



Child Exploitation Policy and Procedure

(Child Sexual Exploitation, Child Criminal Exploitations and County Lines)

February 2020

Version Control

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Version	Group/Person	Date	Comments
DSP1	Business unit	July 2019	Rebranded under new Safeguarding arrangements and to reflect Statutory Guidance.
	CSE Practitioner & CAP Advance Practitioner	February 2020	Guidance reviewed to include Child Exploitation (including criminal, drug and sexual), as well as update of procedures.

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1. Introduction

- 1.1 This procedure and practice guidance has been designed to assist practitioners in identifying what is Child Exploitation (CE), including sexual and criminal (this includes county lines).
- 1.2 The guidance outlines how practitioners can support children and young people to prevent, protect, disrupt and to prosecute those who abuse children and young people through sexual and criminal exploitation.
- 1.3 Evidence has shown that parents/carers/relatives and those professionals (such as teachers, family workers, health professionals, social workers, GPs, Police Officers and the voluntary sector) who have regular contact with children and young people are well placed to notice changes in behaviour and physical signs, which may indicate involvement in child exploitation.
- 1.4 The earlier that child exploitation, or likelihood of it, can be identified, the more opportunities there are to prevent or minimise the harm suffered by a child or young person.
- 1.5 Definition of 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 technology¹.”

- 1.6 Definition of Child Criminal Exploitation;

“Child Criminal Exploitation is common in county lines and 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. 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.

Criminal exploitation of children is broader than just county lines, and includes for instance children forced to work on cannabis farms or to commit theft ².”

“When someone you trusted makes you commit crimes for their benefit ³.”

¹ Department for Education – Child sexual exploitation, Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (February 2017).

² Home Office - Criminal Exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: County Lines guidance (September 2018)

³ Children Society – Counting Lives, responding to children who are criminally exploited (July 2019)

2. What to do if you have concerns

2.1 Vulnerability Factors

In order to identify children at risk of exploitation or experiencing sexual / criminal exploitation and follow a clear plan of effective inter-agency action, you should consider **ALL** of the 14 risk indicators as outlined within the [Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Information Form](#) which can be found on the LSCB website

- Family and peer relationships
- Accommodation
- Education
- Emotional Health
- Experience of Violence
- Running away / going missing
- Contact with abusive adults and / or unsafe environments
- Controlled Substances
- Coercion / control
- Rewards (including online rewards)
- Sexual health and relationships
- Social Networking
- Physical risks
- Engagement with services

2.2 Procedure

The CE risk assessment form will assist you in determining the level of risk for the child or young person and if after considering the above, you remain concerned you **must** contact the [Children's Initial Advice Team \(CIAT\)](#) for further advice and actions required, this contact must also include details of any other child and/or young person who may be involved (whether perpetrators/victims) and/or may also be at risk:

Children's Initial Advice Team

Professionals line 01325 406252

Public Line 01325 406222 (option 1)

e-mail: childrensfrontdoor@darlington.gov.uk

*See Process Map for further guidance

If a child is at immediate risk, you must contact the Police in the first instance on 999.

In order to ensure consistency in decision making, the CIAT will utilise the **Child Exploitation Risk Assessment information form** to help screen the level of risk .

The CIAT will also determine whether the child is:

Open to Early Help

The CIAT will screen the contact utilising the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment information form, if low risk the case will remain open to Early Help Services and forwarded to the relevant Early Help practitioner. If moderate or significant risk the case will be transferred to the Assessment and Safeguarding Team to determine the appropriate next steps to safeguard and support the child. See process map 1, page 9 of this document.

Open to Children's Social Care

The CIAT will forward the information to the allocated social worker. If immediate safeguarding actions is required the necessary steps will be taken by the social worker to ensure the child's immediate safety. A strategy meeting may be held at this point. The social worker will complete the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment form and submit this to the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) group within 72 hours.

If the MACE determines that risk level is moderate or significant, a referral will be made by MACE to Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker (CEVT). If the CEVT outcome is high risk these cases will be heard at CEG (child exploitation group). A referral will also be made to the Child Exploitation Worker to work alongside the social worker. See process map 2, page 10 of this document.

Not currently open and/or these are new concerns

The CIAT will screen the contact with consideration to the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment information form, if low risk the case will be transferred to Early Help Services for an Early Help Assessment (EHA).

If moderate or significant the case will be transferred to the Assessment and Safeguarding teams. If immediate safeguarding action is required the necessary steps will be taken by the social worker to ensure the child's immediate safety. A strategy meeting may be held at this point. The social worker will complete the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment form and submit this to the MACE within 72 hours.

If the MACE determines that risk level is moderate or significant, a referral will be made by MACE to CEVT. If the CEVT outcome is high risk these cases will be heard at CEG (Child Exploitation Group). A referral will also be made to the Child Exploitation Worker to work alongside the social worker. See process map 3, page 11 of this document.

Placed in Darlington by another authority or staying temporarily

The CIAT will inform the child's social worker. If the risks of exploitation are in Darlington the placing or host Local Authority can make a referral to CEVT and the Designated Child Exploitation Worker. See process map 4, page 13 of this document.

Likewise, if a Darlington child is placed out of area, the case holding social worker will liaise with the host Local Authority.

****Note: where a child under the age of 13 years, and/or has learning disability and there are concerns regarding child exploitation, please call CAIT 01325 406252***

2.3 Information Sharing Form

It is important, if you have any information no matter how small in relation to: suspected offenders; suspected vehicles; or locations of interest you must provide details. You should record any detail on the '[ERASE Information Sharing Form](#)' and submit to Durham Constabulary as a matter of urgency. The benefits of sharing this information will enable agencies to work collaboratively to disrupt perpetrators, whilst protecting victims and developing an understanding of local child exploitation issues.

2.4 Multi-agency approach to managing Moderate and Significant Risk Cases

MACE

Following the completion of the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment Information Form by the social worker or early help worker, the case will be discussed at the MACE.

Through the MACE meeting, multi-agency professionals review the completed Child Exploitation Risk Assessment information form to ensure that the appropriate risk level has been identified. The meeting allows the matrices to be objectively reviewed and to ensure consistency within Darlington.

Recommendations are made to ensure that the needs of children at risk of exploitation are responded to, including managing risk and implementing safety plans. The meeting does not and should not replace statutory planning processes such as Strategy Meetings, Child Protection Conferences or Care Planning Reviews for Children Looked After.

The review also ensures that the Child Exploitation Risk Assessment information form is completed within a timely manner and raises the importance and profile of exploitation within Darlington.

Any children identified as moderate or significant risk, will be referred to the CEVT.

CEVT

The tracker is essentially an information tracker. The purpose of it is to document and grade the vulnerability of children who are exploited utilising key risk indicators, whilst providing a summary of risk for effective management. The CEVT does not hold risk - rather it provides a summary of risk for effective management utilising key risk indicators.

CEG

Referrals to the CEG (Child Exploitation Group) will be made via the CEVT (Child Exploitation Vulnerability Tracker) meeting for those that are high risk

A multi-agency meeting is held on a monthly basis and is Chaired by a Safeguarding Lead from Durham Constabulary. The main purpose of the group is to prevent, disrupt and deter children and young people from being sexually and criminally exploited and/or who go missing.

It is the Social Worker's responsibility to ensure that they attend and provide an update of the case. The CEG will have management oversight of all significant risk cases, with the aim to disrupt perpetrators, target locations and protect children and young people at risk of Sexual and Criminal Exploitation.

Strategic CEG

The intelligence gathered at the CEG meetings is shared with the Strategic Child Exploitation Group to inform the CSE, CCE and Missing strategies and to improve the long term outcomes for children and young people in Darlington.

Low risk cases are managed through the Early Help process and interventions are offered by the Early Help team with the aim of reducing/preventing risks escalating. If at any point a low risk case identifies a new or escalating risk the lead worker e.g. Early Help practitioner, teacher must refer to the Children's Front Door, see paragraph 2.2 of this document.

All agencies are responsible for the implementation of the safeguarding plans and disruption plans and the appropriate dissemination of these to their organisations.

2.5 Professional Challenge

Should you at any time feel unhappy about any decisions that have been made in relation to a young person which you feel may not effectively ensure the safety or well-being of a child or young person, then you should refer to the Darlington Safeguarding Partnership Professional Challenge Procedure.

Note: At no time must professional disagreement detract from ensuring that the child or young person is safeguarded.

2.6 Practice Guidance

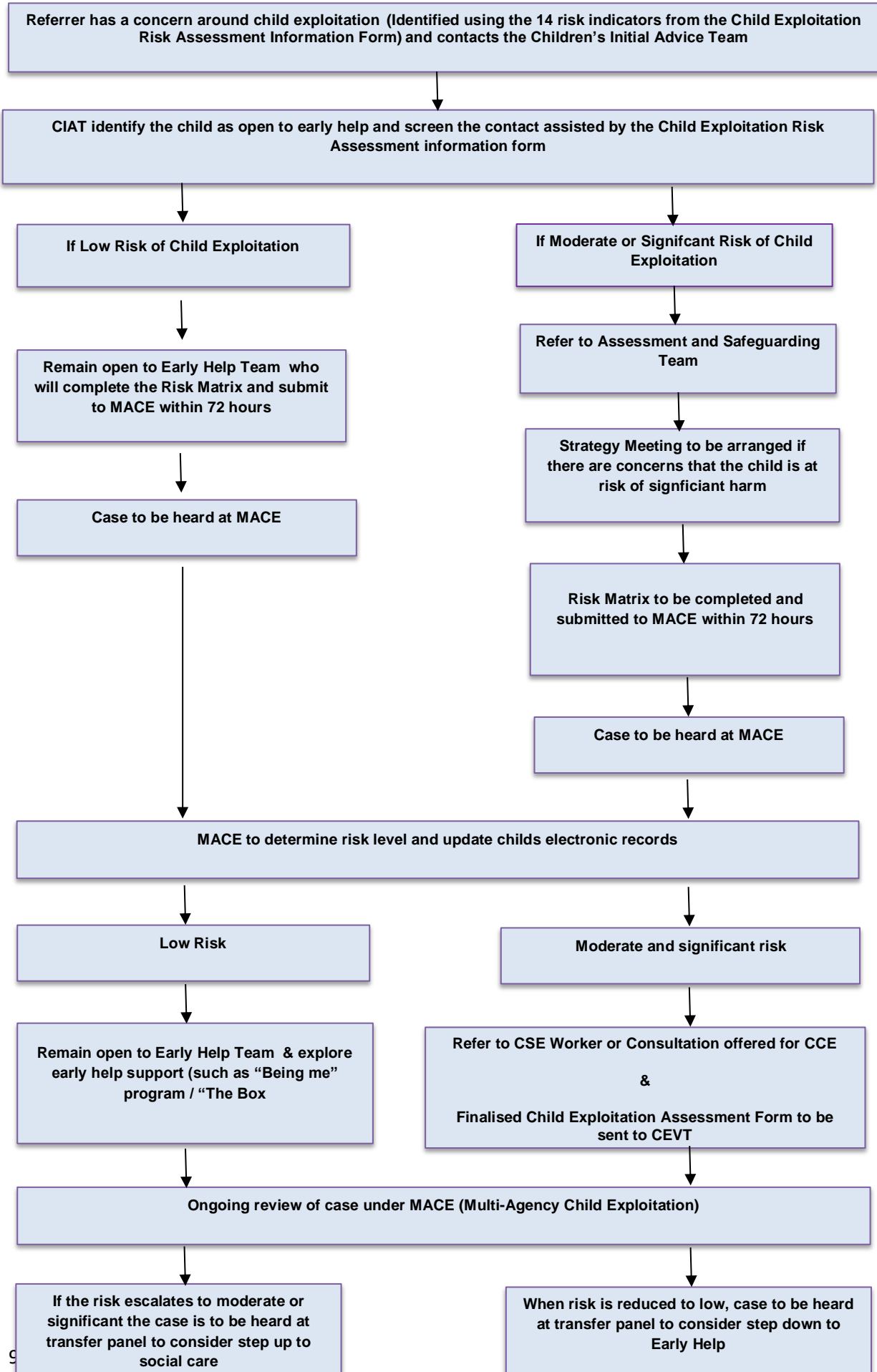
For further information regarding what child sexual / criminal exploitation is, see the link below.

Child Sexual Exploitation Practice Guidance – [link to be updated](#)

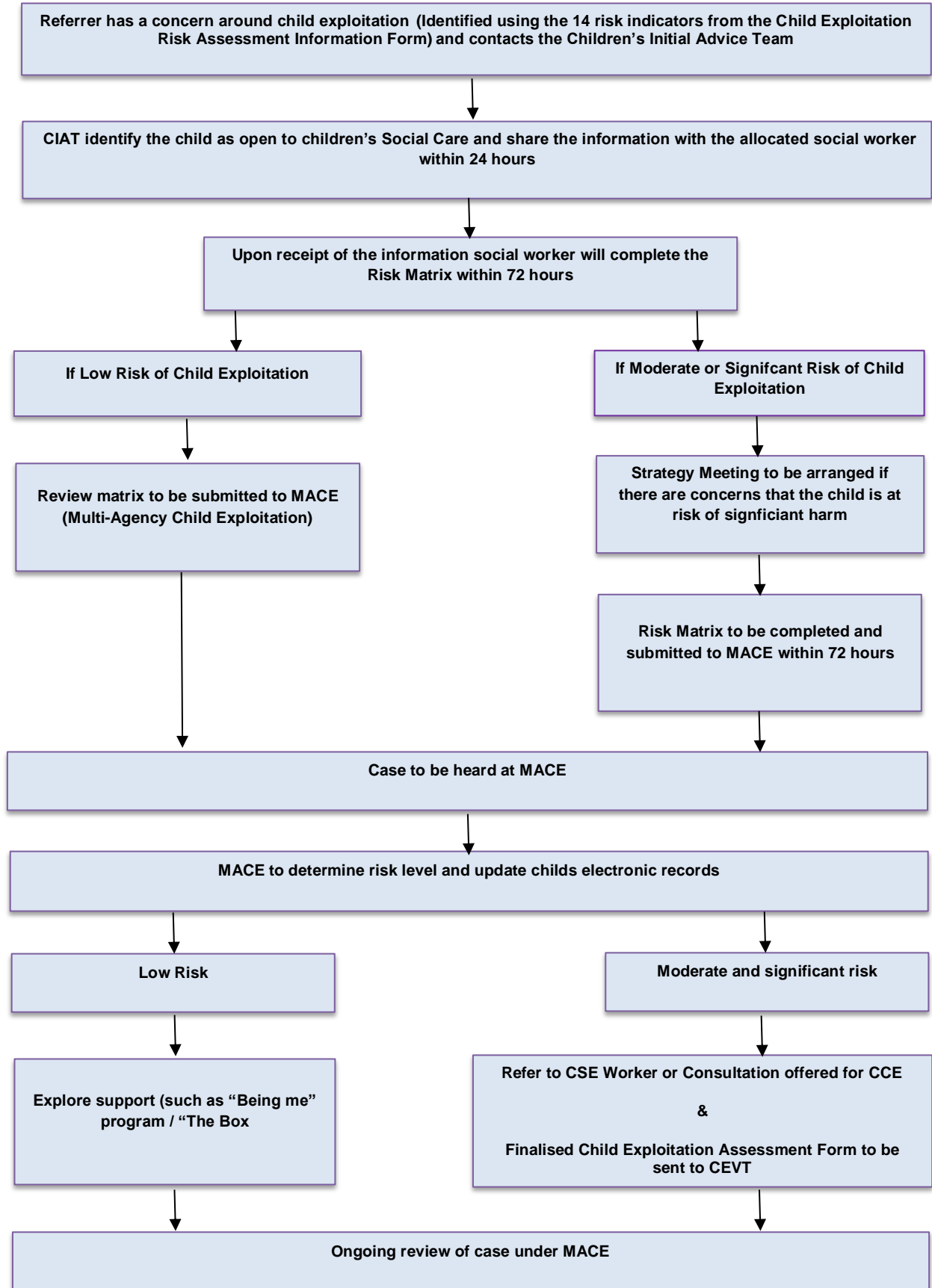
Child Criminal Exploitation Practice Guidance – [link to be updated](#)

Process Maps

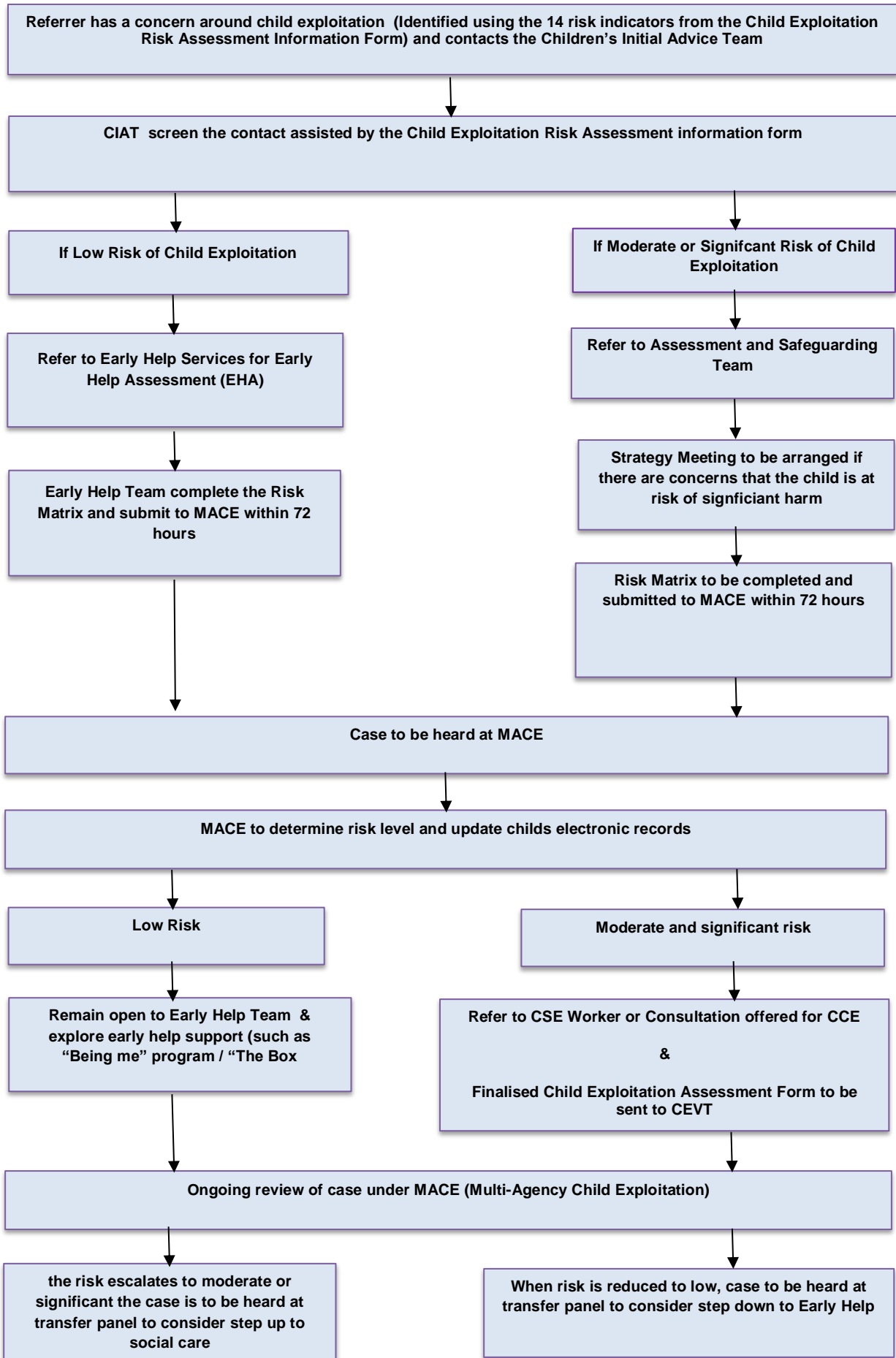
Process Map 1 – Open case to Early Help



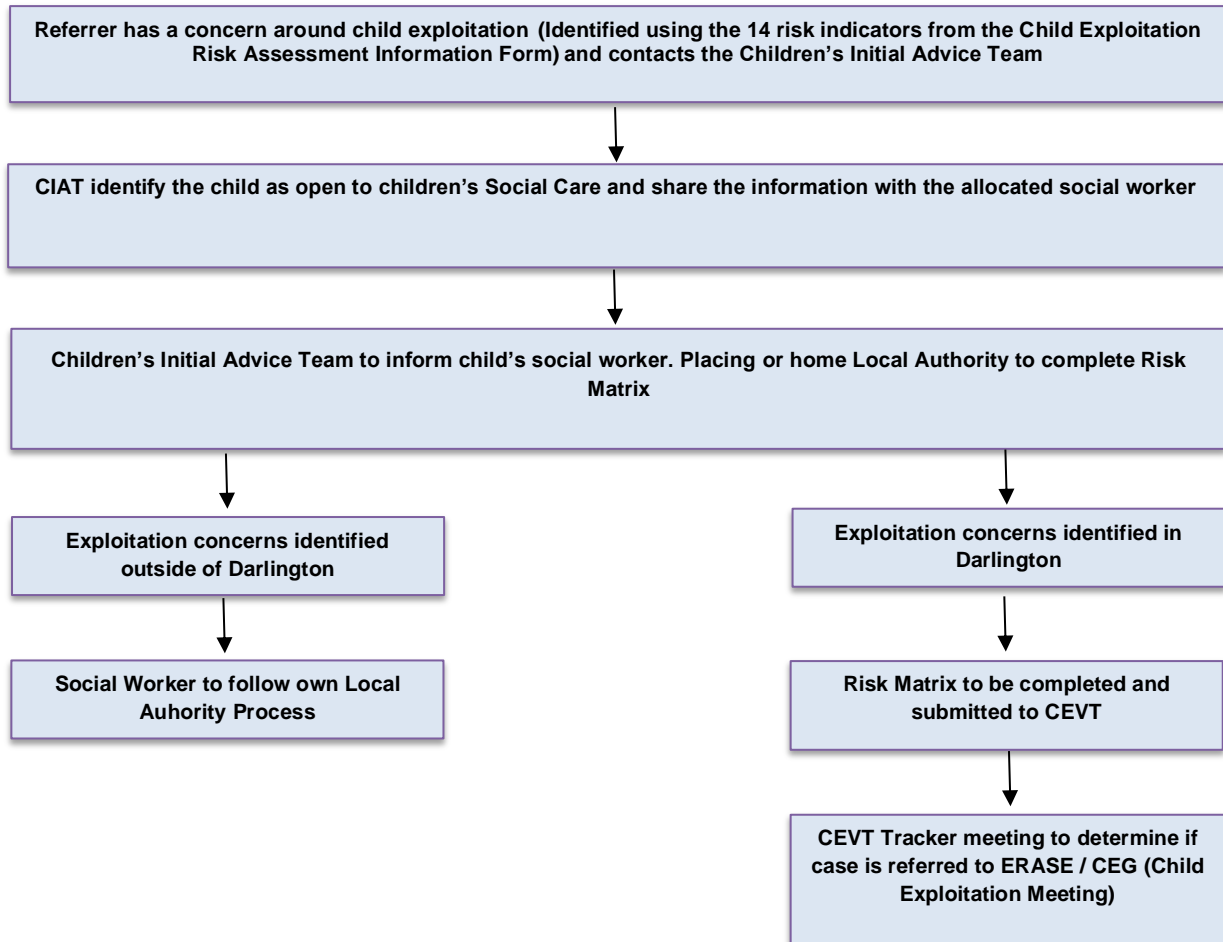
Process Map 2 – Open case to Social Care



Process Map 3 - New Case Identified



Process Map 4 – Child placed in Darlington by another authority or staying temporarily



5. Research, evidence based practice and resources

There are many additional resources and websites available to obtain further information on child sexual exploitation.

- Barnardo's www.barnardos.org.uk

Barnardo's purpose as a charity today is to transform the lives of the UK's most vulnerable children, and provide a wide range of information on their website aimed at parents, children and professionals

- CEOP ceop.police.uk

The NCA's CEOP Command (formerly the Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre) protect children from harm online and offline, directly through NCA led operations and in partnership with local and international agencies.

Childline www.childline.org.uk Childline helps anyone under 19 years in the UK with any issue they're going through.

- ERASE www.eraseabuse.org/Pages/Home.aspx

A local website for people living in County Durham and Darlington you can find out information about sexual exploitation. The site is owned by Durham Constabulary and Darlington Safeguarding Partnership works closely with

- Fearless www.fearless.org

Fearless is a site where you can access non-judgemental information and advice about crime and criminality.

- NSPCC www.nspcc.org.uk

National Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Children.

- NWG www.nwgnetwork.org

Offers support and advice to those working with children and young people under eighteen who are affected by abuse through sexual exploitation.

- PACE UK paceuk.info

Pace works alongside parents and carers of children who are – or are at risk of being sexually exploited by perpetrators external to the family. They offer guidance and training to professionals on how child sexual exploitation affects the whole family.

- Safe and Sound (Fighting CSE) safeandsoundgroup.org.uk

Safe and Sound works to keep children and young people safe and sound from sexual exploitation.

➤ So You Got Naked Online:

swgfl.org.uk/productsservices/esafety/resources/SoYou-Got-Naked-Online

Resources that offer children, young people and parent's advice and strategies to support the issues resulting from sexting incidents.

➤ Stop it Now www.stopitnow.org.uk

Is a child sexual abuse prevention campaign.

➤ Think U Know www.thinkuknow.co.uk

- Think U Know is part of CEOP and provides age appropriate information about how children and young people can keep themselves safe. Including information for parents/carers and professionals

➤ UK Safer Internet Centre website www.saferinternet.org.uk

Provides advice and support to children and young people, parents and carers, schools and the children's workforce and to coordinate Safer Internet Day across UK.

6. Legislation and Standards

- DfE Child sexual exploitation, Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation (Feb 2017)
- DfE Safeguarding Children who may have been Trafficked (2011)
- Working Together to Safeguard Children (DCSF 2018)
- Office of the Children Commissioner Report Gangs and Group CSE (2013) "If only someone had listened" and "It takes a lot to build Trust" (2014)
- Children and Young Person's Missing from Home, Education or Care (2014)
- Children and Families Act (2014)
- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation (2015)