

WOKINGHAM BOROUGH HARM OUTSIDE THE HOME STRATEGY (0-25): 2022-25

PART ONE: BACKGROUND, CONTEXT AND PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

Background

As a Community Safety Partnership we want to ensure that Wokingham is safe Borough with a strong and cohesive community, a place which is safe to live, learn, and visit. Aligned to this objective, we want to help ensure that Wokingham Borough is a great place for all children and young people to grow up. Most children and young people in Wokingham Borough experience highly positive outcomes in relation to educational attainment, safety, health and well-being, and successful transition to independent adulthood. Relative to statistical neighbours and other authorities in the Thames Valley, Wokingham performs strongly in terms of low levels of serious incidents of Harm Outside the Home.

However, for some children and young people in the Borough, there is a relatively higher chance of poorer outcomes and risk of experiencing or becoming involved in harm outside the home environment.

This Harm Outside the Home Strategy sets out how we will prevent and respond to the risk of children and young people experiencing harm outside their home environment. The Strategy contributes directly to the Wokingham Borough Community Vision that Wokingham is a great place to live, learn and grow, and a great place to do business, as well as the Council's Corporate Delivery Plan objectives – particularly those in relation to Enriching Lives, creating Safe, Strong Communities, Changing the Way We Work for You and Being the Best We Can Be.

The Strategy also aligns with and contributes to a range of multi-agency and partnership strategies, plans and strategic objectives designed to improve outcomes for children and young people. We recognise we need a whole system, partnership response to protecting and safeguarding children and young people from Harm Outside the Home, particularly the most vulnerable. This will be achieved through collaborative leadership and delivery across our strategic partnerships, working with young people, families and the local community.

Purpose of the Harm Outside the Home Strategy 0-25 (2022-25)

Safeguarding children and young people from psychological and physical Harm Outside the Home is a key priority for the Wokingham Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP). Our principal aim with this Strategy is to prevent and respond effectively to Harm Outside the Home.

Our definition of "Harm Outside the Home" encompasses:

- Child Sexual Exploitation
- Child Criminal Exploitation
- Children missing and/or excluded from education
- Risks of becoming a victim or perpetrator of serious youth violence.

The contexts in which Harm Outside the Home take place include:

- online and in the digital world

- amongst peer groups
- within schools and places of learning
- within and between neighbourhoods and borough boundaries
- on and around public transport
- wider community settings where young people live their lives.

Three Sets of Key Drivers behind this Strategy

There are three sets of key drivers behind the Harm Outside the Home Strategy:

SET ONE: National and Statutory Drivers. These include requirements for local authorities to set out clear plans for addressing exploitation and serious youth violence; statutory duties around safeguarding and support for vulnerable children, young people and families; requirements set out in the Working Together to Safeguard Children guidance (July 2018)

SET TWO: Regional and Sub-Regional Drivers. These include the need to collaborate across the Southeast region and across the Berkshire West patch around prevention and effective responses to exploitation, extra-familial harm and serious youth violence; commitments to action taken by the Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit to address incidences of serious violence including those affecting young people aged 0-25 across the Thames Valley region; commitments to strengthen safeguarding of children and young people through the multi-agency Berkshire West Safeguarding Children's Partnership (BWSCP) set out in BWSCP Annual Reports

SET THREE: Local Drivers. These include the need to deliver clear actions in the context of the Wokingham Borough Community Safety Partnership Strategic Assessment and Children's Services Strategy, in relation to early intervention and prevention, and focused services and initiatives to improve outcomes for disadvantaged and vulnerable groups.

Additional context: Working Together To Safeguard Children: Government Guidance, July 2018

As well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or more widely from within the wider community and/or online. These threats can take a variety of different forms and children can be vulnerable to multiple threats, including:

- exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups such as county lines;
- trafficking;
- online abuse;
- teenage relationship abuse;
- sexual exploitation;
- the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Extremist groups make use of the internet to radicalise and recruit and to promote extremist materials. Any potential harmful effects to individuals identified as vulnerable to extremist ideologies or being drawn into terrorism should also be considered.

Assessments of children in such cases should consider whether wider environmental factors are present in a child's life and are a threat to their safety and/or welfare. Children who may be alleged perpetrators should also be assessed to understand the impact of contextual issues on their safety and welfare. Interventions should focus on addressing these

wider environmental factors, which are likely to be a threat to the safety and welfare of a number of different children who may or may not be known to local authority children’s social care. Assessments of children in such cases should consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of each child. They should look at the parental capacity to support the child, including helping the parents and carers to understand any risks and support them to keep children safe and assess potential risk to the child.

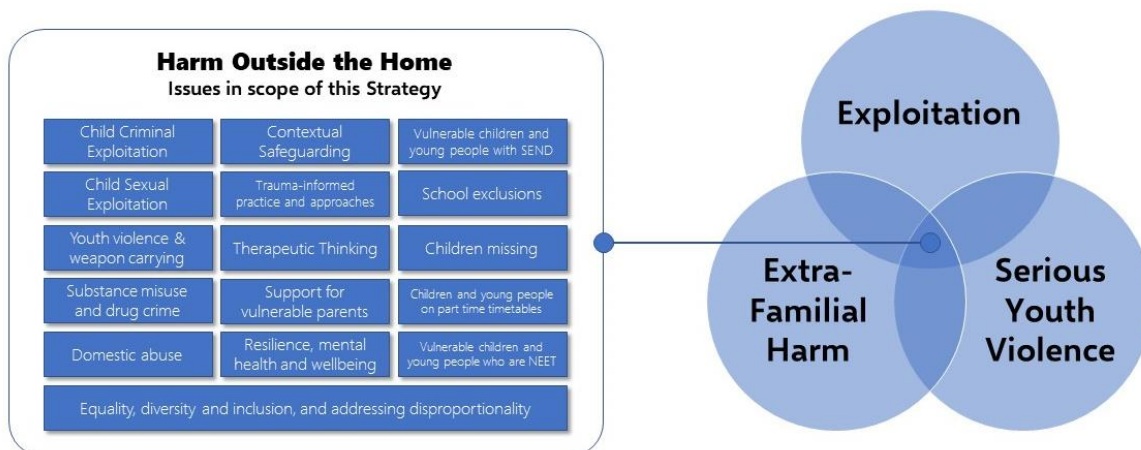
Three Key Themes

There are three key thematic areas in focus for the Harm Outside the Home Strategy:

- **THEME 1: Exploitation**, including Child Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation
- **THEME 2: Extra-Familial Harm**, relating to harm experienced in different contexts outside the home environment, and caused by individuals other than primary caregivers, as well as issues relating to contextual safeguarding
- **THEME 3: Preventing and tackling Serious Youth Violence**, including risks of becoming a victim and/or perpetrator of serious youth violence

Although each of these three Themes are distinct and require focused activity to address them, it is our aim to ensure that actions in this Strategy to address them are strategically aligned, joined up and co-ordinated, to help ensure the maximum beneficial impact. As the subsequent Evidence Base section in this Strategy shows, some cohorts of children and young people are particularly vulnerable to poor outcomes across all three strategic themes listed above. This Harm Outside the Home Strategy presents an opportunity to ensure that Partners take a rounded perspective on the relatively greater level of vulnerability of certain cohorts of children and young people in Wokingham Borough, and put interventions and actions in place to protect some of the most vulnerable. This strategic approach is set out in Figure 1 below.

Figure 1: Strategic approach to Harm Outside the Home, and issues in scope of the Strategy



Issues we will tackle which relate to the three key themes

Several issues relate to the three key themes listed above, which are collectively in scope of this Harm Outside the Home Strategy. The issues are distinct but connected, and initial analytical work undertaken on the Strategy shows that in many cases, several of these issues affect the same cohorts of (particularly vulnerable) children, young people and families.

Examples of issues in scope of the Harm Outside the Home Strategy are set out in Table 1 below:

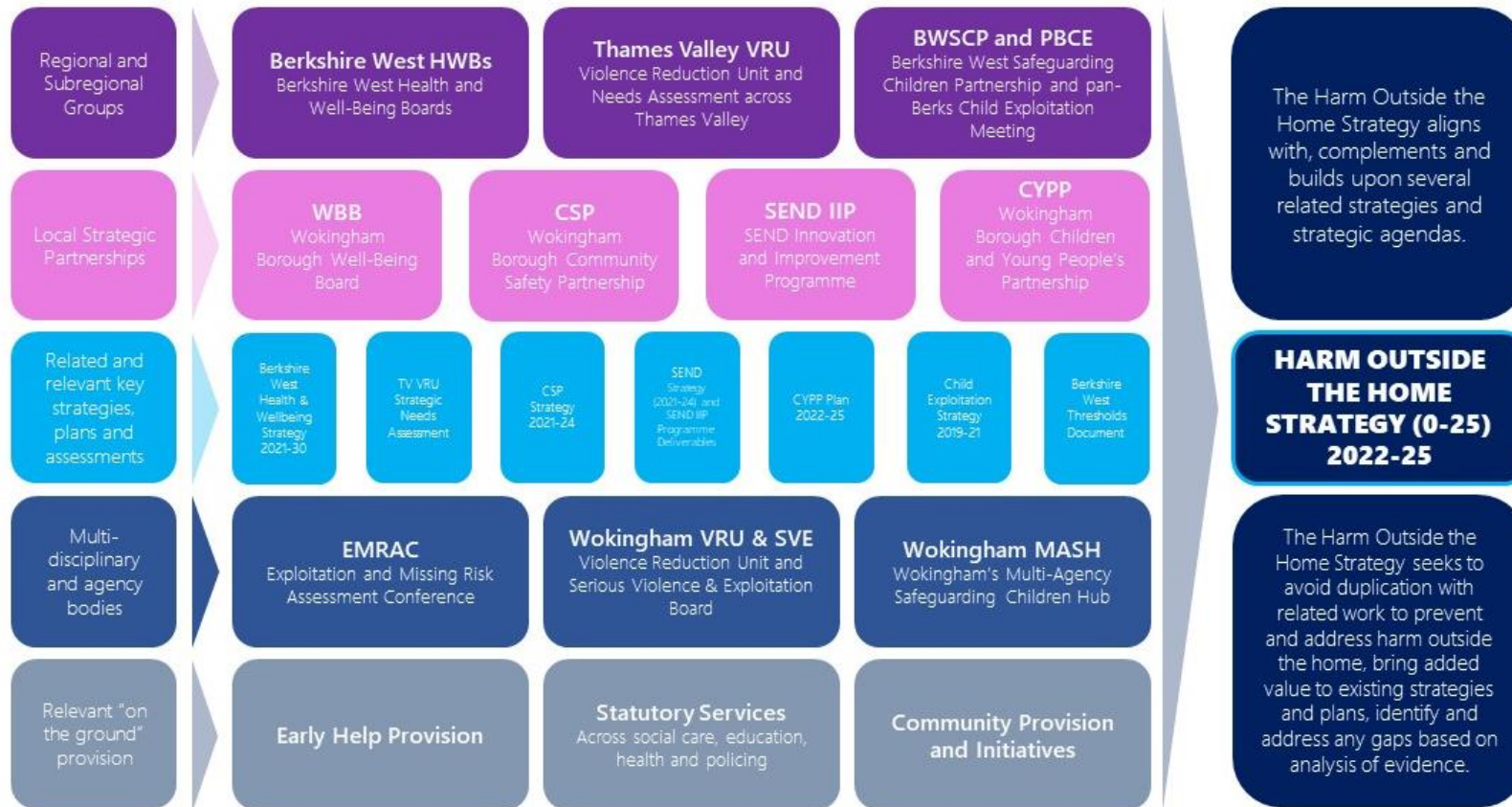
Table 1: Examples of issues in scope of this Strategy which relate to the 3 key themes

Child Criminal Exploitation
Child Sexual Exploitation
Youth Violence and weapon carrying
Substance misuse and drug-related crime
Domestic Abuse
Contextual Safeguarding / safeguarding outside the home environment
Trauma-informed practice and approaches
Therapeutic Thinking
Resilience, mental health and wellbeing
Support for vulnerable parents
Vulnerable children and young people with SEND
School exclusions
Children missing
Children and young people on part-time timetables
Vulnerable children and young people who are NEET
Equality, Diversity and Inclusion, and addressing disproportionality

Relationship between Harm Outside the Home Strategy and other relevant strategic initiatives, plans and partnership activity

Figure 2 below sets out the relationship between the Harm Outside the Home Strategy with other strategies, plans and strategic partnership initiatives. The purpose of the Harm Outside the Home Strategy is to build on and enhance existing work – and address any key gaps identified through analysis of evidence – to strengthen the approach to preventing and addressing Harm Outside the Home in Wokingham Borough.

Figure 2: Relationship between Harm Outside the Home Strategy and related strategies, plans and strategic partnership activity



PART TWO: EVIDENCE BASE

A detailed evidence base underpinning the priorities and actions in this strategy is attached as Appendix 1.

Quantitative data feeding into the evidence base underpinning the Harm Outside the Home Strategy

Partners involved in developing the Harm Outside the Home Strategy are determined to ensure that strategic priorities and key actions set out within the Strategy are underpinned by a comprehensive and robust analysis of relevant data.

To achieve this objective, several datasets have been gathered and analysed as part of the Strategy development process. A summary of the key datasets incorporated into the analysis is as follows:

- Borough-wide demographic data
- The Annex A dataset*
- Prevention and Youth Justice data
- Children Social Care Missing Children data
- Child Sexual Exploitation episodes
- Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference data
- Community Safety Partnership (CSP) Strategic Assessment
- Navigator (A&E) data recording incidents of Harm affecting children and young people 0-25 in Wokingham Borough
- Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit Strategic Needs Assessment and VRU data relating to incidents of Youth Violence involving children and young people aged 0-25
- Profiles of children and young people in the borough who are NEET, including Care Leavers and other vulnerable groups
- School exclusion data and analysis
- Profiles of children and young people on part-time timetables

* Includes information relating to Children's Social Care contacts, early help, referrals and assessments, CIN, CP, Looked After Children and Care Leaver data.

Analysis of quantitative data has been used to determine:

- Key themes and patterns relating to Harm Outside the Home in the Borough – are there any particular types or examples of Harm Outside the Home which partners need to work together to address?
- Trend, comparator and direction of travel data in relation to issues related to the strategy – for example, data relating to year-by-year comparisons, comparisons with geographical and statistical neighbours – in order to help predict future issues before they arise
- Intersectional analysis: are there particular cohorts of children and young people which appear to be vulnerable to multiple forms of Harm Outside the Home?
- Insights into levels of risk and need in the context of multi-agency thresholds and levels of vulnerability and risk of Harm Outside the Home

Qualitative data: Consultation and Engagement with key stakeholders and multi-agency groups

As part of this first phase of developing the Harm Outside the Home Strategy, consultation and engagement with several key stakeholders and multi-agency groups has been carried out.

This initial engagement has helped to:

- source key data and intelligence relevant to the scope of the Harm Outside the Home strategy
- identify examples of current practice, strategic and operational initiatives designed to tackle and prevent Harm Outside the Home
- shape initial thinking about strategic priorities and areas of focus for the Strategy

Engagement has included the following groups:

- Community Safety Partnership's Serious Violence and Exploitation Sub-Group
- Members of the Children and Young People's Partnership (including featured discussion during the CYPP System Leadership Conference), with representatives from education, social care, health and public health, voluntary and community sector
- Multi-Agency Task and Finish Group focused on Harm Outside the Home Strategy development, with representatives from social care, police, prevention and youth justice, educational psychology
- Key service areas across Children's Services, including Prevention and Youth Justice Service, Children's Social Care, Quality Assurance and Safeguarding Support, Special Educational Needs and Disabilities Team
- Representatives from the Special Educational Needs and Disabilities (SEND) Innovation and Improvement Programme
- Further consultation and interviews with key stakeholders through 121 meetings, discussions and updates to Strategic Partnerships and multi-agency groups, as directed by the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) and its subgroups, and Children and Young People's Partnership (CYPP)
- Interviews with Practice Review report authors, to gain insight into key learning points from historic examples of Harm Outside the Home in Wokingham Borough
- Consultation and Engagement with Children and Young People (a detailed consultation and engagement plan for the Harm Outside the Home Strategy has been prepared and is attached as Appendix 2, which includes engagement activities to inform development of the Strategy, as well as activities post-implementation)
- CSP commissioned survey specifically on issues around Serious Violence and Exploitation, to help feed into the Strategy development process

Conclusions from the evidence base: our target groups

Analysis of qualitative and quantitative data shows that certain groups of children and young people are at a relatively greater level of risk of Harm Outside the Home, either as victims, or perpetrators, or both. The priorities and key actions set out as part of this Harm Outside the Home Strategy reflect the heightened vulnerability of these groups.

Priority target groups for support in the context of Harm Outside the Home include:

- a) Children and Young People with SEND**
- b) Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children and Children and Young People newly arrived to the Borough**

- c) **Children and young people missing and/or excluded from education, or on part-time education timetables**
- d) **Children and young people in care / leaving care who are not in education, employment or training**
- e) **Children and young people exposed to Domestic Abuse and/or family conflict.** Even though such harm typically occurs *within* the home environment, data analysis shows that children exposed to Domestic Abuse and/or family conflict are at greater risk of factors such as conduct disorders which have the potential to lead to exclusion – a significant risk factor in terms of Harm Outside the Home.

PART THREE: Our Priorities, Model and Approach

The evidence base underpinning this Strategy has enabled us to establish three strategic priorities, and actions to achieve them. The three priorities are as follows:

1) Focus on Prevention

Data analysis carried out as part of developing the evidence base behind the Strategy shows that the numbers of children and young people experiencing various forms of Harm Outside the Home are low. This does not mean that Harm Outside the Home is not an issue in Wokingham Borough, nor does it mean that there are no levels of risk, but does suggest that an appropriate strategic multiagency approach to Harm Outside the Home in Wokingham is to focus on strong and effective prevention as a primary objective.

Preventing Harm before it takes place will help sustain low levels of Harm Outside the Home in the Borough. Intelligence-led, public health and inclusive approaches are key to this, as is a focus on tackling the underlying causes of Harm Outside the Home, not just the symptoms.

2) Right Response, Right Time

Not all harm can be prevented. Where incidents have taken place they must be noted, learnt from and reacted to; in order to stop similar events occurring repetitively. We will take a consistent approach to interventions and responses – e.g. consistent and effective application of Trauma Informed and Therapeutic Thinking approaches across agencies. Responses will be tiered and flexed according to situations, needs and context.

3) Strengthen the effectiveness of our Multi-Agency and Partnership work

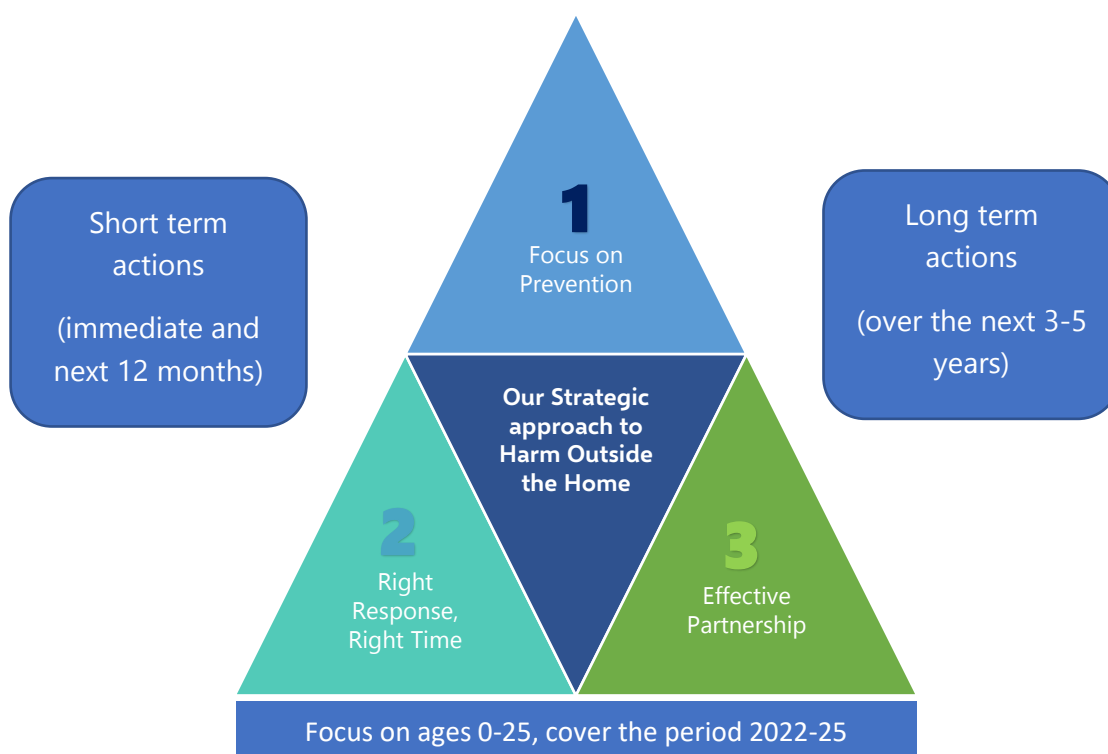
Multi-agency and strategic partnership work is an essential component of any strategy to prevent and respond effectively to Harm Outside the Home. Multiagency partnerships within the Borough – for example the Community Safety Partnership and Children and Young People’s Partnership – will play a key role in driving delivery of the Action Plan associated with this Strategy. Multi-area partnerships – such as the Berkshire West Safeguarding Children Partnership, and Thames Valley Violence Reduction Unit – will be key agents in addressing issues relating to Harm Outside the Home which span across Borough boundaries; sharing data and intelligence and best practice; enhance capacity to develop effective policies, procedures and “on the ground” interventions to tackle Harm Outside the Home.

Priorities into Action

Actions and Interventions which flow from these priorities are set out in the Action Plan attached as Appendix 2 to this Strategy, and are a mix of short-term and long-term actions.

This approach and the 3 Priorities listed above are summarised in Figure 3 below:

Figure 3: Three Strategic Priorities for the Harm Outside the Home Strategy 0-25 (2022-25)



Our Model and Approach

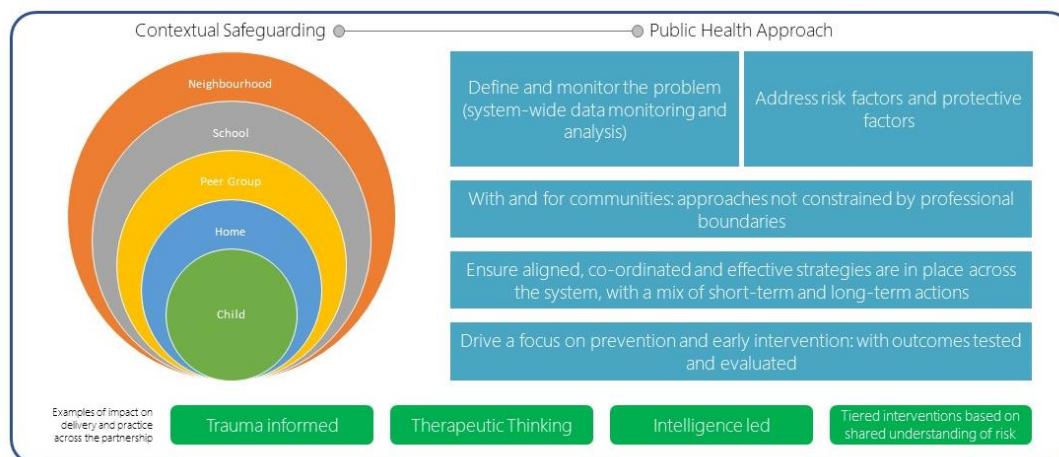
In addition to thinking about the areas of focus for the strategy, we have also been thinking about the approaches we need to take across agencies to ensure that the strategy is successfully delivered.

Based on our reviews of best practise, strategies and plans developed elsewhere, national and regional research into harm outside the home, our review of data and evidence and engagement with key stakeholders, *we have developed a unique model of working which blends aspects of Contextual Safeguarding and the public health approach to tackling social issues.*

- **Contextual Safeguarding** is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighbourhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse.
- A **Public Health approach** to Harm Outside the Home seeks to use evidence to understand the risk by addressing underlying risk factors that increase the likelihood that an individual will become a victim or a perpetrator of harm outside their home environment.

Our unique model and approach is summarised in Figure 4 below:

Figure 4: Wokingham Borough’s Model and Approach to tackling Harm Outside the Home



The purpose of blending these approaches is to ensure we approach Harm Outside the Home in terms of all the environments and contexts in which a child or young person may be at risk – including:

- online and in the digital world
- amongst peer groups
- within schools and places of learning
- within and between neighbourhoods and borough boundaries
- on and around public transport
- wider community settings where young people live their lives.

It is also to ensure we take an intelligence-led, preventative approach designed to address the root causes and risks of Harm Outside the Home, whilst taking effective targeted actions to respond to Harm Outside the Home when it occurs.

Strengthening multiagency Data and Intelligence: Thames Valley Together

In parallel with development of this Strategy, work is progressing to develop a shared data platform for the purposes of prevention and early identification of Serious Violence and other forms of Harm Outside the Home. The “Thames Valley Together” platform is currently in development and will be live in 2022; progress with development of the platform is being monitored by members of the Task and Finish Group steering development of the Harm Outside the Home Strategy, and key actions relating to use of the platform in preventing and addressing Harm Outside the Home will be incorporated into the Action Plan attached to the Strategy.

Strengthening our shared understanding of vulnerability and risk of Harm Outside the Home

In order to strengthen multi-agency working to prevent and address Harm Outside the Home, discussions with key stakeholders in development of the Strategy have focused in part on the different approaches agencies take to assessing vulnerability and risk of Harm Outside the Home.

Work in this area has already been undertaken and embedded in the Borough. For example, the Exploitation and Missing Risk Assessment Conference (EMRAC) has developed a tool and process designed to enable a comprehensive and robust assessment of risk of several forms of Harm Outside the Home. The Task and Finish Group tasked with development of the Harm Outside the Strategy has gathered examples of best practice from other areas who have developed multi-agency risk and vulnerability assessment methodologies, and tools to support professionals to identify risk early and respond appropriately. Delivery of this Strategy will involve reviewing approaches and tools to assess risk of Harm Outside the Home across the sector, in order to identify opportunities for strengthening the multi-agency approach to Harm Outside the Home in Wokingham Borough.

Developing a shared and strategically aligned understanding of thresholds of risk and vulnerability is a key enabler of effective interventions, by individual professionals and/or agencies, as well as multi-agency teamwork. Work to strengthen shared understanding of levels of risk and vulnerability will also assist with ongoing data analysis and performance monitoring, as common thresholds and understanding of vulnerability will enable those developing the strategy to interrogate data in the context of agreed levels of vulnerability and risk. Typically, levels of risk and vulnerability are assessed as “High” “Medium” or “Low”; or “Red”, “Amber” and “Green”. A shared multiagency understanding of which characteristics or issues constitute High, Medium or Low risk of Harm Outside the Home will enable data analysts to determine the profile of how many children and young people in Wokingham Borough fall into each category, any trends of note, or key themes that will help inform strategic priorities and key actions.

PART FOUR: GOVERNANCE

Governance

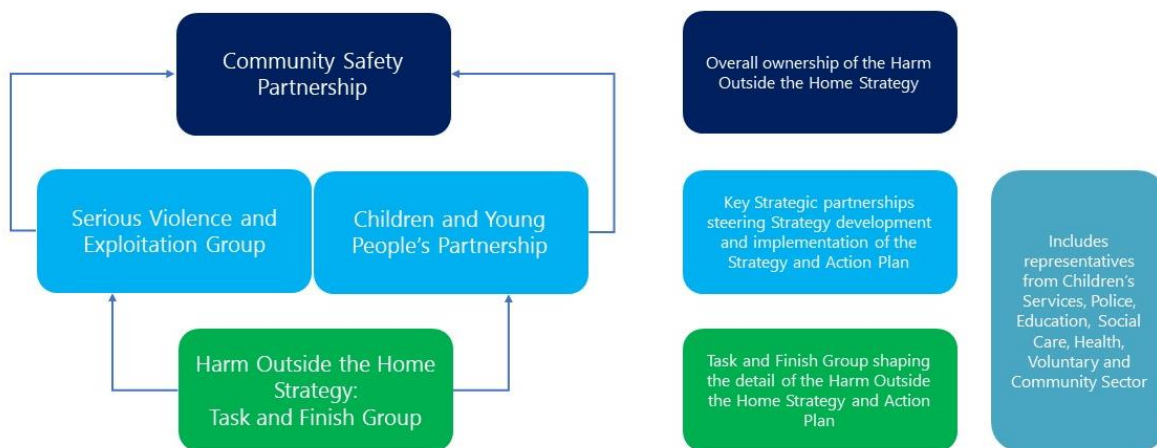
Delivery of this Strategy will be owned by the Community Safety Partnership, with support from the Serious Violence and Exploitation Group, and Children and Young People’s Partnership. This approach aims to ensure:

- clear multi-agency ownership and accountability for delivery of the Strategy
- appropriate steering and support from multi-agency partnerships which collectively address the full range of issues in scope of this Strategy
- sufficient capacity is in place to take forward Actions set out in the Action Plan
- reporting arrangements are clear, so that progress with delivery of the Strategy and assessments of impact can be fed up to senior, decision-making multi-agency groups

Into implementation, the **Serious Violence and Exploitation Group (SVEG)** will lead delivery of the Actions set out in the Action Plan, with support from members of the Children and Young People’s Partnership (CYPP). The SVEG will help co-ordinate activities to ensure the Action Plan is delivered, review progress, and issue formal reports on performance and progress with delivery of the Strategy to the Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Governance arrangements for the Harm Outside the Home Strategy are set out in Figure 5 below.

Figure 5: Governance arrangements for the Harm Outside the Home Strategy



APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: EVIDENCE BASE UNDERPINNING THE HARM OUTSIDE THE HOME STRATEGY

APPENDIX 2: HARM OUTSIDE THE HOME 0-25 (2022-25) ACTION PLAN