**Children’s Services Buddi Tag Policy**

Child exploitation Lead social worker

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# Introduction and Purpose

The **Buddi Tag** is designed to be worn securely around the ankle and works by using GPS and mobile network systems to pinpoint locations of individuals on a continuous basis. The resulting data will show an individual’s whereabouts and can be directly accessed by nominated professionals.

Buddi tags are worn on a purely **voluntary basis** by the wearer; to others the tag will appear as a ‘real’ tag fitted (most likely) due to criminal offences.

The key features of Buddi system include:

* adding inclusion / exclusion zones in support of safety planning or behaviour modification
* location mapping ability
* it is waterproof
* it has on body charging
* it is tamper proof
* it has a smart beacon and remote configuration ability which reduces the need to visit the wearer to set up the inclusion/exclusion zones.

The young person *and* their carers/families will receive a full briefing on how the Buddi Tag system operates.

# Scope of Policy

**Aims and Objectives**

**Aims:**

To promote safeguarding of young people from sexual and criminal exploitation.

To reduce the prevalence of young people from being trafficked.

To reduce the likelihood of young people from becoming victims of any crime.

To restrict the opportunity for young people to perpetrate crime (albeit because of exploitation.)

To help young people feel empowered to make safer choices, avoid peer pressure and avoid dangerous situations.

To assist Childrens Service workers & Police colleagues to locate a child when they have been reported missing.

To support a family in safeguarding their child.

**Objectives:**

CSC, together with relevant directorates and partners, will jointly identify young people who are at risk of harm and who may benefit from wearing a Buddi Tag.

CSC will ensure full engagement with the young person and their family or carers, and the multi-agency team will discuss the Buddi Tag fully before the wearing of a Buddi tag.

CSC will engage with the young person who is at risk in a relational manner; the approach taken will include rapport and trust building together with providing a full explanation of the options available to ensure the young person can understand the process and make an informed and consensual choice to wear a tag.

Once the Buddi Tag has been agreed, nominated professionals within Children’s Social care will have responsibility for monitoring its use and keeping families, carers and the multi-agency group updated.

The expectation is that the Tag is reviewed at least monthly to help evaluate outcomes for the young person and their family. As part of this review, it is essential for professionals to seek the voice of the young person so that they are empowered to make a choice. (Review discussions can be held within statutory meetings).

#  Context

**Terms of Reference**

The Buddi Tag will be considered for children where there are concerns regarding to criminal or sexual exploitation, significant missing episodes (due to exploitation) or serious youth violence.

The Buddi Tag should act as a deterrent against potential unsafe adults that may meet a young person, therefore the young person, the family and all professionals must ensure the programme is agreed to and kept confidential. Information about the Buddi tag should NOT be outlined as part of any care or support plans (this policy outlines where recording should be). A young person has a right to end the programme at any time, there should be no suggestion that this is compulsory. In addition, partner agencies need to be updated and agree with this policy.

The length of time that a young person will where the Buddi tag will be agreed prior to fitting, this may end prematurely or if appropriate maybe extended. In most cases the wearing of a tag would not exceed six months.

The Buddi tag will be available for any gender. The age of the young person wearing the Buddi tag will need to match with the likely age of a young person having a ‘real’ tag.

If family members do not agree but the young person agrees, all efforts will be made to speak with the family regarding their reservations in hope to resolve any feelings of disagreement or apprehensive. Ultimately, if family members do not agree, and they care for the young person a Buddi tag should not be fitted as this will likely impact on the success of the tag.

Consideration needs to be given regarding the capacity of the young person. If it is deemed that the young person does not have the level of capacity to understand how the Buddi tag works, then the programme should not go ahead. It is essential that the young person feels fully informed.

Exclusions zones maybe added to the Buddi tag programme if all parties agree that this this is a proportional response to the harm faced by the child / young person.

If a young person is already subject to restrictions (for example subject to an injunction) and a professional becomes aware that a young person has breached any terms of a legal order the professional would need to report this to the Police or Youth Justice team.

#  Suitability and Process

* Young people with a CE pursue banner or Topaz cohort will be the first cohort for consideration. (CE lead will review banners monthly).
* Consideration will also be being given to lower risk banners on a case-by-case basis.
* CE leads will continuously seek to identity potential young people when providing CE consultations.
* A young person who is regularly missing due to vulnerabilities to exploitation.
* Having the support of parents or carers will be seen as a positive factor.
* Ideally, the young person needs to have some level of understanding that they are at risk in their community.
* If a young person is showing signs of engaging with agencies, this will be seen as a positive factor to wearing the Buddi Tag.
* Operation managers will be informed of the Buddi Tag programme and ideal suitability; they will also be responsible to put forward potential young people.
* If there is a young person who managers believe would be suitable, they will notify the CE lead with a name and rational.
* The multi-agency professional group will need to be notified within a meeting setting to accommodate for any questions and enhance understanding. This can be via a CIN/CP/CLA/ risk management meeting.

**Process**

This will be **worn on voluntary basis only.**

The individual wearing the Buddi Tag will need to sign a consent form, along with parents or carers.

A risk assessment will need to be completed prior to the tag being used. The risk assessment will be completed by the children services worker, with support from CE lead and shall be authorised by the team manager. The risk assessment should be added to LCS/EHM. Good practice would be mean the risk assessment is completed within a multi-agency meeting so all professionals can contribute. If this is not the case the risk assessment will still need to be shared with professionals. There is a template form catered for the Buddi tag system.

The Buddi tag is not monitored by Children services workers or Police as a 24/7 service. Childrens service workers will review data on a once-a-week basis, or earlier if triggered. However, it can be viewed in ‘live time’.

Data will be reviewed by Children’s service workers, however there will be an agreement in place, which the wearer would consent to, which enables the sharing of the data with partner agencies.

Training for staff will be completed before they use the Buddi Tag. Buddi providers are available on the phone for additional support if required.

A ‘cover story’ for wearer will need to be provided prior to being used e.g., worn as part of restorative justice.

The Buddi Tag will need to be worn 24/7, but there will be an agreed length of time that the Tag is worn for (for example, 4 months).

If required, an expert witness statement for court purposes can be completed by Children service workers.

There could be special circumstances whereby the tag is temporarily removed, for example of a medical procedure but this will need agreed by professionals.

# Recording

Police will need to be notified and a flag will need to be placed on PNC regarding wearing the tag.

LCS/EHM will need to be updated with arrangements of Tag outlining any exclusion zones. This should clearly be outlined within the case summary and any relevant risk assessments.

Relevant Risk Assessments/Plans will need to be updated with Buddi Tag arrangements.

When reviewing the outcomes of the tag please record this as separate case note titled ‘Buddi Tag review’ so it can be clearly identified.