



**BIRMINGHAM
CHILDREN'S TRUST**



**BIRMINGHAM COMMUNITY
SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**
WORKING TOGETHER FOR A SAFER CITY

Birmingham Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Practice Guidance

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1. Introduction

The purpose of this document is to provide background information and support for practitioners involved in cases where there are suspected Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation concerns, to help safeguard vulnerable children and promote the welfare of children.

This document incorporates new statutory guidance [Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018](#) which has been published by the government and sets out key roles for individual organisations and agencies to deliver effective arrangements for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children. This guidance focuses on the core legal requirements, making it clear what individuals, organisations and agencies must and should do to keep children safe. In doing so, it seeks to emphasise that effective safeguarding is achieved by putting children at the centre of the system and by every individual and agency playing their full part¹.

Everyone who works with children has a responsibility for keeping them safe. No single practitioner can have the full picture of a child's needs and circumstances and, if children and families are to receive the right help at the right time, everyone who comes into contact with them has a role to play in identifying concerns, sharing information and taking prompt action.

In order that organisations, agencies and practitioners collaborate effectively, it is vital that everyone working with children and families, including those who work with parents/carers, understands the role they should play and the role of other practitioners.

To assist organisations, agencies and practitioners this document contains a Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Risk Assessment Screening Tool with a useful prompt list. This is available in **Appendix A**. The Risk Assessment Screening Tool and prompt sheet should help to make appropriate referrals to help safeguard vulnerable children and take prompt action.

¹ HM Government (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children

2. Background

Criminal Exploitation interlinks with a number of multiple vulnerabilities and offences including the child being exposed to and/or victim of physical and emotional violence, neglect, school exclusion or poor attendance, domestic abuse, sexual abuse and exploitation, modern day slavery and human trafficking, domestic abuse and missing episodes.

2.1 Criminal Exploitation Definitions

Child Criminal Exploitation has been defined within the [Home Office Serious Violence Crime Strategy \(2018\)](#) as 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”.

In Birmingham we have embraced the Home Office Child Criminal Exploitation definition and have built on this to reflect the wider West Midlands Police definition, where a person (A) is criminally exploited if s/he:

Commits an offence, or conspires or prepares to do so, under the instruction of another person (B)

AND

B benefits, or intends to benefit, from the offence in any way

AND

A would probably not commit the offence except for:

Force, threats or deception by B, OR

a vulnerability, which can include:

- Age
- Gender
- Mental or physical health problems
- A power imbalance between A and B (e.g. familial, domestic, cultural, hierarchical within a gang)
- A history of previous coercion by B or others associated with B
- A background of adverse childhood experiences and a lack of stability and support from family, peers and community

Benefit includes monetary and other tangible benefits, and also intangible benefits such as a reduced risk of prosecution for offences.

It should be noted that *criminal exploitation* is construed more widely than:

- Ss. 1-2 Modern Slavery Act 2015 (slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour, human trafficking).
- The evidential test for the defence of duress for A.
- The reasonable grounds assessment for the National Referral Mechanism (NRM).

Therefore, a person can be treated as criminally exploited even if there is insufficient evidence to charge B with an offence under ss. 1-2 Modern Slavery Act 2015, if the evidential and public interest tests are met in respect of charging A with an offence, and if the National Crime Agency (NCA) Modern Slavery Unit has determined that there are insufficient grounds to believe A is a victim of human trafficking or modern slavery.

Practitioners need to be mindful that children who are criminally exploited should be seen as victims and not treated as criminals. They should also be treated through the lens of child safeguarding legislation and practice.

It is important to note that perpetrators of criminal exploitation may themselves be children who are criminally exploited and the victims of criminal exploitation may also be at risk of becoming perpetrators. When examining the definitions of gangs in this

context it can be shown children can be coerced, controlled, manipulated or deceived into any criminal activity.

2.2 Gang Definitions

There are a wide range of definitions of gangs but in Birmingham we use three categories of gangs: peer groups, urban street gangs and organised crime groups.

Peer Groups

It is common for groups of children and young people to gather together in public places to socialise. Crime and violence is not intrinsic to identifying the practice of peer groups. Although some peer group gatherings can lead to increased anti-social behaviour and youth offending, these activities should not be confused with the serious violence of an Urban Street Gang, or criminal activities of an Organised Crime Group.

Urban Street Gang (USG)

A USG can be described as a relatively durable, predominantly street-based group of children who see themselves (and are seen by others) as a discernible group for whom crime and violence is integral to the group's identity. A USG will engage in criminal activity and violence and may lay claim over territory (not necessarily geographical but it can include an illegal economy territory), where they are in conflict with other similar gangs. These gangs have some form of identifying structure featuring a hierarchy usually based on age, physical strength, and propensity to violence or older sibling rank. USGs are loosely organised, and may be affiliated to older criminals who are members of organised crime groups. Criminal Exploitation is likely to occur in USGs. To become a gang member there may be certain rites a person will have to undertake in order to become accepted as part of the gang. This may involve gang violence, anti-social or criminal behaviour.

Organised Crime Group (OCG)

An OCG is a group of individuals normally led by adults. Many of these groups are often loose networks of criminals that come together for a specific criminal activity, acting in different roles depending on their skills and expertise. This involves serious and organised criminality, where organised crime can be defined as serious crime

planned, co-ordinated and conducted by people working together on a continuing basis. Their motivation is often, but not always, financial gain. OCG structures vary. Successful OCGs often consist of a durable core of key individuals. Around them is a cluster of subordinates, specialists, and other more transient members, plus an extended network of associates. Many groups are often loose networks of criminals. Collaboration is often reinforced by shared experiences (such as prison), or recommendation from trusted individuals. Others are bonded by family or ethnic ties – some ‘crime families’ are precisely that.

Both USGs and OCGs are known to criminally exploit children and young people and vulnerable adults to carry out illegal activity on their behalf. Gangs dealing drugs is not a new issue but the extent to which criminal exploitation (often organised) of children and vulnerable adults, as well as the increasing use of violence, has become an inherent part of ‘County Lines’. County lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. Birmingham has recently been identified by the West Midlands Regional Organised Crime Unit as a major exporter of ‘County Lines’ within the UK.

USGs and OCGs are a socially and intentionally constructed group of individuals with attitudes, thinking and behaviours geared towards criminality. They will use violence and intimidation, social media and weapons as ‘tools of power’ to violate, challenge and disrespect other gangs. They will also use this level of violence and intimidation against a child that refuses to do particular criminal activities. This may result in threats being made against a child’s family, including threats towards siblings and wider family members, to coerce someone into criminal activity.

People involved in USGs and OCGs exploit organisational and geographical vulnerabilities since they know there are weaknesses in the way different organisations and services operate. It is important these risks and associated threats are reduced by working effectively to share intelligence in a timely manner.

In Birmingham we are strongly committed to tackling criminal exploitation and gang and organised criminality, where we will disrupt those who are exploiting children

whilst supporting those children and families being exploited. Our focus will raise awareness that these children are victims first and their offending should be seen in that context. We know that these children and their families can be groomed in a similar dynamic to child sexual exploitation.

We have reviewed Home Office Tools, existing research and other Local Authorities' approaches drawing on the existing knowledge base to create this guidance for Birmingham.

We believe our guidance is at the forefront of practice in this field. We are keen to learn from our own and others experiences, and to continue developing our guidance and tools as knowledge and experience in this field grows.

A literature review is provided in **Appendix B** to help partners and front line practitioners understand the full nature of criminal exploitation, gang violence and associated criminality concerns. This will be updated as more information becomes available to keep abreast of any changes in what we know.

3. Relevant Legislation

Crime and Disorder Act 1998 - Local Authorities and other local partners have a statutory responsibility to do all that they reasonably can to prevent crime and disorder in their area and share information to protect communities from serious and organised crime. Publically commissioned private and voluntary sector providers, including Birmingham Children's Trust, must also contribute to prevention efforts through due diligence and information sharing to protect communities from serious and organised crime.

Children's Act 2004 – outlined the statutory requirements each agency working with Children and Families must adhere to, to ensure that there is a co-ordinated approach to safeguarding.

Serious Crime Act 2015 – improved the legislative powers available to local partners to tackle serious and organised crime. This Act gave effect to a number of proposals and commitments made in the Government's Serious and Organised Crime Strategy (2013) and updated existing law dealing with the cyber-crime, serious crime prevention orders, gang injunctions, child cruelty, female genital mutilation (FGM) and the commission of certain terrorism offences abroad. When this Act was

introduced it included a new offence of participating in the activities of an organised crime group and a strengthened preventative capability through Serious Crime Protection Orders. Councils should work alongside law enforcement agencies, sharing relevant intelligence, to make the best use of these new powers to disrupt and halt such crime.

Modern Slavery Act 2015 - provides the legislative framework to equip law enforcement agencies and local partners to effectively prosecute and convict the perpetrators of modern slavery. The Act consolidated and simplified previous slavery and human trafficking legislation in England and Wales into a single statute, and introduced provisions to strengthen law enforcement and afford better protection to victims.

Criminal Finances Act 2017 - introduced new powers to help law enforcement agencies tackle money laundering, corruption, terrorist finance and recover the proceeds of crime.

Children and Social Work Act 2017 – safeguarding partners are required to make arrangements to work together and with relevant agencies to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in the area. This Act strengthens this already important relationship by placing new duties on key agencies in a local area. Specifically the police, clinical commissioning groups and the Local Authority are under a duty to make arrangements to work together, and with other partners locally, to safeguard and promote the welfare of all children in their area.

4. The Role of Practitioner in Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Cases

Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation are complex and developing areas of youth justice, social work and family support practice. Protecting children from risks outside the family home requires a different approach to how YOT workers, social workers, family support workers and multi-agency partners traditionally safeguard children. Children at risk of or being criminally exploited or those affiliated to gangs are influenced by their peer group and adults external to the family network. This is often outside the control of their families. These children will be at risk of significant harm beyond their families and therefore safeguarding and child protection responses will be enhanced when assessments and interventions are expanded to include individuals and sectors who have influence over/within extra-familial contexts.

Extensive evidence has established the importance of relational working for young people as well as the work that is required with families, for addressing the impact of extra-familial risk on children and families. Partnership work to disrupt exploitation is also a key response to protecting these children.

Many children may not relate to their experience as being abusive or exploitative. The child may feel a sense of “loyalty” and “brotherhood” to the exploiters; they may feel emotionally fulfilled in a way they haven’t experienced from parents, carers or professionals before. The child may feel they have gained “friends” or “family” and that these people care for him or her. The child may be receiving money or rewards that they have not had access to previously or the money may be supporting their family to cover basic needs. The child may feel a sense of “status” and “power” that they have not had before. The child may see themselves as an autonomous drug dealer rather than a victim of exploitation at the bottom of a large organised crime structure. However a number of children want to end their association with this activity but continue because of coercion and threats to them or their families and are unable to communicate this to professionals including the police or their families.

Our work as children’s practitioners is to identify and support vulnerable children and their families when they start to pose harm to themselves and to others. This may be through Early Help or Children’s Social Work interventions.

The most effective method to prevent children becoming involved in gangs and/or criminal exploitation is early identification. This will enable preventative services to be implemented at an early stage to support children, young people and their families to make positive life choices and distance themselves from gang related activity.

4.1 Protective Factors

Protective factors are conditions or attributes in individuals, families, communities, or the larger society that, when present, mitigate or eliminate risk in families and communities that, when present, increase the health and well-being of children and families. Protective factors help parents to find resources, support, or coping strategies that allow them to parent effectively, even under stress.

Protective factors are outlined within the [Right Help Right Time](#) guidance for practitioners under the Universal Needs heading. This provides an invaluable reference point in helping to take a strength-based approach by using protective factors to tailor suitable interventions to improve the life chances of those affected by criminal exploitation and gang affiliation.

The protective factors in the Right Help Right Time guidance include:

Education & Learning Needs

- Enjoys and participates in learning activities
- Access to books, toys and age appropriate learning
- Good links between home and school
- Has experiences of success and achievement
- Planning for career and adult life

Health Needs

- Health needs being met
- No worries regarding diet and nutrition
- Good enough hygiene
- Developmental and health checks / immunisations up to date
- Developmental milestones appropriate
- Safe and age appropriate sexual activity

Emotional Health and Behaviour Needs

- Good quality early attachments
- Able to adapt to change
- Able to understand others' feelings
- Takes responsibility for behaviour
- Responds appropriately to boundaries and constructive guidance
- Can differentiate between safe and unsafe contacts
- Age appropriate clothing and appearance
- Age appropriate self-care skills shown
- Demonstrates resilience
- Good emotional wellbeing

Family and Parenting Needs

- Shows warm regard, praise and encouragement
- Ensures stable relationships
- Ensures the child can develop a sense of right and wrong
- Good relationships within family, including when parents are separated
- Support provided by wider family
- Stable and affectionate relationships with family
- Is able to make and maintain friendships
- Provides for child's physical needs, e.g. food, drink, appropriate clothing, hygiene, medical and dental care
- Accommodation has basic amenities and appropriate facilities and can meet family needs
- Budget adequate to meet needs
- Protected from danger or significant harm
- The family feels part of the community and are able to access local services and amenities
- Regular employment

There are a number of other protective factors that practitioners should also consider when dealing with cases of criminal exploitation and gang affiliation. Using the same headings under Universal Needs of the Right Help Right Time guidance, they include:

Education and Learning Needs

- No missing episodes at school or college
- Engaged / re-engaged in education or training, or in work
- No behavioural concerns in school or college

Health Needs

- Accommodation meets the child's needs
- No concerns over misuse of drugs or alcohol
- No known physical or mental health needs identified

Emotional Health and Behaviour Needs

- No concerns over child's behaviour
- Child engaged in positive activities
- Child has age appropriate and positive peers
- Good engagement with appropriate services

Family and Parenting Needs

- Carer actively supports child
- Positive relationships and good relations with family/carers
- Age appropriate boundaries and routines set by carer and adhered to
- Carer is aware of peer group
- Carer recognises risks and will report child as missing
- Carer has good knowledge of exploitation
- There is no known criminality or anti-social behaviour amongst members of the household living at the address
- Good engagement with appropriate services

A strength-based approach can transform lives of those affected by criminality and gang affiliation. This approach seeks to understand and develop the strengths and capabilities that can transform the lives of people in positive ways. As well as emphasis the resourcefulness and resilience that exists in everyone rather than dwelling on what has gone wrong, it affirms that people can grow and change, and that everyone has a range of abilities, and strengths, which, with the right support, can be mobilised to give them a better future.

To support children and young people and their families effectively we need to fully understand the concerns from their perspectives and their life experiences. This guidance is designed to complement the [Signs of Safety](#) approach in the [Request for Support Form](#), supporting practitioners to answer questions about what is going well, concerns and what needs to happen next. The Three Houses exercise will also

support children's practitioners to more fully understand and appreciate the children and young people's perspective.

It is important to note, the solutions will not be the same for everyone that has been affected by criminal exploitation and gang affiliation. The strengths of individuals and their circumstances are different. This may require a whole family approach to be taken where they are fully involved in identifying their goals and building on their strengths and resources. On other occasions, it may require a different approach, where the focus is on the child, vulnerable young person or adult, especially if they are living independently and have no family living near them.

4.2 Contextual Safeguarding

'Contextual safeguarding' is a theory developed by Dr Carlene Firmin of the University of Bedfordshire, which supports an approach to understanding and responding to children's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It is recognised that the different relationships children form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers can have little influence over these contexts and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships and parent/carer capacity to keep them safe.

When children are exposed to harm within their families such as domestic abuse or physical abuse or neglected this can impact their behaviour outside of their home. Young people in these situations may spend more time in street or community settings and may experience criminality, violence and exploitation.

Contextual interventions need to enhance 1:1 work with children and work with families, including relational working for young people and strengthening the capacity to safeguard beyond families. Supporting young people to socialise in safe and protective schools and community settings will also help them form safe and protective peer relationships.

4.3 Relationship Based Practice

A trusted relationship is fundamental to the successful delivery of a service which depends on the effective engagement of a vulnerable child or young person. It has been described as being key to achieving a successful outcome for a child, and to

ensuring that children and young people are confident about discussing their concerns and disclosing issues, or providing a full and accurate account (in the case of the criminal justice system).

The importance of a trusted relationship depends on the level of need and vulnerability of a child or young person. For this reason, the need to build a trusted relationship with children and young people who have been through the care system and previously been let down by adults has been particularly emphasised. In these circumstances, it was said that a trusted relationship can help to reverse the damaging effects of these experiences and to support the emotional development of a child or young person. Without learning how to form a positive relationship there is a danger that a child may reach adulthood unable to trust anybody, which could have a lasting impact on their lives.

5. Understanding Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation

Gang affiliation and criminal exploitation concerns feature at all levels of the Right Help Right Time model, and will often involve Early Help where concerns are emerging but are not currently harmful.

Practitioners are not expected to become experts on criminal exploitation, gangs and organised crime. What practitioners need to be able to do is ask the right range of questions and know when to seek advice from others when they are unsure. If you need advice then contact Alex Urka, Serious and Organised Crime and Gangs Co-Ordinator, 0121 464 4817, alexander.urka@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk or Karen Brooks, CSE and Missing Team Manager, 0777 433 7274, Karen.N.Brookes@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

5.1 Risk and Vulnerability Factors

Practitioners need to be aware of the various factors affecting children and young people that increase their vulnerability to gang affiliation and criminal exploitation. This includes a combination of:

Pull factors: Children being groomed by 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, alcohol or money to the child or 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. These could also include the intensity of peer relationships or having a sense of belonging outside of their family.

Control factors: Brain washing, violence and threats of violence by those exploiting the child particularly when the child is identified by the police, they are expected to take full responsibility for the offences for which they are charged – i.e. possession and supply of Class A Drugs, particularly the possession and supply of heroin and crack cocaine. Crack cocaine markets have strong links to serious violence and evidence suggests crack use is rising in England and Wales due to a mix of supply and demand factors.

There is robust evidence that supportive adult–child relationships are essential for child wellbeing². Children or young people who have no access to friends and family are at risk of being exploited for criminal or sexual gain. Children or young people who have been placed in Local Authority care out of their area are particularly vulnerable, especially if there are multiple placements and/or no trusted relationships. For example, relationships between practitioners and vulnerable children are often changing and short-term, which compounds vulnerable children’s difficulty in trusting adults³.

There are some other factors that can increase the vulnerability of a child or young person to be criminally exploited by others. This can include

- 1) **Child/Individual:** Looked after, learning disabilities, substance misuse, mental health problem.
- 2) **Home/Family:** Adverse Childhood Experiences (ACEs), which can include: sexual, physical and emotional neglect/abuse, exposed to violence, alcohol/drug addiction, family member in prison, mental health, parental separation/divorce. Other factors include poverty, children going missing from

² Lewing, B., Doubell, L., Beevers, T., and Acquah, D. (2018) Building Trusted Relationships for Vulnerable Children and Young People with Public Services, Early Intervention Foundation, p.13

³ Lewing, B., Doubell, L., Beevers, T., and Acquah, D. (2018) Building Trusted Relationships for Vulnerable Children and Young People with Public Services, Early Intervention Foundation, p.14

home or care, lack of a positive relationship with a protective, nurturing adult, homelessness or insecure accommodation status.

- 3) **Peers:** Exposed to other young people known to be exploited, exposed to or experienced peer on peer abuse.
- 4) **Schools:** Fixed and permanent exclusion from school and not in education/training or employment, exposed to violent crime.
- 5) **Neighbourhoods:** Exposed to violent crime, gangs and deprivation

These vulnerabilities do not mean that a child or young person will be criminally exploited but are factors that could increase their vulnerability.

The risk to a child or a young person, and their family and friends, as a result of experiencing gang affiliation and/or criminal exploitation (including county lines) can include but is not limited to:

- Physical injuries: risk of serious violence and death.
- Emotional and psychological trauma.
- Sexual violence: sexual assault, rape, indecent images being taken and shared as part of initiation/revenge/punishment, internally inserting drugs – where they can be shown how or made to internally insert and carry drugs in their rectum or vagina.
- Carry and conceal weapons.
- Engage in and be victims of gang retributions.
- Debt bondage- the child/ren and families being “in debt” to the exploiters; which is used to control the child/ren, with them believing they have to work for free to pay off the “debt”. This can also apply if the child is actually robbed, or if they are arrested and have drugs, money or their phone confiscated by the police.
- Neglect and basic needs not being met.
- Living in unclean, dangerous and/or unhygienic environments.
- Tiredness and sleep deprivation: child is expected to carry out criminal activities over long periods and through the night.
- Poor attendance and/or attainment at school/college.⁴

⁴ The Children's Society (2018) Children and Young People Trafficked for the Purpose of Criminal Exploitation in Relation to County Lines: A Toolkit for Professionals in Relation to County Lines, p.4. This document outlines the majority of the risks identified in this document

Vulnerable locations that gangs target to groom children for criminal exploitation include pupil referral units, alternative education provisions, special education needs provisions and care homes/placements and homeless hostels. Social media is also used to make initial contact with children.

6. Requests For Support and Pathways For New and Open Cases

Anyone who has concerns about a child who is being criminally exploited and/or gang affiliated, should use the [request for support form](#) for the Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) within Birmingham Children's Trust. The processes mirror those of all children where there are safeguarding concerns. This can be seen via the pathway flow charts on pages 20-21 of this practice guidance.

When practitioners refer a child, they should include any information they have on the child's developmental needs, the capacity of the child's parents or carers to meet those needs and any external factors that may be undermining their capacity to parent⁵. Practitioners should also mention any protective factors. Protective factors are outlined within the Right Help Right Time guidance for practitioners, under the Universal Needs heading.

Practitioners who believe a child or family requires help have a responsibility to discuss this with the family and where possible agree a way forward with them. This will ensure that parents are aware of worries and of what information will be shared. Children and families have a right to confidentiality, and we should always seek their consent and co-operation where we want to share information about them with others.

However, if you consider a child is likely to or is suffering from significant harm, consent is not needed to share information or make a referral to Children's Social Care via CASS. You have a duty to share in these circumstances.

In some situations it will not be clear that a child is at risk of significant harm, but it is apparent that their safety may be at risk. In these circumstances sharing information

⁵ HM Government (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, p.17

without consent may still be appropriate, please refer to the [Right Help Right Time guidance](#).

If this is the case it is still good practice to discuss your worries with the family, unless you consider this would put anyone at greater risk of harm.

Practitioners should review Right Help Right Time guidance and consider the information about the child including their experiences to determine what action to take. A Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Risk Assessment Screening Tool is available in **Appendix A** at the back of this document, with a useful prompt list of various risk factors to help to assess the level of risk.

If there is evidence of criminal exploitation or/and gang affiliation then the practitioner should discuss with their line manager and complete the Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Risk Assessment Screening Tool and submit this alongside their request for support to CASS within the Birmingham Children's Trust.

If there is significant risk of a child being criminally exploited or gang affiliated then a request for a Strategy Discussion should be done via the normal process for new and open cases.

If the decision is to hold a Strategy Discussion then the usual considerations must be adhered to such as processes, attendance, information sharing and actions. This needs to be recorded on the same document used for any other Strategy Discussion on CF6 (Eclipse when launched). The only difference will be an action if agreed that the risk is high for the police (police officer in attendance) to refer the child to the Criminal Exploitation Panel. A police referral flow chart is provided in **Appendix C**. The Terms of Reference for the Birmingham Guns, Gangs and Organised Criminality Partnership is provided in **Appendix D**.

Birmingham Children's Trust, Police, and Health practitioners have statutory roles and responsibilities on what needs to happen in Strategy Discussions and Initiating Section 47 Enquiries. This is set out in the government's statutory guidance, 'Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018'. It is important that this is reflected in the way Strategy Discussions and Section 47 Enquiries are used.

Feedback should be given by the Children's Trust to the referrer on the decisions taken. Where appropriate, this feedback should include the reasons why a case may not meet the statutory threshold and offer suggestions for other sources of more suitable support.

Practitioners should always follow up their concerns if they are not satisfied with the Trust's response and should escalate their concerns if they remain dissatisfied⁶.

If practitioners have concerns that a child may be a potential victim of modern slavery or human trafficking then a referral should be made to the [National Referral Mechanism](#), as soon as possible. Where there are reasonable grounds to suspect a child to be a victim of trafficking:

- This should be reported to the police (phone 101 or in an emergency 999) in order for them to investigate the offences committed (i.e. modern slavery and trafficking offences)
- A referral should be made to the Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) as trafficking and exploitation means a child could be at risk of or experience significant harm and Child Protection processes need to be followed. If you have any concerns about the safety and/or welfare of a child or young person telephone the Children's Advice & Support Service (CASS) on 0121 303 1888 or e-mail. cass@birmingham.gov.uk.
- A referral should be made to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM) directly to the Police and Children's Services First Responders.
- **Outside of normal office hours please call 0121 675 4806 for the Emergency Duty Team.**

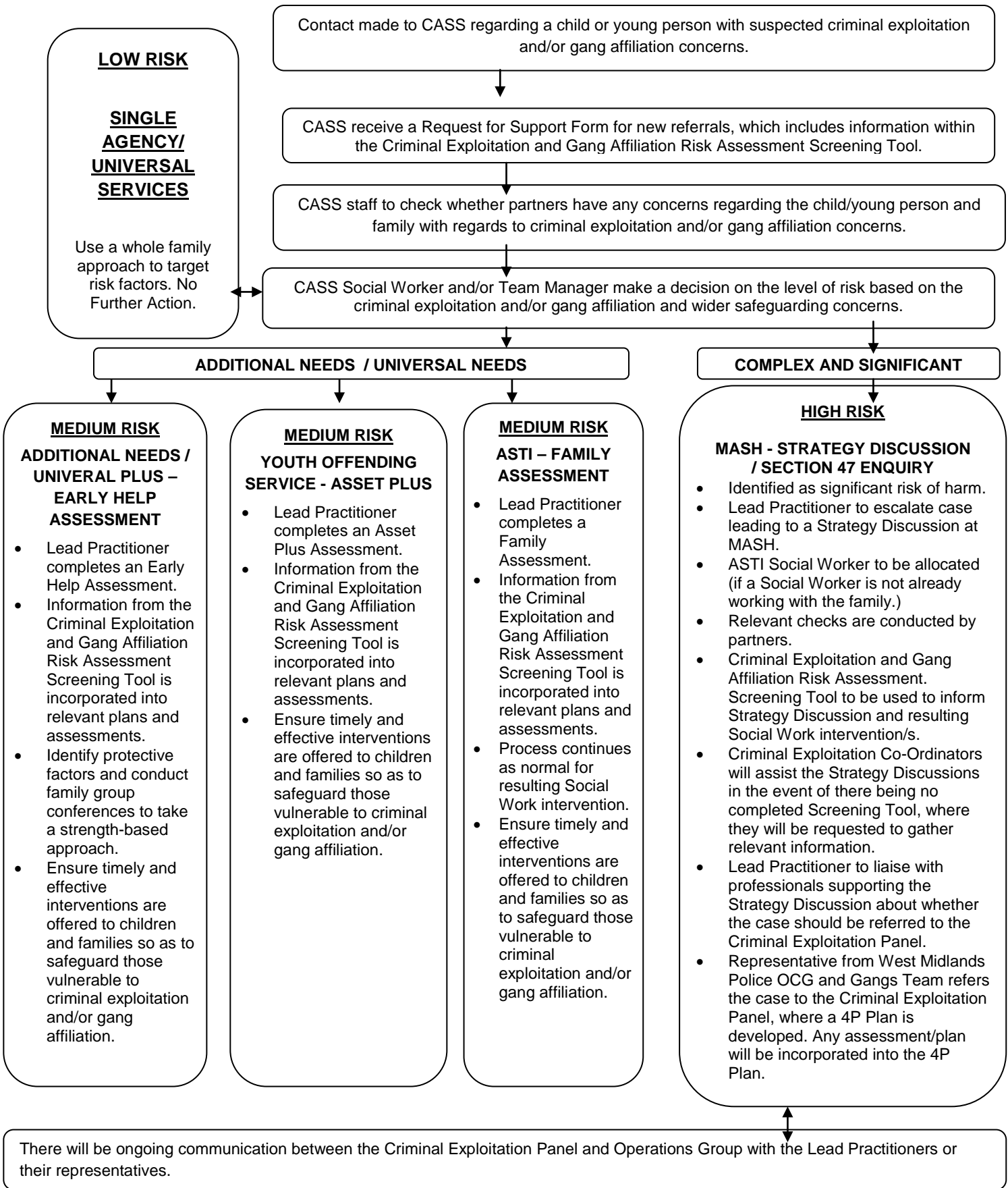
Useful helplines

Modern Slavery Helpline 0800 555 111 or [crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/pre-form](https://www.crimestoppers-uk.org/give-information/forms/pre-form)

Barnardo's 24/7 professionals support line 0800 043 4303 (deals with modern slavery and human trafficking).

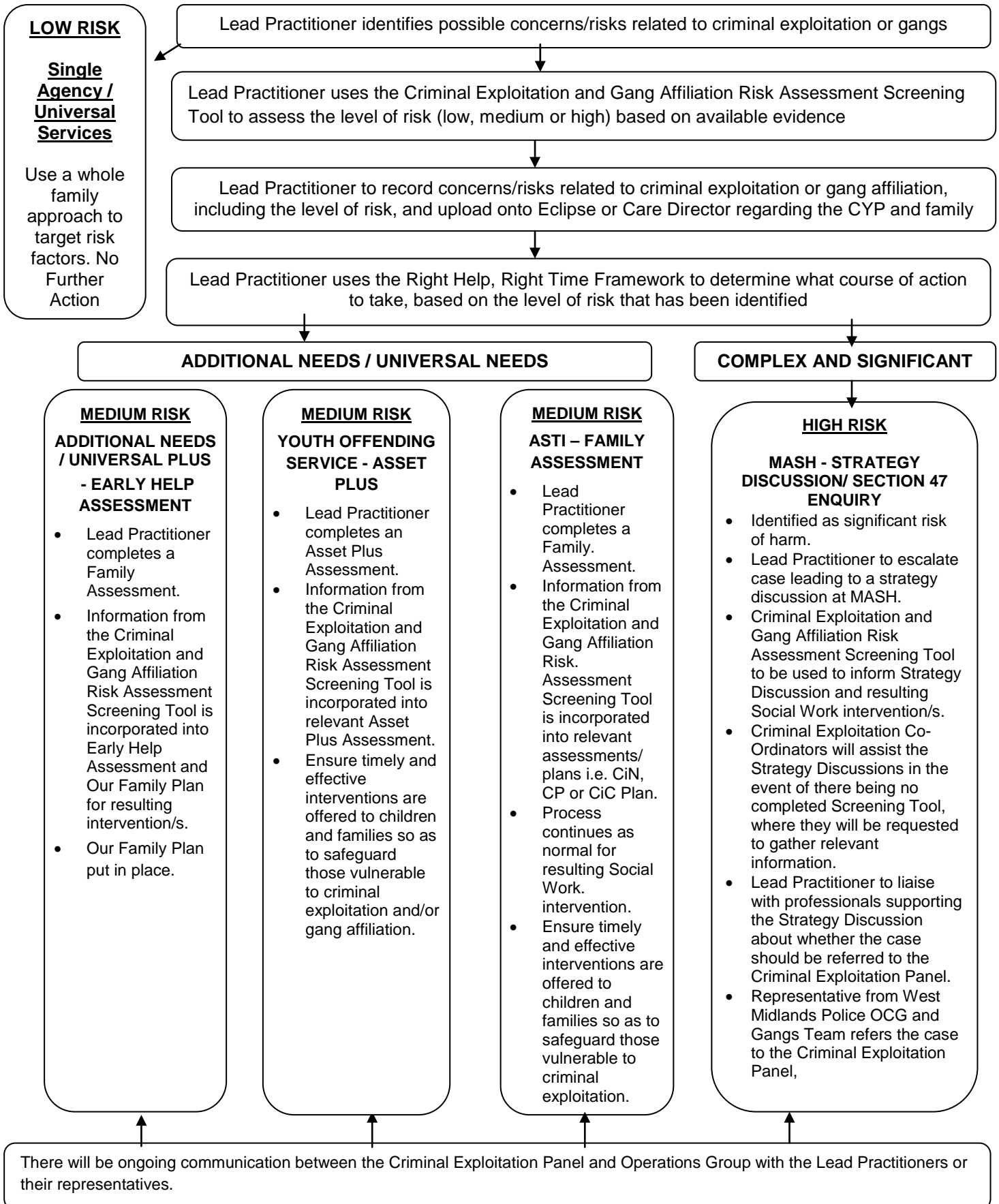
⁶ HM Government (2018) Working Together to Safeguard Children: A Guide to Inter-Agency Working to Safeguard and Promote the Welfare of Children, p.17

Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Case Pathway
NEW CASES



Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Case Pathway

OPEN CASES



Key Contacts on Birmingham Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Matters

Alex Urka, Serious and Organised Crime and Gangs Co-ordinator, 0121 464 4817, alexander.urka@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Karen Brooks, CSE and Missing Team Manager, 0777 433 7274, Karen.N.Brookes@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Marshelene Williams, Assistant Director - North West and Central, 0121 464 8406, Marshelene.williams@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

Trevor Brown, Head of Service – Birmingham Youth Offending Service, Reception: 0121 464 0600, Trevor.A.Brown@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk

APPENDIX A

Birmingham Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation Risk Assessment Screening Tool

(click [here](#) to download the word version)

SCREENING TOOL COMPLETION INSTRUCTIONS

This Screening Tool must be completed by referrers who have contacted CASS regarding concerns about a child or young person that include issues of Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation. The Request for Support Form must also be completed and both documents must be forwarded to CASS.

It is critical The Request for Support Form is still completed as this covers the wider concerns and protective factors around the child or young person and the family which are not covered in this Screening Tool. CASS Advisors together with social workers and team managers will use the information contained in both documents to decide the level of risk involved and the relevant support required by the child or young person and family.

There are three sets of risk indicators included in the screening – high, medium and low. A case may involve risks at all three levels; please indicate all relevant risks; your answers do not need to be confined to one level of risk.

It is **very important** you describe the **evidence** you have observed for each risk you have ticked in the summary of evidence boxes following each set of risk indicators. Please provide as much background information as possible to enable Birmingham Children's Trust to make informed decisions. If the Screening Tool is not fully completed we will contact you to discuss to get a full picture.

Please link the concerns you are raising in this Screening Tool to the relevant section on concerns in the Request for Support Form to provide an overall picture of need. Also think about protective factors that are in place around the child or young person and family reducing the harm related to your concerns.

PART ONE – RISK INDICATORS

HIGH RISK INDICATORS

High Risk Indicators	Tick
Has been found in another part of the United Kingdom with Class A Drugs and / or significant sums of money in their possession.	
Has unexplained amounts of money, mobiles, credit, expensive clothing, jewellery, drugs, alcohol or other items/gifts.	
Is showing interest in, and may have contact with gang members that are known to hold harmful views and/or undertake harmful acts based on those views; this includes those living within their home/placement, extended family members or intimate relationships.	
People demanding money for drug debts.	
Regularly coming home late or going missing from home, care or education for any period of time (whether reported or not).	
Reports being taken to parties, people's houses, unknown areas, hotels, nightclubs, takeaways or out of area by unknown adults.	
Increasingly disruptive, hostile or physically aggressive at home or school Including use of sexualised language and language in relation to drug dealing and/or violence.	
Is carrying and/or, concealing, and/or using weapons.	

HIGH RISK SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE –

Please summarise what evidence you have regarding the high risks indicators you have ticked above. This section must be completed if you have indicated a risk/s above.

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MEDIUM RISK INDICATORS

Medium Risk Indicators	Tick
Carer needs to be prompted to report young person as missing.	
There is sporadic or limited engagement with services.	
Child is starting to disengage from positive activities and interests and spending more time focusing on a particular issue, viewpoint or way of living that may be unhealthy and harmful to the child or others.	
Is isolated from family, friends, peer and peer groups and/or is not forthcoming about how and who they spend their spare time with.	
Is accessing and/or sharing gang related material through social media that is harmful to themselves and/or others. E.g. that encourages people to develop harmful views about others and attempts to recruit friends and other associates to join a gang and / or be involved in criminal activity.	
Has mental health concerns or developmental disorders (e.g. ASD) and there is concern that the child is vulnerable to criminal exploitation and/or gang affiliation that is harmful to themselves or others.	
Has alcohol and/or substance abuse issues that makes the child vulnerable to developing gang-related views that are harmful to themselves or others.	
Is at risk from gang initiation/s. Please state the type of risk e.g. violent acts against others, having sex or undertaking sexual act/s, recruiting friends and / or other associates, committing criminal acts, etc.	

MEDIUM RISKSUMMARY OF EVIDENCE –

Please summarise what evidence you have regarding the medium risk indicators you have ticked above. This section must be completed if you have indicated a risk/s above.

LOW RISK INDICATORS

Low Risk Indicators	Tick
No concerns over child’s behaviour.	
Age appropriate boundaries and routines set by carer and adhered to.	
Engaged in positive activities and has age appropriate and positive peers.	
Can differentiate between safe and unsafe contacts.	

LOW RISK SUMMARY OF EVIDENCE –

Please summarise what evidence you have regarding the low risk indicators you have ticked above. This section must be completed if you have indicated a risk/s above.

PART TWO – ADDITIONAL CONTEXTUAL QUESTIONS

- Has the child experienced any significant life events or trauma such as adverse childhood experiences (ACEs) that may be linked to the current risks?** ACEs include being a victim of abuse (physical, sexual and emotional), being a victim of neglect (physical and/or emotional), alcohol abuse, drug abuse, domestic violence, parental separation/divorce, mental health, family member in prison and/or young offender institution.

- Are there any strengths based protective factors such as good support and challenge in school or concerned family offering appropriate support?**

3. Is there any additional information you would like to provide which is not covered by the risk indicators that you think indicates Gang Affiliation and/or Criminal Exploitation concern/s?

NOTE:

Please refer to Appendix A. This contains a prompt list to support Practitioners to identify more specific Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation concerns.

OVERALL RISK RATING

Please indicate the overall level of risk you believe is present in this case in terms of the Criminal Exploitation and/or Gang Affiliation, including any other wider concerns identified:

- High
- Medium
- Low

Please briefly summarise why you feel the risks in this case are high, medium or low:

NOTE:

Referrers should be aware that working with Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation concerns is a developing area of practice in social work. As such the above indicators may change as more is understood about risks of Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation and how to work with children and families/carers on these issues.

[End of Screening Tool]

If you need help to understand the nature of Criminal Exploitation and Gang Affiliation and the risk presented or the level of risk posed contact: Alexander Urka, Serious and Organised Crime and Gangs Co-Ordinator, 0121 464 4817, alexander.urka@birminghamchildrenstrust.co.uk.

**CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION AND GANG AFFILIATION
RISK ASSESSMENT SCREENING TOOL
PROMPT SHEET**

Purpose: This is a helpful prompt sheet to be used by referring agencies and practitioners to fully articulate the nature of gang affiliation and criminal exploitation issues involved with children and their families.

<p>Missing Episodes From Home/Care/School/College</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Frequent short / prolong missing episodes and been found out of area. ▪ Unexplained absences from, or not engaged in school/ college/ training/ work. ▪ Occasionally goes missing, whether for short or prolonged episodes. <p>Education/Training/Employment Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Is on a reduced timetable ▪ Is persistently absent from school/college/work. ▪ Sudden noticeable change in attendance, performance or behaviour ▪ Carer's engagement with services to improve attendance but no evidence of improvement. ▪ Not attending school/training or employment (NEET). 	<p>Mental Health/Physical Health Concerns</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Increasingly disruptive, hostile or physically aggressive at home or school, including use of sexualised language and language in relation to drug dealing and/or violence. ▪ Returned from missing episodes with injuries, or dishevelled. ▪ Disclosure of sexual/ physical assault followed by withdrawal of allegation ▪ Injuries – physical / sexual. ▪ Significant decline in physical and emotional wellbeing. ▪ Self-harm and / or suicidal thoughts/attempts. <p>Sexual Health Activities and Awareness</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sex is non-consensual. ▪ Child feels pressured to have sex or to perform sexual acts in exchange for status, protection possessions, substances or affection. ▪ Repeated STI's and/or pregnancy ▪ Child is under the age of consent for sex / sexual acts. ▪ Previous CSE concerns. ▪ Associating with known sexually exploited children. 	<p>Ability to Safeguard – Carers/Family</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Parental / carer concerns in making appropriate authorities aware their child is at significant risk of harm due to gang affiliation and / or criminal exploitation. ▪ Carer fails to report young person as missing and struggles to understand the risk around missing and exploitation. ▪ Sporadic or limited engagement with services and breakdown in relationship with child. ▪ Carer doesn't have knowledge of exploitation or child's social media activity. ▪ Carer fails to report young person as missing and to recognise the risk of missing episodes. Disengagement from services. ▪ Carer/Family is affiliated to exploitation. ▪ Parent has been groomed by perpetrator exploiting the child. ▪ Carer needs to be prompted to report young person as missing and/or has limited understanding of exploitation/ child's social media activity.
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Accommodation and Home Relationships

- Unstable or unsuitable accommodation
- Homeless / unknown whereabouts
- Frequent Placement Changes (Child in Care)
- Living in a chaotic / dysfunctional household.
- Current or historic abuse / neglect in the family
- Carer does not implement age appropriate boundaries or recognise negative behaviour
- Child is not responding to boundaries, routines or consequences
- Financial vulnerabilities affecting the family

Peer and Adult Association

- Reports being taken to parties, people's houses, unknown areas, hotels, nightclubs, takeaways or out of area by unknown adults.
- Fear of reprisal from "gang" members or violence from young people or adults
- Entering or leaving vehicles cars with unknown adults
- Relationships with controlling /older individuals or groups
- Increase referrals to agencies for other known peers
- Associating with known criminals / gang members or other children who have been criminally exploited
- Is known to services and is engaging in ASB and other forms of offending
- Evidence that s/he is coerced by others to recruit children for gangs.
- People demanding money or sex or to perform sexual acts to pay off drug debts

Ability to Identify Exploitative Behaviour

- Can recognise risks but unable to apply to themselves to keep safe
- Cannot identify or recognise the risk of exploitation

Social Media (Internet and Mobile Phone Usage)

- Multiple mobile phones and sim cards
- Unexplained mobile phone credits. Not known how mobile phone credits are financed.
- Regularly changing phones
- Child receives texts / calls from unknown or concerning people.
- In possession of a mobile phone which parent / carer have no or only limited knowledge of.
- Child has become more secretive about internet usage
- Child has been exploited online
- Child plans to meet face to face person they know online
- Evidence that s/he is coerced to recruit other children.

Substance Misuse, Physical and Mental Health – Carers/Family

- Alcohol dependent parent / carer.
- Drug dependent parent / carer.
- Increasing use of drugs or alcohol.
- Significant decline in physical and mental wellbeing.
- Self-harm and / or suicidal thoughts/attempts.
- Parents acknowledge concerns but refuse to seek treatment or support.
- Parents do not acknowledge concerns and refuse to seek treatment or support.

Criminality amongst Family and Extended Family Members

- Evidence of parental/carer involvement in guns, gangs or drug supply.
- Historical/current criminal exploitation of others, including their child/ren.
- Family or / and Extended Family known to be involved in criminality or Organised Crime Groups.

<p>Misuse of drugs or alcohol</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Substance use known and part of daily life. Not known how substances are financed. ▪ Increasing use of drugs or alcohol. ▪ Started to associate with negative peer influence where substance use is known to be used. 	<p>Appearance and Possession of Articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Unexplained amounts of money, mobiles, clothing, jewellery, new hair cut or other items/gifts. Receiving rewards of money or goods for introducing peers. ▪ Possession of hotel keys/cards or keys to unknown premises. ▪ Found with large quantities of drugs or weapons. ▪ Found with drugs inside their mouth, rectum or vagina. ▪ Found in possession of class A drugs more than once. 	<p>Young Person's Engagement with Appropriate Services</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Services cannot engage the child, no contact. ▪ Services have been able to sporadically engage the child.
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[End of Prompt Sheet]

APPENDIX B

Literature Review

“Clean Skins”

It is important to note, any child or young person is vulnerable to criminal exploitation and gang affiliation. This can be demonstrated by the number of “clean skins”, where they are not known to services. These children, young people and adults do not have an existing criminal record or have not attracted the attention of law enforcement agencies or security forces. Gangs exploit many of these people at a time when they are most vulnerable due to recent bereavement, family separation / divorce, domestic discord or some other traumatic event in their life.

Gangs actively recruit “clean skins” as they are more likely to evade detection or draw attention to themselves from law enforcement agencies:

- To transport and sell drugs
- To launder money through personal bank accounts
- To be trafficked for sexual exploitation
- To store weapons and money

‘Contextual safeguarding’ is a theory developed by Dr Carlene Firmin of the University of Bedfordshire, which supports an approach to understanding and responding to children’s experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognised that the different relationships children form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers can have little influence over these contexts and young people’s experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships.

Children who are most at risk will include those in traditional ‘at risk’ groups including those families living in poverty, poor housing, those who have poor educational outcomes, live in disadvantaged neighbourhoods, are children in care or in the Youth Justice System (YJS) and parents who have their own vulnerabilities.

Complex Vulnerabilities

Children who come into contact with the YJS in England and Wales are often victims of crime as well as perpetrators, with a number of vulnerabilities. Many have poor records of school attendance and educational achievement; have experienced loss or separation; learning and communication difficulties are common; and many have poor mental and physical health or are on the autistic spectrum.

Many have a diagnosed mental health disorder, often layered with several other needs, making them a complex and vulnerable cohort to assess and treat. These figures may well underestimate the problem, because the chaotic lives led by so many of the children in the secure estate means they have never been referred to mental health services, or have failed to turn up for appointments. Many display poor physical health and will not have visited a doctor or dentist for years and have undiagnosed sight or hearing problems. Many will have problems associated with poor diets or drug and alcohol use.

Missing Episodes

There are links between gang involvement and children going missing from home or care. It has been shown by The All Party Parliamentary Group on Missing and Runaway Children and Adults that there are important gender differences in the way a child is treated when they go missing which can increase the vulnerabilities of those affected. Girls are more likely to be reported missing than boys. Girls who go missing from home or care are also more likely to get an appropriate response from police forces. According to The Children's Society, boys aged 14 to 17 are mostly targeted for criminal exploitation, where gangs deliberately groom and traffick a child to carry out particular tasks.

The Children's Society has identified differences in patterns of missing episodes can relate to the different forms of exploitation children may experience. For example, they observed that on average, boys went missing for two weeks, whereas girls went missing for two to three days, perhaps corresponding with boys being trafficked around the UK in their potential involvement in County Lines.

Other considerations that should be taken into account is how boys are viewed within the home and wider society, since boys may be viewed as more capable of looking after themselves and are less likely to be exploited than girls. This may account for some parents/guardians/carers not reporting a child missing for a number of days or not at all. Equally, threats of violence from gang members, including from their child (who they are protecting), may also account for some parents/guardians/carers not reporting their son missing for fear of violent reprisals against themselves and family members.

County Lines

Both street gangs and OCGs criminally exploit children, young people and vulnerable adults to carry out illegal activity on their behalf. Gangs dealing drugs is not a new issue but the extent to which criminal exploitation (often organised) of children and vulnerable adults, as well as the increasing use of violence, has become an inherent part of 'County Lines'.

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or

other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons.

Police forces across England and Wales have reported a significant increase in violent crime connected to County Lines. The violence includes; murder, rape, stabbings and kidnapping. It is likely that violence is underreported.

Violence is a way for gang members to gain recognition and respect by asserting their power and authority. Knives, baseball bats, ammonia / corrosives and other weapons are used to enforce threats. There is also notable evidence of firearms being seen or used to threaten in connection to county lines activity.

Due to the fact drug runners are exploited to be both consumer and runner, children, young people and vulnerable adults may begin to consume the drugs they are asked to run, which they must either pay back by ‘working’ or else accumulate debt. The more debt the more control the gang has. If the child/young person/vulnerable adult appears to be ‘going ops’ (going oppositional to the gang) then they are made to evidence that they will correct their behaviour quickly e.g. spend more time with the gang or not attend school, college or work. If the gang become concerned that child/young person/vulnerable adult appears to be ‘going ops’ then there is an explicit threat of being ‘banged’. This can vary from threats to be beaten or in more extreme cases stabbed. There can also be indirect threats to harm family members too.

Knife wounds to the buttocks and ‘accidental’ puncture wounds with screw-drivers ‘DIY Injuries’ are becoming recognisable signs of drug debt enforcer retribution. These incidents are more likely to be reported to A & E but not to police due to intimidation and fear.

Cuckooing

Gangs will establish a base when they are involved in County Lines 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”. Some of the cuckooing signs to look out for include but are not limited to the following;

- It usually takes place in a multi-occupancy or social housing property.
- There may be an increase in the number of comings and goings, including people you have not seen before, throughout the day and night, often visiting for only short periods of time.
- There might be new vehicles outside the property, including taxis or hire cars.
- There may be bags of clothing or bedding around the property.

- There may be a possible increase in crime and anti-social behaviour in and around the property reported to services, including the accumulation and storage of stolen pedal cycles.
- There may be evidence of drug use such as deal bags, discarded syringes, weighing scales, foil and cling film, in and around the property.

It is important to be aware that victims of cuckooing may disengage with support services and be unwilling to discuss what is happening at their property when the subject is raised with them. There is also the risk that babies and very young children may be living in properties that are being used by gangs which present significant safeguarding risks.

Secondary Victimization

Children and young people are at high risk of undergoing secondary victimisation by being considered perpetrators of crime rather than victims of exploitation.

Practitioners need to be mindful that children who are criminally exploited should be seen as victims and not treated as criminals. They should also be treated through the lens of modern slavery and child safeguarding legislation and practice.

There is evidence that children and young people fear the repercussions of reporting being victims of any criminal activity. Research has found that children identify a range of risks associated with reporting crime including reputational damage, implications for their family and fears of significant physical reprisal.

Children and young people may also blame themselves for victimisation, falsely assuming responsibility for their experiences. Where children and young people feel in any way responsible for their victimisation they are unlikely to report these experiences or seek support⁷.

This lack of understanding can have a serious impact on children and young people. Not being equipped with this knowledge means that many have to deal with their experience alone and not seeking necessary support available to them. Not reporting also means that they be unable to make the offending behaviour stop, or to seek justice and redress for their suffering.

To limit or avoid any risk of secondary victimisation, specific counselling, support and assistance services should be available to provide appropriate support and safeguard those who are most vulnerable.

Cross Border Issues

⁷ Victim Support (2017) Children and Young People Affected by Crime, Policy Statement, p.3

The threat of organised criminality is not confined to geographical boundaries. Pathways into criminality are diverse and differ between crime types. Individuals can be coerced, corrupted, debt-bound, groomed and exploited, or even offend unwittingly. Forged identity documents (particularly EEA identity documents) and fraudulently obtained genuine documents remain a key enabler of criminal activities. Many OCGs are highly flexible and display great adaptability in the speed with which they adjust their *modi operandi* or whole business models to the changes in the environment.

People involved in gangs and OCGs exploit organisational and geographical vulnerabilities since they know there are weaknesses in the way different organisations operate both internally and externally.

The National Crime Agency⁸ highlights there are a number of factors that help determine why groups might embark on County Lines activity. These include the perception of 'space' in drug markets outside of urban areas and the anticipation of increased profits because of less capable competition. Operating outside of their own areas, where they are 'known' and subject to law enforcement targeting, often gives groups the perception of increased anonymity. It is important these risks and associated threats are reduced by working effectively to share intelligence in a timely manner.

There may be occasions where a child may want to live with each parent/carer (if they are not living together) during the week, especially if the child feels threatened or intimidated by others where they normally reside. This may increase the child's vulnerabilities since relevant safeguarding parties may not be aware of the family circumstances if child is living in different parts of the West Midlands or in other parts of the UK. Similarly, there may be occasions where a child is educated outside their Local Authority area. This may also increase the child's vulnerabilities since relevant safeguarding parties may not be aware of all of the family circumstances to take appropriate safeguarding actions to reduce the risks associated to gang affiliation or criminal exploitation.

It is vital that information is shared to address any cross border concerns. Relevant front line and back office staff need to be trained to keep abreast of any changes in family circumstances and emerging threats to support any intervention, prevention and enforcement work.

FURTHER INFORMATION:

Home Office (April 2018) Serious Violence Strategy, which is available at <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/serious-violence-strategy>

Youth Justice Legal Centre (2018) Child criminal exploitation and gang affiliation: County Lines Gangs, Child Trafficking & Modern Slavery Defences for Children

The Children's Society (December 2017) Toolkit for Working with Children and Young People Trafficked for the Purpose of Criminal Exploitation in Relation to 'County Lines'

⁸ National Crime Agency (2015) Intelligence Assessment – County Lines, Gangs and Safeguarding, p.2

Dr Carlene Firmin (2017) Contextual Safeguarding: An overview of the operational, strategic and conceptual framework

All Party Parliamentary Group (March 2017) APPG on Runaway and Missing Children and Adults: Briefing report on the roundtable on children who go missing and are criminally exploited by gangs

Home Office (2017) Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults: County Lines

National Crime Agency (2017) Violence, Exploitation & Drug Supply, National Briefing Report

National Crime Agency (2017) National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime

Home Office (2016) Ending Gang Violence and Exploitation

Home Office (2016) Lessons Learned: Troubled Families at Risk of Involvement in Serious and Organised Crime

National Crime Agency (2016) County Lines Gang Violence, Exploitation & Drug Supply, National Briefing Report

Disley, E. and Liddle, M. (2016) Local Perspectives in Ending Gang and Youth Violence, Home Office

National Crime Agency (2016) National Strategic Assessment of Serious and Organised Crime

Home Office (2015) Individuals at Risk of Being Drawn into Serious and Organised Crime – A Prevent Guide

Early Intervention Foundation (2015) What Works to Prevent Gang Involvement, Youth Violence and Crime: A Rapid Review of Interventions delivered in the UK and Aboard

Early Intervention Foundation (2015) Preventing Gang and Youth Violence: A Review of Risk and Protective Factors

National Crime Agency (2015) NCA National Intelligence Assessment, County Lines, Gangs and Safeguarding

EUROPOL (2014) Child Trafficking for Exploitation in Forced Criminal Activities

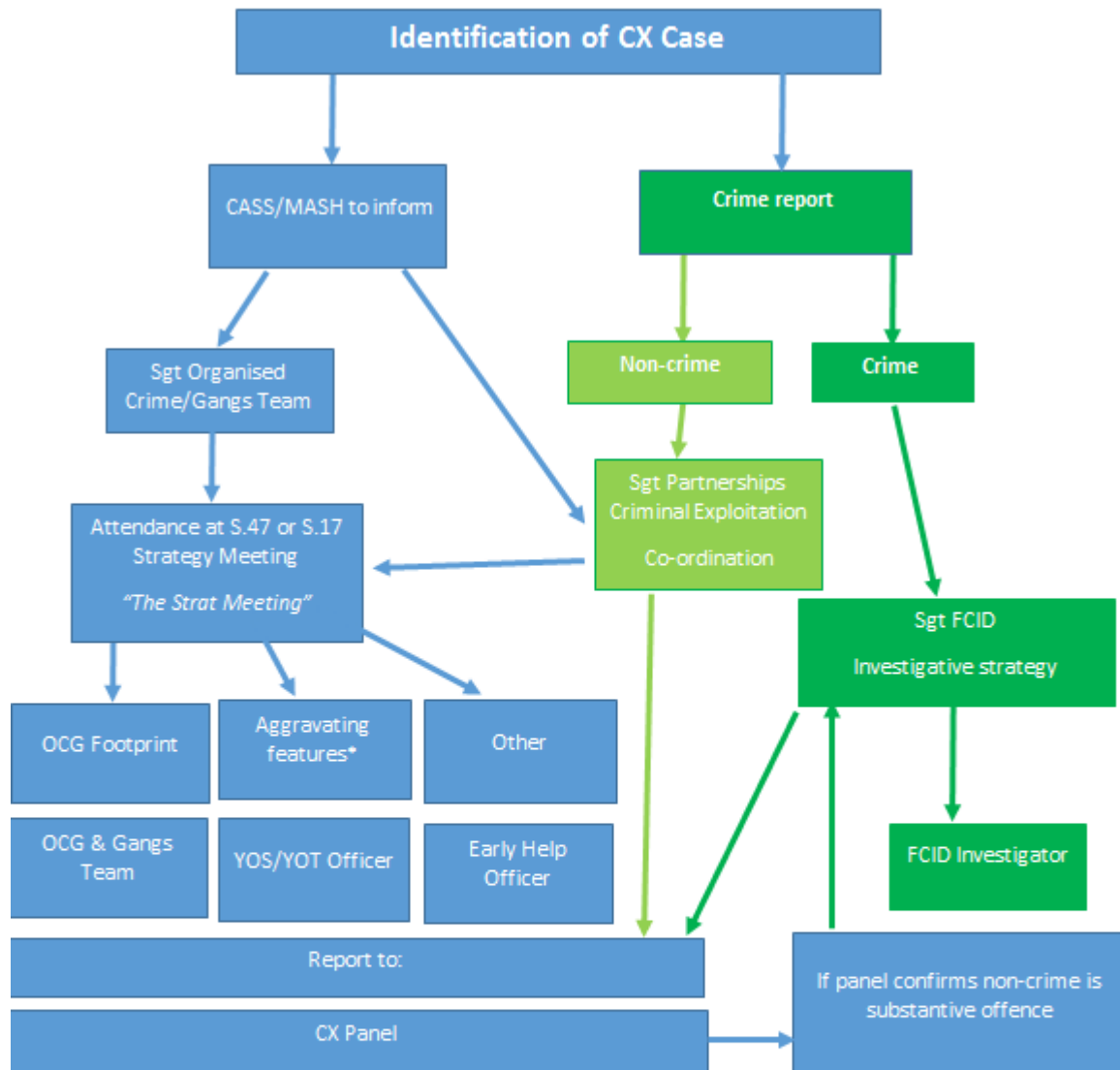
Home Office (2013) Serious and Organised Crime Strategy

Waddell, S., O'Connor, R.M., and Cordis Bright Consulting (2015) Preventing Gang and Youth Violence: Spotting Signals of Risk and Supporting Children and Young People, Early intervention Foundation. A copy of the report is available at

<http://www.eif.org.uk/publication/preventing-gang-and-youth-violence/>

APPENDIX C

West Midlands Police Flow Chart for Criminal Exploitation Referrals



* It is not expected that a full risk assessment will have been completed at this stage. Aggravating features include suspicion of the following, with the YP either a perpetrator or potential victim:

- Use of firearms or other lethal weapons
- Serious violence (likely to be s18 or above)
- Serious sexual offending

It is also to be considered an aggravating feature if the YP is under 16 and subject to long periods missing from home (whether or not reported) and/or long distances travelled/multiple destinations.

APPENDIX D

BIRMINGHAM GANGS, GUNS AND ORGANISED CRIMINALITY PARTNERSHIP ARRANGEMENTS

Terms of Reference

PURPOSE

The Strategic Board, Operations Group and the Criminal Exploitation Panel provides a structured mechanism in facilitating joint working which impacts on all critical areas of business in disrupting gangs, guns and organised criminality. These arrangements seek to ensure each agency will safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, vulnerable adults and protect the public in Birmingham.

AIMS

The aims of the Strategic Board, Operations Group and the Criminal Exploitation Panel are:

- Achieve the strategic objectives within the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality Strategy.
- Foster close co-operation between all stakeholders in the further development and implementation of the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality Strategy.
- To apply a Prepare, Protect, Prevent, Pursue (4P) approach to the risks associated with criminal exploitation (CX) and serious and organised criminality.
- Facilitate the sharing of intelligence on a regular basis to develop a common understanding of concerns, emerging themes and issues affecting all critical areas of business.
- Exchange ideas, share knowledge and to build on what has worked well.
- Act as an advocate of this partnership body within respective organisations in identifying, discussing and addressing issues of common concern and avoid unnecessary duplication of effort.
- Establish and maintain close links with existing multi-agency arrangements including MAPPA, the MARAC, the IOM Programme, the Children's Advisory Support Service (CASS) and Early Help Services.

GENERAL PRINCIPLES

- Operate in a collaborative, open and effective way that views each member as an equal partner and values the contribution of the partner organisations.
- Conduct all business in a climate that seeks to find effective and realistic solutions, reaching consensus rather than determining the action of others.
- Commit to undertake regular formal self-assessment in order to evaluate and improve collaborative working.
- Utilise an evidenced-based approach across all areas of work.
- Co-ordinate activities and embed shared learning in making best use of the legislation and tactics available.
- Criminal exploitation and organised criminality will be tackled using all available partnership intelligence and information, as well as information from police forces and Local Authorities outside Birmingham.

The CX process will apply the following principles:

- All professionals should have an understanding that the victim might not want to be 'saved'. CX is an extremely complicated problem; often victims of CX do not see themselves as victims and will often have committed quite serious offences. However, there are always offenders further up in the hierarchy who take fewer risks and gain more rewards from the criminality, and are willing to continue to recruit more vulnerable people into their organisations. Therefore:
 - Pursue activity should focus resources on the more serious criminality.
 - Prevent activity should include disrupting recruitment activity.
 - If there are no opportunities to Protect identified individuals, this will not prevent other activity taking place to disrupt organised criminals and prevent others becoming victims of exploitation.
 - Prepare activity should focus on raising awareness of criminal exploitation to inform workforce development programmes and assist schools and the wider community to be better equipped to identify and report concerns of criminal exploitation.

MEMBERSHIP

Membership is open to representatives of all organisations and law enforcement agencies subscribing to this Terms of Reference, and who are able to actively assist in the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality work.

Members are expected to attend all meetings and help in the following ways:

- Act as an advocate for the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality work within their organisation.
- Share information and intelligence before each Strategic Board, Operations Group, and Criminal Exploitation Panel meeting, where it will help support the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality work
- Assist with removing barriers to the Strategic Board, Operations Group, Criminal Exploitation Panel achieving its purpose.
- Ensure clean data (data which is in a useable state and requires minimal restructuring or processing in order to use for the required purpose) is shared and assist with validation.
- Communicate with their respective Senior Management Teams (SMT) on decisions and actions agreed from the meeting.
- Identify existing and emerging intelligence targets / gaps / concerns.
- Actively participate in reviews and task and finish groups as appropriate.
- Commit to be the representative to ensure continuity.

Failure of any organisation / service to send representative/s on more than two consecutive meetings will mean a review of existing arrangements to understand the reasons. Similarly, the same applies to representatives from law enforcement agencies and other key stakeholders. Subject to the reason/s given for non-attendance this may result in requesting the relevant service / organisation to select replacements.

JOINT CHAIR - ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

The Joint Chairs are responsible for ensuring the Strategic Board, Operations Group, and Criminal Exploitation Panel functions properly, that there is full participation at meetings, all relevant matters are discussed and that effective decisions are made and carried out.

It is the role of the Joint Chairs to guide discussion towards consensus. Where this is not possible, the Joint Chairs may call for the Strategic Board, Operations Group, and Criminal Exploitation Panel members to vote. Other duties include:

- Plan and run meetings in accordance to the governing document
- Agree the agendas and minutes of meetings.
- Ensure matters are dealt with in an orderly, efficient manner.
- Bring impartiality and objectivity to meetings and decision-making.
- Facilitate change and address conflict within the Strategic Board, Operations Group, and Criminal Exploitation Panel.
- Establish the conditions for continuous improvement in practice and performance.
- Review governance, performance and skills.
- Plan for recruitment and renewal of the Strategic Board, Operations Group, and Criminal Exploitation Panel to ensure it is fit for purpose.
- Communicate effectively the aims and strategic objectives of the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality work.
- Advocate for and represent the Strategic Board, Operations Group, and Criminal Exploitation Panel at external meetings and events.
- Work closely with the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality Co-ordinator in order to deliver the agenda of the Forum.

ROLES AND RESPONSIBILITIES

STRATEGIC BOARD

- Provide strategic leadership, to drive forward and oversee the development and implementation of the

Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality Strategy.

- Maximise the use of available resources through working smarter and developing solutions.
- Provide regular reports to Birmingham Community Safety Partnership to highlight progress and influence business transformation programmes, business planning and strategy and policy development.
- Facilitate collaborative action by encouraging new ways of working.
- Establish task and finish groups to carry out projects to aid the development of the partnership activities
- Review the effectiveness of existing arrangements and take appropriate action to aid continuous improvement.
- Promote achievements through all media outlets using existing channels of communication towards the aim of education and public reassurance.

OPERATIONAL GROUP

Responsibility for the management of criminal exploitation risk relating to Organised Crime Groups (OCGs) sits with the Guns, Gangs and Organised Crime Operational Group (Ops Group). The partnership 4P plans in place to manage these OCGs are to be updated to reflect the nature of the risk, and partners who sit on the group will contribute to the disruption and dismantling of the OCGs, in order to reduce the risks they pose to the community. In these cases, the CX panel will discharge the management of the risk to the 4P plan under the governance of the Ops Group. Partners who sit on the group will contribute to:

- Provide the co-ordinating and tasking functions that will share information around individuals and their networks and agree action plans that offer early help, specialist interventions and enforcement.
- Develop and implement action plans around the 4 Ps (Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare) to reduce associated threats and vulnerabilities.
- Establish task and finish groups to carry out bespoke pieces of work on gangs, guns, and organised criminality
- Identify emerging patterns and trends to inform tactical and strategic responses
- Review intelligence requirements on a regular basis to ensure it is fit for purpose
- Develop a Birmingham Tactical Toolkit and promote and disseminate it across relevant services, organisations and partnerships to support workforce development programmes and raise awareness of gangs, guns and organised criminality and what each service can do if they have concerns.
- Produce regular updates to the Strategic Board to highlight progress following the implementation of the Birmingham Gangs, Guns and Organised Criminality Strategy
- Ensure close links are established and maintained with existing multi-agency arrangements including Criminal Exploitation Panel, MAPPa, MARAC, IOM programme, the Children's Advisory Support Service (CASS) and Early Help Services

CRIMINAL EXPLOITATION PANEL (CX PANEL)

The responsibility of the management of criminal exploitation risk that does not relate to any Organised Crime Group sits with the CX Panel. Partners who sit on the group will contribute to:

- To safeguard vulnerable children where there is complex and significant risk of criminal exploitation
- To use data and intelligence to develop an understanding of criminal exploitation taking place across Birmingham, implement disruption tactics and ensure services are commissioned which can meet identified need.
- Develop and implement action plans around the 4 Ps (Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare) to reduce associated threats and vulnerabilities.
- Identify emerging patterns and trends to inform tactical and strategic responses

CX will be tackled using all available partnership intelligence and information, as well as information from police forces and Local Authorities outside Birmingham.

Information about CX will come in different ways, e.g.:

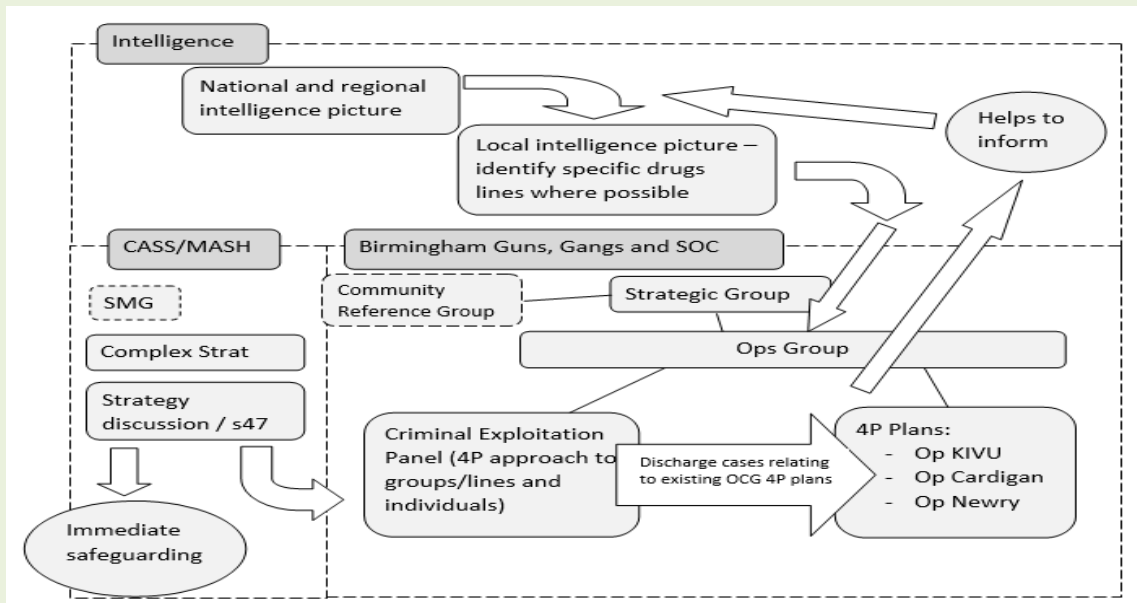
- MASH s47 Strategy Discussion Meeting – attended by a member of the OCG Team
- Intelligence regarding a drugs line or other criminal exploitation

The Panel will decide:

- If the information relates to an OCG that is subject of an existing 4P plan – discharge to the Ops Group for

management.

- If this is a 'stand-alone' piece of information relating to a person, group or piece of intelligence that has no known links to an OCG managed under the Ops Group – the case will be managed by the Panel.
- The Panel will determine whether to discharge any case if there is no further opportunity to do anything else and the risk has been significantly reduced



SUBSTITUTES

- Named substitutes will be permitted.
- If any member is unable to attend a specific meeting, a senior level substitute should be delegated to attend in their place.
- The substitute should have the authority to participate in decision-making.
- Substitute members should be briefed as to the agenda and any actions for the organisation/region they represent.
- The relevant Joint Chairs should be notified if a member of the Strategic Board/Operations Group/ Criminal Exploitation Panel cannot attend and intends to send a substitute to represent their organisation/region in advance of the meeting.

ACCOUNTABILITY

All members (including substitutes) are individually responsible for reporting back on issues to their SMT raised during meetings and any subsequent actions.

It is vital that information is shared to ensure all law enforcement agencies are aware of issues / actions arising. Any actions should be reported within police and other law enforcement agency tasking processes.

DECISION MAKING

- Wherever possible, decisions will be arrived at by consensus. A simple majority will be required. If needed, the Joint Chairs will have the deciding vote.
- All decisions will be recorded in the minutes or via a reporting document.
- The Joint Chairs reserve the right to have the final decision on the membership.

FREQUENCY OF MEETINGS

The Strategic Board will meet quarterly
The Operations Group will meet on a six weekly basis
The Criminal Exploitation Panel will meet on a monthly basis

Extra meetings may be called where the Joint Chairs identifies the need.

COMMUNICATIONS

- The agenda and papers will be circulated to arrive no later than 5 days in advance of a meeting and members will be assumed to have read the papers before the meeting.
- Subject to agreement of the Joint Chairs, papers can be tabled on the day of the meeting if there are urgent matters that need attention.
- Each substantive agenda item will be supported by a paper with a clear recommendation/s. Urgent items may be permitted at the discretion of the Joint Chairs.
- Decisions made by the Strategic Board and Operations Group will be fed into other relevant local, sub-regional, regional and national bodies through minutes of the meetings and representation as appropriate.
- It is proposed that an annual conference will be held to showcase achievements and to gather feedback on areas for improvement. This event will be open to the local community and interested parties to encourage openness and transparency as well as generate wider support from non-members. The timing of the conference will be held that can maximise the opportunities to inform business planning processes of respective organisations and law enforcement agencies.

SECRETARIAT

- Every member of the Strategic Board, Operations Group and Criminal Exploitation Panel has an equal right to place items on the agenda of each meeting. The Co-ordinator must receive these items no later than two working weeks before the date of the next meeting.
- Subject to the agreement of the respective Joint Chairs, agenda items can be tabled at the Strategic Board, Operations Group and Criminal Exploitation Panel meetings.

VENUE

The venue for the meetings will be held at Birmingham Youth Offending Kingsmere Headquarters unless otherwise stated.

REVIEW

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed annually by all members to ensure they are fit for purpose, or as need arises, with a clear 'agreed' and 'review date' stated.

BIRMINGHAM GANGS, GUNS AND ORGANISED CRIMINALITY PARTNERSHIP STRUCTURES

