Abstract] OR "young people"[Title/Abstract] OR youth[Title/Abstract] OR adolescents[Title/Abstract] OR Juveniles[Title/Abstract] OR teen*[Title/Abstract] OR service user[Title/Abstract] OR service-user[Title/Abstract]) AND (abuse[Title/Abstract] OR "sexual abuse"[Title/Abstract] OR exploitation[Title/Abstract] OR neglect[Title/Abstract] OR violence[Title/Abstract] OR justice[Title/Abstract] OR prostitution[Title/Abstract] OR trafficking[Title/Abstract] OR "emotional abuse"[Title/Abstract] OR pornography[Title/Abstract] OR "abuse images"[Title/Abstract] OR Maltreatment[Title/Abstract] OR harm[Title/Abstract] OR criminal[Title/Abstract] OR trauma[Title/Abstract]) AND (Transition[Title/Abstract] OR transitional[Title/Abstract] OR lifespan[Title/Abstract]) AND (Safeguarding[Title/Abstract] OR protection[Title/Abstract] OR planning[Title/Abstract] OR pathways[Title/Abstract] OR support[Title/Abstract] OR "welfare needs"[Title/Abstract])	270

SSCI

Search terms	Records retrieved 21/12/2020
(Child OR "young people" OR youth OR adolescents OR Juveniles OR teen* OR service user OR service-user) AND (abuse OR "sexual abuse" OR exploitation OR neglect OR violence OR justice OR prostitution OR trafficking OR "emotional abuse" OR	961

pornography OR "abuse images" OR Maltreatment OR harm OR criminal OR trauma) AND (Transition OR transitional OR lifespan) AND (Safeguarding OR protection OR planning OR pathways OR support OR "welfare needs")	

Total papers	2667

Appendix 2: Studies ineligible following full text review

Studies were excluded for the following reasons: (i) Did not focus upon the period of transition, as per our inclusion criteria, (ii) Did not focus upon CSE, (iii) No qualitative research findings presented, (iv) Reported pre-2000 data.

1. Bell, M. F., et al. (2018). 'School readiness of maltreated children: Associations of timing, type, and chronicity of maltreatment.' *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 76, 426.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon the period of transition, as per our inclusion criteria.

2. Carr, A., et al. (2019). 'Survivors of institutional abuse in long-term child care in Scotland.' *Child Abuse & Neglect* 93 (38).

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

3. Daining, C. and D. Depanfilis (2007). 'Resilience of youth in transition from out-of-home care to adulthood.' *Children and Youth Services Review,* 29(9), 1158-1178.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

4. Faulkner, B., et al. (2014). 'Pathways From Childhood Maltreatment to Emerging Adulthood.' *Child Maltreatment,* 19 (3-4), 219.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

5. Hurren, E., et al. (2017). 'Transitions and turning points revisited: A replication to explore child maltreatment and youth offending links within and across Australian cohorts.' *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 65, 24-36.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

6. Narayan, A. J., et al. (2017). 'The legacy of early childhood violence exposure to adulthood intimate partner violence: Variable- and person-oriented evidence: JFP.' *Journal of Family Psychology* 31 (7), 833.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

7. Panlilio, C. C., et al. (2018). ‘School readiness of maltreated preschoolers and later school achievement: The role of emotion regulation, language, and context.’ *Child Abuse & Neglect* 75, 82.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

8. Park, J. M. and J. Helton (2010). ‘Transitioning from informal to formal substitute care following maltreatment investigation.’ *Children and Youth Services Review* 32 (7), 998-1003.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

9. Pepin, E. N. and V. L. Banyard (2006). ‘Social Support: A Mediator between Child Maltreatment and Developmental Outcomes.’ *Journal of Youth and Adolescence,* 35 (4), 617-630.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

10. Stewart, A., et al. (2008). ‘Transitions and turning points: Examining the links between child maltreatment and juvenile offending.’ *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 32 (1), 51-66.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

11. Djeddah, C., et al. (2000). ‘Child abuse: current problems and key public health challenges.’ *Social science & medicine,* 51 (6), 905-915.

Reason for exclusion: Reported pre-2000 data.

12. Feiring, C., et al. (1998). ‘Social support and children's and adolescents' adaptation to sexual abuse.’ *Journal of Interpersonal Violence,* 13(2), 240-260.

Reason for exclusion: Reported pre-2000 data.

13. Howell, K. H. and L. E. Miller-Graff (2014). ‘Protective factors associated with resilient functioning in young adulthood after childhood exposure to violence.’ *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 38(12), 1985-1994.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

14. Jonson-Reid, M. and R. P. Barth (2000). 'From maltreatment report to juvenile incarceration: The role of child welfare services', *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 24(4), 505-520.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

15. Landgren, K. (2005). 'The Protective Environment: Development support for child protection', *Human Rights Quarterly,* 214-248.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

16. Tanaka, M., et al. (2011). 'The linkages among childhood maltreatment, adolescent mental health, and self-compassion in child welfare adolescents.' *Child Abuse & Neglect* 35 (10), 887-898.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

17. Vidal, S., et al. (2017). 'Maltreatment, family environment, and social risk factors: Determinants of the child welfare to juvenile justice transition among maltreated children and adolescents.' *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 63, 7-18.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

18. Augustyn, M. B., et al. (2019). 'The reproduction of child maltreatment: An examination of adolescent problem behavior, substance use, and precocious transitions in the link between victimization and perpetration,' *Development and psychopathology,* 31 (1), 53-71.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

19. Barnes, R. and N. Josefowitz (2014). 'Forensic assessment of adults reporting childhood sexualized assault: Risk, resilience, and impacts', *Psychological Injury and Law,* 7 (1), 34-46.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

20. Christian, C. W. and D. F. Schwarz (2011). 'Child maltreatment and the transition to adult-based medical and mental health care', *Pediatrics,* 127(1), 139-145.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

21. Demers, J. M., et al. (2015). 'Unwanted sexual experiences: The impact on women's transition to college', *Violence and Gender,* 2 (4), 209-213.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

22. Dion, J., et al. (2016). 'A prospective study of the impact of child maltreatment and friend support on psychological distress trajectory: From adolescence to emerging adulthood', *Journal of affective disorders,*189, 336-343.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

23. Felix, E. D., et al. (2019). 'Associations between childhood peer victimization and aggression and subsequent victimization and aggression at college', *Psychology of Violence,* 9 (4), 451-460.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

24. Hagborg, J. M., et al. (2020). 'Child maltreatment and substance-use-related negative consequences: Longitudinal trajectories from early to mid adolescence', *Addictive Behaviors* 106, 8.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

25. Hulette, A. C., et al. (2011). 'Dissociation in middle childhood among foster children with early maltreatment experiences', *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 35(2), 123-126.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

26. Jaffee, S. R., et al. (2018). 'Childhood maltreatment predicts poor economic and educational outcomes in the transition to adulthood', *American Journal of Public Health,* 108 (9), 1142-1147.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

27. Jones, D. J., et al. (2013), 'Linking childhood sexual abuse and early adolescent risk behavior: The intervening role of internalizing and externalizing problems', *Journal of Abnormal Child Psychology* 41(1), 139-150.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

28. Latham, R. M., et al. (2020). 'Childhood maltreatment and poor functional outcomes at the transition to adulthood: A comparison of prospective informant- and retrospective self-reports of maltreatment.' Social Psychiatry and Psychiatric Epidemiology: The International Journal for Research in Social and Genetic Epidemiology and Mental Health Services.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

29. Lee, J. S., et al. (2014). 'Extended foster care support during the transition to adulthood: Effect on the risk of arrest', *Children and Youth Services Review,* 42, 34-42.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

30. Middleton, J. S. M. S. W. L. P., et al. (2018). 'Youth Experiences Survey (YES): Exploring the Scope and Complexity of Sex Trafficking in a Sample of Youth Experiencing Homelessness', *Journal of Social Service Research,* 44 (2), 141-157.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

31. Negriff, S., et al. (2019). 'The young adolescent project: A longitudinal study of the effects of maltreatment on adolescent development, *Development and psychopathology.*

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

32. Poon, C. Y. M. and B. G. Knight (2012). 'Emotional reactivity to network stress in middle and late adulthood: The role of childhood parental emotional abuse and support,' *The Gerontologist,* 52 (6), 782-791.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

33. Thompson, A., et al. (2016). 'Do affective or dissociative symptoms mediate the association between childhood sexual trauma and transition to psychosis in an ultra-high risk cohort?, *Psychiatry Research,* 236, 182-185.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

34. Wadman, R., et al. (2019). 'The influence of early familial adversity on adolescent risk behaviors and mental health: Stability and transition in family adversity profiles in a cohort sample', *Development and psychopathology*.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

35. Waechter, R., et al. (2019), 'Maltreatment history, trauma symptoms and research reactivity among adolescents in child protection services,' *Child and Adolescent Psychiatry and Mental Health,* 13, 10.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

36. Wekerle, C. and P. K. Kerig (2017). 'Sexual and non-sexual violence against children and youth: Continuing conversations', *Journal of Child & Adolescent Trauma,* 10 (2), 95-96.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

37. Macpherson, C. (2009). 'Childhood abuse uncovered in a palliative care audit', *Palliative Support Care,* 7 (4), 481-486.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

38. Putnam-Hornstein, E., et al. (2017). 'A Retrospective Examination of Child Protection Involvement Among Young Adults Accessing Homelessness Services', *American Journal of Community Psychology,* 60 (1-2), 44-54.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

39. Schneider, W. (2016). 'Relationship Transitions and the Risk for Child Maltreatment', *Demography,* 53 (6), 1771-1800.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon the period of transition, as per our inclusion criteria.

40. Ahrens, K. R., et al. (2012). 'Association between childhood sexual abuse and transactional sex in youth aging out of foster care', *Child Abuse & Neglect,* 36 (1), 75-80.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

41. Alley, J., et al. 'Illness, Social Disadvantage, and Sexual Risk Behavior in Adolescence and the Transition to Adulthood, *Archives of Sexual Behavior.*

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

42. Garrido, E. F., et al. (2011). 'Psychosocial Consequences of Caregiver Transitions for Maltreated Youth Entering Foster Care: The Moderating Impact of Community Violence Exposure,' *American Journal of Orthopsychiatry,* 81(3), 382-389.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon the period of transition, as per our inclusion criteria.

43. Khoury, J. E., et al. (2020)', Aspects of Parent-Child Interaction from Infancy to Late Adolescence are Associated with Severity of Childhood Maltreatment through Age 18', *International Journal of Environmental Research Public Health,* 17 (11).

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

44. Lanctot, N. (2020). 'Child maltreatment, maladaptive cognitive schemas, and perceptions of social support among young women care leavers', *Child & Family Social Work,* 25(3), 619-627.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

45. Southerland, D., et al. (2009). 'Young adult outcomes and mental health problems among transition age youth investigated for maltreatment during adolescence', *Children and Youth Services Review,* 31(9), 947-956.

Reason for exclusion: No qualitative research findings presented.

46. Warmingham, J. M., et al. (2020). 'Intergenerational maltreatment and child emotion dysregulation', *Child Abuse & Neglect* ,102.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

47. Xiang, Y. H., et al. (2018). 'The Relationship Between Child Maltreatment and Dispositional Envy and the Mediating Effect of Self-Esteem and Social Support in Young Adults', *Frontiers in Psychology,* 9.

Reason for exclusion: Did not focus upon CSE.

Appendix 3: Characteristics of Included studies

Study	Country	Methodology	Method	Participants	Phenomena of Interest (e.g. research questions)	Authors' Conclusion
Abel, G., & Wahab, S. (2017).	New Zealand	QUALI	Interviews (thematic analysis)	N=14 young people who had 'traded sex' (before 18) and had experienced interactions with social workers Six female, seven transgender, one male Ages 17-22 years. Ten had had interaction with social workers, eight had been in the care of child protective services.	[Aim Of researcher] To analyse the rigidity of social work practice, and relationships between young people trading sex and social workers. (Sex work under 18 is not in New Zealand).	The discourse of "at-risk" is a barrier to relationship building between young people who trade sex and social workers. Social workers need to listen to young people's narratives and interpretations. Social workers must 'incorporate young people's perceptions and wishes into intervention narratives'. Need to shift away from rigid procedures to include more individual, emotion-based support. Young people reported that while individual social workers may engage with young people trading sex with acceptance, support and empathy, institutional and organizational shifts are necessary to prevent the impact of governmentalism and bureaucracy, including a shift away from the risk discourse'. P1397.
Beckett et al (2013)	UK	QUALI	Individual interviews (38% current or previous involvement with childrens' services). 11 focus groups with professionals. Eight single-sex focus groups with young people	N = 150 young people (interviews) N=76 professionals. N=38 young people (FG) Age range: 13 to 28 years (28% 18-20yrs, 21% 21-25 yrs) 52% male, 48% female Ethnicity: 32% Black British, 28% White, 21% Dual heritage, 18% Asian/ Asian British	To consider the scale and nature of gang-associated sexual violence and exploitation. To consider potential models for an effective multi-agency response to the issue	'Examples of sexual violence towards, and/or sexual exploitation of, young women were shared by almost all 96 interviewees, however, not all conceptualised them as such' (p25). 47% of gang-associated sexual violence or exploitation related to the exchange of sex for money, drugs and/or alcohol or debt associated with these (p33). A young woman's risk of exploitation varied according to status within the gang (protected so long as she remained a gang member's GF). Young women who engaged in casual sex with one or more gang members (aka 'links' or 'pass arounds') were most at risk of SV and exploitation within the gang environment. (p37). Low levels of reporting was about (i) judgement by others, (ii) fear of retaliation and (iii) a lack of faith in services' ability to protect them or resignation (p43). We need better partnership-working and cross-fertilisation between gangs and sexual exploitation/SV initiatives.
Beech (2018)	UK	Systematic Review	**Review of literature:** semi-systematic review of outcomes for boys impacted by CSE/CSA:	32 professional in workshops	To develop the assessment and intervention approaches to produce	**Review of literature:** Little known about male victimisation. Key areas identified: problems in self-esteem, emotional loneliness,

			International, peer-reviewed articles 2004 - 2018. Further search from 1970's. **Interviews:** with young men on pathways of risk, abuse, exploitation, and journey into service engagement & intervention (thematic analysis). **Professional workshops:** 3 day-long, workshops with professionals	18 interviewees (17 young men; one young person's mother). Demographic info for 14 of the 17: White British x 14 (one not stated). Mean age = 19.2 years. SEND x 20%, No SEND 46%, N/K 34%; Learning Disability x 11%; ADHD/Behavioural x 33% Acknowledgement of CSE concerns: Substantially admitted x 14%, Complete denial x 21%, Minimised denial (14 - 16) 42%, Not known 14%.	better engagement with young men subject to CSE/CSA. A review of the literature on male survivor/victims of CSE/CSA regarding risk and vulnerability factors to design tools and resources to better identify and engage boys and young men.	cognitive distortions, sexual knowledge deficits, disability and depression. Risk-taking behaviours, inappropriate or illegal acts, learning disabilities and/or Autistic Spectrum Disorder. Little evidence found related to: empathy problems and locus of control; perpetrator typologies and behaviours and criminality arising from CSE. **Interviews**: Four key themes: · Family Environment (parents, nature of the relationship, living arrangements) · School (sex education, pastoral support, exclusion) · Transitional periods of life: friends/peers, support worker. · Risk Indicators. **Professional workshops:** Talk about CSE risk and vulnerability indicators. Sub themes identified; personal risks and vulnerabilities and advice to others. Evidence of the under reporting of male victims at risk. Identified need for better 1) qualitative research on disabilities in relation to how to assess CSE, and 2) education of boys in school regarding CSE is needed and that it is ok to report such behaviours.
Dank, M. et al. (2015).	USA	QUALI & QUANT	Mixed method: quant & qual analysis of interviews	N=283 LGBTQ youth engaging in survival sex. Ages 13-21 years	To (1) describe and quantify the characteristics and needs of the LGBTQ youth, YMSM, and YWSW populations engaged in survival sex in the New York City commercial sex market; and (2) to assess their interactions with governmental and non-profit service providers, law enforcement, prosecutors, and court personnel.	Most were in an exploitative situation for more than a year, and had met their exploiters while homeless and living on the street, often at 16-17 when ageing out of foster care. Positive aspects of 'survival sex' were money and shelter, but the majority wanted to stop trading sex, and when asked what would help, common answers include employment, housing and education. While no difference by race or sexual orientation, gender was highly significant, with cisgender women far more likely to experience exploitation. Need to: i) Develop peer-led outreach and accessible drop-in services. ii) Improve short and long term affordable housing options, with supporting protocols specific to LGBTQ youth. Iii) Develop living-wage employment opportunities. iv) Improve food security among LBGTQ youth.
Ellem, K., et al. (2020)	Australia	QUALI	Semi-structured interview. Body mapping	N= 38 Body mapping sample: N= 31. Ages 16-26, two Aboriginal Australians 18 Male, 11 Female, two non-binary. Interview sample:	Supporting young people with complex support needs through transitions. Transcending the professional–client divide	Need 'to shift relationship-based practice from the fringes of youth policy and funding and embed relationship at the 'policy heart' of service provision to young people with complex needs'. Workers to be attuned to more flexible, personal ways of working with young people, showing authentic care

				N=7 Ages 18-25 Four male, three female		and non-judgementality, while addressing practical issues. Need greater stability for young people by access via a single organisation or worker who advocates and provides information.
Hampton, M. D. (2020)	USA	QUALI	Interviews	N= 10 Service Providers. White female professionals. Ave age 39.7 y. All degree educated, specialists in social work, psychology, therapy, criminal justice and years of experience.	To identify service provider perceptions on what is effective care for young people who have experienced CSE moving from juvenile detention to the community. **Note**: Transition is from one service to the community	Research is needed to explore the experience of service providers who work with CSEY. Funding is needed to develop community-based services for CSEY, esp. training and professional support for education, health, social service, and criminal justice staff. There is limited evidence to guide CSEY service providers' practice within or outside the CJ system. It could take years for Federal/State policy to establish care systems that identify CSEY and provide adequate support in the community. Research needs to investigate the effect of policy and practice change affecting CSEY and service providers to evaluate success in decriminalising the response and providing services in the community. (p8)
Hines, A. M., et al. (2005)	USA	QUALI	Interviews, and self-administered questionnaires	N = 14 (12 were single or never married), ten female, four male. Former foster youth currently at university, with experience of maltreatment. Age 19 – 35 years, Four African American, three Asian, three Latino, one White, three Other	To understand resilience and how adversity, family and community interact to enable young people raised in foster care to achieve academic success.	A theoretical grounding in resilience and underlying processes should inform more effective programs and policies aimed at furthering positive developmental outcomes among youth raised in care. Interventions do not need to focus solely on early years, but efforts to support care leavers should include programs that 'foster individual empowerment'. Research into resilience needed to inform development of support services.
Simmons-Horton, S.Y. (2020).	USA	QUALI	Interviews (in depth, semi-structured, audio-recorded), 30 -120 min)	N= 10 previously involved in juvenile justice and foster care systems. Age 18-24 years. Six female, four male, seven African American, three Hispanic. Five unemployed, five employed. Education: degree (one), high school dip. (five), 11th grade (three), 9th grade (one).	Lived experiences of youth involved in the foster care and juvenile justice systems, and the impact of this combination.	Recommend professionals adopt a strengths-based approach to youth, with ongoing trauma informed training for staff. Multi system collaboration should be adopted to help with information sharing, streamlining of services and extended support, and specialised dual status courts. More qualitative research should be done to explore dual status youth at every stage of entry into each system.
Thomas & Speyer (2016)	UK	QUALI	Interviews (in-depth, semi-structured, face to face or phone) Focus groups	N = 42 interviewees - professionals working across Wales, & an adult	To increase understanding of CSE relating to boys and young men and identify recommendations.	Stereotypes in RSE and concern for girls' sexual exploitation makes it hard for boys to disclose or know services are for them. All boys need

				survivor of CSA and sexual exploitation. N = 20 Focus group participants, involved in a junior safeguarding board, four of whom were boys who had been sexually exploited. Age 10-18 yrs.	To improve the engagement of at-risk boys and young men in services that address CSE prevention and intervention. To explore the ways a vulnerable or at-risk boy might present, and perceptions of differences between boys and girls' experiences of CSE.	comprehensive healthy relationships education. High-risk boys and young men may not access mainstream education, so RSE etc needs to target them and reach them via CJ and alternative education provision. Need safe places for boys to seek support and think through their sexual feelings and experiences. Limited opportunities for gay, bisexual and questioning boys to socialise with other LGBTQ young people in safe, local environments plus discriminatory attitudes increase risk of sexual exploitation as they seek acceptance. Training and awareness-raising is needed for staff in services used by boys and young men with risk factors for CSE and to include in assessment tools and processes for residential homes, secure units etc. Media information and service promotion needs to be inclusive.
Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E. (2009)	USA	QUALI	Interviews	N = 61 young people, Aged 14-29 yrs 17 male, 42 female, two transgender N = 28 reported having been involved in CSE (24 female, three male, one transgender) N=3 14-15 years, n=9 16-17 years, n=11 18-19 years, n=1 unknown	To identify the factors (individual, family, peer, school, and community) associated with the commencement of CSEC, ii) factors that surround its maintenance and escalation; iii) factors that impede or empower exiting from or overcoming exploitative situations.	Pathways out of commercial sexual victimization of children need meaningful partnerships between youth and social services to help teens regain control over their lives. Services need to understand the mentalities of CSE victims and why attempts at 'rescue' might be rebuffed, and to provide comprehensive training for therapists, teachers, police and others who work with CSE involved youth. We need i) a coordinated national response to support young people whose lives span multiple jurisdictions; ii) to enhance peer support; iii) to fund transitional shelters, and iv) places for young people to stay where they maintain their autonomy and are empowered to exist CSE.

Appendix 4: Results of synthesis

Synthesised Finding 1: CSE is often associated with girls and young women yet can be experienced by any young person. Gender, age, sexuality or other aspects of identity (self and social) can be sites of vulnerability from which CSE can occur and be subsequent spaces of social meaning by which victimhood can be conceptualised. However, individual attributes can act as strengths and protective factors. Age plays a key role in defining access to services and in limiting opportunities for continued support.

Findings	Categories	Synthesised finding
Gang-based CSE is influenced by wider patterns of CSE. Young women were more likely to report having experienced sexual forms of exploitation than young men. (Beckett et al, 2013)	Gender	**CSE is often associated with girls and young women yet can be experienced by any young person. Gender, age, sexuality or other aspects of identity (self and social) can be sites of vulnerability from which CSE can occur and be subsequent spaces of social meaning by which victimhood can be conceptualised. However, individual attributes can act as strengths and protective factors. Age plays a key role in defining access to services and in limiting opportunities for continued support.**
A strong theme that emerged from the research was that of a double victimisation in which young women were not only harmed, but also apportioned blame for this harm. (Beckett et al, 2013)		
Sexually based initiation processes involving young women (either seeking to be part of the gang themselves or as part of the process of male initiation) was an identified form of gang-specific sexual violence/exploitation. (Beckett et al, 2013)		
Young women were also exposed to considerable levels of physical violence within the gang environment. This could be as unintended targets caught up in intra-male violence or, as was more frequently noted to be the case, as a means of controlling their behaviour and/or as punishment for having transgressed gang expectations. (Beckett et al, 2013)		

"A young woman's risk of exploitation varies according to status within the gang. (Beckett et al, 2013) "		
"While less common, young men were also at risk of sexual exploitation. Almost all reports of this were from third parties rather than victims, indicating that men were less willing to report being a victim of sexual exploitation. (Beckett et al, 2013)"		
"Of the youth who had experienced exploitation, most were in an exploitative situation for more than a year. While there was no difference by race of sexual orientation, there was a highly significant gender difference, where cisgender women were far more likely to experience exploitation. (Dank, M. et al., 2015)"		
"Lack of gender balance in educational tools has an impact on the messaging on healthy relationships. (Thomas & Speyer, 2016)"		
"Specialist professionals' experiences of working with boys who had experienced CSE show that the process of engaging them took longer than it did with girls, and that the practitioner should be aware of social stereotypes and how they may have impacted on the boys' feelings of self-esteem and identity. (Thomas & Speyer, 2016)"		
Boys face barriers to being identified as at risk as a result of gendered stereotypes. Professionals were more likely to view boys as more able to protect themselves and as perpetrators of abuse rather than victims. Professionals were less likely to look past boys' negative behaviour than girls'. (Thomas & Speyer, 2016)		

Young men made suggestions of interventions – computer games, protected Twitter accounts, texting. Not an App because the app would be visible to a perpetrator if they checked the phone. (Beech, 2018)		
There was an absence of continuing services for youth who age-out of the system. Ageing out is not only a problem for youth in foster care settings, it is also an issue for youth on probation: (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)	Age	
"Average age of entry into CSE was 16-17 years old, often coinciding with when youth were either aging out of foster care or being kicked out by family. (Dank, M. et al., 2015)"		
The pathway by which the participants became dually involved influenced their personal narrative, and their worldview.P.1 (Simmons-Horton, S.Y., 2020)	Self-identity	
Individual attributes such as independence, ability to accept help, determination to be different from abusive adults, and persistence were key factors in the ability of care leavers to achieve academic success. (Hines, A. M., et al., 2005: 391)		
"More safe places provide the opportunity for boys to seek support and think through their sexual feelings and experiences. (Thomas & Speyer, 2016)"	LGBTQ	

"Limited opportunities in rural and urban settings for gay, bisexual and questioning boys to socialise with other LGBTQ young people in safe environments local to where they live coupled with discriminatory social attitudes, can sometimes increase young people's risk of exposure to sexual exploitation as they struggle to find acceptance. (Thomas & Speyer, 2016) "		

Synthesised Finding 2: Insufficient relational support or experiences of abuse in the home (physical or emotional) adversely affect young people and can leave them vulnerable to those who might coerce, control and exploitation. Relationships with family and peers could create avenues for CSE recruitment, but also provide avenues for support. Insufficient family support limited routes out of CSE. Relationships with peers were important to promoting emotional wellbeing and avoiding isolation which could make young people vulnerable to exploitation.

Findings	Categories	Synthesised finding
Family environment, support, complex living: Participants reported a lack of parental support/ parenting, including in teaching them simple skills to look after themselves. Participants who had experienced an unstable family home and had witnessed or experienced emotional or physical abuse were adversely affected. (Beech, 2018)	Relationships with Families	**Insufficient relational support or experiences of abuse in the home (physical or emotional) adversely affect young people and can leave them vulnerable to those who might coerce, control and exploitation. Relationships with family and peers could create avenues for CSE recruitment, but also provide avenues for support. Insufficient family support limited routes out of CSE. Relationships with peers were important to promoting emotional wellbeing and avoiding isolation which could make young people vulnerable to exploitation.**
Young people face many barriers to transitioning out of CSE. Aside from the control held by perpetrators against victims, other barriers to transitioning out of CSE include weak familial support, lack of knowledge amongst school personnel to detect CSE, and the fact that communities in general do not know how to confront the issue. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
"Young people often met exploiters through friends or family, and frequently met them while they were homeless. (Dank, M. et al., 2015)"		
"Negative experiences of care and family life are known to create vulnerabilities which can lead to a higher risk of sexual exploitation as children become adolescents, for boys as well as girls (Thomas & Speyer, 2016) "		

Support from friends is important, times of transition can bring emotional loneliness, support or abandonment of friends has consequences for CSE vulnerability as young men participants sought validation elsewhere. (Beech, 2018)	Relationships with peers	
Social isolation, both from peers and family, can make boys and young men more vulnerable to exploitation. Having friends, as well as access to group activities, facilitates emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging. LGBT young people, as well as young people with learning disabilities, were more at risk of social isolation. (Thomas & Speyer, 2016)		
Children and adolescents d**evelop social skills** and learn **independence and responsibilit**y from engaging in age and developmentally appropriate activities, serving as teaching moments. P.11. Therefore, opportunities for **normalcy** should be provided in placements. (Simmons-Horton, S.Y., 2020)		

Synthesised Finding 3: The instability young people experience in their home lives is also mirrored in social care, exposing them to risks and vulnerabilities. Early life experiences of CSE-experienced young people included economic hardship, parental substance use, mental ill health and violence, such instability in informal supports often led to early and sometimes extensive interactions with formal systems. These were a part of their journey in social care as well. Young people's search for acceptance and community at a time of transition made them susceptible to exploitation. Stigma surrounding sexuality and involvement in sex for basic needs impacted their psychological and physical security and hindered the development of social relationships outside of CSE networks.

Findings	Categories	Synthesised finding
The experiences of being dually involved in the study participants meant instability in various vital milestones, including education and engagement in normalcy activities. P.12 (Simmons-Horton, S.Y., 2020)	Instability and Risk	**The instability young people experience in their home lives is also mirrored in social care, exposing them to risks and vulnerabilities. Early life experiences of CSE-experienced young people included economic hardship, parental substance use, mental ill health and violence, such instability in informal supports often led to early and sometimes extensive interactions with formal systems. These were a part of their journey in social care as well. Young people's search for acceptance and community at a time of transition made them susceptible to exploitation. Stigma surrounding sexuality and involvement in sex for basic needs impacted their psychological and physical security and hindered the development of social relationships outside of CSE networks.**
Young people's experiences led to the need to seek and find acceptance. This resulted in finding 'their people' or place in life (illegal partying, drug taking and subsequent exploitation. Swapping somewhere to sleep for sex, not explicitly referred to as non-consensual). (Beech, 2018)		
While there was a diversity in youth experiences with CSEC – T in terms of the length of time they were involved in CSE, and what was offered to them (money, a place to stay, drugs etc), many reported experiences fitted a similar pattern of abuse. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
Several factors were identified as making young people more vulnerable to CSE, such as economic hardship, violence within the youth's family,		

parental mental health and drug abuse. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
Personal risks and vulnerabilities – homelessness, coming from a broken home, being young and gay, in the care system, for the older group of young men drugs, alcohol, parties (Beech, 2018)		
Homelessness was not the biggest risk indicator for CSE vulnerability. For older participants, drugs, money and partying behaviours were reported by the participants as clear indicators they felt were often ignored by school. (Beech, 2018)		
While there was a diversity in youth experiences with CSEC – in terms of the length of time they were involved in CSE, and what was offered to them (money, a place to stay, drugs etc), many reported experiences fitted a similar pattern of abuse. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
Several factors were identified as making young people more vulnerable to CSE, such as economic hardship, violence within the youth's family, parental mental health and drug abuse. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
Instability in young people's informal supports often led to early, and sometimes **extensive interactions with formal systems. (**Ellem, K., et al., 2020**)**		
"However, they also reported negative perceptions of survival sex, particularly in dealing with customers, feeling degraded, and feeling alone. (Dank, M. et al., 2015)"	Stigma	

“Youth perceived **judgment within faith-based** service organizations. Youth per**ceived family views of exploitation as promiscuity.** (Hampton, M. D. (2020)		

Synthesised Finding 4: Mental Health is an important consideration contextualising the lives of young people who had experienced CSE. Being affected by mental health challenges and/or those of family members created a conducive context for CSE to occur. CSE also had a mental health impact. Professionals' focus on mental health, trauma and on-going support was seen by young people to be helpful and necessary (services meeting their material needs) to successfully leaving and 'recovering' from sexual exploitation.

Findings	Categories	Synthesised finding
For dual-status youth, who have an increased likelihood of adverse outcomes, ongoing complex trauma experiences can undermine healthy attachments to peers, caregivers, and supportive staff. P.10 (Simmons-Horton, S.Y., 2020)	Mental health impact	**Mental Health is an important consideration contextualising the lives of young people who had experienced CSE. Being affected by mental health challenges and/or those of family members created a conducive context for CSE to occur. CSE also had a mental health impact. Professionals' focus on mental health, trauma and on-going support was seen by young people to be helpful and necessary (services meeting their material needs) to successfully leaving and 'recovering' from sexual exploitation.**
While these young people achieved adaption in one area, they still reported psychological and emotional difficulties that stemmed from their childhood experience Some of the earlier adversity factors may still be operating in cumulative and multiplicative ways to have long lasting effect on developmental pathways. (Hines, A. M., et al., 2005: 392)		
The vast majority of young people wanted to stop trading sex, and when asked what would services would help them, common answers include employment, obtaining housing and education. Others reported needing counselling or other support. (Dank, M. et al., 2015)"	Mental health support	
Young people valued these relationships particularly when workers showed a genuine interest in connecting with them and listening to them without judgement. Listening non-judgementally was an essential feature of workers		

who were permitted into young people's 'dark spaces' and invited to accompany them through transitions. (Ellem, K., et al., 2020)		

Synthesised Finding 5: The quality of relationships that young people form with professionals impacts their relationships with services. Reliable, trustworthy and stable relationships with professionals were important to young people experiencing transition, especially for boys and young men who were hesitant to express feelings and fully engage with systems. Relationships strengthened when young people felt professionals cared and helped practically. However, feeling judged produced negative impacts for young people and the resulting loss of trust affected their relationship with service/s. Professionals need to be patient, realistic and recognise the impact that trauma history has on the relationships service users build with them. Systems need to recognise how vicarious trauma can impact the wellbeing of workers and service users (since quality and continuity of service can be affected).

Findings	Categories	Synthesised finding
Relationships between young people and workers were built up when workers made practical contributions to young people's lives. (Ellem, K., et al., 2020)	Relationships with professionals	**The quality of relationships that young people form with professionals impacts their relationships with services. Reliable, trustworthy and stable relationships with professionals were important to young people experiencing transition, especially for boys and young men who were hesitant to express feelings and fully engage with systems. Relationships strengthened when young people felt professionals cared and helped practically. However, feeling judged produced negative impacts for young people and the resulting loss of trust affected their relationship with service/s. Professionals need to be patient, realistic and recognise the impact that trauma history has on the relationships service users build with them. Systems need to recognise how vicarious trauma can impact the wellbeing of workers and service users (since**
Young people described their relationships with workers as reinforcing of their self-worth, giving them a feeling of belonging and of being cared for. (Ellem, K., et al., 2020)		
In contrast, young people also reported negative interactions with workers that affected them detrimentally. Feelings of judgment, lack of care and other negative experiences resulted in a loss o trust in workers, the system and reinforced young people's sense of hopelessness and abandonment during transitions. (Ellem, K., et al., 2020)		
"Planting seeds to foster youth-provider relationships. Patience during "honeymoon phase" of exploitation. Depersonalizing defensiveness and resistance related to trauma history.		

Adopting realistic expectations.(Hampton, M. D. (2020)"		**quality and continuity of service can be affected).**
Many young people reported positive experiences with individual social workers (rather than social services in general), placing importance on their individual attributed. Many also placed importance on school as a positive place for them. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
Relationships with support workers during a period of transition are key to supporting boys and young men to express feelings, find identity, acceptance and to engage with someone who can be relied upon (Beech, 2018)		
Integrating support systems for CSEY service providers to manage vicarious trauma and acute/chronic stress. Vicarious trauma from exposure to CSEY clients' trauma. Difficulty maintaining healthy boundaries for self-preservation. Frequent staff turnover due to acute and chronic stress. Agency-level support and leadership (Hampton, M. D., 2020)	Views of the care system	
There was a contrast between those that have previously received support and those accessing – more reflection evident from those that have previously received support compared to those currently receiving. (Beech, 2018)		

"Improved CSEY identification methods. Reliance on observation and chance for identification due to lack of universal screening process. Missed opportunities to identify youth in the community. (Hampton, M. D., 2020)"	Problems with the system	
The rigidity of social work procedures hindered relationship building between young people and social workers. Young people were acutely aware of this. (Abel, G., & Wahab, S., 2017)		
Young people felt that their self-identified wants and needs were not seen as legitimate by social workers, who followed guidelines without allowing room for young people's own interpretations of their needs. (Abel, G., & Wahab, S., 2017)		
Young people trading sex resisted being labelled as 'at risk'. They anticipated negative reactions from social workers who found out they were trading sex and did not always conceptualise themselves as being at risk. They did not see themselves as victims of sex work. (Abel, G., & Wahab, S., 2017)		
"CSE takes many different forms within the gang environment and it is difficult to estimate its prevalence due to lack of reporting. (Beckett et al, 2013)"		
"Professional services are not yet effectively identifying and tackling cases of gang-related CSE. This includes a lack of inter-agency working, and a lack of longer-term support services. (Beckett et al, 2013)"		

There was an absence of services for young people experiencing CSE, including an absence of transition services. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
"Young people often found it difficult to leave their situation (Dank, M. et al., 2015)"		
"Resolving ambiguous feelings and professional practices regarding **views of CSEY as victims versus criminals**. Service provider ambivalence regarding "safety" of criminal justice response vs. inadequate support services following anti-trafficking legislation. (Hampton, M. D., 2020)		
Young people were highly aware and sensitised to the instability in their lives, and many argued for improving the level of continuity of workers, as the stop and start relationships with workers were difficult to manage. Lack of continuity of workers is among the most dispiriting barriers to having their young people's needs met as having to share deeply traumatic experiences with new workers left them frustrated. Constant disruptions to paid relationships interfered with young people's wellbeing and experiences of transition. (Ellem, K., et al., 2020)	Continuity of care	
The main challenges young people identified with interacting with social workers was in building relationships. The high turnover of social workers limited the opportunity for young people to build a long-term +relationship (Abel, G., & Wahab, S., 2017)		
School was a positive alternative to troubled life. P. 389 (Hines, A. M., et al., 2005)	Education	

Many of the most high-risk boys and young men may not access mainstream education, and for this reason educational programmes also need to be delivered in a more targeted way. (Thomas & Speyer, 2016)		
No recollection of receiving meaningful sex or relationship education whilst at school, for some it was non-existent or awkward. There was a Limited knowledge of sex and relationships, including sexual consent, from boys, whose understanding was mostly gained from social media and pornography. (Beech, 2018)		
Exclusion from school is more prevalent now and may present a further risk factor in CSE vulnerability; the importance of a level of engagement at critical personal moments.(Beech, 2018)		
Transitional searching for new attachments, leading to new social networks. The transition from primary to secondary school was described by participants as significant in terms of the new types of people they encountered and formed relationships with. Many described this as a transition where they became involved with ‘the wrong people’. (Beech, 2018)		

Synthesised Finding 6: Familial, social and systemic environments that create conducive contexts for CSE lack necessary resources, social capital, and care to offer routes out of CSE. Such resource-depleted environments were also ill-equipped to support young people in transitioning out of CSE, and this was particularly so for LGBTQ+ youth. Lack of formal and informal support was exacerbated by transition between settings. However, where there was support from education, fostering services or specialist 'safe spaces', young people were able to form trusting relationships with non-abusive adults.

Findings	Categories	Synthesised finding
For participants, placement in congregate settings underscored difficulties they personally experienced or observed.P.7 (Simmons-Horton, S.Y., 2020)	Housing	**Familial, social and systemic environments that create conducive contexts for CSE lack necessary resources, social capital, and care to offer routes out of CSE. Such resource-depleted environments were also ill-equipped to support young people in transitioning out of CSE, and this was particularly so for LGBTQ+ youth. Lack of formal and informal support was exacerbated by transition between settings. However, where there was support from education, fostering services or specialist 'safe spaces', young people were able to form trusting relationships with non-abusive adults.**
"The majority of young people reported some positive aspects of ‘survival sex’, mostly in regards to it providing them with money and shelter. (Dank, M. et al., 2015)"		
Family: Living arrangements – exclusion from home or unstable living arrangements led to lack of control over their lives, lack of self-esteem and vulnerability to exploitation (Beech, 2018)		
The movement of youths from street to street and town to town is a crucial factor in their exposure to sexual exploitation and these cross jurisdictional journeys have important implications. (Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E., 2009)		
Improved access to community services through resource development, inter-agency collaboration, and service provider training. Lack of or insufficient community resources, particularly housing, income, and education. Lack of collaboration between CSEY-serving organizations.		

Learning by trial and error due to lack of systematic service provider training. (Hampton, M. D., 2020)		
These attributes enabled these young people to form connections with non-abusive adults. Young people also found that educational and foster care systems functioned as ‘safe havens’, providing them with opportunities to build new relationships. Emphasises the importance of the young person’s attributes in enabling these opportunities (Hines, A. M., et al., 2005)	Safe spaces	
The need to express sexuality led to the participant not only having no safe place to live but also their experience of homophobia was increased. (Beech, 2018)		

Appendix 5: Study findings and illustrations

Abel, G., & Wahab, S. (2017). "Build a friendship with them": The discourse of "at-risk" as a barrier to relationship building between young people who trade sex and social workers. Child and Family Social Work, 22, 1391–1398.	
Finding 1	The main challenges young people identified with interacting with social workers was in building relationships. The high turnover of social workers limited the opportunity for young people to build a long-term +relationship.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'Because of the high turnover of case workers there was little chance of a long-lasting relationship. "Good" social workers were ones who were perceived as caring about them, listened to them, and made efforts to address their needs.' P. 1393.
Finding 2	The rigidity of social work procedures hindered relationship building between young people and social workers. Young people were acutely aware of this.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'The young people in this study understood the impact of organisational guidelines and procedures on the ways they were managed by social workers. For example, Robert argued that the restrictions put on social workers prevented the development of a relationship with the social worker. "I think a big problem with CYF would be they have such a book of rules to follow, so like you don't really get a say when it comes to CYF. Like they sort of want to make all the decisions. … I reckon it would be better if social workers had more options on what they could do to suit like the needs of the young person"', p. 1393.
Finding 3	Young people felt that their self-identified wants and needs were not seen as legitimate by social workers, who followed guidelines without allowing room for young people's own interpretations of their needs.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'Young people in this study believed that their narratives of their families and experiences competed with the "expert knowledge" created by social workers.' P. 1394. ● 'Robert conceded that the social worker may have been right in saying that it was unsafe for him to be left with his mother, and resented the way that the social worker went about it, which he framed as problematic. The social worker was "looking in" at his family and making judgements based on their own knowledge of what a family should look like—something he took exception to'. P. 1394,
Finding 4	Young people trading sex resisted being labelled as 'at risk'. They anticipated negative reactions from social workers who found out they were trading sex and did not always conceptualise themselves as being at risk. They did not see themselves as victims of sex work.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'They could not trust social workers to not "dob" them in and inform authorities. Margaret talked of young people needing someone to talk to about their problems yet feeling that a social worker was not the right person. "You have to sit there and try and be somebody else, because if you just sit there and tell them the truth, it's going to get you nowhere, if that makes any sense. Well a youth that's working on the street's going to be way too scared to tell their social worker that they're working on the streets"' p. 1395.
Thomas & Speyer (2016). I never spoke about it. Supporting sexually exploited boys and young men in Wales. England: Barnardo's.	

Finding 1	Negative experiences of care and family life are known to create vulnerabilities which can lead to a higher risk of sexual exploitation as children become adolescents, for boys as well as girls
Illustration/ evidence	• One of the most pertinent outcomes, in relation to this research, is that more than double the number of boys had experienced 'early sexual initiation', that is sex before the age of 16, compared to girls.P.16 • 'for kids who are used to growing up in dysfunctional, unsafe environments, who are used to sofa surfing, walking the streets late at night, being homeless for periods of time, not having a secure family base, giving somebody a blow job in a station for £20 is actually an exchange they can live with at least. And I think there is a degree of denial about it. P.15
Finding 2	Social isolation, both from peers and family, can make boys and young men more vulnerable to exploitation. Having friends, as well as access to group activities, facilitates emotional wellbeing and a sense of belonging. LGBT young people, as well as young people with learning disabilities, were more at risk of social isolation.
Illustration/ evidence	• 'For adolescents, peers and a sense of belonging are fundamental to their emotional wellbeing. Peers facilitate the development of personal identity and social status. Partaking in sport and group activities is a part of this. Not having support to access these opportunities can mean a boy can be left exposed to risk as perpetrators identify and exploit this need.' P. 16. • 'Young people with a learning disability are also at higher risk of social isolation compared to their peers. A number of our interviewees spoke about their experience of working with boys whose learning disability had played a key part in their becoming vulnerable to sexual exploitation.' P.17. • 'Such discrimination can lead to social isolation, exposing boys to risk, particularly if the family are not accepting and supportive of their son's sexual identity.' P. 17.
Finding 3	3Boys face barriers to being identified as at risk as a result of gendered stereotypes. Professionals were more likely to view boys as more able to protect themselves and as perpetrators of abuse rather than victims. Professionals were less likely to look past boys' negative behaviour than girls'.
Illustration/ evidence	• 'There's a sense that boys should be able to protect themselves more, whereas with girls… there's a societal view that they need protecting.' P. 27. • 'With the boys that came through, there was an uncertainty with professionals around whether they were victims or perpetrators in almost all the cases.' P. 28. • 'Our girls are a really feisty bunch, and in comparison to the boys, they are just as feisty. But when I go on school visits, foster care visits, residential care visits, if I'm going for a boy, people want to tell me about the conduct stuff… [how] they're getting excluded from school, sent outside the classroom, getting into fights – they want to tell me that. They don't necessarily tell me that about the girls. So I'll go to school and I'll ask and it's there – the behaviour's there – but you know, she's vulnerable, she's a victim, we know why she's doing it so we don't need to tell you because we can explain that bit so that's fine…' p. 27.
Finding 4	More safe places are needed to provide the opportunity for boys to seek support and think through their sexual feelings and experiences.
Illustration/ evidence	• The adult survivor we interviewed made the point that, while the issue could be raised in a group situation, private, confidential one-to-one work should

	also be available as a follow-on. Nobody should be expected to disclose or talk about a personal abuse experience within a group situation. P.44 ● With boys it's a little bit more difficult because of adolescence and their feelings and emotions… which are sometimes giving them mixed messages. I've had some boys say to me [that] they thought they were gay once. They've never had the opportunity to speak to someone else where they've said that's normal, other boys have been through that, because sometimes it's difficult for other boys to be able to openly say, "oh yeah, I've had feelings and thoughts about boys", because then that would be it for them, you know, so those experiences and an outlet to have that are non-existent.P.44
Finding 5	Lack of gender balance in educational tools has an impact on the messaging on healthy relationships.
Illustration/ evidence	● The young people we spoke to also agreed that their experience of resources to educate and raise awareness about CSE was that most contained gender bias.P.42 ● 'Videos are often about girl's sexual exploitation.' ● 'Need to minimise the sterotypical approaches to relationship education – it gets me mad sometimes'. P.42 ● Boys don't want to come forward because they might not know that there is a service for them.' 'Lack of visible images.P.47
Finding 6	6. Many of the most high-risk boys and young men may not access mainstream education, and for this reason educational programmes also need to be delivered in a more targeted way.
Illustration/ evidence	● I think schools are good because it's generic, but… we need to be in the PRUs [pupil referral units], because that's where our vulnerable children are… Like last night, there were more boys in the youth provision than there were girls. So I think we need to get to those informal educational places you know and…if we're saying that boys are in the criminal justice system, then we need to be focusing there as well.P.42
Finding 7	Limited opportunities in rural and urban settings for gay, bisexual and questioning boys to socialise with other LGBTQ young people in safe environments local to where they live coupled with discriminatory social attitudes, can sometimes increase young people's risk of exposure to sexual exploitation as they struggle to find acceptance.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'We don't have much of an LGBT society… and because we don't have much of a scene… I don't see then how young people, have that opportunity to explore, or to ask questions, or be able to find like-minded people that they can open up to. P.45
Finding 8	Specialist professionals' experiences of working with boys who had experienced CSE show that the process of engaging them took longer than it did with girls, and that the practitioner should be aware of social stereotypes and how they may have impacted on the boys' feelings of self-esteem and identity.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'I think people have to stop and think about what engages boys. I think there has to be recognition that boys are different from girls in lots of ways. Obviously there's lots of commonalities as well, but there are lots of differences, so in terms of how you engage with boys, particularly around these subject matters, because that whole societal thing about boys not being victims, well boys share that as well. They share that idea that they can't be

	victims, particularly in a sexual context, so that's something that's really difficult to overcome.P.46 ● 'It's really hard for males to talk. Really, really hard, and I think the difference is we need to understand that males are going to take much longer to open up. Work with males needs to be done over a longer period of time than with females because it's hidden with females, [but] it's even more hidden with males, and they find it very hard to speak out about, because of that whole… [issue] around their sexuality and them being judged, being believed.P.46
Beckett et al (2013) '"It's wrong…but we get used to it": A qualitative study of gang-associated sexual violence towards, and exploitation of, young people in England.' Children's commissioner (2013)	
Finding 1	Gang-based CSE is influenced by wider patterns of CSE. Young women were more likely to report having experienced sexual forms of exploitation than young men.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'Young women, as a whole, were less highly esteemed within the gang environment than males. Most participants asserted, or inadvertently indicated, that young women were frequently objectified, used and/or controlled within the gang environment, although many did note that this was by no means unique to that setting. P. 18. ● 'Although the general consensus amongst participants was that sexual violence and exploitation within gangs was uniquely influenced by the environment in which it occurred (see section 3.5), many were also keen to highlight the influence of wider societal culture upon this and similar examples of sexual violence or exploitation in other settings and to inextricably link sexual victimisation within gangs to these wider manifestations of the same' p. 24.
Finding 2	CSE takes many different forms within the gang environment and it is difficult to estimate its prevalence due to lack of reporting.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'Unfortunately, whilst many sites were able to provide information on gang-associated offending and sexual offending as distinct categories, they did not hold existing data sets that cross-referenced sexual offending with gang-association'. P. 25. ● 'Examples of sexual violence towards, and/or sexual exploitation of, young women were shared by virtually all of the 96 participants who discussed incidents of gang-associated sexual violence or exploitation within their interviews. As noted previously, however, not all explicitly conceptualised them as such'. P. 25. ● 'Participants identified a range of different forms of sexual exploitation or sexual violence against young women within the gang environment, with four out of five identifying several different forms'. P.25. ● 'Almost half (47%) of those who identified examples of gang-associated sexual violence or exploitation did so with reference to the exchange of sex for money (23%) or sex in return for other tangible goods (39%), most frequently drugs and/or alcohol or the discharge of a debt associated with these' p. 33.

	● ‘One of the most frequently identified forms of sexual exploitation (identified by half of those who identified cases of sexual violence or exploitation) was that of sexual activity in exchange for non-tangible goods, specifically status and/or protection’. p.33.
Finding 3	A young woman’s risk of exploitation varies according to status within the gang. A young person’s relative positioning within the gang environment could have a direct bearing upon his or her risk and experience of sexual violence or exploitation
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘Also like familial relations, girlfriends were noted to have a protected status within their boyfriend’s gang; as one 16 year old young man explained it: “they would know not to mess with my girlfriend” (Participant Y2). This protected status was, however, much more tenuous than that afforded to family members, lasting only so long as the relationship did’. P. 36. ● ‘Some participants talked of young women achieving an elevated status via pregnancy by a gang-involved male, whilst others spoke of it in primarily negative terms’ p. 37. ● Young women who engaged in casual sexual interactions with one or more members of the gang (also known as ‘links’ or ‘pass arounds’) were the group of young women noted to be most at risk of sexual violence and exploitation within the gang environment. P.37.
Finding 4	While less common, young men were also at risk of sexual exploitation. Almost all reports of this were from third parties rather than victims, indicating that men were less willing to report being a victim of sexual exploitation.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘Incidents of rape or sexual assault of young men were generally presented as discrete incidents, with a clear gang-related motivation, rather than indicative of a wider social phenomenon of sexual violence against young males. The incidents identified included cases of rape, forced stripping and non-consensual recording of sexual activity, used both as a means of initiation into a gang and as a means of humiliating a rival gang member’. p. 40 ● “Obviously if it happened to a person they’d be too embarrassed to say this happened to me… Cos like if a boy got assaulted by another boy like, obviously sexually, he would never report it cos he’d be like, obviously you’re always gonna be labelled as like a homosexual... you might feel sorry for him yeah, but you’d think like how didn’t you defend yourself, you’re supposed to be a man...”’. p. 40.
Finding 5	Professional services are not yet effectively identifying and tackling cases of gang-related CSE. This includes a lack of inter-agency working, and a lack of longer-term support services.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘Participants across both the interview and focus group phases of the research identified a range of potential explanations for the low levels of reporting observed across the research. Beyond that of resignation to the existence of such experiences considered above, these included (i) judgement by others, (ii) fear of retaliation and (iii) a lack of faith in services’ ability to protect them.’ P. 43.

	• "Then the reality of that is that they may get immediate support from the authorities... but what about the one year, two year legacy after they've reported it and that support has gone away and they're then left within the same community that they're living in, having to face the people who they've reported on. That's a bit of a reality check for young people reporting it because they know that and they're the one who's got to live that experience... And even if that individual is taken out of the community, what happens is their family gets disrespected in the community... the support you get isn't enough for you, to see right through... It feels like a lot of the services are crisis focused"' [professional focus group F] p. 46. • 'Although some services are beginning to engage in work with young women, many others appear to continue to operate on the assumption that only young men are at risk of being associated with, and victimised by, gangs – and that this victimisation only takes physical forms.' P. 46. • 'Silo working across different agencies and strands of work (child protection and gangs initiatives, for example) and a lack of knowledge of how one's practice fits within wider relevant strategies and operational initiatives; • A consequent lack of information-sharing between agencies; • Inadequate partnership-working and cross-fertilisation of learning between gangs and sexual exploitation/ sexual violence initiatives' p.46.
Finding 6	Young women were also exposed to considerable levels of physical violence within the gang environment. This could be as unintended targets caught up in intra-male violence or, as was more frequently noted to be the case, as a means controlling their behaviour and/or as punishment for having transgressed gang expectations.
Illustration/ evidence	• "I've seen girls get shot...they get caught in the crossfire. I seen a girl get shot with a baby in her arms. These kids came down and bam shot her, she was with some of my old crew and bam they came down and shot her" (Participant F, 23 year old young man).P. 20 • "I walked in a party one time, honest to God I walked in a party and I looked around and I didn't even know what was going on. There was like a big room, it was full and there was loads of gang members, guys, and they was all just like swarmed into the middle and I didn't even know what was going on until I like, I fighted my way through like that and seen every single one of them are beating this one girl up on the floor… There must have been about more than 17 guys, they're fighting each other to get to this girl...That's because she got seen and there was rumours going around that she was going out with someone from the opposite side" (Participant N, 24 year old young man) P.20
Finding 7	A strong theme that emerged from the research was that of a double victimisation in which young women were not only harmed, but also apportioned blame for this harm.
Illustration/ evidence	• A number of participants offered commentary along the following themes: she knew what she was getting into; boys have to act that way because girls are untrustworthy and cause trouble; or her actions and attitudes brought it upon herself. P.21

	● Also observed was the double-standards applied to young men's and women's sexual behaviour and the associated motif that a young woman's sexual presentation and/or (perceived) sexual reputation was justification for sexual violence and abuse. P.21
Finding 8	Sexually based initiation processes involving young women (either seeking to be part of the gang themselves or as part of the process of male initiation) was an identified form of gang-specific sexual violence/exploitation.
Illustration/ evidence	● "This girl came to school upset really. She had sex with every boy in a gang just to be part of their gang, and it was really terrible when I heard about this, and I do remember, she came to school crying... I think it probably was under pressure, because she wanted to be a part of them and they gave her an option" (Participant W3, 16 year old young woman) P.28 ● "It nearly happened to me once. I was in a gang, and the boys were like, if you want to stay in this gang, you have to have sex with me...And I'm like 'I have to? I don't have to do anything... d'you know what I'll see you another time' So I left" (Participant S3, 19 year old young woman) P.28
Beech et al (2018). Boys 2. Development of tools and resources to better identify and engage boys and young males at risk of CSE and CSA.	
Finding 1	Family environment, support, complex living: Participants reported a lack of parental support/ parenting, including in teaching them simple skills to look after themselves. Participants who had experienced an unstable family home and had witnessed or experienced emotional or physical abuse were adversely affected.
Illustration/ evidence	● " … it was mainly me getting the abuse, so well, like I think, he hit my mum once and she was gonna chuck him out and then the second time he hit her she threw him out but this was in between me getting it like almost every day …" p.12. ● "My Dad left when we was- when we was three I think … [then] had my little brother's Dad for like two years after that for like three years and then he left and then my next brother's Dad about four years after." P. 16.
Finding 2	The need to express sexuality led to the participant not only having no safe place to live but also their experience of homophobia was increased.
Illustration/ evidence	1. "I couldn't be, like, open about, you know, what was going on with my sexuality or anything." P.12. 2. " … they [online community] was the first people to know I was gay they was the first people to know I'd met my boyfriend M and I'd never really spoke to my parents about things …" p. 14. 3. " … bad relationship with parents is certainly one of those things er it can make you feel- and certainly if you've got no outlets like I had it can make you feel incredibly isolated you know I felt that until I found those outlets I was incredibly just uh lonely I guess an' you know as a fourteen fifteen year old you don't wanna be feeling like you've got nobody." P. 14.
Finding 3	Family: Living arrangements – exclusion from home or unstable living arrangements led to lack of control over their lives, lack of self-esteem and vulnerability to exploitation
Illustration/ evidence	● "all of a sudden cos I didn't have control over who lived there I was like surrounded by you know people smoking crack erm one guy was like a pimp like he was friends 16 with the crackheads and stuff like that was going on and people on the run from prison just doing like bad shit basically …" pp. 15-16.

	• " … I'd been referred [for support] even though at that point I'd been just staying at friends most of the time because of erm the relationship that was happening at home with my mum erm I was then kicked out by my mum and then I was homeless for like two weeks and then my dad said he'd take me in then I left there cos his wife didn't really like me that much and then I moved to my nan's and then my- I was like a- my grandad was like not er really pro-gay so he started to clock on and then I had to kinda leave there and then I lived with my auntie and then after some messed up stuff happened to her and I was like around it a lot and then I ended up getting my own place when I was like just turned sixteen … p. 16.
Finding 4	School – sex education No recollection of receiving meaningful sex or relationship education whilst at school, for some it was non-existent or awkward. There was a Limited knowledge of sex and relationships, including sexual consent, from boys, whose understanding was mostly gained from social media and pornography.
Illustration/ evidence	• "Well the only sex ed I've had is knowing how to put a condom on a penis." P. 18. • "If there were sex scenes on the TV my mother would always cover my eyes so I couldn't see." P. 20.
Finding 5	Exclusion from school is more prevalent now and may present a further risk factor in CSE vulnerability; the importance of a level of engagement at critical personal moments
Illustration/ evidence	• "I enjoyed primary school erm secondary school no it was just terrible obviously got • kicked out of H first and then just went on from there really." P. 22.
Finding 6	Young people's experiences led to the need to seeking and find acceptance. This resulted in finding 'their people' or place in life (illegal partying, drug taking and subsequent exploitation. Swapping somewhere to sleep for sex, not explicitly referred to as non-consensual).
Illustration/ evidence	• 'The result of, apparently, finding 'their people', for many, actually meant illegal partying, drug taking and subsequent exploitation. However, this equated to finding acceptance for who they felt they were at the time, despite a widespread acknowledgement amongst the young men, as opposed to the boys, that, in fact, they had not found their people or place in life at all. Whilst this was common amongst the participants, the young men also talked about knowing (in the moments they found themselves homeless for example) that what they would be swapping a bed for the night for, was sex. No one explicitly spoke about this being nonconsensual, however, they did acknowledge their primary motivation in that situation had been to find a safe place to sleep that night' p. 42.
Finding 7	Support from friends is important, times of transition can bring emotional loneliness, support or abandonment of friends has consequences for CSE vulnerability as young men participants sought validation elsewhere.
Illustration/ evidence	• 'Not only did friends appear to provide a contribution to the emotional loneliness felt by an individual, for others they helped to combat it: "Yeah course they're my best friends I keep close innit like cos I know I can say som'ing and they won't tell anyone like." Pp. 23-24. • "I was left on my own quite a bit erm at school" p. 23

Finding 8	Transitional searching for new attachments, leading to new social networks. The transition from primary to secondary school was described by participants as significant in terms of the new types of people they encountered and formed relationships with. Many described this as a transition where they became involved with 'the wrong people'
Illustration/ evidence	● "… weren't helpful at all tried to lead you off a different kind of path and did for a while." P. 24. ● " … loads of my friends were around him he's giving everyone drugs hanging out at his house like I wanted to hang out with my friends and you know and party and stuff like that and I would just end up in positions where is was like you know very like wasted on ketamine or whatever and he'd do stuff to me …" p.25 ● "… my friends they support me with everything I do and they- they're they're always by my side when I needed them the most … Like say if I wanted to like do something like a different course or like go somewhere and that lot they'll support me by like showing that they care about me …" p. 27
Finding 9	Relationships with support workers during a period of transition are key to supporting boys and young men to express feelings, find identity, acceptance and to engage with someone who can be relied upon
Illustration/ evidence	● "I found when I met P like you know he talked to me like on a level that I didn't really talk to other guys like you know I thought everyone was either just didn't like me or was like judging me you know for being gay and all that kinda stuff and I never really got that from P and erm he was kinda like he's [creative] as well and so am I and he kind of encouraged that and like gave me a vision of like the future where I can actually live a kind of life I was hoping for …" p. 27. ● " … you haven't created this bond with them yet you've not seen them around the school like you did with the school counsellor or anything like that you've not in that way you've sort of been introduced to them a little bit like oh yeah I know like if it was they're not a familiar face you know they're not a familiar face …" p. 28.
Finding 10	Personal risks and vulnerabilities – homelessness, coming from a broken home, being young and gay, in the care system, for the older group of young men drugs, alcohol, parties
Illustration/ evidence	● "I was you know being groomed and like manipulated and stuff like that and they knew I was from like a broken home and like I had issues and stuff like that and erm yeah it still affects me now to be honest like but I just have to work through it …" p. 29.
Finding 11	Homelessness was not the biggest risk indicator for CSE vulnerability. For older participants, drugs, money and partying behaviours were reported by the participants as clear indicators they felt were often ignored by school.
Illustration/ evidence	● "I'd say drugs because people never seem to question where erm you know for instance when I was younger I had no money my mum wouldn't give me any money … where is he getting the alcohol from where is he getting these cigarettes where is he getting these drugs like you know I think that's the major- the first sign …" p. 29.

	• "someone lashing out you know at people when it seems a bit like unjustified or you're maybe like 'why are they doing that?" p. 29. • "… if someone says, 'Oh I have a boyfriend' but you never see them and it's not that they're just like in another school somewhere it's just that I have a boyfriend but nondescript details of it …" p. 29.
Finding 12	Young men reflected on their experience and personal development, supported by Barnardos. There was a contrast between those that have previously received support and those accessing – more reflection evident from those that have previously received support compared to those currently receiving. Young men made suggestions of interventions – computer games, protected Twitter accounts, texting. Not an App because app would be visible to a perpetrator if they checked the phone. Barnardos supported those who received services to gain knowledge and understanding of selves as individuals, build self-esteem, self-confidence and belief.
Illustration/ evidence	• "… just think about your future like really work towards what you want because this period of your life isn't your whole life like your whole life is ahead of you and to get where you want to go you have to like work for it you know and you have to make sure you're in a position to go after what you want and even though you went through some shit now that's not nice you can make your life great still." P.31 • "If I were to give advice I would just say just take a step back from what's happening think about what- what's going on and that lot and like think what could you do to like prevent it happening like no one can't tell you what to do about it but apart from yourself." P. 31. • 'Some talked in terms of helping boys currently at risk of sexual exploitation through computer games, protected Twitter accounts and texting. The one thing that did come through, although not overly strongly, was that an intervention designed around an application (app) that could be downloaded onto a mobile phone would not be suitable for those currently experiencing sexual exploitation because theapp would be visible to the perpetrator should they check a mobile phone' pp. 42-43.
Dank, M., Yahner, J., Madden, K., Banuelos, I., Yu, L., Ritchie, Mitchyll, M., & Conner, B. (2015). Surviving the streets of New York: Experiences of LGBTQ youth, YMSM, and YWSW engaged in survival sex. Washington, DC: Urban Institute. Retrieved from http://www.urban.org/research/publication/surviving-streets-newyork-experiences-lgbtq-youth-ymsm-and-ywsw-engaged-survival-sex	
Finding 1	Of the youth who had experienced exploitation, most were in an exploitative situation for more than a year. While there was no difference by race of sexual orientation, there was a highly significant gender difference, where cisgender women were far more likely to experience exploitation.

Illustration/ evidence	● ‘Seventy-eight percent were in the exploitative situation for a year or more, 22 percent were in the situation for several months, and just under one in ten were still involved with the exploiter.’ p. 52. ● ‘Although there were no differences by sexual orientation or race in youths’ likelihood of experiencing exploitation, there was a highly significant gender difference. Cisgender women had the highest percentage of exploitation (34 percent)’ p. 52.
Finding 2	Young people often met exploiters through friends or family, and frequently met them while they were homeless.
Illustration/ evidence	4. ‘Youth frequently met their exploiters while they were homeless and living on the streets. One youth met an exploiter after running away from a residential treatment program and being approached at night on the street: Interviewee: Honestly okay that night I had been away from [location in New York State]. I used to live in [residential treatment program]. I had run away from there so I had nowhere to go and I happen to be roaming around the street because one of my friends stood me up. So walking in the street cold as hell and I see it’s a school night and I see a little boy outside and in my mind I’m like it’s a school night what are you doing outside?’ P. 53. 5. My sister met him…It was one of those. Met through a friend and she got hooked on him p.49.
Finding 3	The majority of young people reported some positive aspects of ‘survival sex’, mostly in regards to it providing them with money and shelter.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘There’s only two positive things that I found, the fact that it helps you survive and the second thing is that I felt that it made me stronger because it’s like I’m able to go through these tough situations while being in the streets and able to live with it throughout my whole life, but it shows how much I am willing to determine to keep living and surviving and not let death take a hold of me.’ p. 56
Finding 4	However, they also reported negative perceptions of survival sex, particularly in dealing with customers, feeling degraded, and feeling alone.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘It makes me feel like less of a person . . . because, it’s I was raised to treat my body as a temple and I don’t do that anymore . . . Now I just, it’s just an object of getting money it is, it’s not something I would, like I said it’s not something I would suggest somebody to do. It’s not something I encourage people to do. But you have to do what you must do to survive’ p. 63.
Finding 5	The vast majority of young people wanted to stop trading sex, and when asked what would services would help them, common answers include employment, obtaining housing and education. Others reported needing counselling or other support.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘For me to stop trading sex I need to have a continuous and comfortable job, have a place to stay, just have my own stuff, then I won’t need to have to do it, have food, continuously. And not having somebody over my shoulder you know, telling me what I should do, I want to be able to do it myself as a woman’ p. 63.
Finding 6	Young people often found it difficult to leave their situation
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘The system needs to change themselves. They just need to say hey and look at the reviews like what people actually going through. And like to get something done like so they can provide themselves is hard. Especially if you are really young and you have nowhere to go. You have no place. I don’t have my family, I don’t have nothing else but a shelter and to have sex to get money so it’s hard’. p. 64.

	● ‘Many youth reported disappointing or frustrating experiences with social services systems and providers, which often fail to meet their need for safe housing, reliable income, and adequate mental and physical health care, as well as for freedom, independence, and self-expression.’ P. 80.
Finding 7	Average age of entry into CSE was 16-17 years old, often coinciding with when youth were either aging out of foster care or being kicked out by family.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘I actually stopped for a while I was employed and then I got laid off and it’s like when you go from—I call it pulling— when you go from pulling to working and you don’t really want to get back into the workforce just yet, but you know you need the money . . . I would say the only hard part about being in the workforce is the fact that, you don’t get to see your money as readily as you do when you are pulling’. P. 61. ● ‘We found the average age to be between 16 and 17 years old. Based on the narratives we heard, this tended to be the age when youths felt comfortable coming out to their parents, which led to them being kicked or thrown out of their homes. This age was also important for those in the foster care system because it marked when they started to realise that they were close to aging out of the system and would soon be forced to figure out how they would survive on their own.’ P. 68.
Ellem, K., et al. (2020). "Transcending the professional–client divide: Supporting young people with complex support needs through transitions." Child & Adolescent Social Work Journal 37, pp. 109-122	
Finding 1	Relationships between young people and workers were built up when workers made practical contributions to young people’s lives.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘Daniel, for example, spoke about the many ways in which workers who had entered and exited his life, had shaped his identity and restored in him a sense of trust in relationships—“Those people have helped craft who I am, my personality, my likes, dislikes, and everything like that. And I know I can count on them if I need anything in the future.” Young people also reported how engagement with workers could sometimes be a potent mitigating factor against the negative outcomes of transitions’ p. 113.
Finding 2	Young people described their relationships with workers as reinforcing of their self-worth, giving them a feeling of belonging and of being cared for.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘Robert, who depicted himself as an invincible, magical super hero in his body map (capturing his transition through drug-induced psychosis), saw his social worker as someone he could communicate with deeply. According to Robert, the worker conveyed an ability to listen to him, had “…seen what was going through my mind”, and accepted him without judgment’ p. 113.
Finding 3	In contrast, young people also reported negative interactions with workers that affected them detrimentally. Feelings of judgment, lack of care and other negative experiences resulted in a loss of trust in workers, the system and reinforced young people’s sense of hopelessness and abandonment during transitions.
Illustration/ evidence	● ‘Lucy’s worker supported her to keep her three cats in her new permanent home, displayed on the body map by Lucy (Fig. 3) as a distinct house with a sun behind it, depicting its positive association…Through recognising the central importance of Lucy’s cats in her life, and ensuring that her ‘family’ could stay together, Lucy’s

	worker safeguarded one of the most stabilising and valued influences in Lucy's life.' p. 114
Finding 4	Young people described their relationships with workers as reinforcing of their self-worth, giving them a feeling of belonging and of being cared for.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'Such relationships, which evidenced workers' willingness to exceed the paid functions of their roles, potentially crossing professional boundaries, were seen by young people as genuinely caring, as Grounded explained, "This [current organisation] is probably the most helpful because I feel she actually cares. With [other organisation] all they do is hand me money, they're not doing anything else."' The surgeon who undertook Sara's liver surgery was described as motivating her interest in medicine which, at the time of data collection, Sara was pursuing in her tertiary studies. P. 116.
Finding 5	In contrast, young people also reported negative interactions with workers that affected them detrimentally. Feelings of judgment, lack of care and other negative experiences resulted in a loss of trust in workers, the system and reinforced young people's sense of hopelessness and abandonment during transitions.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'Grounded talked about how workers congregated in an outdoor area of the residential care home to smoke and discuss the young people who lived there, acts which engendered dual effects of feeling criticised and hopeless—"like they're out there smoking and chatting to one another and I feel like I'm being judged. So I'd go back inside and give up again." P. 116. ● 'Where workers undermined young people's safety and dignity, and failed to listen, follow through on promises, or engage with them in ways that generated positive outcomes, young people experienced a loss of trust in workers and systems. As Grounded indicated, these types of workers were seen as reflections of uncaring organisations that demonstrated no real interest in, or attention to, young people's wellbeing—"There's no care. It's called care, but there's no care." P. 118.
Finding 6	Young people were highly aware and sensitised to the instability in their lives, and many argued for improving the level of continuity of workers, as the stop and start relationships with workers were difficult to manage. Lack of continuity of workers is among the most dispiriting barriers to having their young people's needs met as having to share deeply traumatic experiences with new workers left them frustrated. Constant disruptions to paid relationships interfered with young people's wellbeing and experiences of transition.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'Jess attributed her ongoing mental health issues to her perpetual life instability, adding that constant changes in workers and loss of paid relationships meant that she was never able to establish forward momentum through transitions: "Changing workers is kind of like you stop and start again. So, you get somewhere with one worker, and you have to go to another service. And, then if you're on medication, that all changes, because you have to see new doctors, but yeah, just the stop and starting…"' p. 118. ● 'A number of young people argued for improving the continuity of workers, including Olivia who said that "more stable relationships with workers" would have contributed

	• to better transition experiences. Jess agreed that “having one person” would have helped with the various transitions she had undergone, providing “something that actually stays the same” throughout her life’ p. 118.
Finding 7	Instability in young people’s informal supports often led to early, and sometimes extensive interactions with formal systems.
Illustration/ evidence	• ‘Participants sought assistance from, on average, four formal service systems during transitions.’ Many young people reported feelings of low self-worth and diminished agency during transitions, and more than three-quarters of participants had been diagnosed with or sought support for mental health issues. P.112. • ‘Service systems mentioned by young people included mental health, education and training, income support, homelessness and housing services, child protection (including out-of-home care and residential care), health, the justice system (including adult justice, youth justice and police contact), disability, alcohol and drug services, employment services, family and/or youth services, multicultural and refugee services.’P.113.
Hampton, M. D. (2020). "CSEY service provider perceptions of critical needs for effective care as youth transition from juvenile detention to the community." Child Abuse & Neglect 100: 1.	
Finding 1	Improved CSEY identification methods. Reliance on observation and chance for identification due to lack of universal screening process. Missed opportunities to identify youth in the community.
Illustration/ evidence	• “…I drive down the blade or the track every day, and on my way to work, I see girls out there working. When I get off work, I see girls out there working…So seeing that the activity is happening in my community, seeing that little was being done, kind of put it out there that we need to do more…to address the issue…girls [are] being approached on their way to school - because the blade is right next to the high school…Other girls…are recruiting younger girls on their way to school…it’s a big problem.” (Page 5)
Finding 2	Planting seeds to foster youth-provider relationships. Patience during “honeymoon phase” of exploitation. Depersonalizing defensiveness and resistance related to trauma history. Adopting realistic expectations.
Illustration/ evidence	• They always say that it’s hardest to get a girl out of the life right when she started because it’s still the honeymoon stage and it’s easier when…they’re just tired of it…because once they’ve been on that train, you’ve got to almost let the train go around the station a couple of times before they’re like, I’m done with this…I don’t want to do this anymore. • The way they talk to people is they’re very entitled. Rather than “may I have?” it’s “you need to get me…” And that can be very difficult to work with too because as soon as somebody comes at you like that, it makes you not want to help. • Another participant described these behavioral manifestations as a function of race and class in addition to trauma. • We’re mainly dealing with girls of color who are poor and they’re extremely traumatized…a lot of people will misinterpret their neediness…or their so-called defiance, and then kind of not want to work with them at all…And I learned very early that… nobody's going to be acting that way if they don’t feel they’re listened to or they’re valued or they don’t feel safe.

	• …an advocate talked to her the first night and then the following Monday…And she still didn't want to have anything to do with us. A few weeks later, she called and then she started coming in for services. She's still a participant to this day…So for me, [I thought] this is how we need to approach this issue. We're not going to get someone to change their mind the first time we contact them. Or the second time. It's going to have to be ongoing, planting those seeds. (all Page 5)
Finding 3	Improved access to community services through resource development, inter-agency collaboration, and service provider training. Lack of or insufficient community resources, particularly housing, income, and education. Lack of collaboration between CSEY-serving organizations. Learning by trial and error due to lack of systematic service provider training.
Illustration/ evidence	• Because for youth under the age of 18, I mean it's about housing…Legally there has to be somebody there to be taking care of this child. For youth over the age of 18, that doesn't exist. They are responsible for making sure they have somewhere to stay, somewhere to eat, that they're in a safe spot…for youth over the age of 18 there's a real lack of safe and affordable housing and they don't want to live in shelters. No one wants to live in a shelter. (Page 5) • …people feel like…I need that piece of the pie so we're not going to communicate with those people because they might take our piece of the pie if we tell them how we're doing things…you just have to throw that out of the window and work as collaboratively as you possibly can… you can't bring ego into this work. (Page 6) • I do feel weird sometimes. I hate the idea that the clients I work with are like props for my learning process…But I also do recognize that I'm learning through those cases and that I'll do this better in the future after thinking through this particular case as well. (Page 6)
Finding 4	Resolving ambiguous feelings and professional practices regarding views of CSEY as victims versus criminals. Service provider ambivalence regarding "safety" of criminal justice response vs. inadequate support services following anti-trafficking legislation.
Illustration/ evidence	• …I have a friend who is a cop…we come from very different places… I mean she's in it. She'll go into hotel rooms. She'll be on the street. The stuff she sees is the stuff of nightmares…I totally get her reaction to be like, let's keep them safe because I just saw them very unsafe, and [I] also know that there aren't really appropriate placements right now. Juvenile hall is not an appropriate placement…And the state laws just changed for all this. (Page 6)
Finding 5	Youth perceived judgment within faith-based service organizations. Youth perceived family views of exploitation as promiscuity.
Illustration/ evidence	• ….in a lot of households when parents find out, you know that their child is involved as a victim. They don't see it that way. They think they're, you know, getting out on the town…and they see it as sexual promiscuity. (Page 6)
Finding 6	Integrating support systems for CSEY service providers to manage vicarious trauma and acute/chronic stress.

	Vicarious trauma from exposure to CSEY clients' trauma. Difficulty maintaining healthy boundaries for self-preservation. Frequent staff turnover due to acute and chronic stress. Agency-level support and leadership
Illustration/ evidence	• And then finally she dealt with her third suicide in a day attempt. And the girl had turned blue and her eyes were red…she'd blown a lot of the blood vessels in her eyes…[the staff member] just started having nightmares, flashbacks, and she never came back…Normal people…don't have to get exposed to that…It's not like you see a stranger almost dead - you're seeing this kid that you've been pouring your heart and soul in…[staff] feel it's almost God's work, but they can't do it for a long time. (Page6) • …I think I do better in the crisis work than in the less crisis work. And saying no in those cases…is what I need to work on because…you can just keep giving and giving and giving. It could be unending…how do we set it up in a way…that's sustainable for both them and us? (Page 7) • I've never seen an organization not have a lot of turnover in working with the kind of trauma that we see…after juvenile hall [I] took a break from direct practice [for] a very nice office policy job for 2 ½ months and it was great…I like walked to work and I climbed on my lunch break and I ate well and I wasn't doing work that was emotionally draining…And for myself, I know that I can't do 100% direct practice. If I did, I would burn out in six months. (Page 7) • I knew if I didn't do it, nobody would. [It was] just kind of a team building…Just setting up events where having the staff go out hiking and stuff like that because it's such an intense job and if you don't develop those relationships with staff…it would be hard…I tried to make sure that they supported each other because there's really no other supports other than what they have for each other. (Page 7)
Hines, A. M., et al. (2005). "Former foster youth attending college: Resilience and the transition to young adulthood." American Journal of Orthopsychiatry 75(3): 381-394.	
Finding 1	Individual attributes such as independence, ability to accept help, determination to be different from abusive adults, and persistence were key factors in the ability of care leavers to achieve academic success. P.391
Illustration/ evidence	• 'All 14 respondents were also extremely independent and self-sufficient. They explained during the interviews that they were generally left on their own from a young age and felt that if they wanted something, they had to do it for themselves.' P. 387. • 'A young man said, "I know that I always asked for help . . . and I think that's a lot of the reason I'm where I am today is because I asked for help." Sometimes the help was in the form of concrete services, advice, or feedback on performance. Respondents were also able to accept encouragement from others, especially teachers and mentors.' P. 388. • 'A young woman described such a situation by saying, "I began experimenting, I guess like most teenagers do, you know. But I never really got into it because I knew that my mom, you know, alcohol was getting ready to almost take her life,

	so, and it had definitely made ours hell, so I decided not to do that." She went on to say, "I needed to be better than the image I had in my own head of a foster youth, or the image of someone who came from this abusive family. I needed to be."' P. 388.
Finding 2	These attributes enabled these young people to form connections with non-abusive adults. Young people also found that educational and foster care systems functioned as 'safe havens', providing them with opportunities to build new relationships. Emphasises the importance of the young person's attributes in enabling these opportunities.
Illustration/ evidence	• 'Respondents spoke instead of friends and helpful adults and of consciously and carefully choosing good friends. One woman stated, "Pretty much throughout life, I've always kept what I would call a best friend. Somehow, instinctively, I guess I just knew that I needed that. And throughout my life, consistently, these best friends had families that kind of took me in and supported me. . . . In middle school, I had a best friend whose family I went to a lot after school. . . . They always had food in the house and they'd feed me. They had a nice house and I got to go there and play games and sleep over and that was really nice."' P. 389. • 'Several respondents spoke of ways the foster care system "saved" them or changed their life for the better by giving them new opportunities for education, positive relationships with adults, and a chance to make new friends.' P. 390. • '"I went to spend the next 2 years in an emancipation group home. OK, and there it was like a culture shock for me because this group home was on the border of _____ and ___, and the high school that I went to was really ritzy. We're talking most of the people there were, their families had more income, socioeconomically, they were better. So that was something I had never really experienced . . . and due to all of the help that I got at the home that I lived in and the friends that I just by chance happened to make . . . I did really well in high school my last couple of years. I was really happy about that. Those were the years that turned my life around.". p. 390
Finding 3	While these young people achieved adaption in one area, they still reported psychological and emotional difficulties that stemmed from their childhood experiences. Some of the earlier adversity factors may still be operating in cumulative and multiplicative ways to have long lasting effect on developmental pathways. P.392
Illustration/ evidence	• 'All of the respondents reported having some degree of difficulty in the area of psychological functioning and emotional health. Ten spoke of problems with rigidity that led to difficulties achieving balance in their life.' P. 390. • 'Five respondents expressed depression or a sadness about the past related to feelings that they had lost their childhood and consequently missed out on a lot while growing up and also during college. As one young woman explained, "I don't have a lot of the same childhood experiences as some of my friends. They'll talk about this or that and I'm just like, "Oh," 'cause I can't really relate to it, because I've never had that."' P. 390.
Finding 4	School was a positive alternative to troubled life. P. 389
Illustration/ evidence	• Respondents in the study reported that, throughout childhood and continuing into adolescence, school was often the only stable and supportive place where they were able to find escape and refuge. P.389

	• Most respondents had attracted the attention of teachers, were placed in programs for the gifted, and took college prep classes in high school. They spoke of liking school and being motivated to succeed. P.389
Simmons-Horton, S.Y. “A Bad Combination”: Lived Experiences of Youth Involved in the Foster Care and Juvenile Justice Systems. Child Adolesc Soc Work J (2020). https://doi.org/10.1007/s10560-020-00693-1	
Finding 1	For participants, placement in congregate settings underscored difficulties they personally experienced or observed.P.7
Illustration/ evidence	• Across each of the pathways, nine of the ten total participants shared their having at least one experience in a congregate placement, while in foster care (Table 3). Five participants in the study reported they entered the foster care system first, and later became involved in the juvenile justice system. These same individuals later became concurrently involved in both systems. Common among this group was a realization that their dual-status involvement was brought about by circumstances occurring once they entered foster care, which they feel would not have occurred otherwise. P.7
Finding 2	For dual-status youth, who have an increased likelihood of adverse outcomes, ongoing complex trauma experiences can undermine healthy attachments to peers, caregivers, and supportive staff. P.10
Illustration/ evidence	• former dual-status youth articulated traumatic experiences which influenced their lives, leaving them hesitant to form trusting relationships in adulthood, particularly when these traumatic experiences were left unaddressed and untreated. P.11 • Common among each of the participants in this study, regardless of their pathway, was the presence of persistent complex trauma. P. 10 Participants described experiences of systemic traumas occurring while involved and placed in the juvenile or fostercare systems.P.11
Finding 3	Children and adolescents develop social skills and learn independence and responsibility from engaging in age and developmentally appropriate activities, serving as teaching moments. P.11. Therefore, opportunities for normalcy should be provided in placements.
Illustration/ evidence	• Participant interviews told the story of a range of missed opportunities for these individuals, and barriers to simple activities such as going to the movies, playing organized sports in school, or dating. P.11. • The participants account represent missed opportunities and challenges in navigating adolescent experiences while involved in foster care and juvenile justice systems. P.12
Finding 4	The experiences of being dually involved in the study participants meant instability in various vital milestones, including education and engagement in normalcy activities. P.12
Illustration/ evidence	• Participants reported the difficulty in receiving needed coordinated services, feeling stigmatized, and experiencing differential treatment because of their involvement in two systems. P.12
Finding 5	The pathway by which the participants became dually involved influenced their personal narrative, and their worldview.P.12
Illustration/ evidence	• Participants who spent more years in foster care, particularly those entering as infants or toddlers, and exiting as older adolescents, shared experienced of multiple and pronounced systemic trauma, including physical and sexual abuse and neglect in foster care, repeated disconnection from family and community,

	and harsher treatment in placements than juvenile-only or foster care-only youth. P.12
Williams, L.M. & Frederick, M.E. (2009). Pathways into and out of commercial sexual victimization of children: Understanding and responding to sexually exploited teens. Lowell, MA: University of Massachusetts Lowell	
Finding 1	While there was a diversity in youth experiences with CSEC – in terms of the length of time they were involved in CSE, and what was offered to them (money, a place to stay, drugs etc), many reported experiences fitted a similar pattern of abuse.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'While each victim's story is uniquely her own, it is remarkable how many of these fit the pattern of other young women from across the U.S, who became heavily involved in "the life"'. Pp. 12-13. ● Given this neutral approach to eliciting the youths' narratives, the conformity of the accounts of those who we interviewed were "in the life" with what has been reported to date in the field is remarkable. The males we spoke to who told the interviewers of experiences with commercial sexual victimization also reflected a range of experiences with men and with women.' P. 15.
Finding 2	Several factors were identifying as making young people more vulnerable to CSE, such as economic hardship, violence within the youth's family, parental mental health and drug abuse.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'While some accounts of entrance into the life of being prostituted, of commercial sexual exploitation, reflect extreme force, violence and threats, many young women we interviewed described a gradual introduction to "the life." We heard many accounts of runaways (or children who were pushed out or moved out of their families) with no place to stay who were given shelter by people who eventually turned them out on the streets to exchange sex for money. ' pp. 20-21. ● 'There was always yelling. There was always fighting. Police always coming up to the house and I decided to run away one night.' P. 23. ● 'Meagan, 18, provided another angle on this family disruption and relocation: "…my parents always have a hard time keeping apartments because of their drug and alcohol problems and I just got tired of going to hotels and motels and this and that and just traveling cause, you know, they never have, you know, the money to deal with me anyways."' P. 25.
Finding 3	There was an absence of services for young people experiencing CSE, including an absence of transition services.
Illustration/ evidence	● 'In addition to a total absence of needed services at a young age this theme also reflected an absence of continuing services for youth who age-out of the system.' P. 30 ● 'Once on the streets the youth experience a sense (and often a reality) that they are totally on their own and at 16 or 17 (or younger) that they need to fend for themselves. As one young woman told the interviewer: "Once you turn 18-- well, it wasn't even when I turned 18 'cause when I turned 17 I got emancipated-- (you) become adult. Legally. When I was 17. And um, they/you can't call/you can't have contact with (the social workers)."' P. 30.

	• ‘As juveniles they were either not viewed as “at risk” or their vulnerability was misjudged. Police, in many jurisdictions across the U.S., were reported to make little or no effort to determine if a young woman was a minor at risk of abuse if she did not look like a “waif” lost on the streets. This response may have been based on lack of knowledge in some communities of the risks for youth, misperception about the characteristics of victims of CSEC, and little or no training on how to assess the age of a person encountered in the streets or to determine if the juvenile is in need of their assistance.’ P. 31.
Finding 4	Many young people reported positive experiences with individual social workers (rather than social services in general), placing importance on their individual attributed. Many also placed importance on school as a positive place for them.
Illustration/ evidence	• ‘Notably, the youth focused on the attributes of the individual (e.g., “she was helpful”, “he cared,” “she took time with me,” and “I can all her anytime.”) while usually describing the larger agency or institution that employed the person in less than favorable terms. Some youth reported strong ties to a particular CPS worker or other supportive adult even after many years had passed.’ P. 33. • ‘Twenty-eight of the youth spontaneously mentioned school as one of the top three things that were important to them at the time of the interview.’ P. 34.
Finding 5	Young people face many barriers to exiting CSE. Aside from the control held by perpetrators against victims, other barriers to exiting include weak familial support, lack of knowledge amongst school personnel to detect CSE, and the fact that communities in general do not know how to confront the issue.
Illustration/ evidence	• ‘Commercially sexually exploited girls interviewed who were in “the life” stated that at some junctures they felt that it was unsafe to try to leave. The level of control, both physical and mental, was so intense that they could not leave for fear of future abuse or not knowing who to turn to for help.’ P. 55. • ‘Youth reported that the police had no alternatives available to help them escape “the life.” An arrest of the young person was more likely to occur when they were not (or claimed to not be) pimp-involved. But such an arrest might logically drive the youth to a pimp. In the absence of coordinated community responses (such as the SEEN program in Boston) police may have viewed arrest as the only option available to them.’ P. 57.
Finding 6	The movement of youths from street to street and town to town is a crucial factor in their exposure to sexual exploitation and these cross jurisdictional journeys have important implications.
Illustration/ evidence	• Familial supervision, support, and protection are often weak or operate in just the opposite direction, to damage and harm the teens more p. 55 • In the course of the interviews they spontaneously provided information about their journeys within and beyond the two urban areas that are the focus of this project. They mentioned specific locations (a street, store, neighbourhood hangout); resources in a community (homeless shelter, drop-in center, health clinic), or the locations of family members or members of their larger social network. Forty-seven of the 61 interviewees made reference to locations we could map. These 47 youth mentioned connections in or travel to/ from 99 cities; 32 states; and 21 countries. P.19

Finding 7	There was an absence of continuing services for youth who age-out of the system. Ageing out is not only a problem for youth in foster care settings, it is also an issue for youth on probation:
Illustration/ evidence	● Once you turn 18-- well, it wasn't even when I turned 18 'cause when I turned 17 I got emancipated-- (you) become adult. Legally. When I was 17. And um, they/you can't call/you can't have contact with (the social workers) 'Our participants provided many examples of how the system failed them as they got closer in age to legal adulthood. As juveniles they were either not viewed as "at risk" or their vulnerability was misjudged.' P.30

What Works *for* Children's Social Care

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