The Alexi Project

The participation of young people in child sexual exploitation services:
A scoping review of the literature

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Executive summary

Part 1

1. This is a scoping review of the literature which focuses on the participation of young people in child sexual exploitation services.

2. The review is part of the Alexi Project, which involves an evaluation of the CSEFA Hub and Spoke services in England.

3. The review aims to develop understanding of the concept of participation and the nature of effective participatory practice in the context of child sexual exploitation services. It has taken place between September 2015 and April 2016.

4. The review focuses on the following questions:

- How is 'participation' of young people in CSE services conceptualised in the research, policy and professional literature?
- How explicit is the policy requirement for children and young people's participation in the processes associated with assessment, planning and review and what evidence exists regarding the implementation and/or effectiveness of these processes?
- What evidence exists regarding the nature of the experience of participation, and its impact, from the perspectives of young people, parents and carers, and professionals?
- What evidence exists regarding the conditions that need to be in place to make participative working possible and effective for different groups of CSE affected young people?
- What evidence exists regarding the replicability of participative models?

5. Review questions were developed in consultation with the research team and the research advisory group, and were also informed by wider work relating to participation in the International Centre.

6. This is a scoping review, which means that while it adopts aspects of systematic reviewing, it is more broadly based and aims to identify significant published literature relating to the topic. This is appropriate in view of the lack of studies evaluating CSE services and focusing on participation.

7. The definition of terms in this review is challenging, and in particular, the term 'participation' has a variety of meanings, and is used in different ways.

8. The definition of child sexual exploitation is established in statutory guidance across the UK, but is also subject to debate in relation to its application in practice.

9. Participation in services should be considered in the context of international and domestic legislative frameworks, in particular Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child, but also children's rights to protection from harm.

10. Participation should also be considered in the context of child sexual exploitation services. While there are both statutory and voluntary sector services available, the majority are located in the voluntary sector. The availability of such services also varies considerably across the country.

11. The review established a series of inclusion and exclusion criteria. Literature was included that was English language, UK related, post 1989, and focused on participation in children and young people's services. While the review focused on participation in the context of child sexual exploitation services, it extended to participation in children's and young people's services in order to better understand the wider context in which CSE services operate.

12. Searches were carried out via academic search engines and three specialist CSE databases.

13. The search generated a variety of literature including theoretical papers, empirical studies, literature reviews, practice reflection and guides to practice.

Part 2

How is 'participation' of young people in CSE services conceptualised in the research, policy and professional literature?

1. Three strands of literature were identified that tries to address this question: literature that focuses on the development of participation as a concept; Literature that focuses on understanding how participation relates to the delivery of children's services more generally; and literature that seeks to conceptualise participation in the context of what is known about child sexual exploitation.

2. It is important to take account of the following when analysing the literature. Firstly, participation is a complex term and is used in different ways by individuals and organisations. Secondly, participation can encompass a wide range of activities and experiences. Thirdly, participation is political and the extent to which it takes place is rooted in relationships of power. Fourthly, participation is an evolving idea, and the debate about what it can and should mean is far from over.

3. Children's rights and participation are intrinsically linked. International acknowledgement that children are individual bearers of rights has become established in law and policy. This has been accompanied by a shift in social theory away from a focus on developmental stages to a view of the child as an independent social actor.

4. In practice the interest in participation has resulted in a wide range of projects and initiatives at local and national level. This is linked to a more general interest in how service users can contribute to the shaping of public services and the specific services they receive.

5. Participation should therefore be considered in relation to a wider set of terms including service user engagement, personalisation and the co-production, co-design and co-creation of services. These ideas are widely seen as positive in rebalancing the power relationship between service users and providers. At the same time, there is a lack of robust evidence on the outcomes of participation work, and some commentators argue for caution in assuming that participation in fact results in the intended benefits.

6. The concept of children's agency is also critical.

7. These decisions and actions are also shaped – though not determined - by wider historical, social, cultural and economic contexts.

8. Social policy and the way in which services are delivered also contribute to the shaping of childhood and adolescence, and the extent to which young people are viewed as competent and able to contribute to decision making about their lives. Young people and families who experience high levels of involvement in and surveillance from the state are often those least likely to be given opportunities to express their views and have these taken seriously.

9. The history of young people who have experienced child sexual exploitation is one in which many have been labelled as troublesome and as lacking the competence or value to contribute in positive ways. This has been reflected in their experience of approaching statutory agencies for help, with many reporting that they have been ignored or blamed for what has happened to them.

10. Many have also become isolated and detached from other forms of community or social engagement – through, for example, absence from school, running away, or placement changes while in care.

11. Alternatively, young people may be viewed as victims, and either passive or in other ways perceived as unable to act with autonomy or agency. Such perceptions of young people are also influenced by conscious and unconscious thinking about gender and sexuality. Adolescents have frequently been held as somehow responsible for their abuse and exploitation, rather than as young people who have been abused and in need of support.

12. These ideas are important in explaining why participation is an important theme in the way in which CSE services are delivered. Participation is often perceived by young people and practitioners as a part of a process of recovering their sense of self, and sense of agency.

13. A variety of models have been developed to describe and explain different types of participation. Early models focused on different levels of participation, but these have increasingly been replaced by models that emphasise that all types of participation have value, and that individual young people should have different options that can be accessed at different times.

14. More recent debate on participation emphasises the need to think about participation as involving dialogue and relationships. Finding out from young people themselves about how they view participation is important, as they will have different perspectives on what this means.

How explicit is the policy requirement for children and young people's participation in the processes associated with assessment, planning and review and what evidence exists regarding the implementation and/or effectiveness of these processes?

1. Article 12 of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child is explicit that children should participate in decisions concerning them. In the UK, this principle has been embedded in successive legislation concerning children, beginning with the Children Act 1989.

2. The evidence relating to the implementation of participatory rights suggests that, while there are many examples of good practice, understanding of participation and the ways in which this is practiced vary widely.

3. Participation is a very important concept in current CSE policy. This is largely due to the evidence from young people, presented in public inquiries and court cases, demonstrating that they have often been ignored or blamed by professionals when seeking to report child sexual exploitation. This is strongly reinforced by the research evidence.

4. This failure to listen to young people has resulted in the widespread failure to identify and respond to child sexual exploitation. Also, as charities, researchers and others have campaigned to have sexual exploitation recognised as a form of abuse, this has sometimes resulted in a perception of young people as 'victims', rather than as individuals with knowledge and skills to contribute to social change.

5. Official guidance emphasises the importance of young people's participation, both at the level of listening to children in relation to decisions about their lives, and in the development of good practice. Those working with children need to take the time to get to know children, so that young people are more able to talk about issues that concern them and to seek help. This involves ensuring frontline professionals have a good understanding of child sexual exploitation and understand the difficulties for children and young people in talking about CSE.

6. There is a lack of research that has systematically examined the way in which participation takes place in practice in CSE services across the UK. This is more an indication of the developing nature of CSE research than a lack of interest or commitment to the principles of participation.

7. It is very positive that participation is viewed as a critical element to the effective delivery of CSE services, but policy assertions do not automatically translate to effective practice, and the available evidence suggests this is variable.

What evidence exists regarding the nature of the experience of participation, and its impact, from the perspectives of young people, parents and carers, and professionals?

1. Young people talk less about participation than about the qualities of the services they like or dislike – but it is also important to note there has been an absence of research studies asking questions about participation in CSE services.

2. There is evidence that young people in CSE services take part in a variety of activities that can be described as participative, though the amount of evidence is again limited. These include: involvement in meetings relating to formal processes of assessment, review and planning; involvement in training, the development of resources and materials, involvement in policy development at local and national levels, and involvement in research and evaluation.

3. There is limited evidence regarding the experiences of participation of different groups of young people, including boys, young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, and young people with different disabilities.

4. There is strong evidence that young people recognise and appreciate certain aspects of CSE services. These include interpersonal factors – most usually the development of positive relationships with individual members of staff – and organisational factors, such as the service environment and opening times. These are the kinds of issues they would like to change in other services which they have found less helpful.

5. There is a lack of evidence about young people who have not felt able to engage with services, or have negative experiences of services.

6. There is a strand of literature that highlights the importance of understanding the process through which young people engage with services, including the extent to which they accept an identity as a user of that service. This is especially important in the context of CSE services, which may be perceived as stigmatising.

7. Although there is limited evidence from professionals, accounts that are available emphasise that unless practice is young-person centred, and includes taking seriously the views and experiences of young people, it is impossible to provide effective support.

What evidence exists regarding the conditions that need to be in place to make participative working possible and effective for different groups of CSE affected young people?

1. An organisational commitment to a participatory approach - This is also referred to as a culture of participation, and emphasises that participation is not additional, but central to the work of the service. This will include a commitment to and enthusiasm for listening and responding to the views of young people. In order to make this happen is important to set clear aims and objectives for participation work, and to consider how to provide evidence for the process and outcomes of participation.

2. Time, resources and appreciation of individual need - Ensuring children and young people have access to their rights to be consulted and to participate in decisions concerning their rights requires time, resources, and careful consideration of what support might be necessary (for example, in relation to language, special communication needs) to enable the young person to participate. This will involve ensuring that staff are trained and supported to understand and reflect on how all young people in a service can be enabled to participate.

3. Organisational arrangements that enable, rather than obstruct, young people's involvement in individual decision making. The research evidence highlights the importance of organisational arrangements in ensuring that young people have the opportunity to develop positive relationships with individual members of staff. A stable staff group, ensuring consistency of workers, is important.

4. Staff with appropriate training and a shared value base - The evidence is very strong that staff should be recruited who have the skills, or the potential to develop the skills, to work effectively with young people who are at risk or have experienced CSE. This will include individual qualities such as warmth, friendliness, humour and lack of judgement. Skill and compassion should be allied with a strong knowledge base relating to CSE and the needs of vulnerable young people. Time is important – the evidence indicates strongly that it is difficult to impose time limits on work with young people, though this is often a pressure in terms of funding.

5. A flexible and creative approach to participation - This will include discussion about what is meant by participation in the context of the specific service, and different ways in which this can be applied. It will also involve exploration of different methods of work. For example, there is evidence that it is helpful to offer young people different opportunities to communicate and explain what is important to them, such as art, music and drama. While there is an absence of specific evidence relating to CSE services in the UK, other evidence suggests that peer support can be important and both group work and other forms of peer support are potentially valuable.

6. There is evidence that young people and families contrast the style of working in the voluntary sector as more positive and supportive than statutory services, such as social care and the police – but this is not universal, and there is also evidence that individuals within statutory services can be equally successful in building positive relationships with young people.

7. There are structural reasons why the statutory sector may find it more difficult to implement participatory styles of working at all levels – time, resource and frequent turnover of staff are not helpful. In larger organisations it may be harder to develop a 'culture of participation', and in turn more difficult to avoid a tick box approach to practice.

What evidence exists regarding the replicability of participative models?

1. There is some evidence from voluntary organisations such as Barnardo's that particular models of practice can be developed across services, but the evidence also indicates that implementation of these will vary according to context.

2. There are challenges and barriers to developing participation across services. Young people identify the attitudes of adults as most likely to obstruct the development of opportunities to participate.

3. Effective participatory practice will require attention to both organisational factors and the quality of individual practice, but will also vary according to the specific practice context.

Concluding messages and next steps

1. There is a strong commitment to the idea of participative practice in CSE policy and practice.

2. Research focusing on young people's views and experiences emphasises that they value the way in which CSE services recognise them as individuals, listen and take their views seriously, and provide a flexible and friendly approach.

3. Participation in CSE services is distinctive, requiring professionals with a strong knowledge base regarding the routes into and experience of CSE, and a reflective and critical approach to practice. At the same time, there is important learning to be gained from other services working with young people who have experienced abuse and maltreatment.

4. The wider research context relating to CSE means that research evidence demonstrating the nature and extent of different types of participative practice is limited, and there is therefore a need for more examples of how participation takes place in practice.

5. There are significant gaps in our knowledge of how groups of young people who are less well represented in CSE services view participation, and how this can best take place.

6. Participation is not a static idea and cannot be confined to the development of policy or practice guidelines; rather services will need to work with service users in an ongoing cycle of research, reflection and action.

7. The review has highlighted the need for more and better knowledge about the nature of participation in practice. This will be developed through the participation strand of the Alexi Project, and the wider evaluation.

1. Introduction

This literature review focuses on the participation of young people in child sexual exploitation services. The review arises from the wider context of the evaluation of the CSEFA Hub and Spoke services (Harris, 2014).

One of the key aims of the CSEFA strategy is to investigate and support ways for young people to be actively involved in CSE services. This is embedded into the evaluation, which includes exploration of the following issues:

- How do Hub and Spoke services view and conceptualise 'participation'? What is agreed, what is contested?

- What are Hub and Spoke services doing to actively engage young people in informing and shaping the services that are provided?

- What examples of good practice and effective working are there?

- What is challenging about young people's participation in CSE services?

- How can learning about participation best be shared and disseminated?

A specific strand of the evaluation, focusing on participation, has subsequently been developed. The methodology for this includes the scoping review of the literature, but also direct work with young people and those working in CSE services to gather views and develop young person friendly outputs. This work is ongoing (see Harris et al, 2015).

The literature review has taken place between September 2015 and April 2016 and focuses on the following questions:

1. How is 'participation' of young people in CSE services conceptualised in the research, policy and professional literature?

2. How explicit is the policy requirement for children and young people's participation in the processes associated with assessment, review etc. and what evidence exists regarding the implementation and/or effectiveness of these processes?

3. What evidence exists regarding the nature of the experience of participation, and its impact, from the perspectives of young people, parents and carers, and professionals?

4. What evidence exists regarding the conditions that need to be in place to make participative working possible

and effective for different groups of CSE affected young people? What are the challenges for professionals, young people, parents and carers in relation to participative working in CSE services?

2. The structure of the review

This report is organised in two parts. The first part deals with what might be termed the machinery of the review. It begins by explaining the nature of the review that has been undertaken, and the definitions of key terms. It then examines the review methods, and the limitations of these, and summarises key issues arising from the core studies identified. The second part of the report turns to the review questions, listed above, each of which has been addressed in turn. Finally, the review concludes by identifying key issues for further research and practice discussion.

3. The type of review

The review questions were developed in consultation with the research team and the research advisory group. They are primarily descriptive rather than evaluative, seeking to explore the range of evidence available and also the theoretical models that have been employed in relation to this evidence.

In light of the review questions, it is important to clarity the type of review that has been undertaken. While literature reviews are a standard element of social research, there has been a growing interest in the type of knowledge that is generated by literature reviews, and also in the value of different approaches to reviewing (Boaz, Ashby and Young, 2002; Arksey and O'Malley, 2005). This issue is especially relevant in the context of research relating to children and young people's services, where there has been extensive discussion of the role of systematic reviews in contributing to a rigorous evidence base for practice (see, for example, Rutter et al, 2010). It is therefore important to emphasise that the present review does not constitute a systematic review; most of the research that has been included would not meet the criteria for systematic review and there has been no systematic weighting of the quality of the evidence. At the same time, the process has been rigorous in terms of the identification of questions; the development of inclusion and exclusion criteria; the identification of search terms; and the development of a framework for analysis (Rutter et al, 2010).

The review is better described as a scoping review. Again, it has been noted that this term can have a range of meanings. In this context, the guidelines produced by the Social Care Institute for Excellence describe well the process that has been undertaken. These suggest that the main purpose of a scoping review is 'to clarify the nature of a research question,

to identify the range of relevant material and to make a broad assessment of the coherence and quality of that knowledge' (Rutter et al, 2010, p1). Therefore, while scoping reviews may not examine all relevant material, they will cover all significant material, and will often indicate the need to fill gaps in knowledge.

Arksey and O'Malley (2005) suggest that there is no ideal type of review, that the review methods will reflect the state of knowledge relating to the research topic. In this instance, the scoping nature of the review reflects that lack of any equivalent review relating to the participation of young people in CSE services. Prior knowledge of the research base relating to CSE and also to young people's services more generally also indicated that little, if any, evaluative research was likely to be available (Brodie et al, 2011; Brodie and Pearce, 2012; Research in Practice, 2015; Gilligan, 2015; DeValle et al, forthcoming).

4. Definitions

None of the key terms of the review are easily defined, and indeed the difficulty in establishing and applying definitions is an important theme of the literature in this area. However, for the purposes of the review, the following definitions were used as a starting point in the identification and retrieval of information.

Children and young people
The terms 'young people' and 'adolescents' are used interchangeably in this review for ease of reading, while recognising that these terms may hold different meanings depending on the legal, policy and practice context. It is important to acknowledge that the age boundaries in discussions relating to child sexual exploitation vary, and there are differences in the age-ranges catered for in different services. The majority of CSE users are 'children' according to the definition of the Children Act 1989 and the Children Act 2004, and are under the age of 18, but some services are provided for young people up to the age of 26. Holmes and Hanson (2015) also distinguish between 'young people' to those roughly between 11 and 20 years and 'adolescents' to those roughly between 10 and 18.

Child Sexual Exploitation
The review adopted the DCSF (2009) definition of child sexual exploitation:

Sexual exploitation of children and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them,

sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child's immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/ young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.

This definition has been important in demarcating an area of policy and practice that relates specifically to child sexual exploitation, and in enabling the identification of abuse that takes place outside the family context and experienced predominantly by adolescents. To this extent it can be regarded as a vehicle for the 'refocusing' of policy and practice debate to include young people, as opposed to the more traditional focus of child protection services on the abuse of younger children within the family (Pearce, 2009). At the same time, it has been recognised that CSE is difficult to define, and it has been suggested that the current definition is 'elastic' and can be applied to such a range of situations that its usefulness for practice is often reduced (Melrose, 2013a; Melrose 2013b). This elasticity is also related to the different ways in which CSE takes place: while a grooming model is still recognised as one form of CSE, there has been an increasing awareness of other types, including the role of on-line abuse, partying and gang involvement (Barnardo's, 2011; Jago et al, 2011; Beckett et al, 2013).

While CSE is clearly recognised as a form of sexual abuse, the overlaps between this form of abuse and definitions of other forms of child sexual abuse have also been highlighted (Allnock, 2015; Melrose 2013a; Melrose 2013b). The question of what 'is' sexual exploitation therefore continues to be a matter of debate, and it is therefore unsurprising that application of the definition continues to present challenges for professionals, while young people may also be unwilling to accept this definition for themselves (Warrington, 2013; Hallett, 2015; Gilligan, 2015).

Child sexual exploitation services
The term 'child sexual exploitation services' should not be taken to imply that there is a single model of such services. As Warrington (2015) observes, these have often developed in piecemeal fashion; there is no consistency across the UK in terms of what services are available, and there is often a 'dearth' (Brodie et al, 2011, p5) of specialist provision. Warrington (op cit) suggests that three main models exist, namely: i) multi-agency teams with representation from

both statutory and voluntary sector; iii) voluntary sector specialist projects and iii) individual project workers embedded within broader statutory or voluntary sector provision (Jago and Pearce, 2008). Evidence suggests that even within these categories there will be considerable variation (NWG, 2010) and other types of services will also provide support, including sexual health providers, runaway or missing projects, young people's drug and alcohol services , youth offending services and adult sex work projects (Warrington, 2015; see also Melrose with Barrett, 2004). Within the context of the present review, this variation is important in recognising that 'participative' approaches may occupy different places in organisational cultures and that professionals may approach the issue from a range of professional backgrounds and experience.

Participation

The term 'participation' is complex and contested, and exploration of the way in which it is interpreted in the context of child sexual exploitation services is part of the scope of the review. As Pearce (2010) suggests, it may be viewed as 'a political activity (with a small p) that encourages children and young people to become advocates for their own rights…a therapeutic intervention or…a tool for educating young people' (Pearce, 2010, p6)

Much of the debate, however, has taken place in the context of wider discussion of the meaning of children's rights more generally. Lansdown (2010) argues for the need for greater clarity, commenting that the term is used to describe a rage of forms of social engagement – for example, taking part in different leisure and cultural activities as well as more civic engagement. She emphasises that participation should be viewed in the context of Article 12 of the UNCRC which asserts the right of children to express their views freely in all matters affecting them, the views of the child being given due weight in accordance with the age and maturity of the child. However, it is important that this provision is viewed in the context of other civil rights, including rights to freedom of expression, religion, conscience, association and information, and the right to privacy. In relation to CSE, it is worth noting the additional rights to protection; Articles 31 and 35 stipulate that children have the right to be protected from all forms of sexual exploitation, sexual abuse and trafficking (ratified December 1991). An Optional Protocol to the UNCRC on the Sale of Children, Child Prostitution and Child Pornography was ratified by the UK in 2009. The UK has also signed, but not ratified, the Council of Europe Convention on the Protection of Children and Young People against Sexual Exploitation and Sexual Abuse.

The existence of this framework does not, of course, equate to the implementation of a participatory approach – this is widely acknowledged to vary greatly internationally, and within and between different state institutions. Nevertheless, this framework establishes the principle that governments are responsible for ensuring that Article 12 is realised for individual children. Importantly, debate about how children's rights can be recognised through law, policy and practice has been accompanied by theoretical developments that emphasise the child as a social actor, with the capacity and will to participate in different types of decision making, and that such participation is beneficial to the individual child, families and communities.

Within the context of service delivery, 'participation' has also encompassed a range of activities, from the ways in which children and young people are able to express their views and have these taken seriously in the context of individual encounters with professionals, to organised group activities aimed at having young people's views represented and acted upon in fora ranging from services and projects to local authority to local, national and international. This understanding of participation is reflected in the International Centre's definition (Warrington, 2015). However, while there is some consensus that such a range of meanings and practices exist, this should not be taken to imply a similar consensus on which meaning or practice should take precedence. They may also, of course, co-exist. Lansdown (op cit) argues that while the clarity of definition is important, there is also a need for a stronger focus on the application of learning about participation in order to ensure it is embedded as a 'sustainable right for all children, in all aspects of their lives' (Lansdown, 2010, p11).

5. Methods

Inclusion and exclusion criteria

The quality of a literature review is in large part determined by the extent to which it is focused and has clear boundaries (Aveyard, 2014). This means that decisions – sometimes difficult ones – need to be made about what can and cannot be covered. In this instance it is worth noting the following areas that were excluded from the review:

The review focused on material published from 1989 onwards. This cut-off date was selected on the grounds that it coincides both with the UK's ratification of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Children Act 1989, both of which represent major shifts in policy and practice thinking about participation and the generation of new research relating to participation in services. Literature relating to child sexual exploitation tends to emerge from the early 2000s, following the publication of the Department of Health guidance on child prostitution (Department of Health, 2000).

It was decided to restrict the review to UK based literature, thus excluding international literature. This decision was based on prior review experience, indicating that the international literature in this area tends not to use the language of child sexual exploitation (see, for example, SOS International and the University of Bedfordshire, 2014), though there is also evidence of CSE related practice internationally which has important messages for UK practice (see, for example, Hickle and Roe-Sepowitz, 2014). Equally, the literature on participation cast the net too wide in the context of the time and resource limitations of the present review. There is also some value in locating the discussion within a specific policy, research and practice context, as this can enhance the policy and practice relevance of the research messages. At the same time, there are clearly advantages to a comparative approach and further review of participation in services relating to sexual exploitation and violence internationally would be beneficial in addressing distinct, but obviously related, questions.

The review has also focused on research based, published information, identified via academic search engines, together with 'grey' literature identified via relevant government departments and third sector organisations. It has therefore excluded practice resources and tools relating to participation. This runs counter, arguably, to the spirit of participatory practice, and the wealth of such resources that have been developed by young people and professionals working with young people. Academic reviews of such an area may have a doubtful legitimacy in the eyes of those who are doing, rather than writing about, participation – either as a young person or as a professional. However, after discussion with the research team and advisory team it was concluded that a review of practice resources required a different process and represents a separate, though potentially extremely valuable, exercise.

This decision also raises the epistemological question of 'whose knowledge counts' – and so how far research has adequately investigated the processes and experience of participation, and how a literature review can capture the often invisible world of participation, and 'participatory' practice. Wider debates concerning evidence based practice have drawn attention to the disjuncture between the 'quality standards' of reviewing in which there is a hierarchy of evidence, at the pinnacle of which stands the randomised controlled trial (RCT). Within this hierarchy the status of the service user has sometimes been unclear (Glasby and Beresford, 2007), though there has been extensive and fruitful methodological discussion of how different types of knowledge can usefully be integrated (Rutter et al, 2010). This current review is, therefore, a research based view of the world, which often lags behind practice. It should be

considered in the context of the Alexi project more broadly, in which new empirical evidence is emerging concerning the nature of participatory practice across England, and the rapidly developing world of CSE research more generally. It is also important to note that the review is one element in the wider programme of work taking place within the participation strand.

As a research based view of the world, it is also important to note that the review excludes the extensive literature relating to young people's involvement in research and the ethical and methodological issues associated with this. This is a difficult issue, in that involving young people in researching and finding out about services and their evaluation has been an important means by which young people 'participate' in the development of services (for example, Hill, 2006). However, this is distinct from the vast and, in the context of this review, unmanageable, literature that discusses and evaluates the research role of children and young people.

In order to respond to the review questions, the review has drawn upon research literature that is specific to CSE and wider literature that relates to young people's experience of services more generally, specifically in the context of child protection, youth justice, health and youth services. The rationale for this is two-fold. Firstly, the CSE-specific literature is too limited for the purposes of answering the review questions (see, for example, Warrington, 2013; Cockbain, Ashby and Brayley, 2015). Secondly, the complexities of the lives of young people at risk of or experiencing CSE suggest that to focus exclusively on CSE would serve to obscure important issues about young people's experiences of services (Melrose, 2013a). The review therefore tries to recognise both the distinctive features of child sexual exploitation as an experience for the individual and in relation to service delivery, and the fact that this experience is located in the wider context of the lives of those young people affected and their families.

Search strategy

It was decided that, in order to explore the different ways in which participation is understood and applied in practice, a generous approach to searching should be adopted. Participation is a broad concept, not easy to define or apply in the context of service delivery. While it has been central to the development of thinking about the needs of CSE affected young people and how services can be delivered effectively, the literature – in common with much applied research relating to vulnerable groups – has often failed to provide detailed descriptions of what this approach to work might mean in practice.

Searches were carried out via the following search engines: the University of Bedfordshire's Discover; Googlescholar;

SocioIndex; ASSIA; EthOS. Three specialist CSE databases, developed for other research studies in the International Centre at the University of Bedfordshire, were also searched. Policy documents and other grey literature was searched via government websites (Department for Education; Home Office; Department for Health), the websites of the devolved governments of the UK (Scottish Government; Welsh Assembly; Northern Irish Assembly) and voluntary sector organisations (see appendix for a full list). Experts in the area were asked for advice on current or recent work which might be included. It is important to note, as well, that a number of reviews have been undertaken that have helped guide this review (see Research in Practice, 2015; Hanson and Holmes, 2015; Brodie [I] et al, 2011; Brodie [E] et al, 2008; SCIE, 2007).

Following abstract screening the search generated a total of 159 items. Inclusion and exclusion criteria were developed in discussion with the research team and the research advisory group. As explained above, items were screened on the basis of date; geography; and scope. Literature was coded in accordance with the coding frame developed for the participation element of the Hub and Spoke project, with additional coding for the type of literature and research methods used.

Inevitably, the search also generated literature of different types. A broad split can be identified between items mainly concerned with child sexual exploitation (n=53) and those primarily focused on participation of different kinds (n=92) with an additional, small group of items which were primarily theoretical and focused more generally on childhood and welfare services (n=16). Items were coded according to the following literature types: theoretical/background discussion papers; policy information; empirical studies; literature reviews; and practice reflection. Table 1.1 below presents the distribution of these different types of literature.

Table 1: 1 Types of literature identified

Type of literature	Number of studies
Theoretical/background discussion papers	34
Policy information	12
Empirical studies	59
Literature reviews	11
Practice reflection	4
Guides to practice, based on consultation	11
Total*	167

Totals do not add up to 159 as some items cross more than one category.

6. The shape of the literature

Research into CSE has been a developing area of research over the past two decades, though 'empirical and theoretical literature on CSE is limited and fragmented, quantitative studies are particularly rare, and fundamental considerations such as incidence and prevalence rates have yet to be established' (Cockbain, Ashby and Brayley, 2015, p3). Nevertheless, it can be said that the evidence has developed to a point where the research community is in a position to identify areas of strength and, equally, weakness in the knowledge base. The development of research in this area is reflected in the emergence of various reviews of relevance to the current review (Brodie et al, 2011; Brodie and Pearce, 2012; Research in Practice, 2015).

There have been strong links between the development of CSE research and CSE policy, with an extensive body of research emerging from charities – most notably Barnardo's and the Children's Society – which have been prominent in campaigning for greater policy and practice recognition and understanding of CSE (see, for example, Melrose, Barrett and Brodie, 1999; Barnardo's, 2011). This has resulted in a number of studies by these organisations which draw samples drawn from their own service users (Creegan, Scott and Smith, 2005; Scott and Harper, 2006; Scott and Skidmore, 2006). However, there is, in turn, a lack of research based and evaluative information regarding the participation of young people at risk of or experiencing CSE and receiving services within the statutory sector. The close policy/research/practice relationship also gives rise to certain tensions in developing the theoretical debate, namely how the need to raise the profile of an issue can be balanced with critical questioning and the consideration of alternative frameworks of understanding (Melrose, 2013a; 2013b).

A good illustration of this tension relates to the question of how far young people exercise 'agency' in their experience of sexual exploitation. Pearce (2006), in a paper discussing the 'victim' status of young people, highlights the difficulties associated with opening this up 'After more than a decade of dedicated work arguing for young people to be seen as victims supported by interventions through the child protection framework, we are bound to be hesitant about shifting the focus of the argument away into other arenas' (p329). A focus on participation might be regarded as precisely such a shift, in that it requires a construction of the adolescent service user that is not solely one of 'victim' (Pearce, 2009; Warrington, 2013; Hallett, 2015; Gilligan, 2015). At the same time, there may also be a gap between the policy imperative – which may place higher value on a discourse of victimhood – and what is happening in practice.

There may also be a degree of tension between the policy and practice imperative to understand better the nature of children's experiences in the context of child sexual exploitation, and an assumption that what is presented via the research literature represents an 'authentic' voice which speaks for all CSE affected young people. To this extent, it is important that review of the literature in this area retains some criticality in terms of the production of research, and the way in which the 'voice' of young people is represented (Spyrou, 2011). The research literature regarding children's participation has consistently highlighted the selectivity of many, if not most, samples, and the political, methodological and practical challenges associated with participatory research.

The close relationship between research, policy and practice also results in a certain fuzziness in the nature and scope of the literature; as Wright et al (2003) note in regard to the participation literature more broadly, there is at times 'a lack of clarity in ascertaining what is research, what is consultation, and what is practice' (p50). It has not always been easy, within the confines of this review, to make such a distinction.

It is nevertheless encouraging to see a clear strand of work that focuses on young people's experiences. While participation is not always the central plank of discussion, it is a present idea and emerges as an important issue from the research findings. Indeed, one of the difficulties in analysis of the research material is the frequently implicit, underlying assumption that participation is key to effective practice, combined with an absence of discussion about how and why this is the case.

A number of more specific gaps can also be identified. These include:

- Empirical research examining the experiences of young people who have experienced child sexual exploitation and have received different types of services in the statutory and voluntary sectors;

- Literature relating to the experiences of young people who have received CSE services but have not taken part in formalised 'participation' activities or processes;

- Longitudinal studies following the experiences of young people and professionals which provides detailed examples of the different ways in which 'participation' may take place and the effect this has on outcomes.

- Literature that describes in detail, and evaluates, the practice undertaken by professionals working with young people at risk of or experiencing CSE and which is perceived to be 'participatory';

- Literature relating to the experiences of specific groups of young people – for example, young people from different minority ethnic groups, disabled young people – in relation to their participation in CSE services.

It was well established prior to the study that the amount of literature relating specifically to young people's participation in child sexual exploitation services would be relatively limited. It was also recognised that, while participation in CSE services might be characterised by some specific features, many aspects of participation would be shared with other types of service. The search therefore extended across services for children and young people in care, young people in receipt of youth justice services and health services. The majority of the empirical studies focused on the experiences of young people's participation in decision making in child protection services and in care.

A core sample of eight studies were identified that focused specifically on the experiences of young people in CSE services, presented in Table 1.2 below.

Table 1.2 Core Studies Underpinning the Review

Reference	Type of source	Method
Coy, M. (2009) 'Moved around like bags of rubbish that nobody wants': How multiple placement moves can make young women vulnerable to sexual exploitation', Child Abuse Review, 18, 254-266.	Academic article	Qualitative interviews with 14 young women who were sex workers and also had experience of care.
Dodsworth, J. (2014) 'Sexual exploitation: selling and swapping sex, victimhood and agency', Child Abuse Review 23, 185-199.	Peer-reviewed article	Qualitative interviews with 24 adult sex workers aged 18-65; this paper based on 12 participants who had experienced sexual exploitation under the age of 18.
Gilligan, P. (2015) 'What do young women say helps them to move on from child sexual exploitation', Child Abuse Review, early view	Peer-reviewed article	Qualitative interviews, focus groups discussions, questionnaires and art-based activities with 25 young adults
Hallett, S. (2013) 'Child sexual exploitation' in South East Wales: Problems and solutions from the perspectives of young people and professionals. Cardiff: University of Cardiff.	PhD thesis	Qualitative research with nine young people in receipt of voluntary sector services and with 25 professionals from a range of backgrounds.
Pearce, J. with Williams, M. and Galvin, C. (2002) It's someone taking a part of you: A study of young people and sexual exploitation. London: National Children's Bureau.	Book based on empirical research	Qualitative interviews with 55 young women.
Scott, S. and Skidmore, P. (2006) Reducing the Risk: Barnardo's support for sexually exploited young people. A two-year evaluation. Barkingside: Barnardo's.	Research evaluation	Data collected on 557 young people and 42 case studies; interviews with stakeholders and analysis of outcome monitoring data
Smeaton, E. (2013) Running from hate to what you think is love: The relationship between running away and child sexual exploitation. Barnardo's and Paradigm Research.	Research report	Qualitative interviews with 41 young people and with representatives of 28 projects working with young people who run away, have experienced CSE or both.
Warrington, C. (2013) 'Helping me find my own way': Sexually exploited young people's decision making about their care. Professional Doctorate. Luton: University of Bedfordshire.	Professional Doctorate thesis	Qualitative interviews with 20 users of CSE services; interviews with 10 practitioners.

All eight studies were considered to meet the criteria of scope, as all examine young people's experiences of CSE services. All are based on empirical research and provided sufficient information on their methods to demonstrate transparency and so to justify their inclusion in the review sample.

Two studies (Gilligan and Warrington) focus specifically on participation in decision making; the others have a more general interest in the views and experiences of young people who have experienced sexual exploitation. However, each contained sufficient information on young people's experience of participation in CSE services to be considered a key source for the review. It is notable that all but one (Scott and Skidmore) are qualitative studies involving small groups – ranging from 14 (Coy) to 41 (Smeaton) young people. Three (Pearce, Coy, Gilligan) involved only young people; the other four studies also include professionals. The qualitative dimension of the studies is usually related to a concern to have young people's voices heard, and the view that there is insufficient information available about young people's views. Through such research, it is argued, it should be possible to provide more responsive services for young people.

The main source of data provides information on young people who are receiving child sexual exploitation services. This is reflected in the evidence base for the current review, and it is, therefore, important to acknowledge that there are other young people, outside the review, who have experienced or are at risk of CSE but have not been in touch with services, have been offered and refused services, or are unable for some reason to access services whose views and experiences remain largely unknown. However, 'whether unidentified cases differ systematically from identified ones is as yet unclear' (McNaughton Nicholls et al, 2014, p3). It is in part due to the relatively recent emergence of child sexual exploitation as a topic for serious research, but also the difficulties associated with empirical research in this area. These include the complexity of the experiences of young people who have experienced or are at risk of experiencing sexual exploitation, which cross-cut different geographical and service contexts; confusion associated with current definitions of CSE and its relationship to other forms of abuse; and the logistical and ethical challenges associated with researching such a highly sensitive topic (McNaughton Nicholls et al, 2014; see also Beckett et al, 2013; Melrose, 2002). Recording of CSE cases has also been inconsistent (Jago et al, 2013; CEOP, 2011; McNaughton Nicholls et al, 2014).

The small size of most of the samples raises questions about the validity of findings, and this limitation is acknowledged by the authors. Hallett (2015) notes that the sample seemed broadly in line with other data relating to

CSE service users in Wales. The majority of studies also seek to demonstrate the diversity of the samples, which include representation from different minority ethnic communities (Warrington, Dodsworth, Gilligan) and young people with care experience. Young people with disabilities appear to be under-represented in these samples.

This evidence indicates that there is no single profile of the 'sexually exploited young person', and that exploitation can take place irrespective of gender, sexuality, disability, social class and geographic location (Brodie et al, 2011; Jago et al, 2011; Warrington et al, 2011; Hallett, 2015; Research in Practice, 2015). The way in which young people's participation takes place within services cannot, therefore, be built on the assumption that one particular group is likely to be in receipt of services.

The publication dates of the studies are also notable, ranging from early but highly influential studies (Pearce) to the very recent (Hallett, Gilligan). This is significant in that the research reviewed spans very different contexts of policy development, and thus might be said to provide some insight into changes in practice contexts. Against this, the experiences of the individuals interviewed span many more years than publication dates might suggest. Two studies (Coy and Dodsworth) are retrospective and involve talking to adult sex workers, but include subsamples who experienced CSE earlier in their lives. Six of the studies were undertaken in England only; one study (Hallett) took place in Wales. Scoping research in Scotland has highlighted the need for further empirical studies relating to child sexual exploitation (Brodie and Pearce, 2012; Lerpiniere et al, 2014).

The majority of the studies focused on CSE services in the voluntary sector, spanning services provided both by large organisations with a long history of CSE service delivery, and some smaller organisations. Most studies that have examined service delivery have highlighted the fairly dominant role of the voluntary sector (Scott and Harper, 2006; Warrington, 2013; D'Arcy et al, 2014; Berelowitz et al, 2015). In Jago et al's (2011) sample of young people being worked with in CSE services, over half of the cases were provided by voluntary agencies. Professional and expert participants in Scottish studies identified third sector organisations as most likely to possess the relevant expertise (Brodie and Pearce, 2012; Lerpiniere et al, 2013). It has been noted that young people from minority ethnic groups are more likely to access the BME third sector (Gohir, 2013). This has been recognised by government, which has promised additional funding for non-statutory organisations which support the victims of sexual abuse, including specialist services for victims of CSE (HM Government, 2015). This is also reflected in research samples of young people, who tend to be recruited from voluntary, specialist CSE services (Warrington, 2013; Hallett, 2015; Gilligan, 2015).

Part 2

The second part of the review focuses on the analysis of the literature in relation to the review questions, namely:

1. How is 'participation' of young people in CSE services conceptualised in the research, policy and professional literature?

2. How explicit is the policy requirement for children and young people's participation in the processes associated with assessment, review etc and what evidence exists regarding the implementation and/or effectiveness of these processes?

3. What evidence exists regarding the nature of the experience of participation, and its impact, from the perspectives of young people, parents and carers, and professionals?

4. What evidence exists regarding the conditions that need to be in place to make participative working possible and effective for different groups of CSE affected young people? What are the challenges for professionals, young people, parents and carers in relation to participative working in CSE services?

8. How is 'participation' of young people in CSE services conceptualised in the research, policy and professional literature?

Three strands of literature were identified that helped address this question:

1. Literature that focuses on the development of participation as a concept.

2. Literature that focuses on understanding how participation relates to the delivery of children's services more generally.

3. Literature that seeks to conceptualise participation in the context of what is known about child sexual exploitation. It is important to emphasise that (1) and (2) are important to interpreting the literature attached to (3).

Across these strands, there is some consensus regarding issues that infuse the debate. Firstly, there is an issue of definition, that participation is a complex term and is used in different ways by individuals and organisations. This has important implications for assessment of whether and how well participation is taking place, and how far it is recognised (Head, 2011). Secondly, participation can encompass a wide range of activities and experiences, from how far children and young people are listened to in the context of individual interactions with professionals, to efforts to influence service design and policy making at local and national levels. Thirdly, participation is political. Concern about the issue has emerged from recognition of the unequal power relationships that exist between different groups, including those between children and adults, service users and providers, individuals and groups who are marginalised through a range of socio-economic factors and those who control the distribution of social, cultural, economic and political resources. Fourthly, and finally, participation is an evolving idea. Literature that discusses the development of the concept illustrates that the range of ways in which participation can be understood has expanded over the past twenty years (Sinclair, 1996; Alderson, 2003; Brodie [E] et al, 2008; Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010). It is important, therefore, to view participation as a dynamic and developing concept, and one that should be examined critically. Each of these dimensions plays a part in understanding the theoretical ideas which inform thinking about participation generally, and in relation to child sexual exploitation specifically.

8.1 Children's rights

Participation is a concept that has emerged from developments in law, policy and social science. In each of the four UK nations, participation in contemporary child welfare legislation can be traced back to the emergence of the Children Act 1989 (and associated legislation in the rest of the UK) (Hill and Aldgate, 1996). This coincided with the introduction of the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child (UNCRC). This represents children as individuals who are 'right-bearers', as 'moral and legal suqjects' with fundamental entitlements (Archard, 2004). Section 22 of the Children Act 1989 states that children, according to their age and understanding, should be consulted about decisions concerning them.

A number of structural developments have taken place to help embed participatory policy and practice. Children's Commissioners have been appointed in each of the four nations, with the brief to inform and advocate on behalf of children and young people. Policy in Wales has emphasised the role of children and young people in service and policy development (for a summary, see Mace and Sanders, 2006). Policy under New Labour – for example, the Quality Protects initiative for Children in Care; Sure Start; the Children's Fund; Connexions – emphasised the importance of direct participation on the part of children and young people, and required agencies and local authorities to produce action plans outlining how this was to be implemented in practice. Under the coalition government, policy relating to children and young people has continued to recognise the need for a participatory approach.

While there are many critiques of the way in which the participation of children and young people has been embedded in practice (for example, Spicer and Evans; Percy-Smith and Thomas, 2010; Tisdall et al, 2006) such initiatives undoubtedly generated useful theoretical and practical learning. Nevertheless, there continue to be significant challenges at a structural level. The most recent report of the four UK Children's Commissioners on the implementation of the UNCRC (2015) describe the realisation of Article 12 in UK law and practice as 'highly variable' (para 4:12). Issues include the failure of the Westminster government and devolved parliaments to incorporate the UNCRC into domestic law; the impact of budget cuts, which they argue has resulted in statutory services limiting their work to the delivery of statutory duties; and the lack of determined effort to ensure the voices of those who are more vulnerable or less heard to be engaged in decision making.

8.2 Agency, structure and power

The development of legal and policy frameworks regarding children's rights has coincided with a paradigmatic 'turn' in thinking about childhood, and the relationship between children, their peers and the adults in their lives. Research into childhood has increasingly focused on the diversity of 'childhoods', which vary both historically (Hendricks, 1997), culturally (Punch, 2000; Lancy, 2008) and across different social groups. To these historical and cultural differences can be added many other factors, including gender, sexuality, ethnicity, health and disability, geographic and community setting – as well as experience of parenting and family life, and the nature of the individual's interactions with institutions such as schools or religious communities. While structural factors such as culture help explain the nature of children's experiences, they do not determine it. Children and young people themselves have become recognised as social actors, with the capacity to act and reflect on their actions in a way that affects their environment and social groups (Prout and James, 1997).

The attribution of agency to children and young people has not, however, been equally distributed. As Brodie [E] et al (2009) note, 'It is impossible to review the literature… without recognising the significance of power dynamics in shaping participation and the participatory experience' (p.3). These include the contexts in which they happen and the relationships which shape them. As with childhood, participation does not take place in a neutral space, whether in terms of time, place, community or organisational structure. Rather the concept represents something of the nexus between structure and individual agency. Theoretical models are therefore required which take adequate account of these dimensions (see Warrington, 2015 for further discussion of this). As Mannion (2007) observes, this is in part a matter about the social actors who are considered

to play a role in participatory enterprises; too often, he argues, adults have not been recognised as playing a critical role in facilitating participation. He therefore argues that more 'relational' thinking about participation is required. Others have drawn attention to concepts of 'thick' and 'thin' agency, referring to the latitude available to young people, which may be circumscribed by different factors including organisational processes or the actions of individual adults (Klocker, 2007; see also Kelly, 2015).

There is evidence from literature relating to child safeguarding more generally, and child sexual exploitation specifically, that there is a tension between a perception of the child as a powerless victim, and the child as 'the potential unlocker of the solutions to their own difficulties and an active contributer to the plan to reduce significant harm' (Sanders and Mace, 2006). For young people engaged with services, the extent to which they are considered competent and capable to participate in decision making is frequently viewed through a lens of vulnerability and risk (Pearce, 2006; 2007; 2009). The known characteristics of young people who are sexually exploited are easily translated into concepts of risk. Official guidance, research studies and numerous powerpoint displays are replete with lists of risk factors for the CSE affected young person. These include such experiences as being looked after, mental health problems, experience of other forms of abuse, disengagement from education, substance misuse, running away (Chase and Statham, 2005; Beckett, 2011; Brodie and Pearce, 2012). The emphasis on risk has resulted in a corresponding emphasis on the need to protect, and a perception that young people with these problems are not able to participate in decision making (Warrington, 2013).

Both Warrington (op cit) and Hallett (2015) argue that this is to misinterpret the significance of agency in the wider context of young people's lives. Hallett suggests that the links between child sexual exploitation and other issues in young people's lives are complex, but together result in feelings of instability, exclusion from what is normal, a lack of trusting relationships and negative and abusive experiences of sex. These feelings generate a sense of 'invisibility' and the need to find ways to reassert a sense of self. Paradoxically, exploitative relationships may serve to restore a feeling of self-efficacy (Smeaton, 2014; Hallett, 2015).

There are tensions, therefore, between a policy and practice emphasis on participation rights and perceptions of the welfare needs of vulnerable young people. These can be further compounded by perceptions relating to the capacity of adolescents in decision making regarding sex and relationships (see, for example, Lees, 2002; Pearce, 2009), often resulting in a discourse of blame (Hallett, 2015). The

construction of CSE as an issue is closely linked to a growing body of evidence highlighting the focus of welfare services on younger children and abuse within the family, at the expense of an understanding of the scale of maltreatment experienced by adolescents (Rees et al, 2009; Allnock, 2015), within the family but also in the context of adolescent partner relationships (Barter, 2011) and sexual exploitation (Hanson and Holmes, 2015).

This is not inevitable, however. The literature that promotes participation reverses the equation, that participation is necessary to protection, and that effective child protection systems will have a children's rights perspective 'at their core' (Parton, 2014, cited in Research in Practice, 2015, p15). There is a high level of consensus in the child sexual exploitation literature that participation should not be viewed as a separate arena for action, but rather as an intervention in its own right. Equally, some literature argues that the absence of participation or consultation directly contributes to the choices young people make. Coy (2009) argues, in respect to her sample of sex workers, that the lack of consultation over placement moves led them to seek ways in which to exercise their agency, even when this involved them in harmful environments (p263; see also Dodsworth, 2014; Scott and Skidmore, 2006).

8.3 Models of participation

There is a body of 'historical' literature tracing the development of different models of participation, which are intended both to describe ways in which participation takes place, and ways in which it can be developed or improved.. Hart's (1992) ladder of participation was widely influential, outlining a series of stages through which participation was enhanced – from the non-participation associated with manipulation, decoration and tokenism through information, consultation and adult-initiated decision making to child-initiated and directed and, at the top of the ladder, child initiated, shared decisions with adults. However, difficulties were identified with this model – for example, the idea that participation should be perceived as a series of levels, with some forms of participation of greater value than others (Treseder, 1997). This was developed by Shier (2001) into a five stage model: that children are listened to; children are supported in expressing their views; children's views are taken into account; children are involved in decision making processes; and children share power and responsibility for decision making. Shier suggested that at each stage of the model, individuals and organisations might have differing degrees of commitment to the process of empowerment (p110). Specifically, at each level, there might be an opening – when a worker is ready to operate at that level; an opportunity – when the worker is able to implement their intention, for example through the provision of additional resources; and finally, an obligation, when it is established in

the organisation's policy that this should be normal practice. Other models have also sought to move away from any implication of a hierarchy in types of participation, and to incorporate more spatial imagery – for example, 'zones' of participation (Barker, 1999).

Participation is generally seen as benign for both young people and services. Sinclair (1996) states that participation by young people can be supported 'for reasons of principle and reasons of practice' (p91). Reasons of principle are closely associated with children's rights, as these have been defined in legislation. These frameworks emphasise that the young person as an individual with views, opinions and legal rights, with the logical consequence of this being that adults cannot necessarily represent the views of children and young people in a meaningful way. Linked to this is the 'unique perspectives' that children hold regarding their lives and experiences (Berelowitz et al, 2015) – they are experts and their knowledge is essential to good practice and the promotion of their welfare. Participation by children leads to better decision making – they are more likely to be based on complete and accurate information, are more likely to be implemented and are more likely to have beneficial outcomes. Through participation, children and young people develop new skills. Involving children in decision making enhances their sense of responsibility and their development of a sense of involvement in a community, whether this is a school, youth club or other context.

These points seem almost self evident in terms of the advantages of participation. However, commentators note ongoing tensions in the way in which participation is understood. While one of the attractive features of participation as a concept is its breadth and inclusivity, this also creates problems – Percy-Smith and Thomas (2010) suggest it can also be 'bland' and 'cosy', resulting in comfortable forms of participation that are essentially tokenistic; equally it may be so elastic as to be rendered virtually meaningless. These tensions are especially acute where young people are perceived to be 'vulnerable' or 'troublesome'. The difficulties associated with the conceptualisation of participation are significant in the context of service delivery, too often resulting in confusion about what participation involves and whether it is actually happening (Head, 2011). Other commentators argue that 'participation' is contextual and experiential, and that this can be obscured by too much concern with definitions. There is therefore a need for a more dynamic, fluid understanding of participation (Horwath, Kalyva and Spyro, 2012; Mannion, 2007) that places greater emphasis on specific contexts.

All this may lead to the conclusion that while models of participation have helped drive debate and reflection, any one model is likely to be insufficient and there is a need

for ongoing critique (Hernandez, Robson and Sampson, 2010). Horwath, Kalyva and Spyro (op cit) note that a common feature of all the available models is that they attempt to describe young people's participation in decision making in terms of adults giving increasing levels of control and power – rather than examining the issue from young people's perspectives. James and James (2001) go further, arguing that programmes and projects focusing on participation do not contribute to children's empowerment, but serve only to legitimise adult agendas. Charles and Haines (2015) consulted with young people about existing models of participation. Although some were viewed more positively than others, the young people were critical of hierarchical models and also found the models boring and too complicated. They were, however, able to identify alternative ways of designing and presenting different types of participation.

There is also an absence of evidence regarding the 'outcomes' of participation. Indeed, it has been argued that there is little robust evidence to demonstrate that participation in fact results in the intended benefits (Day, 2008; Kirby et al, 2003). A note of caution should be sounded here in the light of wider epistemological debates about 'whose knowledge counts' in the assessment of such outcomes (Harris, 2014) and especially given the research gaps identified earlier in this review. Charles and Haines (2014) note that the majority of tools for the measurement of participation are adult –generated, and the direct involvement of young people in the design of participatory tools would help in making these more relevant and useful.

There is a need to disentangle what would constitute an 'outcome' from participation work, in relation both to young people and the service (Wade, 2003). Crawford et al (2002) point out that the ultimate goal of service user participation should be the promotion of health, quality of life, or overall user satisfaction with services. However these outcomes are also difficult to measure, they can take a substantial amount of time to become evident, and the link with the participation of services users and carers can be difficult to prove. These issues are highly pertinent to CSE services, where the time required to undertake work with individual young people has frequently been highlighted, and where change will often involve harm reduction. Wright et al (2003) note that there is also an absence of tools to support professionals for the measurement of outcomes, and link this to the challenges faced by practitioners in setting clear aims and objectives for participation work. They suggest it is important to distinguish review of the 'process' of participation i.e. what organisations are doing; the 'outcomes' for children and young people directly involved in participation practice (e.g. improved confidence'; and the 'outcomes' for the organisation (i.e. what changed or improved). SCIE (2007)

argues that more consideration needs to be given to the question of what would represent good evidence about whether participation makes a real difference, the nature of both costs and benefits, and how learning about this can best be shared. Finding ways to measure impact should include young people and their workers. However, there are many challenges.

8.4 Participation in the context of the delivery of children's services

The implementation of the UNCRC and the Children Act 1989 required services to examine the way in which guidance, organisational structures and processes, and the practice of professionals, reflected an understanding of children's rights to be consulted and to contribute to the development of policy and practice. This interest and concern to develop participation has been reflected in a range of initiatives and programmes, as well as dissemination of good practice from individual agencies (see, for example, Wright et al, 2003). It is worth noting that in addition to the advantages for individuals, however, service user participation is viewed as bringing with it advantages for services, including improved efficiency (and potentially, therefore, cost effectiveness) (Cavet and Sloper, 2004).

However, the evidence indicates that the introduction of participatory approaches has been far from easy, and is far from being established as universal. Melrose (2013) grounds this in the 'arena of struggle (Wacquant, 2006, p8) that is represented by service delivery. For young people who have grown up in a social field characterised by powerlessness and coercion, it is not surprising that the idea of participation in services may appear at best counter-intuitive. Insensitive interventions from statutory services may have been a long-standing part of the experience of their families and communities (see, for example, McKenzie, 2014; also Beckett et al, 2013). The theoretical frameworks which have developed to understand CSE have therefore emphasised the need for voice and empowerment in the form of rights-based theory and feminist theory (see Brodie et al, 2011; Warrington, 2013).

Much of the evidence relating to the experience of participation relates to a fairly narrow focus on formal processes of assessment, review and planning, usually involving meetings. Studies of safeguarding and the experiences of children in care indicate that the experience of young people is variable (Bell, 2002; Woolfson et al, 2010). Bell (1999) found the views of the child were obtained in just over one quarter of child protection cases and reported to conferences in just under one-third. Where processes were observed, studies have found that young people often feel awkward or excluded from the discussions taking place. Triseliotis et al (1995) in a study of adolescents in receipt

of social care services in Scotland, found that young people could be intimidated by the number of adults at the meeting, the language used, fear of upsetting key adults in their lives; and lack of trust in the adults.

Participation is also related to other concepts that have gained traction in policy and practice in public services, and is sometimes used interchangeably with these. Gallagher et al (2012) reviewing children and families' involvement in social work decision making, highlight the following terms: service user engagement, participation, consultation, and personalisation. To this list can be added the ideas of co-production, co-design and co-creation in the design and delivery of public services. Such concepts are also visible in thinking about adolescents and safeguarding services (Hanson and Holmes, 2015).

These terms are often used interchangeably, but broadly refer to the idea, or 'new paradigm' that service users and their communities can, or should, be part of service planning and delivery (Bovaird, 2007). They are linked to broader shifts in the service provider/user relationship, influenced by trends in international development (Chambers, 1997) and political movements such as communitarianism (Etzioni, 1995) which emphasise the resources service users already or can potentially bring to service delivery, and the benefits for both individuals and the services concerned. It would be mistaken, however, to assume that these ideas arise solely from notions of empowerment; much of the debate relating to such concepts has emerged in the context of the rolling back of the state and associated shifts in the configuring of public services. Participation can also be linked to wider concepts of citizenship.

It is important to recognise the extent to which conditionality, or the principle of eligibility, is a central plank of the contract between the user of public services and the state. This is most often applied to state benefits, and refers to the idea that, in order to receive certain entitlements from the state, claimants must agree to meet particular conditions or behave in certain ways. Underlying this is the premise that there can be no entitlement to any rights without associated responsibilities. The coercive nature of this can mean that citizens may start to disengage from the state and disappear from the associated surveillance of the state. The principle of conditionality is not an abstract notion, but an experience enacted by service users and professionals when questions of threshold or access to a service is negotiated. It may also be linked to a wider public discourse where particular groups of service users – often including young people – are more generally stigmatised as undeserving in some way (see, for example, Stein, 2014). Some will have been told that their experiences do not warrant help or support. Young people in care, those with experience of the criminal

justice or mental health systems, will have been subject to the decision making of others, often resulting in feelings of powerlessness and stigma (Coy, 2009; Dodsworth, 2014).

The nature of the relationship between state and service user means that there are difficulties associated with the view that a 'rebalancing' of this relationship is possible through ideas such as service user involvement, personalisation, participation, co-design and co-creation of services. There is also a danger that such language obscures the nature of the power relationship. Such ideas are subject to a range of interpretations and may mean different things in practice. Personalisation is an example of this; like participation, it has become a popular concept in policy, though it has been more often associated with developments in adult social care and disability. Like participation, it has been used in different ways and in respect to different discourses. It is often linked to 'person-centred' and 'individualised' policy and practice. The literature identifies several, sometimes contradictory, ways in which personalisation might take place. These include: providing opportunities for the service user to express a preference for a particular service or combination of services; individualised assessment and matching of services to need; the creation of a service context where the service user is listened to and where their choices inform the design and development of services (Cutler, Waine and Brehony, 2007; Spicker, 2013). Weaver (2011), discussing personalisation in the context of youth justice, suggests that the concept can be applied more widely to create 'new alliances' between the different social actors who might interact with the service user – for example, parents, carers, victims, the wider community and practitioners.

Spicker (2013) argues that it should be considered within the context of the market, and the fact that the service user, unlike the consumer in the conventional marketplace, does not have access to individualised resources. Rather, the service user may be receiving the service not as a result of personal choice but as a result of coercion (as in the case of young offenders) or because they have limited choice or power – as is generally the case for young people in receipt of child protection services. Cutler, Waine and Brehony (2007) suggest that personalisation in social care is especially problematic, as processes of assessment and the setting of thresholds limit access to services. These issues are relevant in the context of child sexual exploitation, where services are limited (OCC, 2015) and where young people and their families may initially approach other, statutory services as a means to gain support. Thresholds for social care support are especially problematic for adolescents, who may not be viewed as eligible for a service – especially if the risks are perceived to be low.

9. How explicit is the policy requirement for children and young people's participation in the processes associated with assessment, review etc and what evidence exists regarding the implementation and/or effectiveness of these processes?

The development of participatory working in the context of CSE services must be viewed in the context of a major shift in thinking about CSE over the past two decades. Prior to the early 2000s, young people who were known to have been sexually exploited were more likely to be viewed within the framework of child prostitution (Melrose, Barrett and Brodie, 1999). Gradually, as a result of the campaigns of voluntary organisations and the emergence of new evidence, a 'paradigm shift' took place which emphasised sexually exploited children and young people as children in need of a welfare, rather than a punishment response (Department of Health, 2001; Chase and Statham, 2005).

This has been hastened by wider events, most notably cases of exploitation that have been subject to prosecution and public enquiries into multiple cases of CSE (see, for example, Jay, 2014; Coffey, 2014; Rochdale Borough Safeguarding Board, 2014; House of Commons Home Affairs Committee, 2014). These have highlighted both the failure of (mainly statutory) services to listen to young people trying to report abuse, and the need for this to be corrected. These are not new messages, but have been repeatedly highlighted in serious case reviews over many years (Munro, 2011).

Outside England and Wales, the development of policy and guidance relating specifically to child sexual exploitation has been slower (Beckett, 2011; Brodie and Pearce, 2012), but has gathered pace since 2012. In Northern Ireland one major empirical study has taken place. In Scotland, the research evidence continues to take the form of useful, but small scale studies (Creegan, Scott and Smith, 2004; Dillane, Hill and Munro, 2005) and aside from one consultation exercise with key stakeholders (Lerpiniere et al, 2014) no major empirical study has taken place (Brodie and Pearce, 2012).

Currently, policy guidance therefore emphasises the necessity of ensuring that professionals build effective relationships with young people and provide maximum opportunity for their views and concerns to be expressed. The Office of the Children's Commissioner (2013) states unequivocally that a focus on the child is essential to good practice; gaining a child's confidence will enable the child or young person to recognise that abuse has taken place, and in time will enable them to disclose this. Ofsted (2014) identifies listening to children and young people; and visiting regularly and getting to know children and young people, as key principles in addressing child sexual exploitation in practice. However, the Office of the Children's Commissioner

notes, in a 2015 report, that only 31 per cent of LSCBs with a child sexual exploitation strategy have involved children and young people in the design of this, and that the voluntary sector described participation in many LSCBs as 'tokenistic' (Berelowitz et al, 2015). This suggests that participation at a strategic level is limited in many areas, and that much remains to be done. At the same time, for participation to take place, expertise and resources are required, and these are not always available to those working in the area of CSE.

10. What evidence exists regarding the nature of the experience of participation, and its impact, from the perspectives of young people, parents and carers, and professionals?

Perhaps inevitably, the literature on participation either tends to involve arguments in favour of participation or the outcomes from participation, rather than reflections on the experience itself. Young people and their families report positively on being listened to and taken seriously (Shuker, 2014; D'Arcy et al, 2014) but there is an absence of evidence reflecting on experiences of being involved in efforts to influence service design or development.

As noted earlier, there is a lack of evidence regarding the views of different groups of young people – for example, boys and girls, young people from different ethnic and cultural backgrounds, young people with different disabilities (see Gohir, 2013; Franklin, Raws and Smeaton, 2015; BLAST, 2014). There is also a lack of evidence of the 'participatory careers' of young people – how they may have moved from a position of resistance to a service to one in which they play an active role, or where they have played an active participatory role for a time then moved on.

Overall, the evidence indicates that the language of 'participation' is not usually evident in the accounts of young people. Their priority is rather what they have valued in the services they have received. They identify interpersonal factors as especially important, most obviously the relationships they have developed with individual workers (Warrington, 2013; Hallett, 2015; Gilligan, 2015). These relationships are perceived by young people to arise from the personal qualities of workers, including their warmth, humour, care, reliability and persistence. What they have received from services has also enabled, empowered or changed their perspectives – all ideas that fit within a participatory discourse. Organisational factors are also important, including easy access to services, flexibility of opening, availability of staff and a friendly environment. These ideas are also present in the models of service outlined by providers (see, for example, Melrose and Barrett, 2004; Scott and Skidmore, 2006; D'Arcy et al, 2014). Between these two dimensions of structure of agency lies an exchange of what

might be termed social capital, in the form of knowledge and information about CSE that alters the young person's self-perception, or horizons of the possible.

A striking feature of empirical studies that feature young people's voices is the way in which these challenge the construction of the 'problem' of CSE and their various vulnerabilities e.g. having a home, somewhere to feel safe and cared for emerges more strongly than the issue of running away. This corresponds with other accounts of how young people's participation will generate new knowledge and shift definitions of a situation; a good example of this is the work of young people in care in drawing attention to the stigmatising features of care, such as the use of bin bags to move belongings (see Stein, 2014). Also, young people's accounts help highlight different forms of CSE, such as violence between peers and the experience of young people with learning disabilties (Firmin, 2010; Franklin, Raws and Smeaton, 2015).

10.1 Resistance and non-participation

Experiences of participation are invariably balanced against experiences of non-participation, and this was evident in all the core studies examined. Empirical studies contain a recognition, not always made explicit, about what participation means – participants know when they are listened to, but are, equally, aware when this is not the case. Their responses are often couched in terms of feeling and emotion. There is a powerful sense of 'them', 'the system' and the ways in which this has prevented the young person being heard, versus the individuals who have helped facilitate participation.

How far young people are participating in CSE services is, therefore, initially dependent on their being able to find a way of contacting or being referred to a service, and feeling able to work with that service. In order for this to happen the young person will need to feel able to accept 'becoming' a user of that service. What this means will vary according to the service context – it may be a matter of attending, or complying with a treatment regime (Snow and Fulop, 2012) or criminal justice order. Dubberly et al (2015) in relation to compliance with youth justice orders, note that people comply for different reasons – self-interest, moral obligation, habit or routine, and constraint or coercion – or a mixture of these.

Severinsson and Markstrom (2015) examine the question of non-participation at a micro-level. Their work focuses on young people living in out-of-home care, but they offer an interesting set of conceptual tools. Drawing on Goffman (1968; 19) that young people in receipt of services are required to adjust to the role of a client (p2) in order to achieve a 'working consensus' that makes existence in an institution possible. However, this consensus can be challenged by individuals who wish to distance themselves from the identity offered/provided/enforced by the institution. Discourse analysis of interviews with young people suggested a range of ways in which young people 'positioned themselves' vis-à-vis the client identity. At the furthest poles were those who totally adjusted and those who totally rejected the client identity and the associated values of the institution, but more nuanced positions involved various forms of compliance.

Warrington (2015) examines this more specifically in relation to CSE, emphasising that the sensitivity of CSE as an issue makes the process of approaching services especially difficult and may be accompanied by feelings of shame and guilt, in addition to prior negative experiences of other services. Both Warrington and Gilligan (2015) note the trajectory involved, a series of steps that include identifying yourself as a victim of CSE or someone at risk; accepting a need for help; and trusting a new set of professionals. In turn this process of engagement is likely to prompt feelings of loss, anxiety, ambivalence, alienation, mistrust, frustration and anger. Warrington notes the important links with and scope for learning from youth work approaches, which also emphasise the principle of voluntary engagement and the need to allow for self-referral.

10.2 Previous service use

All seven core studies highlight the importance of past and current service use in understanding the experiences of young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation. There is strong and consistent evidence that, while sexual exploitation can be experienced by young people from any background, a disproportionate number will have experienced a range of adversities, including family difficulties, experience of different types of abuse and neglect, experience of the care system; a history of educational difficulty, including truancy and exclusion from school; a history of running away or going missing; drug and alcohol misuse; and delinquency and gang involvement(Pearce et al, 2002; Scott and Skidmore, 2006; Creegan, Scott and Smith, 2005; Dillane, Hill and Munro, 2005; Jago et al, 2011; Beckett, 2011; Brodie et al, 2011). Aspects of these experiences may represent either 'push' or 'pull' factors in respect to the young person's experience of CSE (Smeaton, 2013; Coy, 2008), and may be important in the identification of CSE by professionals. Consequently, it is unsurprising that samples of young people in receipt of CSE services also indicate high levels of pre-existing service use (Jago et al, 2011; CEOP, 2011; Beckett, 2011; Warrington, 2013).

Prior service use includes a disproportionate number of young people with experience of care, though again this is not inevitable and the majority of young people are likely

to be living at home (Jago et al, 2011). Samples of young people in care have tended not, to date, collected information about their experiences of CSE or contact with CSE services. However, Beckett's (2011) research in Northern Ireland found that 1 in 7 young people in touch with social care had been sexually exploited. A scoping study of the sexual exploitation of looked after children in Scotland found that just over a fifth were known or suspected to have experienced CSE (Lerpiniere et al, 2013). Other research has highlighted sexual violence within care settings (Barter et al, 2004) and studies of residential care have indicated the targeting of residential settings for the purposes of exploitation (Dillane, Hill and Munro, 2004).

Such evidence highlights the need to examine young people's experience of participation in CSE services within the wider context of their lives. An exclusive focus on CSE is unlikely to capture an understanding of the reasons why a young person has become sexually exploited, or, in turn, how they interact with services. More than that, the past experiences of young people who are sexually exploited draw attention to the wider social context of which they are a part, and the ways in which their lives are situated at 'intersections' of interconnecting social, economic and political conditions which make their exploitation more likely (Kelly, 2016). Pearce et al (2002) note that for the young people in their sample, exploitation was not always the dominant problem, and that young people were dealing with many other challenges at the same time. Warrington (2013) found that the young people in her sample had experience of engagement with at least two other statutory or voluntary services, and some had experience of as many as nine other services. A total of 34 additional support services were mentioned as having been accessed by the group. Warrington notes that this both 'highlighted their proficiency in navigating professional systems of welfare' while at the same time providing a context for the widespread cynicism and mistrust about welfare service revealed within interviews' (p.98).

There is strong evidence that young people in receipt of child sexual exploitation services may have experienced discrimination or negative reactions from professionals. Creegan, Scott and Smith (2005) found that young people who had been sexually exploited and living in secure accommodation were described as 'attention-seeking', 'manipulative' and 'hard work'. Other studies note the tendency for young people who are sexually exploited to be described as 'alienated from other services' (Pearce, 2009; see also Lerpiniere et al, 2013). The way in which young people are described, either verbally or in writing, and informally as well as in the formal settings of reviews, can have a significant effect on whether and how interventions take place and perceptions of how 'safe' young people are. Equally, such language implies that young people are not

interested in participating, if not unable to participate.

This suggests that service users of CSE services may not always be viewed as competent or interested in participating. This is challenged by research into the views of young people themselves. Coy (2008) focused specifically on exploring the stories of 14 young women who were sex workers but also had experience of the care system. All participants felt they 'had valuable suggestions to improve preventative and diversionary work' (p257). This is reflected in other research relating to the participation of children and young people in the child protection system and associated services (Buckley, Carr and Whelan, 2011) . This highlights their desire to be involved in the process, specifically in terms of being listened to and feeling that their views are taken into account (Bell, 2002).

11. What evidence exists regarding the range of participative models and techniques deployed in CSE services, and the accessibility, acceptability and effectiveness of these different approaches?

There is a lack of evaluative information from the core studies and the wider evidence examined regarding participative models and techniques. The information available is patchy, and tends to involve single examples of practice, rather than a description of a 'model'. There is also a lack of evidence regarding differences in practice. Descriptions of services can tend to 'showcase' good practice rather than explore in detail the tensions and difficulties and how these are managed. This is likely to reflect the way in which CSE research has developed, which has required a more general focus in order to develop an evidence base for policy.

Where evidence exists, there are consistent messages about what professionals see as the fundamental elements to an effective CSE service. Although the language of participation tends not to be used, the principles of participation are present.

Two models are more explicit. Barnardo's model of provision in terms of the 'four A's': 'Access', which involves seeking new and creative ways to enable young people to access services; 'Attention', or developing protective and supportive relationships through the consistent and persistent attention; 'Assertive Outreach', or the use of 'persistent engagement techniques' to maintain contact; and 'Advocacy' work with other agencies to ensure that young people's needs are placed at the centre of decision making.

Similarly, a model of 'therapeutic outreach' emphasises the need to think beyond traditional models of service provision, such as planned appointments in professional spaces.

Rather, it is important to develop services that recognise the nature of young people's everyday experiences and routines, and works flexibly to interact with individual young people in ways that are comfortable for them. This has much in common with youth work models of provision.

11.1 Types of participative involvement

Meetings
With the exception of Warrington (2013), studies have tended not to address this issue in relation to child sexual exploitation, though it is a significant theme in other literature. Warrington found that young people were often excluded from meetings, in the sense of not being informed that these were taking place or invited, or excluded by virtue of barriers such as language or the attitude of those present or the confusing nature of proceedings. While meetings may not appear the most desirable form of participative activity, they are important for decision making and it is therefore important to ensure that the arrangements in place are designed to facilitate participation. Warrington suggests a checklist, including preparation e.g ensuring young people understood the purpose of meetings, the opportunity to provide input to agendas; the process of the meeting e.g. finding ways to make young people feel welcome, appreciating the challenges of attending the meeting, providing opportunities for young people to challenge information shared about them or language used to describe them; post-meeting processes e.g ensuring young people received detailed feedback (particularly from any relevant meetings that they did not attend in person)

Involvement in training
There has been a strong emphasis on the importance of raising awareness and improving the knowledge base of all professionals working with young people in regard to child sexual exploitation. New training is being developed and is being delivered, often by specialist agencies, and there is evidence of young people being involved in this to very positive effect, either by developing training materials or being involved in delivery. There is a lack of clear evidence about how participatory styles of working are presented in such training, and the effects of this.

Development of resources and materials
There is evidence that young people are involved in developing a variety of resources using a range of media, which aim to improve understanding of CSE and also to serve as tools for training and practice. These include leaflets, films, reports and presentations. Young people attest to the value of involvement in these activities, and report enjoying learning or developing skills (Purple Monsters, 2014; BLAST, 2015).

Involvement in policy development, locally and nationally
There is an absence of research relating to young people's participation at organisational and structural level in the development of CSE policy and practice. Evidence to date suggests that between a quarter and a third of LSCBs involve young people in the development of their CSE strategies (Jago et al, 2011; Berelowitz, 2015). However, young people are clear that they have important issues to raise in the development of more effective policy and practice (Coy, 2009).

Undertaking research and evaluation
This is an important strand in the literature on participation. Young people with experience of CSE have been involved in consultations and advising on research projects and research materials (see, for example, Warrington, 2013; Franklin, Raws and Smeaton, 2015). They have also helped in the dissemination of research findings. The experience of being involved in CSE-related research is, however, under-researched.

11.2 The replicability of participative models
There is an absence of studies that have evaluated participative models, and a more general absence of studies that have sought to replicate models. Overall, the evidence would support the view, as illustrated throughout the review, that there is consistency in what is perceived to be effective practice in work with young people who are at risk or are experiencing CSE, and that this incorporates a participative approach. The evidence indicates that the development of CSE work in the voluntary sector has provided opportunities to replicate work (Barnardo's programme of CSE work represents the most visible and well-evidenced example of this). Certain services (e.g. Lancashire) also have a high national profile and appear in different places as examples of good participatory practice (Ofsted, 2014).

At the same time, evidence from the Hub and Spoke project (Harris et al, 2014) and some smaller studies (D'Arcy et al, 2014) indicate that differences in policy and practice context help generate differences in organisational and practice approaches, and this includes variations in the way in which participatory approaches are adopted. There is also a question about how far participatory approaches need to vary for different groups or contexts. This is difficult to evaluate. Empirical studies have often tried very hard to ensure diversity, but the numbers are very small (Warrington, 2011; Hallett, 2015). Larger samples of CSE service users (CEOP; Jago et al; also emerging findings from Hub and Spoke).

Participation work is often associated with organised groups, and the development of a more political or campaigning approach to influencing services that extends beyond participation in individual decision making. In the context of CSE, service examples indicate that participation work often takes place in a group setting (Ofsted, 2014). To date this has been under-explored in the context of CSE literature. The majority of the literature focuses on one-to-one work as a model, and there is an absence of UK based literature relating to the role of peer support in CSE services as a means to develop participatory working (but see Hickle, 2014).

There is also a therapeutic aspect to group based participation activities. An important advantage of the group setting is the opportunity to build positive peer relationships, which can make young people feel less isolated (Smeaton, 2013). Groups may also provide the opportunity to experiment with different methods of work – art, drama, music, poetry – which offer young people different ways of expressing their feelings as well as developing new skills (Smeaton, 2013).

Underlying such work is a strengths-based approach, which may also be described in terms of resilience. There is an extensive literature on resilience that lies outside this review, but broadly this approach chooses not to focus on the young person's problems, resulting in a negative picture of the individual, but to recognise their resources as a means of countering the risks in their lives (Hanson and Holmes, 2015). In recognising young people as active agents in their own lives and capable of taking part in decisions, there is an acknowledgement of the strengths of the young person, rather than the problems or risks which are frequently used to define them. Involving young people in developing services is at once an acknowledgement of their abilities, but also provides opportunities for them to build skills and self confidence, and a greater sense of self-efficacy (Scott and Skidmore, 2006; Street and Herts, 2005; Hanson and Holmes, 2015).

11.3 Outcomes from participation

Overall, the literature indicates a lack of a rigorous approach to the mapping or measurement of outcomes from participatory approaches in CSE services, probably linked to the fact that practice may not be viewed as explicitly 'participative'. The main sources of evidence in the core studies are the perceptions of young people that change has occurred, and this can be linked to a form of professional practice that can broadly be described as participative. Scott and Skidmore (2006) measured young people's awareness of rights in terms of their understanding of risks. They found that young people using Barnardo's services had, at the point of first assessment, a limited awareness of their interpersonal rights, while at final review there was

a significant reduction in the number of young people who were considered to lack the ability to assert their rights.

12. **What evidence exists regarding the conditions that need to be in place to make participative working possible and effective for different groups of CSE affected young people?**

Kelly (2016) suggests that in the same way certain institutional and organisational contexts are especially conducive to violence and abuse, so certain contexts can be conducive to undoing such harm. There is a strong body of evidence about what children and young people – and their families – seek when approaching CSE services for help, and practice that is described broadly as 'participative' is an important aspect of this.

However, consideration also needs to be given to the precise nature of these conditions. Overall, the way in which samples have been recruited for research studies of child sexual exploitation mean that less attention has been given to the organisational and cultural aspects that support the practice of individual members of staff. Unfortunately, the majority of research information tends to focus on practice quality, rather than wider, organisational issues.

Participation in CSE services is distinctive, though it will share characteristics with other welfare and educational services working with young people who have experienced violence and abuse. Several studies identify practice challenges associated with engaging young people. These include: denial by the young person that they are being sexually exploited; drug use and dependency; difficulty of balancing choices and rights with effective protection; mistrust of services based on previous experiences (Chase and Statham, 2005). There may be a fear of stigmatising the young person by 'labelling' them as a victim of CSE (Lebloch and King, 2006). More generally, there may be a lack of skills, or lack of confidence in such skills, in engaging with young people (Scott and Harper, 2006; Lerpiniere et al, 2014).

There is evidence from a wider body of literature, not part of the scope of this review, that changing conditions in the statutory sector mean that the autonomy and resources available to individual practitioners make the implementation of a participative approach more challenging (see, for example, Ayre and Preston-Shoot, 2010; Gallagher et al, 2012). The imperatives of protection may also be viewed as antithetical to participation, even while the need for a more flexible, child-centred approach in safeguarding has been strongly asserted at policy level (Munro, 2011). More practically, a context of economic austerity and budget cuts has affected the availability of preventative services and the range of interventions available (OCC, 2014; Coffey, 2014;

UK Children's Commissioners, 2015), including child sexual exploitation services.

12.1 An organisational commitment to a participatory approach

There is reference in CSE research and research relating to participation of the importance of organisational commitment to a participative approach. Horwath, Kalyva and Spyro (2012) talked to young people with experiences of violence in four European countries, about their participation in services. They argued that the organisational and policy context in which participation occurs, together with the knowledge, skills, values and experiences of young people involved in a participative activity, together determined the level of participation that could be achieved. In line with wider evidence on participation, they emphasised the importance of adults having positive attitudes and beliefs regarding participation. In addition to this general context, the facilitator of any specific activity needed to have specific skills in supporting children and young people to make decisions; approaches activities in a non-judgemental way; allows children and young people to speak freely; and ensures that all those present feel safe and secure. In the context of a group, staff members needed to ensure that young people were treated with respect and gave due consideration to religious and cultural beliefs.

Kirby et al (2003) refers to 'cultures' of participation – the idea that participation infuses the organisational arrangements as well as the practice values of individual members of staff. This practice guide also distinguishes between different degrees to which organisations may incorporate a participative ethos. Therefore, consultation-focused organisations consult children and young people, either occasionally or on a more regular basis, for information that can support services, policy and product development (e.g. website design). Consultations usually take place one-off or occasionally, but can be repeated or regular events; participation-focused organisations, which consult young people and involve them in making decisions within 'higher-level' participation activities which focus on particular areas of work and are time bound (e.g. advisory group or recruitment panel) or context specific (e.g. youth forum, school council); and Child/youth-focused organisations where participation is central to all practice with children and young people within these organisations. They establish a culture in which it is assumed that all children and young people will be listened to about all decisions – both personal and public – that affect their lives. However, the evidence from young people indicates that however an organisation labels itself, the attitudes of the adults present are more critical (Haworth, Kalyva and Spyro, 2012; Warrington, 2013).

There is evidence that these different types of participative culture operate in CSE services, but a lack of data on the distribution or extent to which these different models operate. Melrose with Barrett's (2004) series of case studies from different CSE services includes descriptions of work that implicitly or explicitly involves consultation with young people. More recent examples of good practice also refer to consultation on specific issues, as well as more strategic approaches to influencing knowledge and practice relating to CSE at a local or national level (Ofsted, 2014). In such accounts there is a strong sense that a coherent and consistent approach to participation on the part of the organisation more generally is likely to stimulate practice at ground level. This is reflected in Scott and Skidmore's evaluation of Barnardo's CSE services, in which young people's increased awareness of their own rights is cited as a key outcome for services.

12.2 Effective CSE practice

The developing body of CSE research includes a high level of consensus in terms of what is perceived as effective practice, which as noted above includes characteristics that can be described as participatory. These characteristics have been demonstrated in the – admittedly small in number – service evaluations that have been undertaken (Scott and Skidmore, 2006; Shuker, 2014; D'Arcy et al, 2014). Five issues can be identified as consistently important:

Voluntary engagement with services

When the young person has made contact or begun to engage with a service, the nature of that engagement should also be voluntary. This involves a recognition that the young person has chosen to go to the service, and has a choice about whether they continue to engage. Implicit in this is the recognition of the young person as a capable individual who can and will make choices, as well as the responsibility of the service to respond in an appropriate way, or to guide the young person to an alternative service that is more appropriate. The opportunity to self-refer is an important indicator of this principle in action (Melrose with Barrett, 2004).

Service providers highlight the importance of confidentiality, and clarity about the nature of this, when working with young people. Several operate a 'high risk' approach to confidentiality, where information disclosed by the young person is not automatically passed on to another agency (Melrose with Barrett, 2004 – but note this information is outdated). While providers recognise the difficulties associated with this, not least the stress placed on workers, they also see it as an important aspect of communicating to young people that they have control over what is happening to them within the service. Again, there is a strong sense of a rights based approach.

Making services accessible

Services need to be available when young people need them – for example, at evenings and weekends. This evidence can be related to a much wider body of literature attesting to the need for services for adolescents to be accessible in terms of location and opening times. Young people highlight the importance of being able to self-refer. The principle of voluntary engagement with services is important in demonstrating respect and understanding of the young person's experiences and choices.

There is a consensus in descriptions and evaluations of services that accessibility is important (Pearce et al, 2003; Melrose with Barrett, 2004; Scott and Skidmore, 2006; Smeaton, 2013). In order for participation to take place, young people have to make contact and in some way access the service. Drop-ins, different opening hours and the value of street-based outreach are also suggested as ways in which accessibility may be achieved. At the same time, it is noted that the rigidity of some organisational structures act as a barrier to young people accessing services (Scott and Harper, 2006). However, accessibility is not only linked to organisational rules and procedures; it will also involve attention to the nature of the space and environment being offered to young people. To this extent the literature largely reflects what is known about services for adolescents more generally (see, for example, Brodie, Goldman and Clapton, 2010; Street and Herts, 2005. However, the research literature goes further to suggest that the process of making services accessible is an ongoing one, and persisting in offering a service even when the young person is reluctant or hostile, is an important aspect of the intervention (Pearce et al, 2002; Scott and Skidmore, 2006). At the same time there is an ongoing need to recognise the enormity of the step being taken by young people when approaching CSE services.

Recognising diversity

Given the invisibility of some groups of young people in cse services, the importance of understanding local communities and identifying ways of communicating and raising awareness amongst different groups will be important in ensuring that services are both accessible and acceptable.

For participation to be effective for different groups of CSE affected young people, the organisation and its practice will also need to be inclusive. An organisation may be 'participative' – but may not extend these opportunities in equal measure to different social groups. Tisdall et al (2008) note the importance of links between participation and inclusion. Participative processes may exclude some young people by virtue of factors such as language or ability. In order to avoid this, they suggest a high level of critical reflection is required on the part of practitioners to examine the extent to which young people from diverse backgrounds are enabled to participate in a service.

In CSE research more generally, most samples of young people receiving CSE services are girls (Jago et al, 2011; Scott and Skidmore, 2006). Boys (Lillywhite and Skidmore, 2006), young people from minority ethnic groups (Cockbain, 2013; Ward and Patel, 2006); and those with learning disabilities (Jago et al, 2011; Smeaton, 2014; Franklin, Raws and Smeaton, 2015) are less likely to be in touch with CSE services. Professionals acknowledge that these groups are under-represented in their services, and services which work with these groups specifically suggest that additional measures need to be taken to ensure that services are approachable (BLAST, 2015; Gohir, 2013). Boys nevertheless represent a sizeable minority of service-users, though proportions vary considerable from 11 per cent (NWG, 2010) to 29 per cent (CEOP, 2011). Cockbain, Brayley and Ashby (2014) in an analysis of Barnardo's CSE service users, found a range from 2 per cent to 50 per cent. Interestingly, the same study found that males tended to be younger and were more likely to present with disabilities, especially autism and ADHD. However, there were also many similarities in the experiences of male and female service users – for example in the levels of other forms of violence, including other sexual abuse and domestic abuse; and in levels of homelessness, running away and experience of the care system. These problems of accessibility are not, of course, restricted to child sexual exploitation services and is reflected in a wider body of literature relating to the delivery of services to adolescents in mental health and housing (See, for example, Street et al, 2005; Wolpert, Maguire and Rowland, 2011; Brodie, Goldson and Clapton, 2010).

Relationship based working

The research evidence is clear that positive relationships lie at the core of effective practice in CSE services. Considerable work has taken place in unravelling the different ingredients of effective relationships between professionals and young people in the context of CSE practice. Scott and Skidmore (2006) consider such relationships 'the bedrock' of their model of working; similarly Shuker (2014) describes the ability to form such relationships as the 'primary characteristic' to be sought in foster carers for sexually exploited young people. The professional participants in Welch's (2014) scoping study felt that only through such relationships could other aspects of CSE related work be achieved; it was only through positive relationships that staff would know young people well enough to open up conversations about their lives and their risks or experience of exploitation and to be able to ask questions and raise issues of concern in a sensitive way.

In turn this helps facilitate the development of trust between young people and workers (Bell, 2002; Cossar et

al, 2011; Munro, 2001; Leeson, 2007, 2010; McLeod, 2007; 2010). From a rights perspective, supportive and trusting relationships are more likely to offer opportunities for a child to make their views known than a relationship that is characterised by dominance (Bell, 2002).

Maintaining such relationships is also important (Bell, 2002). This will require commitment on the part of the service and managers to ensure that continuity of relationships is maintained. This requires certain structural conditions to be in place – for example consistency in the individuals providing the support.

Talking and listening

Within this relationship between young person and worker the individual encounter or conversation is key; Warrington (2013) cites Plummer (1995; p26) that the 'the power to tell a story, or indeed to not tell a story, under the conditions of one's own choosing, is part of the political process.' (Plummer, 1995, p26). The power to disclose information about oneself may be one of the few areas where a young person feels able to exercise control. The way in which this power is exercised emerges as an important theme of the literature on CSE, as the young person's decision to disclose the nature of their risk or experience of sexual exploitation, and other issues within their lives, is frequently presented as a important (turning) point in their relationship with a service, even while non-disclosure does not preclude effective engagement. Listening, asking questions sensitively, allowing the young person to talk or be silent, all serve to indicate 'care'. At the same time there is some evidence urging clarity between participants about 'what happens next' (MacLeod, 2006), as young people and practitioners may not be on the same page about this.

In Smeaton's (2014) study of young people running away and child sexual exploitation, it was noted that 'The importance of professionals showing young people that they care was stressed time and time again' (p83), and this 'care' was explicitly linked to workers' listening and asking young people about their experiences and feelings. The importance of care emerges strongly in literature relating to the care and child protection systems, where the lack of 'care' is often uppermost in young people's accounts. This idea can also be linked to literature stressing the importance of care in the 'everyday' contexts of young people's lives, as opposed to the headline risks and concerns (Holland et al, 2008). The concept of care suggests an ongoing process, which takes place over time and perseveres when young people may be resistant to engagement. This links well to the concept of therapeutic outreach (Pearce, 2009).

12.3 Does the sector make a difference?

As noted above, the voluntary sector has dominated in the provision of CSE services. The core studies in this review are largely based on the accounts of young people who have most recently been engaged with voluntary sector, specialist provision. These accounts often include unfavourable comparisons with the statutory sector: young people in Smeaton's (2014) study reported that they found it easier to access voluntary services and workers in this sector were more able to offer them time and support; the young people in Gilligan's (2015) study were similarly positive. Parent/carer respondents in an evaluation of a service for young people at risk of CSE and their families sometimes made an explicit comparison: that the style and approach of FCASE staff was distinctive in being noticeably unpatronising and friendly; that the interests of a voluntary sector organisation such as FCASE were likely to be different (less interested in procedure); and that there was a certain freedom in being able to develop a strengths based model of practice (D'Arcy et al, 2014).

Other research commentary argues that the statutory status and responsibilities of agencies such as social care mean that their focus is less likely to lie with participation (see, for example, Sanders and Mace, 2006). Equally, professionals from the statutory sector identify certain traits or skills as particularly associated with the voluntary sector, specifically time and the ability to develop relationships with young people. Scott and Harper (2006), in a study of the views of key professionals in London, identified engagement with young people as a challenge for social services. They note that this requires assertive outreach work was required, which social workers did not have the time or resources to provide.

However, in the same way that CSE services have developed unevenly across the UK, it is also the case that policy and practice relating to participation has varied, both geographically and in terms of sector– for example, there have been differences in the approach of education and social services to participation, with the latter generally viewed as more progressive (Sinclair, 1996; Alderson, 2003). Additionally, there is considerable difference between services, even within local authorities and individual teams (Wright et al, 2003). The size and complexity of statutory organisations create additional barriers for the individual professional seeking to offer more formalised opportunities for participation. Specific expertise in child sexual exploitation is also important; Malloch (2006) found that even in voluntary organisations working with young people who were running away, child sexual exploitation was seen as different, and young people who had been sexually exploited viewed as more problematic.

However, there are dangers in the assumption that a participative approach is the preserve of the voluntary sector and cannot be implemented within statutory services. Evidence has consistently shown that service providers in the statutory sector can and do develop meaningful relationships with children and young people, and that these are highly valued (see, for example, Bell, 2002; Brodie and Morris, 2010; Shuker, 2014). The statutory sector has also developed many tools and resources relating to participation. At the same time, aspects of the professional context may militate against the development of a culture which promotes participation. Key issues include a managerial and bureaucratic culture which focuses on risk to the exclusion of empowerment and enabling (Ayre and Preston-Shoot, 2010; Munro, 2011). The staff group may be less likely to change, in contrast to statutory services where young people often complain about the rapid turnover in staff (Bell, 2002; Coy, 2009; D'Arcy et al, 2014). At the same time, voluntary sector organisations experience the constraints of short-term funding, which affects the extent to which they are able to embed CSE work, and may also encounter challenges in working with statutory agencies (Scott and Harper, 2005; D'Arcy et al, 2014).

Training may have a role in addressing elements of this, though in itself is unlikely to correct disparities in organisational cultures. However, many of those working with young people who have experienced CSE are receiving training; equally, there is evidence that specialist services are often engaged in training (see, for example, D'Arcy et al, 2014). There has been a recognition that professionals require training in how best to work directly with CSE affected young people, and that the learning that has taken place in specialist organisations needs to be shared. Jago et al (2011) found that 52 per cent (of 89) interviewees reported training on ways to engage with young people at risk of or experiencing sexual exploitation. What is less clear is how prominent participatory working is as part of this training. Where practice in this area has been developed, there is evidence that the direct input of young people into the content and delivery of training is viewed as an important outcome of participatory working, and a key avenue for the embedding of the young person's voice in frontline practice (Ofsted, 2014). As awareness of CSE increases, and the knowledge base becomes more embedded, there is some potential for participative principles to become more embedded. LIttlechild (2000) argues that systematic approaches to children's participation are also important and should involve, inter alia, greater specificity in guidance and regulations about what is required of professionals in courts and welfare agencies, and concrete performance indicators.

13. Concluding messages

It is no exaggeration to state that participatory working is fundamental to the effective delivery of CSE services. There is a strong consensus in the literature that a shared value base exists which recognises the importance of individual rights, the imbalance of power that exists in the experience of receiving services, and the need to restore that balance through professional practice that is respectful, knowledgeable, patient and persevering. Research focusing on young people's views and experiences emphasises that they value the way in which CSE services recognise them as individuals, listen and take their views seriously, and provide a flexible and friendly approach.

However, there is no room for complacency. The review has demonstrated that approaches to participation in CSE services vary. It is also clear that some groups of young people continue to find it difficult to access CSE services. It is important that services retain a critical approach to what 'participation' means across their service, in order to ensure that participation is not restricted, and that the practice of participation incorporates values of equality and inclusivity.

There is a case to be made that participation in CSE services is different, requiring professionals with a strong knowledge base regarding the routes into and experience of CSE, and a reflective and critical approach to practice. It is encouraging that the literature supports the view that there are shared values regarding the participation of young people in specialist CSE services, but it is important that a response that values participation is not restricted to these services or viewed as 'their' job. Young people at risk of or experiencing CSE are also in contact with other services, or will need to be supported in accessing other services. For some this will involve extensive contact with the criminal justice system and court processes (Warrington and Beckett, 2014). A participative approach that treats young people as individuals and provides a space for dialogue rather than judgement, should be the task of all agencies working with vulnerable children and young people. The process of establishing and maintaining this should also recognise the potential for learning from other services, and the need to advocate for the development of participatory approaches . While the research is unequivocal on the need for professionals who combine knowledge, skills and compassion, there is a need for such practice to be supported by accessible organisations which try to ensure that structures do not obscure individuals. This is extremely difficult in a context where inequalities relating to basic needs for housing and income are growing.

More generally the review has illustrated the very significant gaps in knowledge relating to participatory practice in CSE services. There is a need for more examples of how participation takes place in practice, and for stronger evidence from young people about how they would like to participate in services, and how these opportunities can be effectively communicated. This might also contribute to further critique of the idea of participation, including the language of participation and how this may be misused to further embed institutional and adult power as well as identifying positive practice in enabling young people to contribute in ways that are important to them. In all of this, it is clear that participation is not a static idea and cannot be confined to the development of policy or practice guidelines; rather services will need to work with service users in an ongoing cycle of research, reflection and action.

14. Next steps?

Scoping reviews are helpful in collating and synthesising the research evidence, but the issues identified in this review will also contribute to the development of work in the participation strand of the Alexi project. This includes supporting young people to develop resources relating to participation and working with professionals to share information and practice relating to participation. The findings from the main evaluation will also help fill some of the gaps identified in the review, especially concerning the nature of practice in CSE services, and the role of participation within this.

Appendix

Database keywords

The diverse focus of studies for the review required a range of search terms. These included:

CSE: child sexual exploitation, prostitution, services, adolescents, child protection, safeguarding and UK. Participation: non-participation, resistance, involvement, engagement, children's rights, services, compliance, personalisation and youth and adolescents and UK.

Services: child welfare, child protection, safeguarding, care, looked-after, youth justice, youth work

Websites

A total of 16 websites were searched. They include:

PACE – Parents Against Child Exploitation
Office of the Children's Commissioner (England)
Scottish Government
Welsh Office
Northern Ireland Office
Department for Education
Research in Practice
National Children's Bureau
Barnardo's
CELCIS, University of Strathclyde
CEOP
NSPCC
National Working Group for Sexually Exploited Children and Young People
Social Care Institute for Excellence (SCIE)
International Centre: Researching Child Sexual Exploitation, Sexual Violence and Trafficking, University of Bedfordshire
University of Middlesex – CATS; Forensic Psychological Services
University of East London
Journals hand-searched
British Journal of Social Work
Child Abuse Review
Children and Society
Child and Family Social Work
Critical Social Policy
Youth and Policy
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