



Pan-Dorset Protocol for Managing Child Exploitation Risks for Children and Young People who are visiting/trafficked into all areas within BCP/Dorset Council areas

1. Introduction

- 1.1. Children and young people who are trafficked into Dorset for the purposes of moving/dealing drugs usually initially come to the attention of Dorset Police. This is often outside of usual working hours. A clear protocol for responding to immediate risks is required. This means assessing to what extent an individual child or young person is at risk of imminent harm whilst she or he is physically in the Dorset area. Whilst this is often hard to establish from the child or young person themselves, the available information should be gathered as a matter of urgency and assessed for risk and urgency before plans are made to return the child or young person to their home area. This is a priority for the respective teams in both Bournemouth, Christchurch and Poole Council (BCP) and Dorset Council, working with the police. There are frequently delays in agreeing plans for the young person when they are released from Police custody and significant time can be spent by the Police and Social Care Teams both out of hours and the following day in contacting the responsible Local Authorities. That time should be used for multi-agency investigation of the level of risk and urgency, to the extent possible.
- 1.2. This protocol is intended to ensure there is a shared understanding of the individual agency responsibilities, provide a process for information sharing and recording to ensure that risks are known and managed whilst the young person is in Dorset and that the responsible Local Authority is aware of the potential risks to the young person following the Police actions when the young person is returned home. The safe and timely return of the young person to their home is primarily the responsibility of the parents or if a child is looked after then the home Local Authority. However, all agencies are required to work together to arrange the safe repatriation and to escalate any concerns to successively higher levels of management when repatriation is avoidably delayed.
- 1.3. The Local Authority responsible for children and young people in custody is the Local Authority where the young person is 'ordinarily resident' where they usually live, or if looked after, the Local Authority who placed the young person in care. The responsible Local Authority should work closely with the Police throughout the period the young person is in custody to ensure appropriate and safe plans are in place for the return home of the young person on release. If these negotiations

become challenging then the police and the home local authority will need to escalate through their own senior management team

The Local Authority where the young person is in custody is responsible for immediate protective actions where there is a 'risk to the life of a child or a likelihood of serious immediate harm'. In these circumstances, local authority social workers, and the police should use their statutory child protection powers to act immediately to secure the safety of the child. The local authority in whose area a child is found in circumstances that require emergency action (the first authority) is responsible for taking emergency action. If the child is looked-after by, or the subject of a child protection plan in another authority, the first authority must consult the authority responsible for the child. Only when the second local authority explicitly accepts responsibility (to be followed up in writing) is the first authority relieved of its responsibility to take emergency action. Taking emergency action when necessary is the first priority. Assessing the level of risk and urgency as far as this can be done is the second priority. The window to achieve both is likely to be a matter of hours or days at most.

- 1.4 There will also be circumstances when we encounter a child who has been trafficked for another purpose e.g. sexual exploitation, modern day slavery. In these cases the child will have been taken into Police Protection. Repatriation will be different for these children and they will need to be put in 'a place of safety' whilst awaiting repatriation. To determine the 'place of safety' there needs to be a discussion between children social care and the police. This could facilitate an opportunity for a 'reachable moment' with the young person. Repatriation should follow the same process outlined in paragraph 2.8.

2. Process

2.1 Police Custody should notify the responsible Local Authority Social Care Team or responsible Local Authority Out of Hours Service immediately a young person whose home address is outside of Dorset is arrested. They should be informed of how long it is expected that the young person will remain in custody and an approximate time of release provided. Either BCP Council or Dorset Council, for young people in custody should be notified at the time of arrest, depending on the location of the custody suite.

2.2 Parents, or another responsible adult nominated by the parents are usually the best person/s to act as the Appropriate Adult. There should be an expectation that the parent or Local Authority carer undertake the role unless:

- There is a suspicion that an offence was committed against the parent/carer.
- The home address of the young person is at a distance that makes this impractical in a reasonable timeframe.
- The young person has provided information that suggests this would not be in their best interest or would put them at additional risk.

2.3 Where there is not a parent/carer or responsible person nominated by the family able to act as the Appropriate Adult, a request will be made to the Youth Offending Service if the young person is arrested before 5pm during the weekdays or the out of hours services after 5pm and up to 10pm and at weekends. Appropriate Adult

provision for youths is currently commissioned from The Appropriate Adult Service. All interviews of young people should consider the young person's fitness for interview and especially for any interviews that need to take place after 10pm at night.

2.4 Children and young people should not spend more time in custody than is necessary and alternative arrangements for their care on release from custody should be agreed with the responsible Local Authority as soon as possible after the notification. The Children's Services Social Care/Out of Hours Teams for the respective councils will support Dorset Police in any negotiations with the home Local Authority and ensure that appropriate information is shared about any potential risks to the young person on their return home.

2.5 The Prisoner Escort Record (PER) should be provided to the responsible Local Authority and Dorset/BCP Children's Services Team as soon as it is available. The home Local Authority is responsible for providing information to inform all risk assessments while the young person is in Dorset and for making the appropriate arrangements to ensure these risks are managed. This might include the home Local Authority agreeing alternative care arrangements with the family and young person and how the young person will be transported home.

2.6 In all cases where there is concern that a young person found in Dorset is being criminally exploited, a PPN will be completed and sent to:

- The responsible Local Authority
- BCP or Dorset Children's Services
- Safeguarding Health
- The Dorset Youth Offending Service

As 'first responder' the Police should also consider making a referral under the National Referral Mechanism and record the decisions and actions taken.

2.7 A 'Contact' will be recorded on the Children's Services Mosaic system, detailing the reason for the arrest, the PER and PPN, and actions taken to ensure the safe repatriation of the young person.

2.8 When the young person is ready for release, all agencies should work together to ensure she or he is released to a safe place. The primary responsibility to determining the safe place is with the home Local Authority. However, where there is an unavoidable delay, a temporary place of safety should be identified. There are agencies that need to work together to discuss the options, including the identification of risks, to ensure the young person is repatriated as soon as possible. The police, or relevant agency if a PPO, will need to approach the links and/or agencies listed below to discuss and if a solution cannot be established then with one then they will move to the next one:

- Parent/carer or family member
- Home Local Authority
- Third sector recovery (see options)
- BCP or Dorset Council Local Authority
- Police

There needs to be an acknowledgement that each agency has limited resources and therefore they need to enter into discussions with an awareness of the challenges when determining who is best placed to provide a 'safe place' and/or to repatriate a young person. Also need to consider who would be best placed to potentially capture the 'reachable moment', as recommended in the Waltham Forest SCR, to enable the young person to be heard.

Repatriation utilising police officers and vehicles should be viewed as a last resort and will only take place in circumstances where all other options are exhausted. The decision to utilise police resources will be subject to an National Decision Making Model review and be made in consultation with supervision.

August 2020

Third Sector Rescue and Respond organisations

Catch 22 – service for Liverpool young people

Rescue and Respond (St Giles Trust) – service for London young people