**London Borough of Tower Hamlets (LBTH) Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panel**

**Terms of Reference and Procedure**

MACE is a multi-agency meeting responsible for coordinating information sharing and multi-agency interventions to disrupt and protect against harm outside the home, specifically child sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, missing, and children harmed through violence. The MACE operational procedures are governed by the Child Exploitation Pan-London Protocol. [the-london-child-exploitation-operating\_protocol\_2021.pdf (met.police.uk)](https://www.met.police.uk/SysSiteAssets/media/downloads/central/services/accessing-information/child-abuse/the-london-child-exploitation-operating_protocol_2021.pdf)

**Pre-MACE**

A Pre- MACE that is well supported can ensure the MACE runs effectively. The meeting is not designed to replace current London Child Protection Procedures and is not a strategy meeting. The sharing of information should not be delayed for the next meeting. Agencies should share relevant concerns as soon as they come to light. This will ensure a lead agency or authority is agreed and clear direction is provided for coordinated activity. The Pre-MACE should act as a quality assurance process to ensure the high-risk cases are escalated to MACE and there is partnership oversight of high risk/high harm exploitation cases.

Pre-MACE operational panel will review and provide oversight of harm and risk assessments and plans. While this is a specialist area of practice, it is important that all practitioners, supervisors, and senior leaders are diligent in ensuring that children are kept safe, with early identification of needs, up to date risk and harm assessments and robust plans that are continuously reviewed to demonstrate impact. This meeting will escalate cases of high harm and high risk to the MACE panel where applicable.

This document was updated in March 2022 to reflect London Borough of Tower Hamlets adoption of the pan-London Child Exploitation Protocol 2021, alongside continued implementation of harm outside the home safeguarding approaches and assessment processes. The pan-London protocol sets out the key definitions and operating principles.

London Borough of Tower Hamlets Safeguarding Children Partnership (THSCP) has adopted the London Multi-Agency Safeguarding Data Sharing Agreement for Safeguarding and Promoting the Welfare of Children, and the LBTH MACE arrangements follow the same principles included in this agreement. Any escalation relating to the panels will follow the LBTH Escalation Policy.

**Attendance:**

Exploitation Head of Service

DI – Public Protection

DS – Child Exploitation Police Team

DI – Local Investigations

DS – Integrated Gangs Unit

Exploitation Coordinator

Youth Justice Head of Service (or delegated Manager)

Family Support Head of Service (or delegated TM)

Children we Care for Head of service (or delegated TM)

MASH Head of Service (or delegated manager)

Assessment and Intervention Head of Service (or delegated TM)

**Cases**

The decision whether a case is heard at Pre-MACE operational panel will be made following a strategy discussion and or through the risk and harm assessment process, where there are clear concerns regarding harm outside the home safeguarding matters. All children with a new completed or updated Exploitation Risk Assessment (ERA) will be discussed at Pre-MACE to ensure that children are kept safe, with early identification of needs, up to date risk and harm assessments and robust plans that are continuously reviewed to demonstrate impact. All high risk/high harm children are reviewed where applicable daily through the Exploitation Service daily and weekly briefings where concerns are identified through this process cases will be discussed at Pre-MACE and all relevant processes will be followed.

**Pre-MACE Operational Action Tracking**

Decisions made at the Pre-MACE operational panel, must be actioned within two weeks. An action tracker will be used to monitor progress, with action owners or managers expected to report back on any outstanding actions to the minute taker. The governance for the action tracker will be monitored by the Exploitation Service Coordinator.

**Frequency:**

The Pre-MACE operational panel sits for 3 hours monthly.

**MACE panel**

The Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Meeting (MACE) has strategic oversight of all exploitation cases, information, intelligence, and activity across LA areas and across BCU boundaries.

The MACE should have the capacity to remove blockages or obstacles in cases, as well as considering and directing resources and activity in response to trends identified from those cases. The MACE meeting takes place 4-weekly.

The meeting is jointly chaired by the Local Basic Command Unit Police at Detective Chief Inspector or Detective Inspector level and the Exploitation Head of Service.

The MACE is not designed to case manage individual cases but should identify, discuss, and deliver a partnership response to short, medium- and longer-term themes, trends and patterns emerging from exploitation cases. All cases must have followed existing child protection procedures prior to being discussed at the meeting, must have been subject to a strategy meeting/discussion and should have (where applicable) a corresponding police child exploitation crime report number. If an agency does not feel that a case is progressing, it should escalate the matter in accordance with the locally agreed escalation process for resolution of professional disagreements. The enactment of escalation should be reported to the MACE and the ‘lessons to be learnt’ identified. However, there is still a requirement that the safety and action planning is conducted at a strategy or professionals meeting/discussion, and this should not be left until a MACE meeting is scheduled.

To assist in the identification of themes and/or emerging trends, reports are presented at the meeting in a format that ensures the key information and intelligence is properly captured. It is recommended that attendees should consider the key information using the VOLT mnemonic. V – Victim(s) O - Offender(s)/perpetrators/persons of concern L – Location(s) T – Theme(s) The key case information should be captured at a strategy meeting or pre-MACE. This will be reviewed at the MACE and allows the chair and all professionals supported by analysts to identify intelligence and areas of risk. The information can be transferred if the child is placed in another area and complements the statutory placement forms.

The MACE panel is a multi-agency partnership that considers cases where a partnership discussion and approach would benefit the case, strategic matters that are fed through from the Pre-MACE operational panel, as well as local, national learning and good practice. The objective of this panel is to ensure strategic oversight, accountability and ensuring the tracking of impact. Where there are blockages to cases, plans, themes, locations, and persons of interest; these will be discussed here with a view to early identification, planning, and disruption.

When a decision has been made that a child or children should be discussed (this decision is made at Pre-MACE) the allocated social worker, officer in the case (where applicable), their supervisor (where appropriate) and any other relevant key professionals involved in the case will be invited to attend a fifteen-minute slot, key partners and other professionals will provide any information they hold about the child or family.

In advance of the meeting, the social worker will complete or update the harm & risk assessment and have a clear safety plan, which should be collaboratively undertaken with a child and family. When the social worker and manager attend the panel, they will clearly set out the risks and safety plan as well as sharing any concerns or barriers faced.

Multi-agency partners will contribute with intelligence and solutions to enhance safety and protective measures and unblock identified barriers. All professionals will consider the following:

V – Children at risk of being exploited

O - Offender(s)/perpetrators/persons of concern

L – Location(s)

T – Theme(s)

The MACE panel sits for 3 hours on a 4-weekly basis

**Multiagency responsibilities:** All agencies will:

* Ensure their agency is represented.

Check names and details of new referrals in advance of the meeting so that any relevant contributions can be made at the panel. - *Participants should use the agenda and new referrals circulated in advance to ensure they are appropriately prepared to offer meaningful contributions to the panel.*

* Record the relevant details of the case on their systems to ensure that the oversight and actions from the panel is recorded.
* Progress any actions pertained to them.
* Adhere to and comply with Data Protection laws and regulations, understanding that the purpose of information sharing is to safeguard vulnerable children and/or to detect and prevent crime.

**Statutory safeguarding processes**

Both MACE panels operate in accordance with established statutory procedures relating to protecting children under the *London Child Protection Procedures 2017*, *Working Together 2018* and *The Pan-London CE Operating Protoco*l *2021*. A strategy discussion MUST have taken place for a child to be discussed at Pre-MACE/MACE. If at the strategy discussion, there are clear concerns regarding harm outside the home, a harm and risk assessment needs to be completed and, where applicable the case will be discussed at Pre-MACE. **Neither panel will be used as a substitute for the safeguarding processes that exist in LBTH in relation to children**.

Where a professional, person or agency has concerns in relation to the welfare of a child/children, referrals must still be made to be MASH) as a matter of urgency (or to the Police in emergency situations).

**The responsibility for the oversight, monitoring and implementation of any plans remains with the professional network working with the child.**

**Strategy discussion**

Whenever there is reasonable cause to suspect that a child is suffering or is likely to suffer significant harm, there should be a strategy discussion involving Children’s Social Care (CSC) (including the residential or fostering service if the child is looked-after), the police, health, and other bodies such as the referring agency. It is within these forums a decision is made whether to pursue the matter as a joint or single agency.

**Referrals**

Cases discussed at MACE must be open to Children’s Social Care. A Harm Outside the home risk and harm assessment needs to be completed before a discussion can take place at Pre-MACE and or MACE. Risk assessment and plans must be updated for all children presented or where exploitation is a concern. Following Pre-MACE the social worker and team manager for the children may be invited to attend the MACE panel where a decision has been made at Pre-MACE that the child will be discussed at MACE.

Children’s Social Care, Police and other partner agencies can request a case discussion at MACE through pre-MACE. A discussion will occur at pre-MACE where a decision will be made as to whether a further discussion at MACE is required.

**Organised and complex meetings**

When exploitation has been identified and there are concerns that the abuse involves one or more abuser, multiple victims, a group, or location where additional focus is required to monitor peer networks and activity; consideration should be given as to whether this falls within the Organised and Complex Abuse procedures as outlined in chapter 8 of the London Child Protection procedures. There will be an expectation that intelligence from complex meetings will be shared at the strategic MACE panel, for oversight and to ascertain what resources can be galvanised from the partnership to assist with safety.

**Case presentation**

Children presented at MACE require the allocated Social Worker, Youth Justice Practitioner, and/or other relevant professionals to attend the Panel as per the allocated time for the child’s case (schedule will be sent out in advance). The team manager should attend if the social worker is not available.

The aim is that children will be discussed once during the panel. Where an individual presents with concerns in more than one area (e.g. harmful behaviour and being exploited) they will be prioritised and discussed as a victim in the first instance.

The panel can also recommend the requirement for locations of concerns (whether in regard to a peer group, location or education setting) to be taken to the Neighbourhood tasking meeting where the safer places, safer spaces section is specifically for children.

The allocated worker(s) and/or team manager are to provide information on the following:

* Summary – Significant incidences and facts to support the referral.
* Up to date harm and risk assessment and up to date safety plan
* The effectiveness of the multi-agency network around the child and the support required from MACE to increase impact.

**Governance**

The strategic MACE is the strategic oversight panel and report directly to the Safeguarding Partnership.

**Measurement of MACE success**

By adopting the changes detailed in this document, the strategic meeting will be able to effectively demonstrate the success of its involvement and investment in combatting child exploitation through the collection of key information and intelligence, it will ensure there is a consistent data set collected that will inform both a local and a London-wide problem profile.

**Appendix 1 – Membership of MACE Panels**

**Membership of Pre-MACE**

**DI Public Protection (Child Exploitation Team & Missing Person Unit)**

**DI Local Investigations**

**DS Child Exploitation Team**

**DS Integrated Gangs Unit**

**Head of Service, Exploitation**

**Head/Deputy Head of Service YJS**

**Head of/Group Manager – Family Support & Protection**

**Head of Service – Looked after children & Through Care**

**Exploitation & Serious Youth Violence Coordinator (MACE coordinator)**

**Analyst, Exploitation Service**

**Membership MACE Panel**

* The panel will be quorate if Health, Children Social Care, Police and Education are represented.
* Where members cannot attend, they should send a representative with a similar level of management decision making. Concerns regarding attendance will be raised via the chair(s).
* Professionals and/or team managers will be invited to attend for the slot allocated for the child they are working with.
* Attendees will be expected to provide relevant information from their organisation.

**Core members,** attending regularly, will be as follows:

**Police**

DI Public Protection CE BCU (C**hild Exploitation Team & Missing Person Unit)** (co-chair)

DI Local Investigations (co-chair)

CSE and Missing Persons SPOC

DS Child Exploitation Team

DS Integrated Gangs Unit

**Children & Families**

Head of Service, Exploitation (co-chair)

Service Manager - Family Support & Protection

Team Manager - Children in Care

Team Manager – Exploitation

Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence Coordinator (MACE coordinator)

Team Manager – Family Support & Protection

Team Manager Youth Justice Service

Early Help

**Community Safety**

**Health**

**Education & Early Help**

**Commissioned Services and Voluntary Services in regard to MACE**

**Offender management**

**Housing**

**Appendix 1 – Agenda format**

**Pre-MACE Agenda**

1. **Introduction & Apologies**
2. **High risk Children**
3. **Children being harmed**
4. **Cases for MACE**
5. **Offenders**
6. **Locations**
7. **Peer Groups**

**MACE Agenda**

Information discussed by agency representatives within the ambit of the panel meeting is strictly confidential and must not be disclosed to third parties without the agreement of the partners at the meeting.

For cases where there are concerns regarding being a victim of exploitation and a perpetrator of harm they will be treated as a victim in the first instance and placed in that section of the agenda (see agenda format below).

**Example MACE Agenda**

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| ***Part 1 (Strategic overview/Identify case blockages/Setting actions to mitigate risk)*** | |
| 13:00-13:10 | 1. Welcome & Introductions |
| **13:10-13:40** | 1. Partner presentation & Updates |
| **13:40 -14:00** | 1. Actions – Review of minutes/actions. |
| **1400-1425** | 1. Missing – From home and Care   Misper Coordinator (MPS) – Missing from Home – 10 minutes  Analyst (Exploitation Service) – Missing from Care – 10  Questions related to missing – 5 minutes  High risk missing children referrals |
| **1430-1445** | BREAK |
| **1445-1545** | 1. Case overview – presented under the VOLT mnemonic. 2. Victim – Child criminal exploitation/Child sexual exploitation/children harmed through violence (drug market concerns)/ National Referral Mechanism (NRM) and confirmed or potential cases of trafficking.   Children being discussed at MACE – High risk/high Harm – 10 Minutes – Chair   1. Cases presented this month 2. Offenders – Repeat offenders, known links to children, cross-border, owning BCU and who has responsibility – 10 Minutes – Sean Beasley/Angie Baker/Rob James 3. Location– Repeat locations/Crime generators & Themes – Emerging themes e.g. new apps, UCK parties and Blue Whale challenges – 10 Minutes – All |
| **1605-1610** | 1. Discharged cases – Agencies may decide to close their case first and MACE is the forum confirming the reasons. |
| **1610-1620** | 1. Cross-border – Issues that impact multiple BCU/boroughs including overview of children placed in/outside of the borough. Mapping and the sharing of this intelligence is key. – 10 minutes – All |
| **1620-1630** | 1. Trafficking/NRM – Confirmed and potential cases |
| **Part 2 (Forward thinking)** | |
| **1630-1700** | 1. Joint intelligence presentation – Reports of note/Intelligence taskings/Identifying risk children and top ten offenders. (The findings should feed into the child exploitation profile)   Presentation – Analyst Exploitation Service – 10 minutes  Questions about the analyst presentation – 5 minutes   1. Information Sharing – Information to be shared from other forums, such as MARAC, Gangs, Missing and Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements (MAPPA) – Chairs 2. Best practice documents to be shared with BCUs and partners to promote joint working – Chair and All 3. Violence, Vulnerability and Exploitation Delivery Plan (Managed through the sub-group) |