



NCASP

NORTHUMBERLAND CHILDREN AND ADULTS
SAFEGUARDING PARTNERSHIP



Exploitation Strategy

Northumberland

2023 – 2024

Document control and record of amendments

Version	Reason for amendment	Amended by:	Date:
V4	2020-23 Strategy has been refreshed and rebranded under new partnership arrangements (NCASP)	Leigh Graham / Saira Park	June 2023

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Statement of Intent

Tackling exploitation remains one of the most important challenges for Northumberland Partnerships. It is our collective, multi-agency responsibility to identify and safeguard both victims and those vulnerable to exploitation and its associated impact.

We are committed to preventing these forms of abuse and supporting safer communities by the provision of positive multi-agency intervention, proactive disruption and promotion of community vigilance.

Strategy Aims and Objectives

Our strategic objectives are:

1

Working in partnership we will use shared intelligence to support problem profiles in order to fully understand the full extent of exploitation in Northumberland.

2

Through raised awareness, we will ensure that signs and indicators of exploitation are recognised at the first opportunity. Early intervention support will ensure preventative measures are taken for children, vulnerable adults and families at risk.

3

We will work in partnership through the Missing, Slavery, Exploitation and Trafficking Panel / Strategic Exploitation Group to consider key learning and themes to ensure that our communities are aware of exploitation.

4

We will Safeguard vulnerable people, tackle perpetrators, disrupt opportunities and target hotspot areas.

Governance and Delivery Plan

The Partnerships have a Joint Strategic Exploitation Group, all partners have agreed to progress the delivery plan through this Group. Information from key partners will be utilised in the development of the delivery plan. The plan is repeatedly refreshed during the year and adapted to meet current needs identified through review, problem profile data, intelligence, changing legislation and significant local and national cases. It reports to the Northumberland Partnerships on a yearly basis, with exception reporting when required.

What is Exploitation?

Exploitation is a form of abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a person into 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. Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology.

This definition applies to all forms of exploitation. We recognise that exploitation is complex and multi-faceted, victims do not always feel able to disclose or accept support. Many vulnerable people travel across local authority boundaries which increases their vulnerability and the risk of exploitation. In response to this, multi-agency information sharing with the host local authority and key partners should be common practice. The gathering and sharing of information from the Independent Return Home Interviews when victims or those at risk go missing, is vital to capture and share intelligence.

What is Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking?

Modern slavery is the recruitment, movement, harbouring or receiving of children, young people or adults through the use of force, coercion, and abuse of vulnerability, deception or other means for the purpose of exploitation.

Human trafficking includes the movement into, out of or within the UK with victims moved for a number of reasons including exploitation, forced labour, domestic servitude and organ harvesting.

Within Northumberland professionals should refer to the following guidance:

- [Northumberland Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation Concept of Operations](#) which outlines a multi-agency approach to supporting victims who have been subject to slavery, trafficking and exploitation.
- NCASP guidance (adults) [Modern Day Slavery and Trafficking guidance for staff](#)
- NCASP guidance (children): [Children from Abroad, including Victims of Modern Slavery, Trafficking and Exploitation](#); [Child Exploitation \(Sexual and Criminal\)](#),
- [National referral mechanism \(NRM\) guidance](#)

Mental Capacity Act and Consent

It is acknowledged that victims may lack the capacity to consent or may be being threatened or coerced into sexual or criminal activity. Grooming, coercion and control have been known to all have an impact on an individual's mental capacity, particularly where exploitation is a factor.

Case reviews across the country have highlighted a failure to understand the impact of coercion by abusers on behaviour, and to assess capacity to make informed choices.

Where appropriate, the Safeguarding Adults process will be followed – [Safeguarding Adults Process](#)

The Mental Capacity Act (2005) applies to anyone aged 16 years and over:

- who has an impairment of and/or disturbance in the functioning of the mind or brain;
- a person's capacity is decision and time specific;
- if someone lacks capacity, then a decision should be made in their best interests;
- agencies need to work together to assess capacity and implement the best interest framework.

We believe the basic principles of good practice are fundamental to keeping all potential victims safe:

Multi-agency working

- This should specifically consider contextual safeguarding and the impact of community and environmental factors to the level of risk.
- In order to achieve this, key partners (including statutory and non-statutory agencies) should be included in information sharing and hold joint accountability for risk management.

Good leadership and clear governance

- and a frequent review of operations to drive practice including effective data capture.

Building trusted relationships

- is essential to effective communication and risk management
- it takes persistence, tenacity, creativity and being able to respond quickly to critical moments.
- **Critical moments include:** Exclusions from school / loss of employment, Serious physical injury, Arrest / imprisonment, Death of a peer or family member

Take a life course and trauma informed approach

- to safeguarding all victims of exploitation.

Parental engagement

- parents and extended family need effective support to help them manage risk from outside the home.

Transitional Safeguarding

- Vulnerable children can become adults at risk;
- the transition from childhood to adult is a particularly risky period in relation to exploitation, therefore it is important to share information across services in a timely and proportionate way.

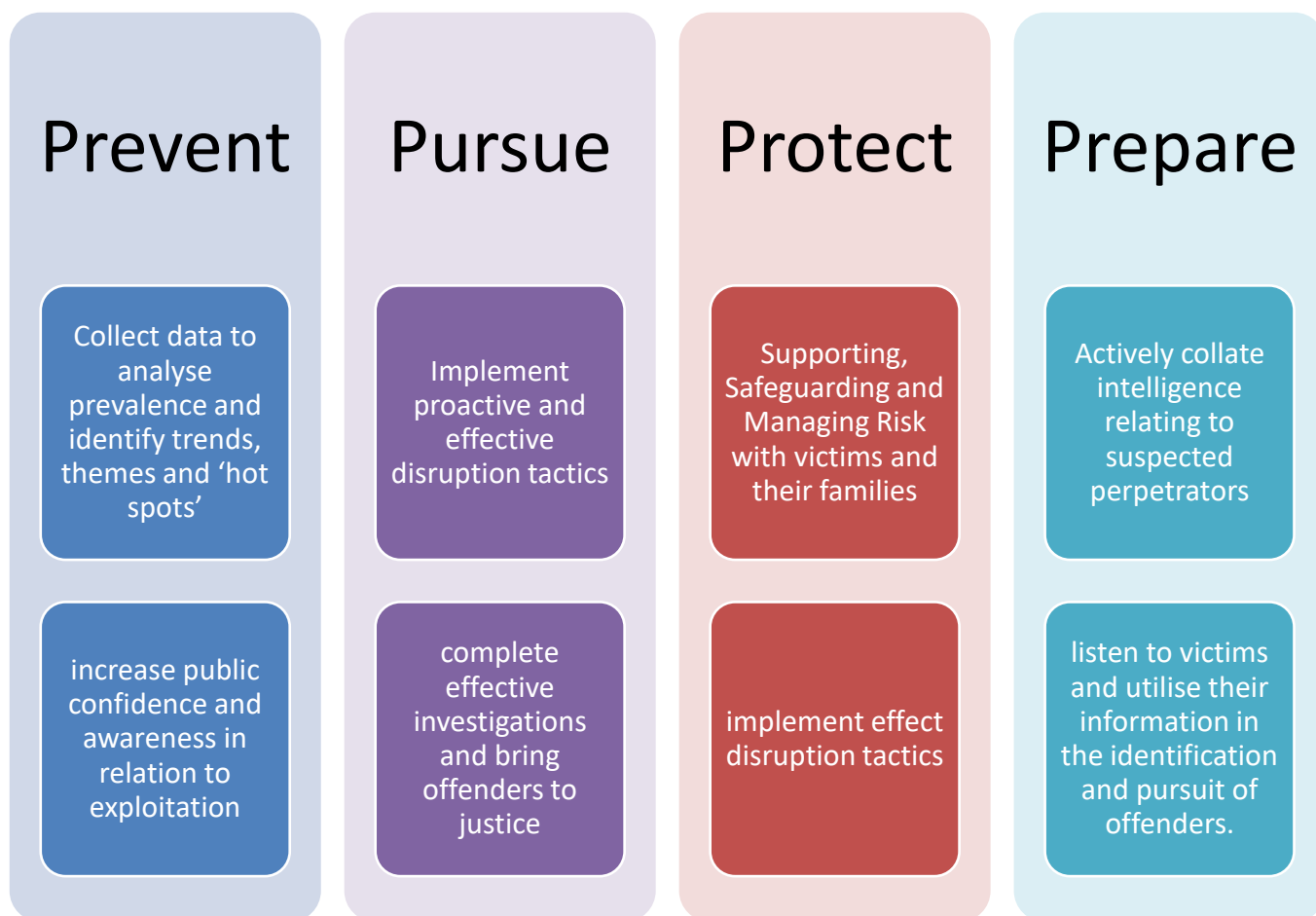
To follow statutory responsibilities

- in line with Working Together, The Care Act, investigating and disrupting crimes and criminal activity.
- For a detailed list of statutory responsibilities please see the NWG disruption toolkit

[NWG disruption toolkit](#) - criminal, civil and partnership disruption options for perpetrators of child and adult victims of exploitation

Structure of the Delivery Plan

The exploitation strategy 2023-2024 involves a multi-agency approach to addressing exploitation in Northumberland and consists of four key strategic objectives:



The delivery plan is developed as a separate document and is monitored by the Joint Strategic Exploitation Group.