



**Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership**

## **Child Exploitation Strategy**

### **April 2018–April 2021**

**Working together to safeguard children in Gloucestershire at risk of  
going missing, being exploited and/or being trafficked**

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## Gloucestershire's Safeguarding Children Partnership Pledge



On behalf of the Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership (GSCP) our Pledge to children and young people is to commit to work together to identify those at risk of child exploitation at the earliest opportunity and put in place protective measures. The issue of child exploitation continues to be a significant feature in our work across the partnership led by the Missing and Exploitation Subgroup. This is an area that the partnership as a whole is very passionate about ensuring that we get it right. We have seen the impact of exploitation on our children and young people and the damage that it does to their long term outcomes.

This strategy is designed to address child exploitation in a coordinated robust manner and most importantly to ensure that the voice of children and young people is at the centre of all that we do. It is the failure to listen to their experiences and responding appropriately to them that makes children subject to exploitation more vulnerable, feeling isolated and unsupported. In Gloucestershire our professionals must understand the need to listen to the lived experiences of children and young people and to work with partnership colleagues to support them to improve outcomes and make good practice embedded in all that we do together.

## **We will:**

- Seek to understand the prevalence of exploitation in Gloucestershire through information sharing and data analysis.
- Take a proactive, multi-agency approach to ensure maximum impact.
- Focus on early identification and providing early help, with a shared approach to raising awareness.
- Support parents, communities and professionals to identify signs of vulnerability and know what they should do and where to get help.
- Establish the Gloucestershire Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub as a single point of referral, with links to other areas of the local authority.
- Ensure professionals working with children at all levels of need have access to expert advice and consultation.
- Develop a model of good practice based on a child or person-centred approach to supporting victims, involving them and their family.
- Devise a strategic approach to disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators.
- Monitor outcomes and learn from successes and failures.



## Introduction

**Child Sexual Exploitation:** Child sexual exploitation is a form of abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity ....(a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; It can occur through the use of technology – from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2018a) & Child sexual exploitation: Definition and guide for practitioners (Department for Education. 2017)

**Child Criminal Exploitation:** Child criminal exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 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 – from Working Together to Safeguard Children (HM Government 2018a) & Serious Violence Strategy (HM Government 2018b)

The Casey Report of February 2015 alerted us to the potential for sustained organisational denial in recognising the extent of the problem. The Government's publication 'Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation' March 2015 states:

***'We must eradicate the culture of denial that allows organisations and individuals to avoid the issue, blame others, or distract themselves with endless planning rather than making sure they actually make a difference. Changing culture requires strong leadership, clear accountability, engagement with victims and staff, and unequivocal feedback on what is working well and what is not across the whole local area'.***

Gloucestershire, like other areas of the country, is faced with the challenge of tackling the issue of children and young people being abused through sexual exploitation, children and young people going missing, young people involved with gangs and/or being trafficked. This strategy refers to child exploitation and therefore, both Criminal Exploitation and Child Sexual Exploitation are used throughout the strategy.

Contextual Safeguarding as defined in Working Together 2018 provides a useful framework for this strategy and in Gloucestershire this approach will be used to review and respond to the wider vulnerabilities and risks relating to CE.



## **Working Together 2018 guidance informs that practitioners should, in particular, be alert to the potential need for early help for a child who:**

- Is disabled and has specific additional needs.
- Has special educational needs.
- Is a young carer.
- Is showing signs of engaging in anti-social or criminal behaviour, including gang involvement and association with organised crime groups.
- Is frequently missing/goes missing from care or home.
- Is at risk of modern slavery, tackling or exploitation.
- Is at risk of radicalization or exploited.
- Is in a family circumstance presenting challenges for the child, such as drug and alcohol misuse, adult mental health issues or domestic abuse.
- Is misusing drugs and alcohol themselves.
- Has returned home to their family from care.
- Is privately fostered.



This exploitation strategy recognises the importance of listening to the voices of children and young people in a meaningful manner. It includes ethos and changes required in service delivery where relevant and appropriate. Gloucestershire's Contextual safeguarding approach links child sexual exploitation with vulnerabilities - for example when young people involved with gangs and/or go missing. This CE strategy recognises that these matters cannot be dealt with in isolation and must be considered in a holistic manner.

- 1.1 The GSCP has a significant role in strengthening the strategic framework for tackling child exploitation. The collective 'ownership' of the policy and practice at the highest level in partner organisations is crucial to its success. Therefore, the Strategy is led by the GSCP and will in addition inform collaboration with Gloucestershire Safeguarding Adults Board (GSAB) in recognition of the risks extending to, and overlapping with vulnerable adults.
- 1.2 The strategy builds on the work already taking place within Gloucestershire and replaces the CSE strategy of 2014. It outlines how all agencies will work together to ensure the most effective and coordinated response to exploitation over the

next three years. Multi-agency working is further strengthened by the Gloucestershire MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) and MACE (Multi-Agency Missing and Child Exploitation Panel – formerly the CSE/Missing MARAC) (Appendix I and II).

- 1.3 The governance arrangements for this CE strategy have been agreed to ensure that there is effective leadership of the strategy. The strategy is owned by the GSCP as a whole and its work will be overseen by the - Child Missing and Exploitation sub-group which considers our response to children who are exploited, missing, gangs, and trafficked children.
- 1.4 The Child Exploitation and Missing Sub group is Multi agency and drives local responses to the identification and support of these vulnerable Children. The sub-group is committed to a collaborative approach including the engagement of voluntary organisations and will drive the following priorities:
  - **Prepare**
  - **Prevent**
  - **Protect and**
  - **Pursue**
- 1.5 In this Strategy we aim to:
  - Take a shared but co-ordinated multi-agency approach to raise awareness of child exploitation and practice early intervention.
  - Provide targeted child-centred support, for those who are at risk of or already victims of sexual exploitation.
  - Take a shared but co-ordinated multi-agency approach to deterring and disrupting child exploitation, and prosecuting potential and active perpetrators whenever possible.
- 1.6 The Objectives of the strategy are to ensure that:
  - All relevant professionals have a good understanding of the prevalence, risk factors and indicators of child exploitation in their area and have a good understanding of the referral pathways.



- Children, young people, parents and carers, and members of the wider community have an increased awareness of child exploitation
- Children, young people, parents and carers, and members of the wider community know who they can speak to if they have concerns about child exploitation
- Children and young people at risk of CE and other related risks are identified and effectively supported to prevent them from becoming victims of exploitation.
- Victims of exploitation are listened to, professionals work to understand and support them to achieve positive outcomes.
- The activities of perpetrators are either effectively disrupted or result in successful prosecution and action is taken to prevent them from exploiting other children.
- To develop the performance information and data to support and underpin the ongoing development and delivery of this Strategy, and aligned action plans.

## **2. What is child sexual exploitation?**

- 2.2 CSE is often difficult to identify and stop. It preys upon the most vulnerable in society and perpetrators frequently evade prosecution. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, or include non-contact activities including: involvement of children and young people in the production of sexual images; forcing children and young people to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities; encouraging children and young people to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet) according to the National Crime Agency (NCA).
- 2.3 a significant number of CSE offences include deceiving children and young people into producing indecent images of themselves and engaging in sexual chat online or sexual activity over a webcam. Children and young people at risk of harm online may not have previous vulnerabilities that are often associated with victims of sexual abuse and exploitation. This means that they are less likely to be identified and previously known to authorities. Children and young people often do not see the dangers of sharing intimate images of themselves to strangers. The internet creates a false feeling of security and diminishes inhibitions that would usually be prevalent offline.
- 2.4 Although majority of victims are female, evidence suggests that boys who are exploited are even more difficult to detect. Victims come from a range of different social groups, but many will have additional vulnerabilities such as: problems in their

home life, previous victims of child abuse, experiencing emotional and mental health needs, or affected by substance misuse problems. Some may have friends who have been exploited or have links to gangs.

- 2.5. Young people can be sexually exploited by people of a similar age as well as adults. Research is increasingly demonstrating that a significant number of sexually exploited young people have been abused by their peers. In some cases, young women and young men who have been exploited themselves, by adults or peers, will be exploited to recruit other young people to be abused. Exploitation can include coercion for peer on peer abuse is an emerging theme. This can be 'one on one' abuse or group related. Sexual exploitation also occurs within and between street gangs, where sex is used in exchange for safety, protection, drugs and belonging.
- 2.6. Voice of the Young Person - There is a wealth of evidence (Jay, 2014, Holger-Ambrose *et al.* 2013, Hayes and Unwin, 2016, Lebloch and King, 2006, Puffett, 2016 and Dodsworth, 2014) suggesting that the most effective ways of engaging with young people who are at risk or already involved in CSE is to take an informal, person centred approach, gaining trust and building a relationship with a young person. Melrose (2013) suggests that interventions that attempt to rescue a young person will more often than not come up against resistance at being rescued. Furthermore, interventions that attempt to rescue, act only at an individual level and do not take into account underpinning/constraining factors that have led to the young person being in that situation.

Throughout the literature there are continual references made to the specific skills needed to work with young people at risk of CSE and the way this work should look.

It is vital therefore that this strategy guides the ways in which young people at risk or involved in CSE will be worked with, the approach that will be taken and identifies which organisations will be involved in this work.

### **3. What do we know about child criminal exploitation (CCE) in Gloucestershire?**

- 3.1 The problem profile aims to provide an understanding of the nature and extent of the problem locally, identifying areas of priority.
- 3.2 There is currently insufficient partnership data and this limits our understanding of the scale and nature of CSE within the county and is an area for development outlined in this strategy. The Police Crime data 1st January 2015 - 25th August 2016 highlighted 127 crimes involving children and young people containing an exploitative element.

It is accepted that this is an under-representative figure and improvements to the identification of CSE is already underway to improve the identification and collation of data. In addition, the senior CSE Police lead has made the decision to commission a report on the problem profile in Gloucestershire. This report will collate data from Children's Services with data from other agencies to ensure a more accurate picture for the Gloucestershire can be developed and this data will to inform priorities going forward.

- 3.3 In the period April 2019 to April 2020 there were 700 screening tools received by the CSE Team. Out of the 700 tools 218 were male and 482 were female. The most common age group was 15 year olds. The youngest by age was 10. Prior to April 2020 this was all the information that was being captured. Since this time we have included if the risk was associated with CSE or CE, their legal status and locality.

Between April 2019 and April 2020, there were 21 crimes which held a CSE crime tag, this figure is low and is likely due to the manner in which crimes are tagged – i.e. they will only be tagged as a CSE crime if the Modus Operandi (MO) matches exactly the definition of CSE. The CSE team are currently holding 61 crimes for investigation (spread over a team of 5 investigators). As a team, over the last year we have utilised resources from the Regional Organised Crime Unit to proactively target offenders and will continue to seek to use this wherever possible. The nature of the crime investigations undertaken by the team range from one victim, one suspect where the suspect is predatory or has exhibited predatory behaviours to offences involving either groups of victims or offenders – these are both online and contact offences or a combination of both. As a team we have been involved in a number of complex strategy meetings where a police investigation has been undertaken as part of the multiagency response.

In the period May 2019 – April 2020 there were 1061 children who had been reported as missing. 513 were children in care. 73 were children on a child protection plan. 202 were children in need. 92 were children from other local authorities and 181 were children not open or known to social care. In respect of Return Interviews an average of 65 to 70% are completed a month. The weekly multi-agency missing meeting provides a framework for a more robust approach and in gathering real time data, together with collating details of return interviews in order to gain an improved understanding of 'push' and 'pull' factors

- 3.4 The analysis of children and young people subject to MACE arrangements highlights a prevalence of peer on peer abuse, exploitation through social media usage; youth produced sexual imagery and county lines activity. The recent strengthening

of the MACE Panel will strengthen the understanding of Gloucestershire's problem profile in the future. The MACE approach using the VOLT methodology (Victims, Offenders, Locations and Themes) will provide improved intelligence gathering and analysis. In addition, the analysis of return interviews will greatly improve the understanding of CSE in Gloucestershire.

## 4. **Categories of Concern** [New combined screening tool to be launched soon]

### 4.1 Stages of sexual exploitation

Barnardo's have identified three stages of sexual exploitation:

1. A young person is involved in inappropriate relationships
2. A young person is a victim of peer and 'boyfriend' exploitation (which may be associated with groups and/or gangs, forming parts of gang rituals including 'initiation')
3. A young person is involved in organised sexual exploitation. This can involve moving young people around towns and cities for sex and sometimes arranging networks for the exchange of money for sexual services.

### 4.2 Categories of risk

When assessing concerns about CSE the categories below provide a framework to be used in Gloucestershire including the MACE assessing the required response towards children and young people thought to be at risk of CSE.

Young people assessed as being in Categories 1– 4 will be provided with a range of services from relevant agencies informed by the specific needs of each case. The CSE team will offer and/or coordinate a specialist service for children who are assessed in the 3-4 categories.

<b>Category 1 Mild risk of CSE</b>	<b>Category 2-3 Moderate risk of CSE</b>	<b>Category 4 Significant risk of CSE</b>
Vulnerable child or young person with one or two risk indicators.	Vulnerable child or young person with a number of risk indicators present e.g. periods of going missing, lack of protective networks, changes in behaviour, appearance or routine, spending	Vulnerable child or young person with multiple risk indicators present e.g. regular periods of going missing, disengaged from professionals, isolated, unexplained sums of money or goods, relationships with an older or 'controlling' person, entering vehicles driven by unknown adults,

	time with inappropriate adults, sexting, STI's, use of substances.	disclosure of harm, STI's, use of substances.
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## 5. Information Sharing

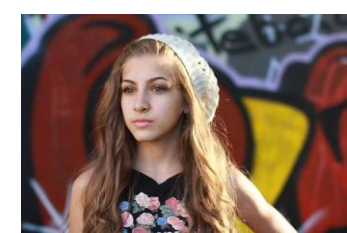
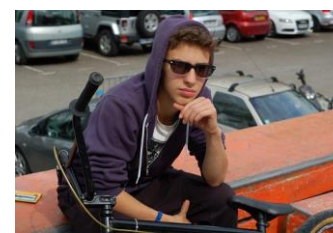
- 5.1 Effective sharing of information across agencies will be essential if young people at risk of and experiencing child exploitation are to be identified and supported at an earlier stage and if perpetrators' activities are to be disrupted or lead to prosecutions.

Working Together 2018 reinforces the importance of professionals sharing information in order to safeguard children and young people. In particular, the document emphasises the importance of professionals sharing information: *"Fear about sharing information **must not be allowed** to stand in the way of the need to promote the welfare, and protect the safety, of children, which must always be the paramount concern."* (Page 18 Working Together 2018).

- 5.2 As CE usually includes sexual abuse of children and young people and criminal activity, the existing guidance on information sharing relating to seeking and potentially overriding of consent. Working Together 2018 provides myth busting section which has guidance for professionals to share information on CE – the principle that safeguarding of children should override the need for consent: *"where it is not appropriate to seek consent, because the individual cannot give consent, or it is not reasonable to obtain consent, or because to gain consent would put a child's or young person's safety at risk".* (Page 20 Working Together 2018). As is the case with all children and young people at risk of significant harm, victims of CE must be supported through high quality casework which will include discussions about what information needs to be shared with whom and the reasons for sharing information.

## 6. The role of MASH (Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub) including the CSE Team

- 6.1 The Multi- Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) is an opportunity to develop a single point of coordination of all referrals in relation to CE. The GSCP team will have governance ownership of the CSE Team.



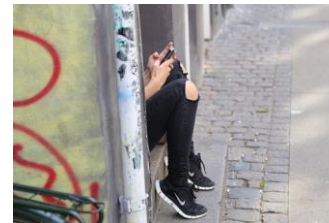
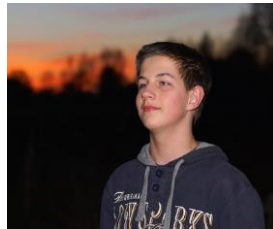
## **The Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) Team**

- 6.1 The CSE team is a multi-agency team, comprising of social care workers, Police officers, outreach workers and a family support worker. The CSE team are based in the Public Protection Unit and are a County wide team. The CSE team do not case hold, but are dedicated to supporting professionals working with young people who are at risk of CSE.
- 6.2 The CSE Team works closely with the Missing & Mental Health Team [Police] and the specialist YST Missing Team. Collaboration and support provided to identify and manage Missing Persons as part of a Child Exploitation remit
- 6.3 The team specialise in gathering, analysing and reporting on information regarding children and young people at risk or involved in CSE and those missing and/or being trafficked.
- 6.4 In addition, the CSE team is dedicated to disrupt and investigate CSE activity within the County. An important aspect of data analysis will be to identify possible gaps in intelligence and awareness about CSE. The proposed plan is to further refine the 'Problem Profile' to analyse the particular patterns and prevalence of CSE in Gloucestershire.
- 6.5 A data set will be developed and collated with information of all children and young people referred to the CSE team where there are concerns about CSE. Intelligence will be gathered in respect of missing children, and/or trafficked, in order to provide a comprehensive overview of related concerns.

## **7. The role of Multi-Agency Strategy Meetings (Complex Strategy Meetings)**

- 7.1 These meetings are key to ensure that there is a robust and multi-agency process for discussing all children and young people where there are CE concerns. Where there are concerns about CE, these meetings will be convened and chaired by a Head of Service. The meetings will include professionals who are working with individual victims or young people at risk. These strategy meetings will be key to ensuring concerns are reviewed and referred to the MACE Panel as appropriate. It is also important to note that CE needs to be viewed as 'abuse' and as such, child protection processes should be followed in addition to a referral to the MACE Panel where deemed appropriate.

## **8. The role of MACE Panel (Multi-Agency Missing and Child Exploitation Panel)**



- 8.1 The MACE Panel is a monthly meeting co-chaired by the MACE Police Lead, and CSE coordinator in Gloucestershire. Its main purpose is to develop and maintain a detailed overview of the profile of child exploitation and missing children in the county. Individual children and young people will not usually be discussed at the MACE Panel unless they have previously been referred into MASH or the CSE team and discussed at a strategy meeting. This is to ensure that any risk to the child has been managed in a timely and appropriate manner, as well as enabling the MACE Panel to maintain a strategic overview of CE. A common referral form has been established, which includes mapping interrelations with other children and young people who appear to be at risk, along with details of alleged perpetrator or any other relevant people. The arrangements are further strengthened by the weekly reviewing of the most concerning CE and Missing children.

8.2 The MACE Panel provides an opportunity to share information and intelligence in relation to CSE as well as to:

- provide a multi-agency response to operational issues
- oversee prevention activity
- reviewing the profile of CE and missing children
- identify any trends or 'hotspots' where CE appears to be a particular issue
- Ensure the disruption and prosecution strategy is implemented and effective
- Ensure coordinated approaches with other local authorities where required, including where looked after children and young people are placed out of the authority.

## **9. Approaches to looked after children**

9.1 For Children and young people looked after; the initial responsibility to respond to any concerns regarding CE is held by the local authority in which the child resides. This would include MASH and MACE processes, although it will not always be the case that such arrangements will reflect those of Gloucestershire.

9.2 The child's allocated social worker has a significant role in maintaining regular, effective contact with the young person, regardless of where they are placed. Along with Independent Reviewing Officers, social workers also have a major role in relation to engaging and monitoring the views and behaviours of the young people concerned as well as ensuring effective communication with their carers.

9.3 Social workers would be expected to attend any relevant local planning meetings in other authorities that take place in relation to CE. To reinforce robust oversight of children and young people and their placements, the following procedures are followed:

- The local authority ensures that formal notifications to the 'host' authority take place when looked after children and young people are placed out of the authority.



- The Gloucestershire placements team maintain a record of looked after children and young people placed with independent private and voluntary providers out of the authority, including those in residential provision.
- The Gloucestershire placements team carry out specific checks before placing children and young people in such placements including the number of missing episodes recorded and any safeguarding issues. The views of other authorities should always be sought before using a new resource.
- A CE risk assessment is carried out in relation to each young person before they are placed in a particular placement, including the consideration of risks posed by or to other young people already placed there as well as known risks in the vicinity of the placement.

## **10. Children and Young people involved in gangs or serious youth violence**

- 10.1 The main priorities of street gangs usually include protecting territory, selling drugs or involvement in a range of other criminal activity. Recent national research ‘ If only someone had listened: Office of the children’s commissioner’s Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups’ November 2013, revealed the prevalence of sexual violence within or between gangs, including the use of rape as a weapon in gang conflict or punishment.

Young girls may be expected to offer sex to achieve status or gain protection. The research found that many professionals fail to regard such violence as sexual exploitation. There is also a risk that boys could be exploited through being coerced into initiation rituals which include sexual exploitation. Intelligence about known gang activity and perpetrators will be provided from MASH, the Police and the Youth Offending team. The local authority Sexual Exploitation leads will develop effective information sharing arrangements with strategic groups addressing gang-related issues in Gloucestershire.

- 10.2 In Gloucestershire, the profile of cases appears to be peer-on-peer abuse. There have been some links with gang members on a one to one basis, but there was no established link between the exploitation and their gang associations. Our revised strategy will focus on understanding the profile.



## 11. Missing Children and young people

- 11.1 For the purposes of this strategy the following definition will be used for children and young people missing from home or care:

**‘A child (i.e. a young person under the age of 18 years) is to be considered ‘missing’ if their whereabouts are unknown, whatever the circumstances of their disappearance. They will be considered missing until they are located and their well-being or otherwise is established’**

GSCP Children & Young People Reported as a Missing Person - Partnership Working Protocol The MACE will also consider children missing from:

- **Education**
- **Home**
- **Care**

- 11.2 In working with children and young people all policies and processes set out in this strategy must take account of and prioritise listening to their voice. Children and young people who have been subjected to CE may have other multiple needs and it is important that professionals take the time to understand each child individually. CE interventions should take account of needs in the context of the child's life experiences. Contextual Safeguarding, as defined in Working Together

2018, is an essential aspect of this work and as is the use of BASE model and restorative practice models adopted by Gloucestershire.

- 11.3** The link between children and young people being exploited and children going missing is very strong. Some 140,000 children go missing from home or care in the UK each year and it has been estimated that running away places around a quarter of this number at risk of serious harm. Children go missing from home or care for a variety of reasons and once they are away from home, they are vulnerable to many risks including CE, gang exploitation, becoming involved in crime or becoming a victim of crime.
- 11.4** Failing to recognise missing episodes is a serious safeguarding issue which can lead to significant gaps in agencies' awareness and the effectiveness of their response. Early intervention with a missing child can reduce the harm they experience. A multi-agency Missing Panel ensures that intelligence is effectively coordinated and that adequate plans are put in place to keep children safe. It is informed by the 'return interviews' where reasons children have gone missing are explored. It is therefore essential that Return interviews take place on time and patterns of missing episodes are reviewed and analysed to safeguard children. This Panel coordinates its work with the MACE Panel and will report to the GSCP annually.
- 11.5** As required by the Department of Education's 2014 'Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care', Gloucestershire has a protocol that sets out local arrangements for dealing with these children. Safe and well checks are carried out by the police as soon as possible once a missing child has been found. They are intended to check for any indications that the child has suffered harm, establish where and with whom they have been with, and provide the child with an opportunity to disclose any offending by or against them. Within 72 hours of the child returning to their home or care setting, the child is offered a return interview, which provides an opportunity to uncover information that can help to protect the child from:
- The risk of going missing again
  - Risks they may have been exposed to while they were missing
  - Risk factors in their home or care setting
- 11.6** All actions and laws which apply to missing children, in general, equally apply to unaccompanied children. Despite the enormous risks to which unaccompanied migrant children and young people are exposed, their disappearance is usually underreported. For many of these children, the journey into exploitation and suffering does not end once they arrive on EU

shores. In the UK, The British Asylum Screening Unit reported that 60% of the unaccompanied minors accommodated in UK social care centres go missing and are not found again (Frontex, 2010).

## **12. Trafficking**

12.1 Article 3 of the Palermo Protocol To Prevent, Suppress And Punish Trafficking In Persons, Especially Women And Children, Supplementing the United Nations Convention Against Transnational Organised Crime to the UN Convention (2000) (ratified by the UK on 6 February 2006) defines trafficking as:

a. “Trafficking of persons” shall mean the recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation. Exploitation shall include, at a minimum, the exploitation of the prostitution of others or other forms of sexual exploitation, forced labour or services, slavery or practices similar to slavery, servitude or the removal of organs;

b. The consent of a victim of trafficking in persons to the intended exploitation set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article shall be irrelevant where any of the means set forth in subparagraph (a) have been used;

c. The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of a child for the purpose of exploitation shall be considered “trafficking in persons” even if this does not involve any of the means set forth in sub-paragraph (a) of this article;

d. “Child” shall mean any person under eighteen years of age.

12.2 In this practice guidance a child is defined according to the Children Acts 1989 and 2004 as anyone who has not yet reached their 18th birthday. References to ‘children’ therefore mean ‘children and young people’. As stated in Working Together 2018

to Safeguard Children, the fact that a child has reached the age of 16 does not change his or her status or entitlement to services or protection under the relevant legislation.

- 12.3 The Palermo Protocol establishes children and young people as a special case. Any child transported for exploitative reasons is considered to be a trafficking victim, whether or not they have been forced or deceived. This is partly because it is not considered possible for children and young people to give informed consent. Even when a child understands what has happened, they may still appear to submit willingly to what they believe to be the will of their parents or accompanying adults. It is important that these children and young people are protected too.
- 12.4 Care leavers are particularly vulnerable and to ensure that their needs are met PREPARE holistically, this strategy also addresses our role, in liaison with other agencies, to tackle exploitation of vulnerable young adults up to the age of 25.

### **13. GSCP's Exploitation Strategy for 2018-21: Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue**

- 13.1 This strategy aims to ensure a coordinated approach across all partner agencies and the engagement of local communities so that they all work together to prevent risks to vulnerable young people and ensure that we have a proactive approach to identifying those at risk, providing appropriate support, and disrupting and prosecuting offenders.

The effectiveness of this strategy will be informed by their voices of children and young people – sourced both from a local and national perspective.

- 13.2 Locally the role of the LADO in prepare, prevent, protect and pursue is important and is therefore included in this section of the Strategy.

The allegation management process provides a framework that manages perpetrators that are in a position of trust over children whether there is a criminal investigation or not.

The threshold for instigating the allegation management process is where;

- A member of staff or volunteer has harmed or may have harmed a child.
- Possibly committed a criminal offence relating to a child
- Behaved towards a child or children in a way that indicates he/she may pose a risk of harm to a child.

Within the role of the LADO information sharing with other organisations is key to identify any safeguarding risk and ensure proactive steps are made to prevent the abuse of children.

One organisation that is involved in that safeguarding overview is the district councils licencing departments situated in each of the district councils.

After a review of practices a number of additional steps will be undertaken to ensure the process is robust with good information sharing between agencies to enable positive action where necessary towards identified perpetrators that hold licences approved by the district councils.

#### **Actions agreed;**

- A conference between the Licencing team, LADO, Police (If applicable) will take place before any Licencing reviews that are intended to be held. This will look to establish what information is available and what can be disclosed to the review panel as well as giving reasons why such material is not able to be disclosed. As a result of this meeting the panel can be given the updated position and decide if any additional representation at panel is necessary
- Awareness training will be given to panel members to ensure they are aware of the constraints and processes relating to the police and LADO roles.
- Councils Licencing departments to look at ensuring a consistent approach to information sharing and proactive management of identified perpetrators is maintained.

13.3 To drive the following priorities of **PREPARE, PREVENT, PROTECT** and **PURSUE**, action plans are confirmed and overseen by the GSCP's established Child Missing and Exploitation Subgroup

## **14. PREPARE.**

Prepare is essential aspect of the strategy. All agencies in Gloucestershire will prepare to address child exploitation as part of the day to day work and ensure that it is embedded in organisational structures and practices. Preparation and input will take place by inclusion of child exploitation in agency's information, incorporated in community and school based education and at the fore front of all on going work.

14.1 Preparation for working with child exploitation is part of the community capacity building, intelligence and analysis of problems, disruption to perpetrator activity and the development of high quality community resources.

14.2. Raising awareness in the community of child exploitation including where it occurs within the context of modern slavery.

14.3 Child Exploitation takes place in local communities and information known to partners could be used to highlight the threat and establish risk. It is anticipated that an improved intelligence picture will enable effective action in a greater number of cases of child exploitation.

14.4 Within Gloucestershire, partners have signed up to work together to meet the core 'aims and principles' set out within this strategy. As part of GSCP, they are committed and all partners have acknowledged that a proactive, co-ordinated, multi-agency approach will be effective in disrupting child exploitation and prosecuting perpetrators.

We will Prepare through:

- Multi-agency meetings/discussions to share relevant intelligence through data. Shared by the partnership.
- Intelligence will be reviewed and discussed at the GSCP Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup to ensure that any patterns in respect of child exploitation activity are identified and responded to.
- GSCP Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup will discuss views and patterns of Child exploitation to provide a strategic overview of the issues in Gloucestershire.

- Professionals will share soft intelligence between meetings especially with the CSE Team – the effectiveness of this will be reviewed by the GSCP Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup reporting on exceptions to the GSCP.
- This full range of responses will go beyond traditional law enforcement and the multiagency meeting/discussion will provide a range of support for children, families and others, raising awareness and disrupting activity for the purpose of protecting and safeguarding children and young people.
- An analysis of the child exploitation training needs of Lead Officers and practitioners.



**Success in PREPARE will mean:**



- Sharing of Multi Agency Data sets will inform practice.
- Intelligence shared will support detection and prevention of child exploitation.
- Lead Members and Practitioners training assessment will inform training of Lead members and practitioners.
- Soft intelligence sharing between practitioners and the report of its impact by GSCP Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup will enable a more effective landscape to respond to child exploitation.
- GSCP Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup regular review of activities that go beyond legal and other frameworks has an impact on reducing child exploitation activity.
- GSCP provides leadership of Prepare strategy providing support and challenge to ensure that the strategy is implemented.
- An increase in parents/carers and members of the public accessing raising awareness events and confirming that they know where to access help following the events.
- An increase in public and practitioner consultations and reports of child exploitation in Gloucestershire.



## **15. PREVENT – Making it difficult to exploit children**

**Our aim is to ensure that as many people as possible; members of staff, members of the public and young people – know the risks and signs of child exploitation, and how to report them.**

Preventing child exploitation is the most desirable outcome for children in Gloucestershire and every effort will be made by agencies to ensure that agencies work together to prevent child exploitation. Therefore, raising awareness amongst children and young people, parents/carers, practitioners and the community, including the business community, to identify and respond to concerns of child exploitation is a key priority.

We will provide information to teachers, parents and communities, helping them to understand these risks, recognise the signs that a child may be vulnerable or subject to this abuse, and take appropriate action.

We will focus on early identification help. This will be aligned to Gloucestershire's Early Help Strategy which outlines a common approach across the partnership to support families and ensure all Gloucestershire children and young people achieve their full potential.

We will provide training to key professionals who may be in contact with young people who display heightened vulnerability to exploitation. This will help identify those at risk, and prevent exploitation through building resilience and providing support.

We will develop our approach through:

- Delivering an education programme to raise awareness amongst young people through universal services, including schools and youth clubs, and targeting the younger age range. This will link to the e-safety strategy. We will support innovative approaches to engage with groups who are seen as hard to reach.
- Raising awareness amongst parents, professionals and communities to help adults identify signs of vulnerability and know what they should do and where to get help. This will include specific briefings/conferences for parents and foster carers.
- Communication strategy promoting child exploitation awareness via local media,
- Consultations with children and young people about their knowledge of child exploitation
- Guidance setting out a shared risk assessment model and an integrated planning process. This will set out the expectations of officers across agencies to proactively respond to risk and vulnerability.
- Embedding the use of the screening tool to identify vulnerable young people.

- Providing targeted training to key professionals – particularly those linked to ‘hot spots’, helping them to identify signs early.
- Developing links to services for young adults (up to 25yrs) to ensure they are aware of the issue and understand their duty to support vulnerable adults.
- Linking vulnerable young people to early help support services via the MASH. Ensure that professionals providing support have access to relevant training to understand child exploitation and build resilience in young people to protect them from exploitation.
- Developing new guidance to promote an integrated approach and a shared model for assessing risk.
- Ensuring professionals working at all levels of need have access to expert advice and consultation, and understand their duty to identify vulnerability and risk, and ensure young people are provided with appropriate support.
- Dedicated training for elected members.
- Support lead roles and Champions for child exploitation within key statutory agencies, schools and the faith/voluntary sectors.

### **Success in PREVENT will mean:**

An increase in the number of children and young people identified and protected before becoming exposed to actual exploitation.

- An increase in the number of Lead Officers and practitioners trained in identifying and appropriately responding to child exploitation
- An increase in the number of children and young people accessing awareness raising events/training – including healthy relationships and awareness of harmful sexual behaviour – and confirming that children and young people know where to access help
- An increase in parents/carers and members of the public accessing raising awareness events – and confirming that they know where to access help following the events

## 16. PROTECT – and support

**Our aim is to identify those at risk and provide them with early help – and support victims of child exploitation to break free from exploitation and help reconstruct healthy lives.**

We will ensure single and multi-agency processes and procedures are effective, efficient and fit for purpose to support the protection of children and young people from the risks and impact of child exploitation. This will involve:

- Raising the profile of child exploitation through a pledge signed by all agencies represented at GSCP.
- The collation and analysis of the profile of child exploitation in Gloucestershire and associated cross border issues – to be regularly updated to help inform strategic and operational activity.
- Evaluation of responses including early help, CIN and Child Protection.
- The strengthening and Evaluation of the effectiveness of the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Panel (MACE). The MACE will have a direct link to the GSCP Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup , providing regular progress updates and highlighting gaps in provision or barriers to the implementation of this strategy. The MACE will review progress of investigations across the County including disruptions.
- Monitoring of consultations taking place with the young person and their parents or carers as to the kind of support needed and the outcomes that are expected.
- Reviewing the effectiveness of support provided, including that provided through the criminal justice processes.
- Monitoring support offered to young people who have left exploitative relationships and their families (involving relevant voluntary and early help services and access to specialist agencies should additional concerns arise).
- Creating lead roles for child exploitation within key agencies.



### **Success in PROTECT will mean:**

- There is a consistent and robust approach to assessments of need and risk, planning and review.
- Persistent and flexible interventions take place where engagement is complex and challenging, leading to an increase in the involvement of children/young people in preventative and supportive interventions. Taking the right approach to engaging these vulnerable young people is crucial if we are to stand any chance of supporting them to break free from exploitation. We will improve victims' experiences of support, ensuring that they are listened to, respected and given choices about how they are helped.
- An increase in the engagement of parents/carers in planning and decision-making processes/meetings.
- An improved understanding of children/young people affected by multiple vulnerabilities e.g. missing/absent episodes, gangs, trafficking.
- An increase in public and practitioner consultations and reports of child exploitation in Gloucestershire

## 17. PURSUE – Identification and Prosecution

**Our aim is to obtain and use reliable information to disrupt patterns of exploitation and help prosecute perpetrators**

Child exploitation is a criminal act. We are committed to ensuring that we will do all we can to **disrupt** perpetrators who are exploiting young people and where possible **prosecute** them. We will build on the work of committed and skilled professionals, and take a more strategic approach to identifying, disrupting and prosecuting perpetrators. Whilst the aspiration is to bring prosecutions against perpetrators wherever possible, we recognise that this is not always achievable, nor is it always in the interests of victims to pursue a lengthy investigation. Developing systems to enhance information-sharing and providing clear guidance to support effective collection and recording of evidence are crucial to improve performance in this area. Learning from national and local experience is vital to ensure continuous improvement. We will build in regular reviews, analysis and feedback to learn from successes and failures, and disseminate this learning. .

To achieve greater effectiveness in the Pursue priority, agencies will:

- Promote an informed understanding through its training of perpetrator behaviour, using the Metropolitan Police initiative 'Can you see it?' The 'Can you stop it?' This video aims to raise awareness about how perpetrators of "on-street CSE" target control and transport their victims.
- Develop a strategic overview of the prevalence of child exploitation and collaborate a cross border multi-agency approach.
- Use pro-active and robust use of enforcement and legislative powers to challenge and confront inappropriate and criminal behaviour.
- Provide guidance and training to key professionals (particularly those linked to 'hot spots') to improve the quality of evidence gathering and recording.
- Ensure that there is accessible, consistent, and long-term support for victims throughout the investigation, prosecution and post-court phases.
- Develop a strategic overview of the progress of investigations. Support a multi-agency approach to developing support plans. Develop links to the specialist police resource to escalate cases and draw on external resources.

- Learning from national and local experience is vital to ensure continuous improvement. We will build in regular reviews, analysis and feedback to learn from successes and failures, and disseminate this learning.

### **Success in PURSUE will mean:**

- An increase in the amount of disruption activity employed against perpetrators
- An increase in the number of prosecutions for child exploitation crimes
- An increased identification of child exploitation 'hotspots' and people of interest
- Improvement in the quality of information and intelligence shared between agencies
- Improvement in the understanding of any links between areas of child exploitation including CSE, Missing, Gang or Trafficking activity.

## **18. Profile.**

In summary, there is a great deal more we need to do in Gloucestershire to have a better understanding of missing episodes and child exploitation.



# Appendix I



## Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH)

MASH will provide a single point of coordination of all referrals, including those relating to concerns of child exploitation. It collates multi-agency information and intelligence to help identify the threshold and categorisation of each case, so that appropriate interventions are initiated.

All cases of concern involving child exploitation must be processed through the MASH. This includes cases already open to Children's Social Care, where concerns of child exploitation emerge.

**The MASH is supported by a **child exploitation** Coordinator who provides guidance and advice on identification and assessments, particularly with regard to cases requiring the attention of the MACE.**

The MASH supports effective information sharing to assess need and identify risks:

- Safeguarding referrals quickly reach our social work services,
- Families who are not a safeguarding risk can receive appropriate early help support
- We quickly build up a fuller picture of any child or young person of concern, and their family

Gloucestershire MASH aims to simplify the pathways to early help by providing a more consistent approach. It links families to the right support, and where possible, diverts referrals away from statutory services.



## Appendix II

### MACE (Multi-Agency Missing and Child Exploitation Panel)



MACE is a multi-agency meeting led by the **Police and Children's Social Care**. Its main purpose is to maintain a detailed overview of the profile of child exploitation in the area, including the identification of any 'hot-spots'. It aims to identify links between cases and ensure appropriate coordination of approaches, both within Gloucestershire and where there are cross border issues.

Across the partnership, we are committed to making a difference for children and young people up to the age of 25yrs through:

- Enabling children and young people to make safe choices through a concerted campaign of awareness raising and education,
- Providing accessible, early support, to target vulnerable groups, build resilience and prevent exploitation occurring,
- Remodelling support to victims, making it accessible and designed around their needs.

We will:

- Ensure that there is greater consistency of support from trusted adults, drawing on innovative practice to help young people regain control and break free from exploitation.
- Work proactively across the partnership to identify, disrupt and prosecute perpetrators of this crime, to reduce the duration of abuse and to minimise the impact on the victim.

## Appendix III



### Targeting Risky Groups / Vulnerability Factors / Risk Indicators

Targeting risky groups	Vulnerability Factors		Risk indicators / Risk assessment tools	'Out of mind, out of sight'; Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (2011)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• children regularly absent from education</li> <li>• children who regularly go missing</li> <li>• children affected by gang activity</li> <li>• children with mental health issues</li> <li>• children abusing drugs or alcohol</li> <li>• children with disabilities or</li> </ul>	<p>Children are more vulnerable to abuse through sexual exploitation if they have experience of one or more of the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Child sexual abuse;</li> <li>• Domestic violence within the family;</li> <li>• Family breakdown;</li> <li>• Physical abuse and emotional deprivation;</li> <li>• Bullying in or out of school;</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• running away from home and going missing</li> <li>• drug and alcohol misuse</li> <li>• sexual health</li> <li>• sexually risky behaviour</li> <li>• bullying</li> <li>• domestic servitude, neglect and violence</li> <li>• teenage pregnancy</li> <li>• long-term sexual, physical and psychological</li> </ul>	<p>There are a number of tell-tale signs that a child may be being groomed for sexual exploitation, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• going missing for periods of time or regularly returning home late</li> <li>• regularly missing school or not taking part in education</li> <li>• appearing with unexplained</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• adults or older youths loitering outside the child's usual place of residence;</li> <li>• persistently missing, staying out overnight or returning late with no plausible explanation;</li> <li>• leaving home/care setting in clothing unusual for the individual child (inappropriate for age, borrowing clothing from older young people);</li> <li>• acquisition of expensive clothes, mobile phones or other possessions without plausible explanation;</li> <li>• truancy/disengagement with education or considerable change in</li> </ul>

<p>special needs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• looked after children</li> <li>• homeless young people, and those living in unsafe situations</li> <li>• victims of child abuse and those experiencing or witnessing domestic violence at home</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family involvement in sexual exploitation;</li> <li>• Parents with a high level of vulnerabilities (drug / alcohol, mental health etc.);</li> <li>• Drug / alcohol, mental health or other difficulties themselves;</li> <li>• Being looked after in residential care; and</li> <li>• Going missing frequently.</li> </ul>	<p>harm</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• forced marriage</li> <li>• self-harm and suicide</li> </ul> <p>And it can be related to <b>other factors in the lives of children and young people</b>:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• mental health issues</li> <li>• non-attendance at school and school phobia</li> <li>• learning disabilities</li> <li>• being in residential and foster care</li> <li>• forced isolation from community and family</li> <li>• immigration status</li> </ul>	<p>gifts or new possessions</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• associating with other young people involved in exploitation</li> <li>• having older boyfriends or girlfriends</li> <li>• suffering from sexually transmitted infections</li> <li>• mood swings or changes in emotional wellbeing</li> <li>• drug and alcohol misuse</li> <li>• displaying inappropriate sexualised behaviour.</li> </ul>	<p>performance at school;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• volatile behaviour exhibiting extreme array of mood swings or use of abusive language;</li> <li>• getting involved in petty crime such as shoplifting, stealing;</li> <li>• entering or leaving vehicles driven by unknown adults;</li> <li>• hostility in relationship with parents/carers and other family members; and</li> <li>• returning after having been missing, looking well cared for in spite of having no known home base.</li> </ul>
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The Child Safeguarding Practice Review National Panel have undertaken a national review of cases involving child exploitation, the GSCP will commit to applying the learning from this national and any local Child safeguarding practice review into its practice and strategy ([Safeguarding children at risk from criminal exploitation review](#))