

Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership

Child Exploitation Strategy 2016-2019



Contents

Introduction	3
The Local Context	3
Local Case Study	4
Missing Children.....	4
Child Exploitation	4
Sexual Exploitation	4
Criminal Exploitation	5
County Lines.....	5
Modern Slavery.....	6
Principles Underpinning our Strategy	7
Operating Framework.....	7
Partnership Working in Hampshire.....	8
The Willow Team	8
Scrutiny and Oversight	9
Understand and Identify	10
Prevention	10
Intervene and Support.....	11
Disrupt and Bring to Justice	11
Measuring Impact.....	11
Key Reports	13

Introduction

'A strong focus on child sexual exploitation is maintained by the LSCB to steer and monitor the implementation of agreed policies and procedures by partner agencies. This has ensured that this vulnerable group of children is safeguarded effectively. The LSCB sub-group for missing, exploited and trafficked children provides energetic and committed multi-agency approach that drives local responses to the identification and support of children identified as missing or at risk of sexual exploitation and trafficking. Voluntary organisations are well engaged in this group and this collaborative approach ensures that the MET pathways and protocols are well understood and implemented across the partnership' (Ofsted, March 2014).

We have continued to build on our approach to identifying and responding to all forms of exploitation such as child criminal exploitation, county lines, child sexual exploitation. These issues are a key priority for Hampshire Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

This strategy builds upon the significant work already taking place within Hampshire and sets out how all agencies will work together to ensure the most effective and coordinated response. In Hampshire, all under 18s are referred to as children because this reinforces the vulnerability of these individuals.

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The delivery of this strategy is supported through HSCP's Annual Business Plan, which can be found on the resource library of the Partnership's website, and Child Exploitation Group.

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There are clear links between child exploitation and those children who are trafficked and/or go missing and the matters cannot be dealt with in isolation. HSCP has combined these three areas to ensure a robust multi-agency response across the Local Authority area. It is clear that the collaboration of all partners is required to ensure that exploitation of children is eradicated.

The Local Context

A review of historic cases of child sexual abuse in Hampshire was completed in mid-2015. On the basis the outcomes of that review, in addition to information available from the Police, Children's Services and Health partners from more recent case reviews the following can be concluded that there is no currently identified evidence of any systemic organisational failure to address issues of child sexual exploitation, such as those found in Rotherham.

However, the issue of missing, exploited and/or trafficked children is a national problem, with one or more elements being present in every town and city across the UK. Therefore, HSCP remains focussed on preventing, identifying and responding to issues of child exploitation within Hampshire and always being vigilant.

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There is a culture of professionals and agencies being able to think the unthinkable, challenge fixed views and work in different ways to respond to the new techniques being used to identify, groom and exploit vulnerable children.

Local Case Study

A 15-year-old male was network mapped alongside other vulnerable children as having links to drug running in an area in the north of the County. The male was known to have been 'running' or dealing to at least two gangs whose origins were outside Hampshire.

Social care and the police had known intelligence linking him to London gang 'elders' and use of 'deal' or 'county lines'. Missing episodes were high as was his trafficking risk as he was being moved around the south of the UK to deal drugs. It was suspected that he was assaulted and had Class A drugs and mobile phones taken from him. It is known that gangs will assault their own runners so that they end up with a drug debt that they have to pay off or face threats of further intimidation and violence.

This child refused to seek support as he was much more afraid of repercussions from the gang than any support offered. However through persistent engagement with the family and police to disrupt the gang behaviours the risk reduced and child was deemed to be safer. This work is often long term and requires a high level of building trust with the child.

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Missing Children

The College of Policing definition:

- *Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.*

The Department for Education definition:

- *Missing Child: a child reported as missing to the police by their family or carers.*
- *Missing from care: a looked after child who is not at their placement or the place they are expected to be (e.g. school) and their whereabouts is not known.*

Child Exploitation

There are different forms of child exploitation and these are outlined below.

Sexual Exploitation

'Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial

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advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology' (Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation, HM Government, February 2017).

Criminal Exploitation

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact, it can occur through the use of technology.

County Lines

'County lines' is a form of criminal exploitation. It is a police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. It involves child criminal exploitation (CCE) as gangs use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a

base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

County lines is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing, and exploitation have a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

The national picture on county lines continues to develop but there are recorded cases of:

- Children as young as 12 years old being exploited by gangs to courier drugs out of their local area. 15-16 years is the most common age range.
- Both males and females being exploited.
- White British children being targeted because gangs perceive they are more likely to evade police detection.
- The use of social media to make initial contact with children and young people.
- Vulnerable adults, including habitual class A drug users, being targeted so that gangs can take over their homes (known as 'cuckooing').

Children who get involved in county lines appear to come from a variety of backgrounds including those with multiple interventions from public services because of chaotic and risky home circumstances, looked after children and those from well-ordered and materially comfortable families. One reason for the diversity of backgrounds is that county line owners/managers will recruit children that blend in with the drug market that the line is intended to exploit. Recruiting children who know, and can fit in with the relevant market environment helps lines to 'keep under the radar' of the police and communities.

HSCP has a strategic focus on county lines due to the geographical location of Hampshire, its transport links with London and the mix of rural and city conurbations.

Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categorises offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking. These crimes include holding a person in a position of slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after.

Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery within your own country. It is possible to be a victim even if consent has been given to be moved.

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Children cannot give consent to being exploited therefore the element of coercion or deception does not need to be present to prove an offence. Any child (0-17 years) transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim.

Children can be trafficked for:

- Child sexual exploitation.
- Benefit fraud.
- Forced marriage.
- Domestic servitude such as cleaning, childcare, cooking.
- Forced labour in factories or agriculture.
- Criminal activity such as pickpocketing, begging, transporting drugs, working on cannabis farms, selling pirated DVDs and bag theft.
- Serious organised crime.

Numerous pieces of legislation have been introduced that make reference to, and directly tackle, modern slavery. As contemporary systems of slavery have evolved, new definitions have developed. Some of the forms of slavery are:

Bonded labour: People become bonded labourers after falling into debt and being forced to work for free in an attempt to repay it. Many will never pay off their loans, and debt can be passed down through the generations.

Forced labour: Where people are forced to work, usually with no payment, through violence or intimidation. Many find themselves

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trapped, often in a foreign country with no papers, and unable to leave.

Descent-based slavery: Where people are born into slavery because their families belong to a class of "slaves" within a society. The status of "slave" passes from mother to child.

Child slavery: Children are in slavery as domestic workers, forced labour – in, for example, the cocoa, cotton and fisheries industries – trafficked for labour and sexual exploitation, and used as child soldiers.

Early and forced marriage: Women continue to be married without consent, often while still girls, and forced into sexual and domestic servitude.

Anyone can become a victim of modern slavery – any age, race or gender. Modern slaves are sold like objects, forced to work for little or no pay, live in fear and squalor, have their freedom restricted and are at the mercy of their employers.

Principles Underpinning our Strategy

- We have the safety and welfare of the child at the heart of everything we do.
- We listen to children and their families and seek their views in the development and review of services.

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- We focus our work on early identification, intervention and prevention as well as disrupting and bringing perpetrators to justice.
- We take account of family circumstances when deciding how best to safeguard and protect the welfare of children.
- We continue to enhance our partnership model in Hampshire with activity aligned to the HSCP Business Plan.
- We scrutinise, challenge, monitor and review our work to ensure that we have a positive impact and make a difference to the lives of children and their families. We will achieve this by continually improving our performance and auditing framework.
- We challenge fixed / uninformed views and language and work in different ways to respond to the new techniques being used to identify, groom and exploit vulnerable children.
- We liaise with neighbouring authorities to ensure that we are linking with them for the purposes of safeguarding children.

Operating Framework

HSCP has overall responsibility for ensuring there is a co-ordinated multi-agency response to issues of child exploitation in Hampshire. Our Child Exploitation Group is responsible for delivery of the strategy via the HSCP Business Plan.

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The Child Exploitation Group was set up to tackle the issues of exploitation in Hampshire by:

- Developing, sharing and promoting best practice across Hampshire.
- Ensuring that all practitioners and managers who work with or come into contact with children are trained to identify and support children at risk of exploitation.
- Raising awareness of the issue of exploitation amongst members of the public, encouraging them to report their concerns.
- Developing and implementing processes for the sharing of information about children at risk of exploitation across local authority/agency borders.

The Child Exploitation Group focuses on four key themes, which ensure a more targeted approach. These themes include:

- **Understand and identify;** strengthen the identification and assessment of children at risk of exploitation.
- **Prevention;** *raise awareness of exploitation issues across agencies, children and their families and the wider Hampshire community.*
- **Intervene and support;** *improve safeguarding of vulnerable children deemed to be at risk of exploitation. Provide direct therapeutic support and access to specialist services.*

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- **Disrupt and Bring to Justice;** *lead in disrupting perpetrator behaviour and bringing those offenders to justice by building an accurate and clear picture of local trends and networks.*

Partnership Working in Hampshire

The Willow Team

The Willow Team is a multi-agency specialist exploitation team, launched in October 2015. The team comprises a team manager, three social workers, two mental health practitioners, one child and family support worker and administrative support. The team work collaboratively with Barnardo's workers, Hampshire Constabulary's Missing & Exploited Team, Hampshire's Youth Offending Team and the Children & Adolescent Mental Health Service (CAMHS). The Frankie Worker project is also located within the Willow Team and offers therapeutic intervention for children within Hampshire who have experienced sexual abuse, sexual exploitation and/or been a victim of female genital mutilation.

The team operates across Hampshire and works directly with children identified at risk of one or more elements of MET. The team receives referrals from Hampshire's Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) relating to children who are not currently open to Children's Services and where concerns are raised that they are at high risk of MET; and / or children who are in contact with known perpetrators of exploitation or trafficking. The team will also support all unaccompanied asylum seeking children (UASC)

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and will undertake trafficking risk assessments. In addition, the Willow team work with the Barnardo's CSE and ICTA services in Hampshire.

The team also requests support for children currently open to Children's Services. In such cases support can be offered in a number of ways such as:

- Direct work with the child.
- Direct work with the parent/carers/residential workers.
- Mentoring to professionals including education, social workers, school nurses etc. to support them to undertake direct work with the child.
- Consultation advice and support to professional groups (e.g. High Risk Strategy Meetings) to offer support on how to progress a plan or a child.
- Undertaking awareness-raising with multi-agency professionals.
- Disruption of perpetrators. The team may seek to undertake work on tackling the perpetrator rather than working directly with the child.

Scrutiny and Oversight

Overall objective

To ensure that the strategy is making a positive difference to the safety and welfare of children in Hampshire

How we will achieve this

- Build on the existing dataset ensuring that each agency contributes information and that the strategy is informed by that information.
- Regularly interrogate data relating to missing, exploited and trafficked children to ensure an up-to-date understanding of the current threat, which is used to inform the multi-agency response.
- Undertake quality assurance activity to ensure that partner agencies are compliant with statutory guidance.
- Scrutinise and challenge our collective response to exploitation within Hampshire and report progress against the strategy to the Main Board on a six monthly basis.
- Conduct regular assessments on the effectiveness of partners' responses to child sexual exploitation and include this in the Partnership's annual report.
- Ensure that agencies represented contribute to the delivery of the exploitation elements of the HSCP Annual Business Plan.
- Share good practice following multi-agency audits and inspections.

Understand and Identify

Overall objective

To ensure that we have effective and well established information sharing and risk assessment mechanisms in place to understand and identify those at risk of, or experiencing any issues of exploitation.

How we will achieve this

- Ensure that our risk assessment tools for identifying and assessing exploitation risks/concerns across the multi-agency workforce are well understood and embedded.
- Promote consistency between partner agencies in reported occurrences of child exploitation.
- Further develop the multi-agency specialist Willow Team, including collaboration with the Police Missing, Exploited and Trafficked Children Team, to deal with exploitation issues so that a timely and effective service is available to our children.
- Ensure that information and intelligence relating to victim, offender and locations is shared effectively within Hampshire and across local authority boundaries.
- Ensure that effective arrangements are in place between Children's and Adult's services to support vulnerable adults at risk of exploitation.

Prevention

Overall objective

To prevent children experiencing any issues of exploitation in the first place.

How we will achieve this

- Ensure that the public, professionals, children and families are well informed and confident about the identification, prevention and disruption of exploitation issues.
- Continue to work with relevant HSCP subgroups to establish effective information-sharing mechanisms with front line services such as schools and health settings including learning from good practice.
- Develop effective information sharing mechanisms with faith groups and diverse communities, including the local business community, to ensure that exploitation risks are understood and addressed.
- Ensure that those who commission or provide services to provide care to children, including transport services, are able to identify children at risk of exploitation and know how to report concerns.
- Listen to children and ensuring that they and their parents'/carers' views inform service design and delivery.

- Ensure that partners meet their statutory duties in relation to missing episodes and children returning from missing episodes.
- Ensure that partners work together to address vulnerability at the point of children leaving care.

Intervene and Support

Overall objective

To intervene and support to ensure that the right support is available for child victims and adult survivors when this is required.

How we will achieve this

- Ensure that preventative/early help services have a robust awareness of exploitation issues/plans and are supporting those children who might be identified as at risk of MET.
- Provide specialist trauma work with the child/family as necessary.
- Provide specialist services for children such as CAMHS, to provide accessible and 'fit for purpose' therapeutic services for children victims of CSE/CSA.

Disrupt and Bring to Justice

Overall objective

To identify, disrupt and prosecute those who are intent on exploiting children.

How we will achieve this

- Produce a regular multi-agency exploitation profile including victims, perpetrators and hot-spots to inform our collective response and interventions.
- Ensure that information and intelligence relating to victims and perpetrators is shared and acted upon.
- Supporting the development of mechanisms to risk assess perpetrators.
- Promote the use of the disruption toolkit to maximum effect to assist investigations, restrict and manage offenders and support and safeguard victims/potential victim.

Measuring Impact

HSCP measures impact through delivery of the annual Business Plan, which includes objectives relating to exploited children. Progress against the Business Plan is scrutinised by the Business Group and Main Board.

HSCP oversees an agreed dataset that monitors multi-agency child protection arrangements and enables the Partnership to support and challenge partners for their performance. The Child Exploitation Group reviews the components of the dataset on a quarterly basis, along with a six-monthly exploitation profile, which includes information from Hampshire Constabulary's force-wide CSE strategic profile. This information enables HSCP to evidence the impact of its collective response to issues of MET children.

HSCP also undertakes an annual programme of multi-agency audits focussing on child protection and safeguarding arrangements in Hampshire. As part of this work, HSCP undertakes annual monitoring of partner agencies' responses to child exploitation. Recommendations and associated action plans are reviewed by the Quality Assurance Group, the Business Group and the Main Board.

Key Reports

Date	Details
November 2013	<u><i>If only someone had listened: Office of the Children’s Commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Exploitation in Gangs and Groups Final Report</i></u>
January 2014	<u>Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care. Roles and responsibilities when a child goes missing from care and organisational flowchart (Department of Education)</u>
August 2014	<u>Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham (1997 -2013) A. Jay</u>
October 2014	<u>Real Voices; child sexual exploitation in greater Manchester/ An independent report by Ann Coffey, MP.</u>
February 2015	<u>“If it’s not better, it’s not the end” – Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups: One year on.</u>
February 2015	<u>Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council February 2015</u>
March 2015	<u>Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation Report, (DFE)</u>
October 2015	<u>Child sexual exploitation pathway – Clarifies the role of the school nursing service regarding child sexual exploitation.</u>
March 2016	<u>‘It’s not on the radar’. The hidden diversity of children and young people at risk of sexual exploitation in England (Barnardo’s)</u>
January 2017	<u>Guidance on roles and responsibilities of Independent Child Trafficking Advocates (ICTAs)</u>
February 2017	<u>Child sexual exploitation. Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (Department for Education)</u>

July 2017	Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines
May 2018	County lines – a national summary & emerging best practice (Violence and Vulnerability Unit)
May 2018	National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime (National Crime Agency)
July 2018	Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018