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**EMPOWER U**

**(Child Exploitation and Missing Contextual Safeguarding Hub) Offer**

We know that children who are missing are vulnerable to exploitation, that a child missing is also an indicator of exploitation and that Children in Care who go missing are particularly vulnerable to exploitation. For this reason, BCT and Partners have recently aligned our responses to Child Exploitation and Missing within the new Exploitation and Missing Safeguarding Hub which now sits alongside the front door for (CASS). The hub is a partnership team which takes a contextual approach to protecting children and keeping them safe and free from exploitation with a coordinated and proactive response from prevention through to safeguarding and prosecution.

The hub brings together what was the BCT Exploitation and Missing service( now EMPOWER U ) , West Midlands Police ( Locate), SOCEX police as well as WMP Child exploitation coordinator, and analyst ( investigator) and Childrens Society. Additional to this is the virtual input from Health, Education, Housing , Probation Community Safety Partnerships, Youth Services and Red Thread, and Gang’s Police ; conversations are ongoing with the virtual partners and others regarding their role within the hub. The hub continues to develop to develop to its full potential and also be instrumental in supporting the development of a contextual safeguarding approach across the City and wider partnerships.

The hub works alongside colleagues in existing statutory and non- statutory provision offering a range of services to both CIC and other children to reduce the risk of child exploitation and missing episodes by providing:

* Screening and triage of missing episodes and CE referrals with immediate advice and support with immediate safety planning and disruption pending onward referral to exploitation panels
* Missing from Home and Care Return Interviews and direct brief intervention for young people who go missing
* Improved evidence gathering, intelligence/mapping and information sharing to inform police and partnership problem profiling, disruption and prosecutions
* Links in with commissioners regarding placement suitability to support permanence planning
* The conduit for criminal and safeguarding investigations both in and out of force areas including progression of National Referral Mechanism referrals (NRMs)
* Support and advice to colleagues/social workers re CSE/CCE and peer on peer violence specialist intervention with children and parents including children looked after out of borough
* Work in partnership with the BCT Practice Hub and Safeguarding Partnership to develop a contextual approach to safeguarding across the workforce and partner agencies
* Coordination and oversight of missing and child exploitation cases via the Disruption planning meetings
* Referral to specialist commissioned services including Barnardos and Children’s Society
* Working with care homes across the borough re exploitation missing and peer on peer violence
* Support practitioners with safety planning and assessment of risk outside the family home

The ambition is for the hub to provide a systematic, coordinated, proactive and expedited response from prevention through to safeguarding and prosecution including support to victims through the judicial process. Future planned activity includes:

* Partnership problem profiling based on victim, location and perpetrator
* Defining the role of the hub in respect of children missing from education and the relationship with exploitation
* Development of expertise in disruption planning and location based assessments and interventions
* Inform outreach provision: training and presentations to schools, youth centres, colleges, professionals
* Increase capacity to co- work complex case work alongside statutory caseworkers
* Fast tracking of access to specialist services such as sexual health, therapeutic services, education, housing etc
* Ongoing support for older children transitioning to adult services
* Considering widening the response to include other types of contextual risks such as radicalisation