

Minutes of the Derby Medical Society, Tuesday 6<sup>th</sup> November 2018  
Derby Medical School Lecture Theatre  
'Child sexual exploitation and its impact on children and young people'

**Apologies**

Dr Sarah Milner  
Dr Shehla Imtiaz-Umer  
Dr Stuart Holloway  
Dr Tony Henry  
Dr Wendy Scott

**Speaker**

Shelia Taylor MBE – CEO of NWG Network: Stop Child Sexual Exploitation

**Introduction**

Miss Hewitt welcomed members and guest Dr Julie Mott. There was a reminder to register online and provide feedback. She then introduced the speaker this evening, Ms Taylor MBE, from the NWG Network.

Shelia represents the NWG Network, a charitable organisation formed as a network across the UK, tackling child sexual exploitation and trafficking. The NWG Network works across public and private sectors. Sheila has 27 years' experience in this area and understands issues surrounding sexually exploited children.

In recognition for her services she was awarded an honorary degree from Derby University and an MBE.

Miss Hewitt explained that she heard Ms Taylor speak for one hour back in 2010 and it was a talk which fundamentally changed her thinking and practise of medicine, leading her to invite her to address the Derby Medical Society this evening.

**'Child sexual exploitation and its impact on children and young people'**

Ms Taylor began with a health warning about the narratives to follow, the nature of which can be upsetting. She is aware from previous experiences that many people have suffered child sexual exploitation (CSE) and may have never disclosed. She referenced a meeting years ago, when an 87 year old lady disclosed to Sheila she was a survivor of CSE and requested she continue her incredible work.

NWG stems from Operation Retriever, a case in which a group of 9 men were successfully charged with sexual abuse, following an undercover investigation by Derbyshire police. At the time Sheila was working for an organisation 'Safe and Sound', protecting children in the city. Almost all newspapers ran this high profile case as a headline, Sheila gave a significant number of interviews that day to highlight the issue nationally.

In the UK the perception of CSE is of Muslim males raping white girls. This is maybe why this case caught the public's eye. However Sheila and her colleagues knew this to not be a true reflection. In fact the thinking is that a significant group of perpetrators are white men over 40, often operating

alone and online. One of the aims of the NGW Network is to educate everyone that perpetrators come from every walk of life, denomination, race etc. There is a need to keep an open mind.

In the USA a major problem is of long distance lorry drivers picking up young people in service stations, taking them across states and dropping them off in unknown locations. There is a big project in USA to tackle this. One thing Ms Taylor pointed out is the focus on girls and the emphasis on CSE with boys is lacking.

In Holland there was a recognition that there are young people behind the windows in the red light district, many of whom have been trafficked. Again there is a focus on trafficked females.

After Operation Retriever, Ms Taylor was approached by police teams for assistance. She went to other areas to help set up internal reviews and investigation into CSE there. As information unfolded and the case developed, a common thread was found linking multiple cases. This has been a recent subject of a television drama. Ms Taylor worked with victim support, police interviewers, social care and health professionals. The ultimate aim being that once a child like this is found, the whole team can surround them. She explained that she has spoken to a survivor of CSE who pointed out that in the beginning of the investigation, the police rang her to ask if she was alright very frequently. She also had a CAMHs worker and had input from the local sexual health clinic. Once the case was finished and the perpetrator sent away, all the supportive phone calls stopped. The survivor explained that that was the point when the nightmare and flashbacks really started.

Ms Taylor then discussed the impact of CSE on the young people. This included their mental, physical and sexual health. There are so many risks to their health, including undetected pregnancies, miscarriages, STIs etc.

### **Control and Consent**

She recounted a story from a sexual health clinic, whereby a nurse saw a young, lone female. She had been told, by the men who essentially controlled her, that when she arrived at the clinic she was to ring them and keep the phone on whilst she was in the clinic. Therefore the staff asked all the right questions but patient was unable to answer due to the fear that the perpetrators were listening. This demonstrates the massive element of control these single men or gangs can exert over their victims.

Cases where extreme control had been exerted demonstrated the levels of control some perpetrators had over young men and women.

Those levels of control invalidates consent. We are all raised to be polite and go along with things. So often children simply do not know how to respond. If in a room with multiple men, maybe under influence of alcohol, maybe kidnapped, in order to get home they have to have sex first. Given this scenario we must consider consent and question its validity. Ask 'what are the consequences of saying no'. This idea of valid consent can be difficult in court.

### **'Shine a light and you will find it'**

After CSE there are often significant mental health problems and suicidal thoughts. It is actually worrying how many of these young people have attempted suicide. Therefore it is really important to ask children these questions if they present with alcohol intoxication, overdose or mental health crises. We need to routinely ask the right questions. Most young people who have suffered CSE say nobody ever asked them. This therefore needs to become part of our routine vocabulary. We cannot be afraid, we might be the only person who is going to ask them.

### **Utilise the NGW Network for Action Planning**

A few years ago Ms Taylor's team received an enquiry from a sexual health nurse in an area of the West Midlands, requesting assistance setting up an action plan for her team, to combat CSE. Sheila's unit went in and helped them. They then showed the action plan to NHS England and Public Health England, who liked it and subsequently rolled it out to the West Midlands as a regional action plan. This then went up to NHS England, who tweaked it into a national action plan. This all started from someone asking a question and asking for help. There are lots of resources on the NGW Network website to assist with action planning or direct towards sources of help.

The NGW Network works across borders. It employs health safeguarding professionals, safeguarding officers, people from education to simply name a few. They are a varied and experienced team. They are available for advice over phone and can help to problem solve.

### **The Importance of Language**

Ms Taylor expressed frustration over use of the term 'High risk'. She argued that referring to people who have suffered NAI or STI's are not 'at risk' but are actually already being abused.

She referenced Julia Penelope, a linguist in America who describes domestic violence and adapted her words for CSE. It demonstrates how correct language triggers correct action.

Consider – 'Jim and John raped Mary' – this triggers an instinctual response to do something about it  
Now consider – 'Mary was raped by John and Jim' – sounds more like it was Mary's fault

Now – 'Mary was sexually exploited' – John and Jim have disappeared and the situation has been minimised

And finally – 'Mary is a sexually exploited child' – Mary's identity is now changed to being a sexually exploited child. There is a passivity and minimisation of the problem.

### **National Referral Mechanisms**

Ms Taylor drew attention to NRMs, 'National Referral Mechanism' for trafficked victims. The NGW Network can help fill in the referral form. Using the NRM entitles the child to a gold standard service. The police have no choice but to formally investigate. It is a wonderful piece of legislation, which often people do not know about it.

It was used in the Rochdale case. When the case was heard in court it was helpful in explaining poor memory due to alcohol or fear etc. In fact a lot of the defence barristers asked judge to stop referring to girls as victims, arguing it was swaying the jury. Because of the NRM however, they kept the victim status which helped convey the seriousness of the situation to the jury.

### **The wider impact of CSE**

Ms Taylor then read the case of 'Judy' (not her real name). At the age of 13 Judy was befriended outside of school in 1998 and was groomed between the ages of 13-15. She was reported to police for undercutting street sex services. She attempted suicide aged 15, after her life was threatened. At 16 she moved to London, changed her name and converted to Islam. She began wearing a hijab, as a form of protection. She suffered recurring PID and had frequent, repeat prescriptions, the courses of which she did not complete. She lived in a women's refuge for 12 months and was exploited again. At 18 her PID was so bad she was advised to have her fallopian tubes removed. She had successful IVF, but tragically her twin daughters died following pre-term labour, a complication of PID. She later married a taxi driver and had another IVF treatment, and delivered a healthy son. When he was born, medical staff were informed of her previous prostitution, which led to questioning of whether or not she was a suitable parent. At the age of 27 she was dependent on codeine and diagnosed as Bipolar. She has no friends and rings her mum 10-12 times a day for support. This is simply a brief overview of the catastrophic impact of CSE on her life.

Judy's mum also lost her job as records officer, her husband left and she lost her friends, as well as her house. She has had threats against her life. In one instance Judy was taken by men in the boot of a car and Judy's mum drove her own car in front to block the kidnapping. She has her own PTSD and generally struggles. CSE does not just impact the victim, but the entire family.

### **Take Home Message**

The CSE National Task Force was commissioned in March 2016. It is based in Derby, right on our doorstep. They have a huge network of expertise to draw upon, both nationally and internationally. The ultimate aim of the organisation is the desire for our young people to grow up in a world that is safe for them.

The main talk ended with a round of applause and questions were taken from the floor.

Total attendance – 64

Full members - 17

Guest members - 2

Doctors in training - 2

Medical students - 43