Contact sexual crimes against children have traditionally been thought of as lone perpetrator offences. Research suggests that just 8% of child sex offenders knowingly met another offender prior to conviction and only 5% committed an offence with another person. Recent developments in the UK suggest group-based child sex offending may be more common than previously thought.

A series of high-profile

DEFINITION: The UK Department of Schools, Children and Families guidance states that:

> ó*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 ósomethingô(e.g. food, drugs, alcohol, accommodation, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activitiesô*

Child sexual exploitation (CSE) can be broken down into the four general categories; online, peer-on-peer, institutional and community-based. Familial offences are not normally considered CSE. This document addresses community-based CSE, which includes the sex trafficking of children

The behaviour involved in community-based child sexual exploitation (CSE) has in all likelihood been around for generations. The major change in recent years has been in the responses to the crime, rather than the crime itself. Once viewed as child prostitution and/or 'promiscuous and street-wise' children going missing, this is now treated as a serious offence. Consequently, public agencies are under growing pressure to deal with the issues involved. Police forces are increasingly initiating proactive investigations into community-based CSE. At a time of resource constraints it is important to act in a targeted and effective manner.

NATIONAL SCOPING STUDY: Faced with mounting concern around community-based CSE, the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) launched a major nationwide investigation

UK GOVERNMENT AND LAW ENFORCEMENT REPORTS

Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) (2011) Out of Mind, Out of Sight. Available at: