

Policy / Procedure

Child Exploitation Procedures & Guidance

Version 1.0

Effective date: May 2024

Review date: May 2026

Issued by: Dave Wraight

ROLE: Service Manager



Contents

Purpose	p3
What is Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)?	p3
What is Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)?	p3
Models of Child Exploitation (CE)	p5
Children who go missing	p7
Consent	p8
Warning signs/Risk Factors	p8
Principles	p9
What to do if you think a young person is at risk of CE in West Berkshire?	p10
- Identification	p11
- Assessment	p11
- Exploitation Risk Assessment	p12
Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC)	p13
Child Protection and Child Exploitation	p14
Child Exploitation Action Plans	p14
Escalation Process	p14
Partnerships with young people and parents	p15
Complex investigations	p15
Looked After Children	p15
Working with those who have experienced CE	p16
Identifying and prosecuting perpetrators	p16
Strategic Group	p17
References	p17

Appendices

1. Warning signs
2. Flowchart – what to do if you have concerns about CSE
3. Flowchart – Flowchart for processes for Children and Family Services
4. Indicator tool
5. CE Decision matrix
6. CE Action Plan
7. Police intelligence form
8. Information exchange protocol

Purpose of this document

This framework is designed to:

- Promote awareness amongst the statutory and voluntary organisations of the risk indicators of Child Exploitation
- Enable a consistent approach to the assessment of risk for a child or young person exposed to exploitation
- Enable a shared understanding of the exploitation models in West Berkshire
- Enable a child, young person family or carer to access the right support at the right time
- Enable professionals working with children who are or may be at risk of child exploitation to access the right support at the right time.
- To identify and intervene early to prevent and reduce opportunities for Child Exploitation

In West Berkshire we recognise that children can be exploited in various ways. This procedure aims to address the most prevalent forms of exploitation – Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) and Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE).

What is Child 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 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, for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain.

Violence, coercion and intimidation are common. Involvement in exploitative relationships is characterised by the child's or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social, economic or emotional vulnerability.

A common feature of CSE is that the child or young person does not recognise the coercive nature of the relationship and does not see themselves as a victim of exploitation.

CSE has been given government status as a national threat for the police and partner agencies. Awareness and understanding of CSE has increased a huge amount in the last few years.

It is important to recognise that transaction/commercial child sexual abuse is only one form.

What is Child 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 the 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 also occur through the use of technology.

Young people who are victims of Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE) include those who are:

- Trafficked within the UK with the intention of being used to commit criminal acts that benefit the trade of drug and criminal gangs
- Coerced into the supply, transporting and dealing of drugs. They may be doing this within their local area, however they are often crossing one or more police force and local authority boundaries
- Coerced into carrying drugs, weapons and money to assist in the trade and movement of drugs

The indicators for CCE can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal adolescent behaviours'. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual children to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support is given.

CCE often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, and with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. 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.'

One of the key factors found in most cases of child criminal exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (e.g. carrying drugs in return for something). Where it is the victim who is offered, promised or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or clothes) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived friendship or affection). It is important to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a young person does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example, a young person who engages with child criminal exploitation activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

The criminal exploitation of children includes a combination of:

- **Pull factors:** Children/young people performing tasks for others resulting in them gaining accommodation, food, gifts, status or a sense of safety, money or drugs; often the hook is through the perpetrator supplying Class B drugs such as cannabis to the child/young person.
- **Push factors:** Children escaping from situations where their needs are neglected and there is exposure to unsafe individuals, where there is high family conflict or the absence of a primary attachment figure.
- **Control:** Brain washing, violence and threats of violence by those exploiting the child/young person, particularly when the child/young person is identified by the police, and is expected to take full responsibility for the offences for which they are charged – i.e. possession and supply of illegal substances.

It is important to note that perpetrators of CCE may themselves be children who are criminally exploited and that the victims of CCE may also be at risk of becoming perpetrators.

Models of Child Exploitation

The following examples describe some different types of exploitation offender's use and how children can be coerced. It is important that it is recognised that children with learning disabilities are more vulnerable to all forms of abuse, including child exploitation.

Boyfriend Model

Here the offender befriends and grooms a young person into a 'relationship' and then coerces or forces them to have sex with friends/associates or undertake criminal activities under duress. The boyfriend may be significantly older than the victim, but not always.

Peer on Peer Exploitation

Children can be exploited by people of a similar age as well as adults. Research is increasingly demonstrating that a significant number of exploited children have been abused by their peers.

Children can be exploited by their peers in a number of ways. In some cases both males and females, who have been exploited themselves by adults or peers, will recruit other children to be abused. In other instances, sexual bullying in schools and other social settings can result in the sexual exploitation of children by their peers.

Exploitation also occurs within and between street gangs, where sex is used in exchange for safety, protection, drugs and simply belonging. For 16 and 17 year olds who are in abusive relationships, what may appear to be a case of domestic violence may also involve other exploitation. In all cases of peer-on-peer exploitation, a power imbalance will still inform the relationship, but this inequality will not necessarily be the result of an age gap between the abuser and the abused.

Organised/Networked exploitation or trafficking

Young people (often connected) are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced/coerced into criminal or sexual activity. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised 'buying and selling' of children by offenders. Organised exploitation varies from spontaneous networking between groups of offenders, to more serious organised crime where young people are effectively 'sold'.

Children are known to be trafficked for exploitation and this can occur anywhere within the UK, across local authority boundaries and across international borders.

Organised Crime Groups and Gangs

Organised crime group means a group that-

- (a) Has as its purpose, or as one of its purposes, the carrying on of criminal activities, and
- (b) Consists of three or more persons who act, or agree to act, together to further that purpose

Gang related violence and drug dealing activity is defined as gang related if it occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that-

(a) Consists of at least three people, and

(b) Has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group.

(Serious Crime Act 2015)

County Lines

County lines is the police term for urban gangs supplying drugs to suburban areas and rural towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. It involves 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 voluntary and community sector organisations. County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

Inappropriate relationships

These usually involve one offender who has inappropriate power or control over a young person (physical, emotional or financial). One indicator may be a significant age gap. The young person may believe they are in a loving relationship.

Familial

Young people can be individually exploited, or it may also involve other family members. The motivation is often financial and can involve substance use. Parents or family members control and facilitate the exploitation.

Opportunistic

This may occur quickly and without any form of grooming. Typically older males identify vulnerable children who may already have a history of being groomed or abused. The perpetrator will offer a child a 'reward' or payment, the perpetrator is often linked with a network of abusive adults.

On-Line exploitation

New technologies and social networking tools and platforms, chat rooms, dating sites or online gaming, present further opportunities for social interaction. They also bring new risks and increase the opportunity for offenders to target vulnerable children. Offenders access social media platforms, for example, Facebook, Instagram, Snapchat to identify children to groom.

Technology can facilitate sexual exploitation of children. Where abusive images have been posted on, or shared via the internet, there is little control over who can access them. This can lead to repeat victimisation. The NWG Network 2013 study, If you Shine a Light you will probably find it, also identified that GPS technology available for mobile devices can be used

to identify the location where a photograph was taken, which may increase the risk to the victim. The software can be downloaded freely and provides the coordinates of where the digital image was taken. Exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child realising it. For example, a child is persuaded to post images of themselves on the internet and/or mobile phones. In some cases, the images are subsequently used as a bargaining tool by the perpetrators and threats of violence and intimidation are used as methods of coercion.

Offenders may use technology to exploit children and young people in the following ways:

- Harassment and bullying through text messaging.
- Purchasing mobile phones for victims and sharing their numbers among group or gang members.
- Randomly contacting children via social networking sites.
- Using 'friends' lists on networking sites of known victims to target children and young people.
- Viewing extreme or violent pornography and discussing it during sexual assaults.
- Posting images of victims with rival gang members to invite a sexual assault as punishment.
- Filming and distributing incidents of rape and sexual violence.
- Distributing lists of children for the purpose of sexual exploitation.

The Child Exploitation On-line Protection (CEOP) Thinkuknow website <http://ceop.police.uk/safety-centre/> provides information for children and young people on how they can protect themselves online. Parents, carers and teachers can also use the website to understand how they can help to protect children in their care while they are using the internet. IVision Trust provide useful online support and guidance. <https://ivisontrust.org.uk/for-parents/>

Children who go missing

Missing children and young people must be considered at an enhanced risk of exploitation. They should be reported as missing to Police at the earliest opportunity. The Police define missing as; anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed. All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from 'no apparent risk' through to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action. A significant number of children who are at risk or are victims of exploitation go missing from home, care or education. Return interviews can help to establish why a young person has run away and identify supports that may be required as well as preventing repeat incidents. Information gathered in the return interviews can be used to inform identification, referral and assessment of any child sexual exploitation and/or child criminal exploitation case. The policy and procedure for responding to missing children can be found with the following link <https://intranet/missing-young-people>

Consent

In assessing whether a child or young person is a victim of CSE or at risk of becoming a victim careful consideration should be given to the issue of consent. It is important to bear in mind that:

- A child under 13 is not legally capable of consenting to sex or any other type of sexual touching.
- Sexual activity with a child under 16 is an offence
- It is an offence for a person to have a sexual relationship with a 16 or 17 year old if they hold a position of trust or authority in relation to them
- The fact that a young person is 16 or 17 years old and has reached the legal age of consent should not be taken to mean that they are no longer at risk of sexual exploitation. These young people are defined as children under the Children Act 1989 and 2004, and they can still suffer significant harm as a result of sexual exploitation.
- Non consensual sex is rape whatever the age of the victim; and
- If the victim is incapacitated through drink or drugs, or the victim or his or her family has been subject to violence or threat of it, they cannot be considered to have given true consent and therefore offences may have been committed.
- CSE is an issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not limited to those in a specific age group.
- CSE investigations require a proactive approach to explore the nature and patterns of sexual exploitation locally, and to share information with partner agencies about those at risk and potential offenders.

Child sexual exploitation is therefore potentially a child protection issue for all children under the age of 18 years and not just those in a specific age group (DfE) Remember - a child cannot consent to their own abuse.

In regards to CCE, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of CCE) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

Warning Signs/Risk Factors

Adolescence is a time of necessary experimentation and can be a particularly challenging period. The risks that adolescents face are particularly difficult and wide ranging and are as harmful if not more so than those experienced by younger children. Adolescence is a time of vulnerability to particular risks and developing skills, propensities, adaptations, social contexts and social relationships that can feed into risks but also provide unique opportunities to build resilience in the face of them. (Research in Practice).

The perpetrators are both skilled and strategic; they aim to drive a wedge between the child and adults, closing down the normal channels of communication and the emotional bonds.

Many warning signs are typical of all teenagers, so need to be treated with caution. As a (very) general rule, if a child is exhibiting three or more of the following warning signs, please discuss with your agency safeguarding lead or [Contact Advice and Assessment Service CAAS](#).

- The child may become especially secretive and stop engaging with usual friends
- They may be particularly prone to sharp mood swings
- They may be associating with, or develop a sexual relationship with older men or women

- They may go missing from home – and be defensive about their location and activities, often returning home late or staying out all night
- They may receive odd calls and messages on their mobiles or social media pages from unknown, possibly older associates from outside their normal social network
- They may be in possession of new, expensive items which they couldn't normally afford
- Look tired and/or unwell, and sleep at unusual hours
- Have marks or scars on their body which they try to conceal
- Adopt new 'street language' or respond to a new street name

Further Warning Signs (see appendix 2 and hyperlinks below)

http://www.barnardos.org.uk/get_involved/campaign/cse/spotthesigns.htm

<http://ceop.police.uk/Knowledge-Sharing/>

Principles

- Exploited children and young people should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders
- Many sexually exploited young people have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices about sex and sexuality, and the sexual activities they are coerced into. This potential confusion should be handled with care and sensitivity by professionals
- Primary law enforcement effort must be made against the coercers and adults who exploit young people. In some cases young people themselves may exploit other young people, and in these cases law enforcement action may also be necessary
- Young people over the age of 16 are still defined as children under the Children Act, 1989 and 2004. They can still suffer significant harm as a result of exploitation and their right to support and protection should not be overlooked.

What to do if you think a child is at risk of exploitation in West Berkshire

Identification

As a professional working with young people you may have opportunities to identify issues early so it is important to familiarise yourself with the warning signs (appendix 1) that a young person is being exploited and to share this information with your colleagues and professionals in other agencies.

All professionals need to share information appropriately, in a timely way, and with primary regard to the interests of the child. "All practitioners working with children and families, including those in universal services and those providing services to adults with children, need to understand their role in identifying emerging problems. They need appropriate training so that they: know when to share information with other practitioners and what action to take to support early identification and assessment and are able to identify and recognise all forms of abuse, neglect, and exploitation (Working Together 2023 para 123).

Referral

Where child exploitation (CSE or CCE) is suspected, frontline practitioners should discuss the case with a manager or designated lead for child protection, noting the incident or risks that have been highlighted. If after discussion there remain concerns, local child protection procedures must be followed https://www.proceduresonline.com/berks/west_berk/index.html and a contact made with the Contact, Advice and Assessment Service (CAAS) - CAAS is the front door for all referrals. At this stage CAAS will undertake all agency checks to elicit further information including from TVP.

Where the child is not deemed to be in need the social worker must consider onward referrals to other agencies that provide services to children and young people with additional needs.

Where there is a risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious harm, please contact the police immediately and the Contact Advice and Assessment Service.

Where there are concerns about CSE or CCE the referrer to Children and Families should ensure that any risk factors are included in the referral information – refer appendix 2. Children and Family Services will then take action in accordance with appendix 3.

If the child is already open to a social worker they should discuss the case with a manager, noting the incident or risks that have been highlighted. The manager will provide management oversight requesting the completion of an indicator tool.

Indicator Tool

For all cases an Safeguarding Partnership agreed Child Exploitation Indicator tool will be completed (appendix 4), where CSE and CCE risk factors are identified, by the Children and

Families Service allocated worker within five working days and sent within three working days to EMRAC (Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference).

The indicator tool should help focus on the specific indicators and determine whether further investigations are needed. The tool could be used in supervision, in discussions with parents and carers, with other professionals and with the child.

Many of the indicators of child exploitation are also part of normal teenage behaviours and it is the presence of higher risk factors, or multiple other factors which may be indications of child exploitation.

Professionals need to exercise their own judgement when completing the tool. This includes capturing concerns about which they have some evidence and concerns based on 'their gut feeling'.

Any cases considered by workers and their managers should be passed to EMRAC via CManageradmin@westberks.gov.uk for inclusion on the agenda at the next EMRAC.

Assessment

On receipt of a referral, the [Contact Advice and Assessment Service](#) (CAAS) will seek and consider all available relevant information and decide on a course of action within one working day of the referral.

A single assessment under section 17 of the Children Act 1989 must be undertaken in all cases where child exploitation, or the likelihood of it, is suspected. The assessment will identify the needs of individual children to determine what services to provide and action to take.

If a S17 enquiry shows a child is suffering or likely to suffer significant harm the social worker will hold a child protection strategy meeting with the police and other professionals who know the child where possible. The meeting will consider whether an investigation is required under S47 of the 1989 Children Act and will also consider whether an initial child protection conference should be convened.

In the case where a child is considered to have been trafficked the *Council of Europe Convention on action against trafficking in Human Beings* the UK has a [National Referral Mechanism](#) for identifying and recording victims of trafficking and ensuring that they are provided with appropriate support wherever they are in the UK.

Decisions about who is a victim of trafficking are made by trained specialists in designated 'Competent Authorities'. The UKHTC and UKBA act as the UK's Competent Authorities with responsibility for the final decision on whether a frontline professional's grounds for believing that the child has been trafficked are founded i.e. whether the child is or not a victim of trafficking.

Exploitation risk assessments

The monthly multi agency EMRAC meeting will determine the type and nature of risk; this decision will be informed by information from the indicator tool, the professional assessment

and information from relevant agencies involved with the child and the assessment process. The categories of risk are: Child Exploitation currently not a factor at this time/concerns relate to age appropriate behaviours; Evidence of vulnerability to sexual exploitation; Evidence of being groomed (including online) or targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation; Evidence of being groomed into membership of a criminally active gang; Evidence that child is being sexually exploited; Evidence of drugs exploitation; Evidence of other modern day slavery. Risk assessments are subject to regular review at EMRAC based on the child's individual needs and levels of risk.

If young people remain at the same level of risk for six months then an updated single assessment should be considered to specifically address and analyse the effectiveness of the exploitation response.

High Risk (Level 3)

Young people assessed as high risk of CSE or CCE will have a CE Action Plan (Appendix 6) which will be completed following EMRAC within five working days which will be cross referenced with the relevant statutory framework meetings e.g. Strategy Meeting, CP Core Group or CIC review and will also be reviewed at the monthly EMRAC meeting. If a young person is assessed as high risk for three months or more the EMRAC chair or a relevant Service Manager will review the CE Action Plan and any other multi agency plan as a test of assurance that the case is not stuck and risks are reducing.

Medium risk (Level 2)

Young people assessed as medium risk of CSE or CCE will be reviewed through the relevant statutory framework meetings e.g. Core Group or CIC review. Child in need cases will be reviewed through child in need or signs of safety meetings. Progress of the CE risks will also be reviewed at the EMRAC meeting, recommendations and minutes will be managed as above.

Low risk (Level 1)

For young people and children deemed at low risk of CSE or CCE if they are not subject to a statutory plan should be supported via services deemed to be universal or targeted. Services working with these young people should ensure monitoring of the case in order to identify early any increase in risk - The practitioner would then need to initiate the referral process. These children will remain on the monthly CE agenda as a mention only unless the risk indicator increases.

Risk levels and types of risk for young people can change, therefore a revised screening tool will be required to indicate any change in the risk level. This will be reviewed at the monthly EMRAC meeting.

Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC)

The EMRAC meetings are used to review the indicator tool and risk assessment of all young people at risk of exploitation. The meeting will consider the indicator tool and information and assessment presented to the panel. The meeting is a multi agency forum to review the risk and look at what measures need to be in pCICe to assist in reducing risks. The group can assist where there are problems identifying resources, where a case is stuck or where there are issues that are hampering progress of the plan.

The purpose of the meeting is to

- Consider the level and type of risk and what steps need to be taken to reduce the risks
- Facilitate multi-agency discussion and sharing information
- Contribute to planning for young people and children
- Demonstrate how risks are being reduced

The EMRAC meeting does not negate the need for ongoing assessment, support and intervention and does not replicate statutory processes to which the child may be subjected.

It is the responsibility of core members to prepare and share relevant information and to attend all meetings; if they are unable to attend a representative must be identified to attend in their place. Information sharing has to be proportionate and in line with the “West Berkshire EMRAC -Information Sharing Agreement 2024”. Refer appendix 8.

The minutes of the meeting are recorded on the West Berkshire IT system and are distributed securely within 5 working days of the meeting. The actions and recommendations are distributed to those professionals working with the child and sent to the allocated social worker and team manager, they are also sent to the service manager for QAAS. Urgent actions and recommendations are corresponded to the relevant practitioner within 24 hours. The minutes of the meeting are sensitive and confidential; it is the responsibility of each agency to ensure safe storage within their own security and data protection rules.

Missing Children and EMRAC

Not all children who have been reported missing are discussed at EMRAC, however if the child has had any of the following they are automatically added to the agenda and discussed:

- Three or more missing episodes in a 90 day period
- Any overnight missing episode
- Any missing episode of particular concern
- Any missing episode in relation to Child Exploitation

Thames Valley Police Missing Co-ordinators send a list of all children who have been missing three or more times in 90 days, any other children discussed are added by the West Berkshire Missing Children Coordinator, who receives all missing reports for West Berkshire Children on a daily basis and monitors these.

The child will continue to be discussed until they are no longer categorised into any of the above points.

Child Protection and Child Exploitation

Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership Procedures should be followed if the child / young person is thought to be suffering or likely to suffer significant harm.

In the majority of cases, parents and carers will be actively seeking to remove their children from exploitation therefore the multi-agency team will be seeking to work in partnership with the parents and carers to safeguard the child.

Child Exploitation Action plans

To ensure clarity and consistency a child at risk of exploitation will only have one plan, either a child in need (CIN), child protection or looked after child plan, **unless** they are at high risk of exploitation when a specific CE Action Plan (Appendix 6) will be developed.

Plans will identify and be explicit about

- the child exploitation risk,
- the desired outcomes to ensure the child/YP is safeguarded,
- the internal and external controls to reduce the risk and
- be SMART (specific, measurable, achievable, realistic, timely actions)

If a child is already subject to a CP or CIC plan and child exploitation risks are identified, this information should be shared with the Child Protection Chair and a discussion held to consider whether or not the Child Protection Review Conference should be brought forward as per the pan Berkshire CP Procedures. This would also apply where additional safeguarding concerns are identified for CIC, the Independent Reviewing Officer should be made aware and a discussion held to consider the need to hold an earlier CIC Review Meeting.

The EMRAC meeting may make recommendations that need to be followed up; this will be communicated and followed up in writing via the minutes/emails to the Social Worker or lead professional. For children subject to a CP plan or CIC the QAAS will also be notified.

Escalation Process

The chair of the EMRAC meeting will organise liaison with the social work teams to ensure actions in relation children or young people identified at risk of CE have been progressed. Updates will also be requested that can be shared with the monthly EMRAC. Any unacceptable delay or lack of progress will be escalated accordingly through the team manager, service manager and if unresolved through the Head of Children and Family Services.

Should there be an unacceptable delay or lack of progress in an action for another agency other than children's social care, the chair will liaise with their counterpart in that agency to find a solution, if this is not possible the Head of Service will be informed to progress with their counterpart accordingly.

Partnership with Children and Young People and with their Parents or Carers To effectively Reduce Risk

The majority of children affected by child exploitation are living at home when the abuse starts and it is highly likely that parents/carers/family will be among the first to realise something is wrong although they may not be able to identify what as their child will be presenting profound behavioral changes. In order to maximize the ability of agencies and families to safeguard a child suffering or at risk of CE working in partnership with parents is vital. <https://ivisontrust.org.uk/for-parents/>

Young people and parents or carers will generally be invited to CP, CIC and child in need planning meetings in respect of exploitation. The exceptions are when it is not considered to

be in the young person's best interest or there are concerns that parents or carers are implicated in the abuse.

Children and young people and their parents and carers should be encouraged to contribute to the multi-agency plan agreed at the meeting.

Complex Investigations

Where there is knowledge or strong suspicion that children / young people are involved in exploitation together, or are being controlled by the same person or a group of people, consideration should be given to implementing the Safeguarding Children and Young People Involved in Organised or Complex Abuse and other Complex Investigations Procedure.

Children in Care

Children and young people who are cared for by the local authority and are living in foster care or in residential care may be particularly vulnerable to being exploited. Whenever concerns arise regarding a child in the care of the Local Authority being at risk of being exploited, the social worker should immediately discuss this with the relevant team manager who should then call a Strategy Meeting as per the Pan Berkshire Child Protection Procedures and invite all the relevant agencies as appropriate. The allocated social worker should also ensure that the Independent Reviewing Officer for the child/young person is notified.

In addition the following factors should be taken into account:

- Risks to other children / young people in the placement;
- Whether the child / young person should remain in their present placement;
- To establish the level of risk in order to protect the child / young person.

If the child or young person is a looked after child, carers should be asked to take positive action to clarify and record their suspicions. Every effort should be made to try to minimise the child's exposure to exploitation. The allocated social worker will ensure that the Local Authority where the child is placed is aware of the risks and has a copy of the action plan or care plan for the child. He/she will also ensure that any local mechanisms for oversight of CE in the area are aware about the concerns for the young person.

Social workers should ensure that all relevant information is recorded in the child/young person's care plan. The care plan should clearly indicate the level of risk the child or young person faces as a result of exploitation and how these risks can be reduced and monitored. The care plan will need to be updated if new concerns arise which require an adaptation to the plan, in these cases the review may need to be brought forward. The plan will be explicit about the child exploitation risk, outcomes, and internal and external controls and actions required keeping a child safe.

Working with children and young people who have experienced exploitation

Professionals should reach agreement on the coordination and services to be provided to a child or young person at risk of or being exploited. The type of intervention should be appropriate to the needs of the child or young person and should take in to account the

identified risk factors and their wider circumstances. The record of decisions and planning needs to be recorded and reviewed through CP, CIC or CIN planning.

The effects of child exploitation can last into adulthood and support may be required over a longer period. It is important to plan transitions to adult services and voluntary organisations to maintain support interventions.

Consideration also needs to be given to support families of victims of CE, through organisations like IVision Trust.

Identifying and prosecuting perpetrators

The police and criminal justice agencies lead on the identification, disruption and prosecution of perpetrators. All frontline practitioners working with those at risk or victims of child I abuse should gather record and share information with the police as quickly as possible. It is possible to share information with the police, in doing so it enables the police to gather intelligence that may assist them to make arrests or to disrupt CE (appendix 7 for the police intelligence form).

If a child or young person goes missing please report to the police on the 101 number.

Plans to support child victims through any legal prosecution process should be put in place and where necessary special measures should be put in place.

Strategic group

The Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership has a multi-agency CE Strategic Group which takes forward the work of the strategy ensuring there is a multi-agency co-ordinated response to support children and young people at risk of CE. The objectives of the group are part of the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership business plan. The key objectives for the group are to develop an action plan which includes;

- Local mapping systems to monitor prevalence, trends and responses
- Ensure a co-ordinated multi-agency response which will safeguard and promote the welfare of children who are potentially more vulnerable or at risk of exploitation
- Increased understanding of CE by young people, parents or carers, and professionals
- Clear pathways for referrals to services which will respond and work with identified young people, including shared links with neighbouring authorities
- Good practice in terms of robust and effective interventions across all relevant agencies
- Ensure effective communication between partner agencies on the BWSCP
- To safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people through appropriate training and dissemination of information.

The EMRAC meeting chair feeds directly into the strategic group to highlight any gaps in provision, operational blockages and high risk cases.

References

[That Difficult Age](#): Developing a more effective response to risk in adolescence; Research in Practice, Dr Elly Hanson and Dez Holmes

[The Relational Safeguarding Model](#), Parents against child sexual exploitation (IVision Trust), 2019

[What to do if you feel a child is being abused](#), Dept for Education

<http://www.nspcc.org.uk/preventing-abuse/child-abuse-and-neglect/child-sexual-exploitation/>

Phoenix project <https://www.itsnotokay.co.uk/professionals/>

<https://ivisontrust.org.uk/training/online-learning/keep-them-safe/>

[Working together to safeguard children 2023](#)

Appendix 1

Child Exploitation Warning Signs

Appearance and Behaviour

- Physical symptoms (bruising suggestive of either physical or sexual assault).
- Evidence of drug, alcohol or substance misuse.
- Volatile behaviour / mood swings / use of abusive language.
- Truancy/disengagement with education or change in performance at school.
- Low self-image, low self-esteem, self-harming behaviour, e.g. cutting, overdosing, eating disorder, promiscuity.
- Physical aggression towards others.
- Change in appearance / always tired.

Sexual

- Sexually transmitted infections / pregnancy / seeking an abortion.
- Sexually risky behaviour.
- Sexual / unexplained relationships with older people.
- History of abuse or neglect.
- Domestic violence / parental difficulties.
- Clothing – inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from others.
- Reports that the child has been seen in places known to be used for sexual exploitation.

Relationships

- Entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults.
- Hostility in relationship with parents/carers and other family members.
- Reports to suggest the likelihood of involvement in sexual exploitation (eg from friends or family).
- Associating with other young people who are known to be sexually exploited.
- Inappropriate use of Internet – & forming relationships, with adults.
- Phone calls, text messages or letters from unknown adults.
- Adults or older youths loitering outside the child's usual place of residence.

Missing / Homelessness

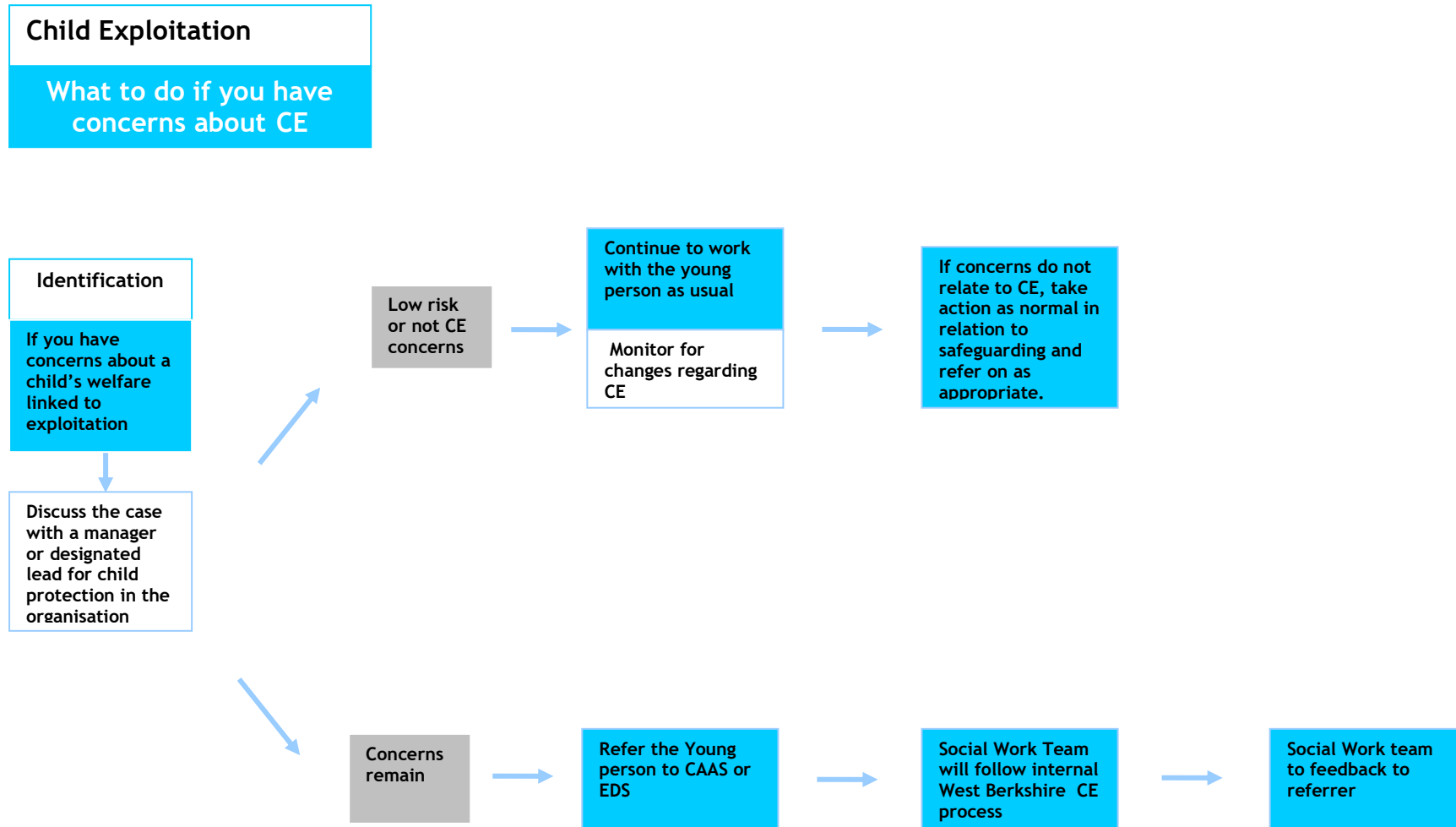
- Truancy.
- Placement breakdown.
- Persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late.
- Returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base.
- Missing for long periods, with no known home base.
- Going missing and being found in areas where the child or young person has no known links.

Financial

- Petty crime e.g. shoplifting, stealing.
- Possession of offensive weapons.
- Having keys to other premises.
- Expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without explanation.
- Accounts of social activities requiring money.

- Possession of large amounts of money with no plausible explanation.

Appendix 2 Flowchart – What to do if you have concerns about CE



Appendix 3 Flowchart

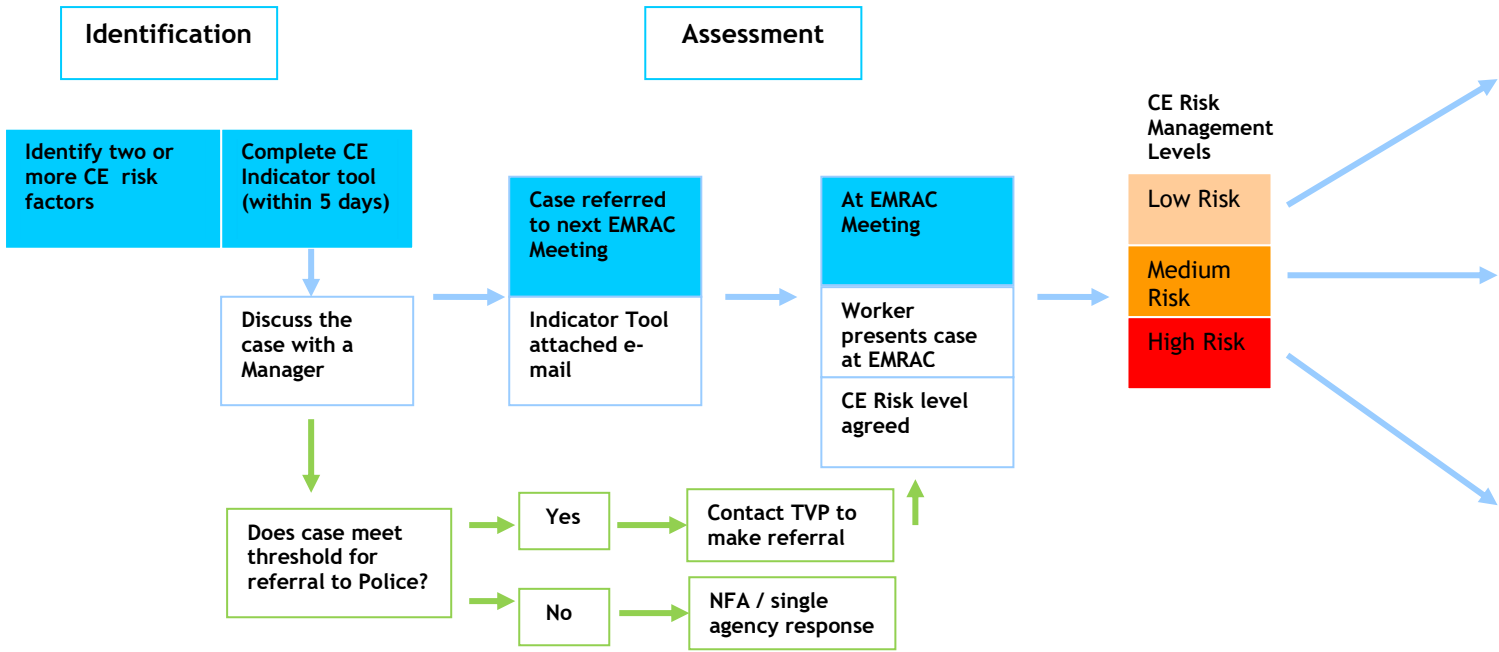
Child Exploitation Process for Children and Family Services

Planning

CE risk planning forms part of the existing planning framework ie CIN, SOS, CP, CIC plans etc

CE risk planning forms part of the existing planning framework with the plans to be updated with CE actions at the next review

CE Action plan to be completed on any high risk cases within 5 days of the EMRAC Meeting and cross referenced in the existing plans



CE indicator tools to be sent to cs.managers@westberks.gcsx.gov.uk and attached on Care Director

PLEASE NOTE: STRATEGY MEETINGS, CP PROCEDURES, CIC PLANNING, CIN PROCESSES ETC SHOULD RUN IN PARALLEL TO THE PROCESSES ABOVE

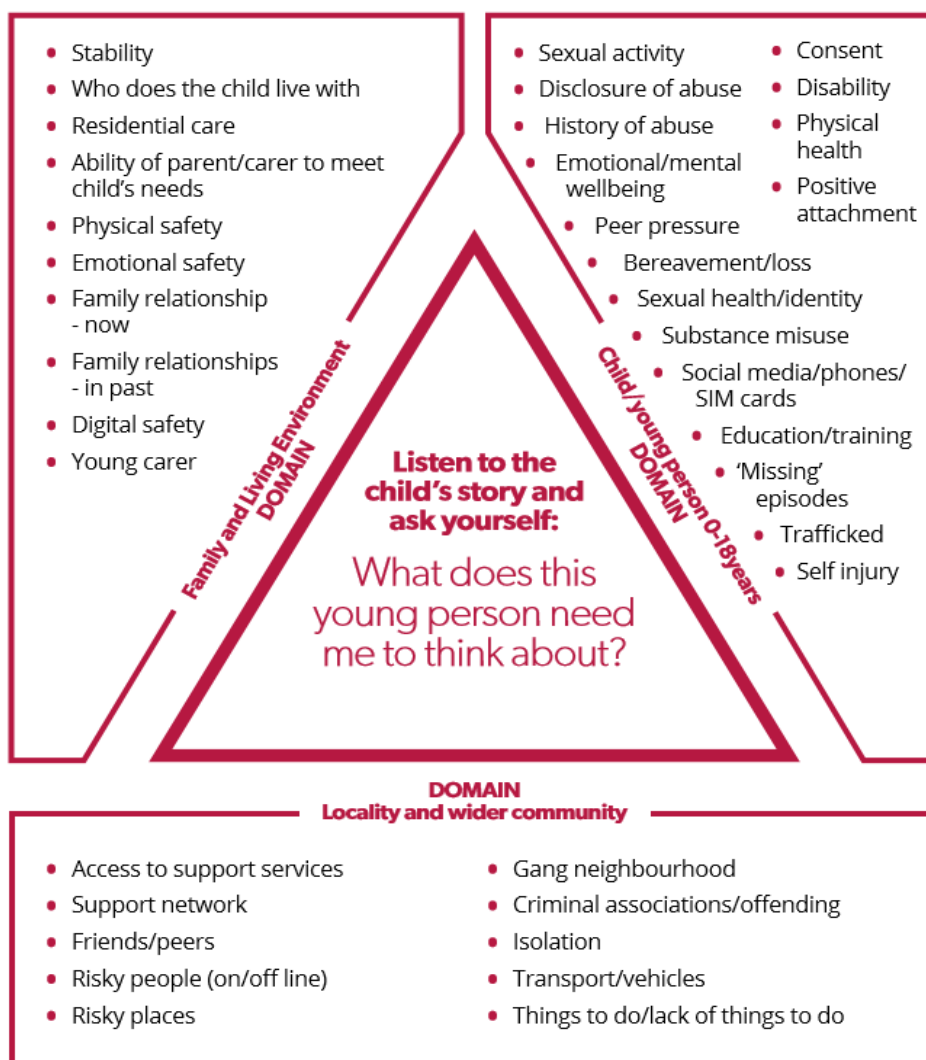
Pan Berkshire Child Protection Procedures

Child Exploitation (CE) and Serious Youth Violence (SYV) Indicator and Analysis Tool



Guidance

When considering child exploitation the following domains are helpful to consider:



1. Child Details	
Child's name:	
Date of birth:	
Ethnicity:	
School / College:	
Is this child looked after?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Do they live in residential care?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are they placed at a distance?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>

2. Your Details	
Your name:	
Job title:	
Contact details:	
Date completed:	

3. Information Sharing and Disclosure	
Is child aware that this tool has been completed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
Are Parents/Carers aware that this tool has been completed?	Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/>
<p>Has the child made a disclosure of exploitation (abuse)?</p> <p>Current <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If 'Yes' you must refer to Children's Social Care immediately</p> <p>Historic <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> If 'Yes' you must refer to Children's Social Care to determine current risk</p>	
<p>Are the people who may be grooming or exploiting the child:</p> <p>Known to the child? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/></p> <p>A family member? Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Unknown <input type="checkbox"/></p>	
(if you answer Yes to either of the above questions please state who this person is)	
Names of the child/child's friends/family who you think are or might be affected by Child Criminal Exploitation also:	

--

4. Evidence The following is evidence of child exploitation or activities of a comparable level requiring rapid and rigorous response. If you identify any of the following please make an immediate child protection referral.	Yes (Y) / No (N)	Current (C) / Previous (P)
Child under the age of 13 has been coerced, exploited or sexually abused		
Being trafficked to an area/place for the purposes of exploitation, e.g. to sell drugs or engage in sexual activity		
Abduction and/or false imprisonment.		
Being groomed online for exploitation.		
Unexplained marks/scars/physical injuries and attempts to conceal these.		
Attendance at a hospital / surgery with a stab wound or other non-accidental injury		
Comments/description/evidence of concerns marked 'Yes'		
5. Risk Indicators Children are groomed and exploited in different ways. Below are some signs that may signify if the child is being groomed for exploitation or actually being exploited.	Yes (Y) / No (N)	Current (C) / Previous (P)
Child located in areas known for on/off street sex work and/or drug supply		
Disclosure of sexual/physical assault, possibly followed by withdrawal of allegation.		
Arrested for PWITs (Possession (drugs) with Intent to Supply		
Carrying, or in possession knife / other weapon (or intelligence to suggest this)		
Entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults.		
Knowledge of/connection to town or cities child has no previous connection with.		
Identified links to taxi firms/takeaway owners/hotels/B&Bs etc		
Evidence of unexplained / suspicious use of public transport - rail / bus tickets to places where they have no trusted association		
Seen in hotspots/places of concerns.		
Change in behaviour – being more secretive/ withdrawn/ isolated from peers and not mixing with usual friends.		
Increasingly disruptive, hostile or physically aggressive at home or school, including to animals, and the use of sexualised language.		
Older person(s) contacting the child online/offline, and encouraging emotional dependence, loyalty and isolation.		

Physical/emotional abuse from a partner, controlling adult or peer, including use of manipulation, violence and/or threats.		
Victim of a violent offence or threatened with violence/physical assault		
Possession of keys to unknown premises and/or hotel key cards.		
Phone calls, texts, letters from unknown adults.		
Persistently missing from home/care/school for different periods including overnight, including episodes that aren't reported to Police.		
Returning home after long intervals appearing well cared for or dirty/disheveled.		
Change in physical appearance (more/new clothes, more/less make up, weight gain/loss).		
Marks/scars/physical injuries and attempts to conceal these.		
Expression of despair (depression, mental health, self-harm, suicidal thoughts/attempts, eating disorder).		
Repeat/unplanned pregnancy(s) and/or seeking termination/emergency contraception.		
Adults/unexplained person(s) loitering outside the child/young person's usual place of residence or school.		
Sexually transmitted infections (STI's) and/or repeat visits to the sexual health clinic.		
Concealed/concerning use of the internet and/or mobile phone, including during the night (webcam, online gaming, web chat, social media, online dating apps/websites).		
Concern that an online relationship has developed into an offline relationship.		
Involvement in offending / violent offending		
Peers / siblings involvement in violent offending / weapon carrying / PWITS		
Exclusion from school, reduced timetable, disengaged from education, unexplained absences from school.		
Disengaging from usual/age appropriate extra-curricular activities, or showing a lack of interest in these activities.		
No response to attempts from workers/carers to keep in touch/disengagement from professionals.		
Distrust of the police i.e. not reporting crime, negative attitude to the police		
Evidence of older, or unknown persons sending sexualized messages to the child		
Young person's sexuality being explored in a risky and unsupported way		
Association with groups/gangs/fear of victimisation from groups/gangs.		
Increasing use of drugs/alcohol or misuse of drugs/alcohol.		
Concern that the child/young person is being coerced/bribed/threatened to provide sexually explicit images/engage in inappropriate online activity.		
Unexplained money/clothing/goods/activities.		

Possessing multiple mobile phones, sim cards, or concerning use of a phone, i.e. multiple callers, frequent messages, phone answered by adult/unknown person.		
Harmful sexual behavior.		
Becoming angry/hostile if any suspicions or concerns are expressed about their activities		
Changes in language use – new alias,/nickname, use of gang slang, drug terminology, sex language		
Comments/description/evidence of concerns marked ‘Yes’		

6. Vulnerabilities These are things which may make a child more at risk of being targeted for exploitation. The absence of these vulnerabilities does not preclude children being targeted; evidence shows victims can come from any background and without any prior vulnerability.	Yes (Y) / No (N)	Current (C) / Previous (P)
Spending time with other exploited children.		
Migrant/refugee/asylum seeker/trafficked status.		
Currently/previously known to Children’s social care.		
Physical/learning disability(s)/communication disorder(s) ADHD or mental health disorders		
Living in a chaotic or dysfunctional household.		
History of emotional/physical/sexual abuse and/or neglect.		
Living in residential care/hostel/B&B/sofa surfing/homeless.		
Places and spaces the child spends their time noted for high crime rates and/or anti-social behaviour?		
Gang affected through family/friends/neighbourhood.		
Unsure about sexual orientation or unable to disclose sexual orientation.		
Parental difficulties; drug and alcohol misuse, mental health problems, physical or learning difficulty. Child or young person is a young carer.		
Recent bereavement or loss.		
Low self-esteem/self-confidence.		
Exploitation previously identified as a concern for the child.		
Poverty or deprivation.		
Current/historical exposure to domestic abuse.		
Breakdown of family relationships and/or conflict around boundaries, e.g. staying out late.		
Family involvement in trading sex/drug supply network/criminal activity		
Lacking friends of their own age.		
Comments/description/evidence of concerns marked ‘Yes’		

--

7. Summary of Concerns

Please note scoring of the below is not prescriptive of risk

	Evidence	Indicators	Vulnerabilities
Number of concerns marked as 'Yes' and 'Current'			
Number of concerns marked as 'yes' and 'Previous'			
Total			

What type of exploitation has been identified through completion of the assessment tool;

- Child Exploitation currently not a factor at this time/concerns relate to age appropriate behaviours
- Evidence of vulnerability to child criminal exploitation
- Evidence of vulnerability to child sexual exploitation
- Evidence of child being groomed (including online) or targeted for the purposes of sexual exploitation
- Evidence of child being groomed into membership of a criminally active gang
- Evidence that child is being sexually exploited
- Evidence that the child is being criminally exploited
- Evidence of other child exploitation / modern day slavery
- Evidence of involvement in serious violence/weapon carrying

Please note that the threshold for referral to National Referral Mechanism ([NRM](#)) is that there are reasonable grounds to believe the individual is a potential victim of human trafficking and modern slavery and if this tool has identified reasonable grounds then a referral should be made to the NRM.

What information has this indicator tool identified about other children, including siblings and friends, who may be at risk of, or are, being exploited, or may be involved in serious violence or carrying weapons?

This is really important for early intervention.

Specific planned or completed actions as result of tool completion:

Date assessment completed:

Date for next review:

**MEETS THE CRITERIA FOR EMRAC: YES/NO
REASON:**

**TO BE CONFIRMED AND SIGNED BY CO-CHAIR:
DATE:**

Pan Berkshire EMRAC Risk Matrix

Quick Guide to Identify the Risk Indicators for Child Exploitation (CSE/CCE or serious violence)

<p>Level 1 - Low Level Risk Indicators – any THREE indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Seen in hotspots/places of concerns. b. Spending time with other exploited children c. Exploitation previously identified as a concern for the child. d. Change in behaviour – being more secretive/ withdrawn/ isolated from peers and not mixing with usual friends e. Exclusion from school, disengaged from education, unexplained absences from school f. No response to attempts from workers/carers to keep in touch/disengagement from professionals. g. Evidence of unexplained / suspicious use of public transport - rail / bus tickets to places where they have no trusted association h. Increasingly disruptive, hostile or physically aggressive at home or school, including to animals, and the use of sexualised language. i. Becoming angry/hostile if any suspicions or concerns are expressed about their activities j. Unexplained money/clothing/goods/activities k. Concealed/concerning use of the internet and/or mobile phone, including during the night l. Concern that the child/young person is being coerced/bribed/threatened to provide sexually explicit images/engage in inappropriate online activity. m. Expression of despair (depression, mental health, self-harm, suicidal thoughts/attempts, eating disorder). 	<p>Level 2 - Medium Level Indicators- any of Level 1 and ONE or more of these indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Persistently missing from home/care/school for different periods including overnight, including episodes that aren't reported to Police. b. Child located in areas known for on/off street sex work and/or drug supply c. Disclosure of sexual/physical assault, possibly followed by withdrawal of allegation. d. Entering/leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults e. Being groomed on the internet f. Evidence of older, or unknown persons sending sexualized messages to the child g. Older person(s) contacting the child online/offline, and encouraging emotional dependence, loyalty and isolation. h. Concern that an online relationship has developed into an offline relationship. i. Possessing multiple mobile phones, sim cards, or concerning use of a phone j. Victim of a violent offence or threatened with violence/physical assault Arrested for PWITS (Possession (drugs) With Intent to Supply) k. Carrying, or in possession knife / other weapon (or intelligence to suggest this) l. Peers / siblings involvement in violent offending / weapon carrying / PWITS m. Increasing use of drugs/alcohol or misuse of drugs/alcohol. n. Involvement in offending / violent offending o. Association with groups/gangs/fear of victimisation from groups/gangs. p. Sexually transmitted infections (STI's) and/or repeat visits to the sexual health clinic.
<p>Level 3 - High Level Indicators- any of Levels 1 and 2 and ONE or more of these indicators</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Child under the age of 13 has been coerced, exploited or sexually abused b. Being trafficked to an area/place for the purposes of exploitation, e.g. to sell drugs or engage in sexual activity c. Abduction and/or false imprisonment. d. Being groomed online for exploitation. e. Unexplained marks/scars/physical injuries and attempts to conceal these. f. Attendance at a hospital / surgery with a stab wound or other non-accidental injury 	

CE Action Plan

Name:		D.O.B:	
RAISE No:		Lead Professional:	

1. Summary of CE concerns:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
2. Managing CE risk: external and internal controls	
What 'external controls' need to be put in place? (Define current controls & those to be developed. I.e Abduction notices. Detail linked organisations/ individuals & key dates as relevant).	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
What work needs to be done with the young person to develop 'internal controls'? (Define current controls & those to be developed e.g. enhancing his/her ability to respond appropriately to identified triggers for CE behaviour)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
3. Managing the CE risk: protective factors	
What other factors could help to contain the risk? (Define factors that both contain & reduce risks)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
4. Managing the CE risk: achieving (1) and (2)	
Is there any additional action that can be taken by the EMRAC?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
What referrals need to be made to other organisations? (Detail in full linked organisations/ individuals & key dates as relevant; Note expected outcomes of referrals)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
Are there any other procedures that need to be implemented / actions to be taken? (Detail any further procedures & linked organisations/ individuals & key dates as relevant)	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
5. Managing the CE risk: sharing information	
What other key pieces of information need to be shared? How and when will this be done?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
6. Managing the CE risk: planning for future events	
What factors or changes in circumstances would result in him/her moving to a different risk category?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
If these changes occurred, what action would need to be taken? How quickly could this be done?	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ 	
Plan completed by:	
Position:	Date (of assessment) :
Review of plan to be completed by:	
Date:	

Thames Valley Police

Partnership Agency Intelligence Sharing Submission Form

Please complete all 3 sections of this form and return to the e-mail address at the bottom of the form.

Reporting Person Details	
Reporting Person Name	
Reporting Person Job Title & Organisation	
Reporting Person E-mail Address	
Reporting Person Telephone	

Source Details	
Does the information originate from the person above?	Yes / No
If no please provide the source details below. This will be held securely and not released.	
Source Name and Date of Birth	
Source Address	
Source Telephone	
Source E-mail	
Do you believe the source is willing to be contacted by police?	Yes / No

Intelligence Report	
Date of Report	<i>DD/MM/YYYY</i>
<i>Please write the information you wish to share here. Please be concise but provide all necessary details. When detailing people use full names and dates of birth, with vehicles provide as much detail including registration, make, model and colour.</i>	
Additional Information	
<i>Is the source the only person to know the information? Are there any risks to the source? Do they know you are sharing the information with police? How does the source know this information?</i>	

Once completed e-mail - AITReaderReading@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

Please e-mail completed form to AITReaderReading@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk

West Berkshire: Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC)

Information sharing agreement 2024

**This agreement is an addendum to the Berkshire
Information Sharing and Assessment (ISA) Protocol**

West Berkshire Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC), Information Sharing Protocol.

Introduction

Information shared within EMRAC meetings is shared for the express purpose of safeguarding and protecting children and young people. Information exchange will also support the prevention and detection of crime. The overarching arrangements for the exchange of information are described in the Information Sharing and Assessment Protocol, embedded within Berkshire Child Protection Procedures to which all LSCB statutory partner agencies are signatories.

This agreement also takes into account of the [ICO guide](#) to sharing information to safeguard children updated in 2023. It states that 'data protection law allows you to share information when required to identify children at risk of harm and to safeguard them from harm. Data protection law doesn't prevent you from doing this. It can be more harmful not to share information that is needed to protect a child or young person. Appropriate information sharing is central to effectively safeguarding children from harm and promoting their wellbeing.'

Information will be shared proportionately (i.e. on a basis of 'need to know' to fulfil statutory responsibilities) and for the express purposes stated above.

The EMRAC meetings are used to review the risk assessment of all young people deemed to be at risk of or vulnerable to Child Exploitation. The meeting will consider the indicator tool, information and assessments presented to the panel. The meeting is a multi agency forum to review the risk and look at what measures need to be in place to assist in reducing risks. EMRAC can assist where there are problems identifying resources, or where a case is stuck or where there are issues that are hampering progress of the plan.

The purpose of the meeting is to

- Consider the level of risk and what steps need to be taken to reduce the risks
- Facilitate multi-agency discussion and sharing information
- Contribute to planning for young people and children
- Demonstrate how risks are being reduced

The EMRAC meeting does not negate the need for ongoing assessment, support and intervention and does not replace statutory processes that the child may be subjected to.

Membership

- Children’s Social care (all teams) ATM/Team Manager, 16+/LC Team
Team Manager Children In Care
ATM/Team Manager, FS East
ATM/Team Manager, FS West
ATM/Team Manager CAAS
Missing Person’s Coordinator
- Thames Valley Police DI CID CSE Lead
Case Investigator CE Team
Missing Person’s Coordinator
- School nurses, Community School Nurse
- Sexual health outreach team (RBH) Contraceptive and Sexual Health Youth
Outreach Nurse
- Education Welfare Service Senior Education Welfare Officer
- The Edge, Drug and alcohol service Manager
- Youth Justice SupportTeam Operational Manager
- I-College Deputy/Head Teacher

The allocated social worker for the child/young person will be invited to update the panel.

Sharing Intelligence

A key function of the EMRAC meeting is to share intelligence in order to identify new suspected victims, perpetrators or ‘hot spots’ and to make certain that appropriate measures are in place to reduce the safeguarding risk.

Thames Valley Police has developed an intelligence submission form which is available to all panel members and agencies (see appendix 6). This is attached to the framework for professionals working with children and families vulnerable to, or at risk from Child Exploitation. The intelligence has to be sent securely through a GCSX account to AITReaderReading@thamesvalley.pnn.police.uk.

Family and victim participation

The EMRAC meeting is a professionals meeting to discuss strategies and planning. Victims and carers will not normally be invited to attend and may not routinely be informed of its discussions.

Sensitive and confidential information is shared about suspected perpetrators and potentially a number of children with whom they may be involved .

Information may only be shared by members with other professionals within their own organisation

Any sharing of information with victims or their families may only take place with agreement of all members of the group and to ensure the protection of a child from further harm.

Information may be shared with the chair and police counterparts in other local authority areas to ensure links between potential abusers are recognised and actioned.

Information about children at risk who move area must be communicated to the Local Authority and Police service for that area to ensure a consistent approach to safeguarding.

Information sharing has to be proportionate and in line with the “General protocol for sharing information between agencies working with children in West Berkshire” 2018.

Framework for confidentiality and information sharing

The information sharing framework for this is set out in the Information Sharing and Assessment Protocol, embedded in the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures, please reference this document for further detail. Statutory Partner Agencies will be expressly fulfilling their role to ‘safeguard’, ‘protect’ and ‘co-ordinate their activities to ‘promote the welfare’ of children and young people identified in the Children Act 1989 and 2004 and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2023.

There are six key documents that provide the main national framework for information sharing

- **Data Protection Act 1998**

The data protection act has 8 guiding principles

1. Fair and lawful processing of personal data
2. Data shall be used for specified purposes
3. It shall be adequate, relevant and not excessive in relation to its purpose
4. It shall be accurate and up to date
5. Should not be kept longer than necessary
6. Shall be processed in accordance with the rights of the data under this act
7. Appropriate security measures
8. Personal data shall not be transferred to a country outside the EEC unless that country ensures adequate levels of protection

- **The six Caldicott principles**

1. Define purpose
2. Use anonymised information if possible
3. Use minimum information necessary
4. Access to personal information on a need to know basis
5. Staff must be aware of their responsibilities
6. Use only when lawful

- **Human Rights Act 1998**

Article 8 provides that everyone has the right to respect for their private and family life, home and correspondence

- **NHS Confidentiality Code of Practice**

A guide to required practice on confidentiality, security and disclosure of personal information, issued in July 2003 and applies to all NHS organisations.

A Supplementary Guidance: Public Interest Disclosures was published in 2010.

- **Crime and Disorder Act 1998**

Is the primary legislative tool common to all crime reduction protocols, it does not override existing legal safeguards on personal information.

- **Information Sharing: advice for practitioners providing safeguarding services: DFE March 2015**

Includes seven rules for information sharing. The rule italicized is an additional rule adopted locally for the LSCB document "Eight Golden Rules for Information Sharing".

1. **Remember that the Data Protection Act is not a barrier to sharing information** but provides a framework to ensure that personal information about living persons is shared appropriately.
2. *If there are concerns that a child may be at risk of significant harm or an adult at risk of serious harm, then it is your duty to follow the relevant procedures without delay. Seek advice if you are not sure what to do at any stage and ensure that the outcome of the discussion is recorded.*
3. **Be open and honest** with the person (and/or their family where appropriate) from the outset about why, what, how and with whom information will, or could be shared, and seek their agreement, unless it is unsafe or inappropriate to do so.
4. **Seek advice** if you are in any doubt, without disclosing the identity of the person where possible.
5. **Share with consent where appropriate** and, where possible, respect the wishes of those who do not consent to share confidential information. You should go ahead and share information without consent if, in your judgement, that lack of consent can be overridden in the public interest, or where a child is at risk of significant harm. You will need to base your judgement on the facts of the case.
6. **Consider safety and well-being:** Base your information sharing decisions on considerations of the safety and well-being of the person and others who may be affected by their actions.
7. **Necessary, proportionate, relevant, accurate, timely and secure:** Ensure that the information you share is necessary for the purpose for which you are sharing it, is shared only with those people who need to have it, is accurate and up-to-date, is shared in a timely fashion, and is shared securely.

- 8. Keep a record** of your decision and the reasons for it – whether it is to share information or not. If you decide to share, then record what you have shared, with whom and for what purpose.

Scope of this Information Sharing Agreement

This agreement covers the sharing of personal information about children and young people and their families who are at risk of or subject to child exploitation. It also covers those suspected of or perpetrating child exploitation.

The agreement covers sharing information with the agencies who attend the EMRAC meeting.

Approval of this Information Sharing Agreement

This agreement is an addendum to the ISA Protocol embedded within the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures and is subject to these signatories. This document will be submitted to all partners for formal approval after any significant change, update or amendment.

Partners will be asked to approve the agreement and

- Facilitate the sharing of information on the basis detailed in this Agreement
- Implement the Agreement in each organisation
- Support staff in the implementation of the agreement through the provision of advice and guidance
- Provide relevant information to facilitate monitoring and review

Partners to this Agreement will ensure their staff operate in accordance with national agreements on confidentiality and will facilitate the sharing of information wherever possible. Agencies will have an approved internal processes/protocol concerning who information is shared with and how it is stored securely.

Purposes of information sharing

Information may be shared for the following purposes

- Referring a case to the EMRAC meeting
- Discussions at the EMRAC meeting to inform multi agency actions to prevent abuse from occurring, disrupt perpetrator activity and secure evidence to support prosecutions.
- Provide EMRAC meeting members with up to date information on cases outside of the meeting where appropriate
- Establish the potential involvement of partner agencies with identified children and young people or adults of concern.
- Notify partner agencies of actions arising from the meeting
- Share information with other local authorities and agencies so that cross border links are recognised and actioned.

The Agreement will be used to ensure that

- Information is shared in a secure manner
- Information is shared on a 'need to know' basis
- It is clear which agency staff are able to deal with requests for disclosure

- There are clear procedures to be followed with regard to information sharing
- Information will only be used for the reason it has been obtained.

Meetings

At the start of each meeting the chair will circulate a confidentiality statement for each participant to sign to acknowledge their duty of confidentiality in respect of the information discussed in the meeting.

Attendees are expected to verbally share relevant and proportionate information in relation to cases on the agenda.

Information discussed within the meeting is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties who have not signed up to the agreement without the agreement of partners of the meeting and the chair.

Information, recommendations and decisions will be recorded on the minutes of the meeting.

The minutes of the meeting are recorded on the West Berkshire IT system and are distributed securely within 5 working days by the administrator from Children's Services.

Members of the EMRAC meeting should process this information in line with their own agency's policies and procedures. Some information will be sensitive and will need to be handled accordingly.

Consent

The EMRAC meeting is a professionals' forum. Informed consent for the sharing of information will not be sought from individuals whose personal information may be shared at a meeting. In the case of a young person providing their own informed consent, their competence, capacity and capability will be given due consideration i.e. Fraser guidelines.

The following provisions allow the sharing of such information without the knowledge or consent of the individuals concerned.

- Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998
- Personal information may be provided to the Police under Section 29 of the Data Protection Act for the prevention and detection of crime or apprehension or prosecution of offenders. This is a power and not an obligation and information should only be disclosed where:
 - Without disclosure the task of preventing or detecting a crime would be seriously prejudiced
 - Information shared is limited to what is strictly relevant to a specific investigation.
 - There are satisfactory undertakings that the information will not be used for any other purpose than the specific investigation
 - Where sharing is necessary because there is evidence that significant harm may be caused to a child or adult. In these cases the public interest in safeguarding the child or adult may override the need to keep the information confidential.

- Where sharing is necessary in the vital interests of the victim or another person (life and death situations)
- For medical purposes and is undertaken by a health professional
- Where the court orders to inform proceedings and decisions by the court.

Specialist advice should be sought if there is any uncertainty regarding the appropriateness of using any of the above jurisdictions for sharing information

A written record should be made of the decision to share without consent giving the details for the decision.

Retention of records

Each agency is responsible for retaining and storing minutes, agenda's and any other information in accordance with their own agency and data protection principles.

Agreement

It was agreed at the West Berkshire LSCB on 19.3.2015 that further signatories by partner agencies to this agreement were not required as this agreement is an addendum to the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures overarching ISA (Information Sharing and Assessment) Protocol. This was updated in 2017.