

Tackling Child Exploitation Strategy

2020 - 2022



milton keynes council



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Statement

MK Together Safeguarding Partnership is committed to preventing children being exploited. The collective aim will be to: identify when exploitation is occurring, protect the victims/survivors and pursue those who choose to target children for the purpose of abusing them through exploitation.

Priorities – Prepare, Prevent, Protect and Pursue

In Milton Keynes we recognise that identifying, tackling and preventing the exploitation of children is a complex task that requires a co-ordinated collaborative approach through partnership working in conjunction with the victim/survivor, their family and the community. To achieve this, all of the partners follow the four Ps:

- **PREPARE**
- **PREVENT**
- **PROTECT**
- **PURSUE**

Prepare

- Have a determination to understand and raise awareness of the problem, to agree a coordinated approach to address exploitation and an ambition to embed a culture that ensures no child is exploited.
- Collectively challenge systems and practices that exclude or blame children and risk perpetuating harmful and exploitative situations.
- Ensure that the voice of children who are at risk, or have experienced abuse, informs insight into local risks and the partnership approach.

- Demonstrate collective ownership through the work of the MK Together Risk Board, working to an agreed framework of actions informed by an evidence-based Milton Keynes Multi-Agency Exploitation Profile, which identifies both thematic and specific risks and vulnerabilities.
- Develop a set of agreed indicators that evidence progress in addressing and preventing exploitation.
- Information and resources are accessible to MK children's workforce.
- Identify key community groups and out of hours front line professionals for roll out of training/awareness raising (eg Night-time economy staff, taxi drivers, fast food outlets, Walk-In Centre, A+E) to support early identification of both potential victims and perpetrators of exploitation.

Prevent

- The safety of children from exploitation is prioritised across the partnerships, including partner agencies and community leaders and that this is reflected and owned within their respective strategic ambitions.
- A contextual safeguarding approach is used so that risks to children are considered in the systems and context in which they live, and the valuable contributions of their wider support networks are recognised.
- Confidentiality will not prevent the sharing of information that could safeguard a child. All agencies understand their responsibility and have pathways for effective information sharing.
- All agencies adopt an early help intervention approach for children at risk of experiencing adversity to reduce the child's vulnerability to being exploited.
- Professionals, wider workforces, community and faith groups staff are knowledgeable enough through accessing specific training relating to exploitation to be able to identify and respond effectively and at the earliest opportunity to children who are reported missing or who are being exploited.
- Vulnerabilities around key transitions are identified and understood and partners will take account of these in planning appropriate responses to strengthen steps to safeguard those individuals or groups identified as particularly vulnerable.

- Have an understanding of the reasons why children go missing at both individual and strategic level to inform the degree of convergence or divergence with other factors affecting exploitation risks and vulnerabilities.

Protect

- To identify and protect children who are being coerced, trafficked or exploited by providing a timely and proportionate multi-agency response and support to the child, family and community.
- All agencies and professionals adopt a collaborative respectful approach with the survivor/victim and their family in response to the concerns.
- Multi-agency information and intelligence is gathered and shared to identify children who are vulnerable to exploitation, to map hotspots, trends and risks in missing episodes, victim and perpetrator identification and criminal activity involving exploited children, including County Lines.
- Development of an exploitation and missing profile relevant to Milton Keynes is regularly updated to enable strategic opportunities to target individuals, locations or themes where increased concerns have been identified.
- A Memorandum of Understanding will be produced between the partnership and any setting where increased concerns or vulnerabilities are identified, to reduce risks.
- Effective information and communication is shared with other local authorities and external partners to ensure that Milton Keynes children placed in other areas, or moving regularly across the Borough boundaries, and children from other LAs placed or housed in Milton Keynes are effectively safeguarded from exploitation.

Pursue

- The collation, sharing and analysis of information and intelligence between agencies and as part of the Exploitation Profile is effective in supporting a joint understanding of those who are exploiting others.
- Information is used to identify individual perpetrators and organised crime groups/gangs, to map links between these known perpetrators and victims.

- The risks individuals may pose are understood and the risk managed in the appropriate meetings (Multi-Agency Public Protection Awareness, Strategic Exploitation Panel, etc),
- Opportunities are sought to identify and target locations where exploitation and trafficking concerns exist.
- Criminal and Civil orders are utilised to maximise professionals' ability to disrupt exploitation and modern slavery.
- Law enforcement (Police/CPS), Children's Social Care, Educational Settings, Housing, Youth Offending Team and the voluntary sector proactively use existing legislative opportunities at their disposal.
- All agencies will respond to concerns raised regardless of the time period the alleged offence/abuse occurred.
- The MK Together Partnership promotes the use of the Home Office's '*Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit*' (2019).
- There are details available of charities and organisations specialising in working with individuals who display abusive behaviour or have thoughts of harming others .

Local profile Jan – Dec 2019

The most recent figures identify Milton Keynes population as **264,479** (2016) with **27.4%** under the age of **19**. The Office for National Statistics estimates that the population will reach **300,000** by 2025.

There are **13** mainstream secondary schools (population **19,415**), **91** Primary Schools (population **26,532**), **6** Special Schools (population **851**) and Primary (population **13**) and Secondary Pupil Referral Units (population **139**).

There are good transport links to a number of major cities including London, Birmingham etc.

324 exploitation screening tools were submitted and reviewed by the Missing and Exploitation Hub with **131** children being discussed at the Multi-Agency Risk Management Meeting (MARMM).

397 children were reported missing **1173** times – this includes **64** children placed in Milton Keynes by other Local Authorities who were reported missing **282** times.

Following referrals to the National Referral Mechanism (NRM - Modern Slavery Act 2015) - **19** Reasonable Grounds (RG) and **2** Conclusive Grounds (CG) decisions were made for children.

Levels of concern

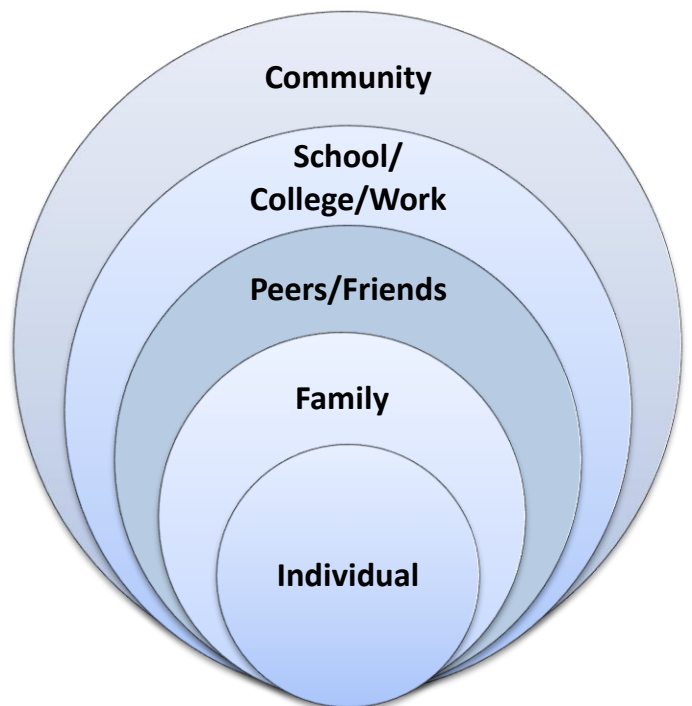
Milton Keynes Safeguarding Partnership has adapted and added to the NWG (National Working Group) risk categories that were originally devised to address the exploitation of children. For more detail see the [Exploitation Strategy Levels of Concern supporting document](#)

Multi-agency co-ordinated approach

By increasing the knowledge and sharing the insight of those who come into contact with exploited children (professionals, statutory agencies and the wider community) we can build and maintain an accurate, contemporary, local profile of exploitation. This will provide a comprehensive understanding of the types of risk, locations, victims/survivors, and those who perpetrate or facilitate this abuse.

A shared objective to ensure the response is cohesive and complementary to other services will support more timely flow of relevant information, ensuring earlier identification and support to victims, and minimise gaps in services.

The implementation of a Contextual Safeguarding¹ approach will enable scope far beyond the individual and will address



¹ <https://www.csnetwork.org.uk/en/about/what-is-contextual-safeguarding>

existing and potential risks in the wider contextual environment in which exploitation is taking place.

Recent developments within Thames Valley Police (TVP) in response to HM Government Violent Crime Reduction Strategy have seen the creation of a Violent Crime Taskforce (VCT). Details of this team and the wider local police response are published in the Milton Keynes Local Policing area - Violent, Missing & Exploitation Reduction Framework.

For additional information see [Identifying and Responding to Child Exploitation](#).

Looked After Children (LAC)

Children who are looked after are at an increased vulnerability to being exploited and it is the responsibility of the local authority by whom the child is 'looked after' to have robust interventions to reduce this vulnerability and to respond proactively to concerns identified.

Social workers, Independent Reviewing Officers (IROs) and those who support looked after children, either in their residential setting or through support work, need to have access to training to increase practitioners and support staff awareness of exploitation.

Other local authorities who place looked after children within Milton Keynes local authority boundary (Host Authority) will be expected to provide MK CSC details of exploitation, trafficking, gang association, missing person occurrences and sexually problematic behaviour as well as completion of a TVP 'Grab Pack'. The 'Grab Pack' is where information relating to a child who regularly goes missing, or is the subject of exploitation concerns, is collated on one form within Thames Valley Police. It enables the police to have quick and ready access to information about either a local or a placed child in Milton Keynes so that officers can refer to it in their response to locating the child.

Milton Keynes Local Authority will develop and maintain a list of approved premises that have met standards set out by the local authority and undergo regular checks to ensure compliance.

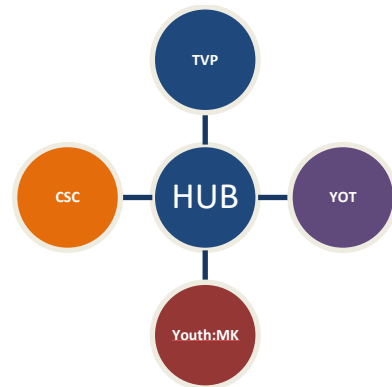
Children placed by MKC outside of Milton Keynes where there are concerns relating to exploitation and trafficking will be raised within Milton Keynes Strategic Exploitation Panel (SEP) meeting.

Missing and Exploitation Hub

To reflect the need to work in collaboration with partner agencies required the development of a multi-agency HUB to tackle child exploitation.

The hub brings together staff from Children's Social Care, Youth Offending Team, Youth: MK and Thames Valley Police.

The Missing and Exploitation multi-agency hub will act as a focal point when responding to children reported missing and exploitation concerns arise and will:



1. Maximise information sharing.
2. Provide specialist support for professionals.
3. Ensure all exploitation concerns are reviewed and plans are in place to address risks to the child and to disrupt those perpetrating exploitation.
4. Analyse information which will feed directly into a 'live' problem profile.
5. Provide and monitor an agreed data-set.
6. Develop in-house resources and programmes of work relevant to the local issues.
7. Provide awareness-raising and training to professionals, organisations, schools and the community.
8. Actively seek to disrupt and investigate allegations of exploitation in collaboration with case-holding practitioners/officers.
9. Manage Return From Missing Interviews (RFMI) and specialist workers.
10. Be part of a collective network liaising with missing and exploitation professionals who border Milton Keynes to identify trends and concerns that may be occurring between and across geographical authorities.

Missing and Exploitation Panel (MEP)

There will be a multi-agency panel working in collaboration with the allocated Children & Families Practitioner/Social Worker to develop and implement plans to address missing and exploitation concerns, ensuring these are robust and reflect a multi-agency approach. The plans will be overseen by the Strategic Exploitation Panel (SEP).

MK Youth Risk Meeting

This multi-agency meeting is chaired by the Violent Crime Taskforce (VCT) and provides a forum to ensure effective co-ordination of agencies to support disruption in respect of youth violence, gang/ASB groups and County Drug Lines (CDL) networks.

Strategic Exploitation Panel (SEP)

The multi-agency Strategic Exploitation Panel monitors the intervention supporting children with significant exploitation or missing concerns. SEP will problem-solve and address barriers to implementing effective plans by offering strategic support, protective and disruption options to address places, individuals, groups and organisations of concern. SEP will identify and coordinate strategic multi-agency approaches to specific themes of concern around exploitation highlighted by other multi-agency meetings including: MAPPA, MEP, MK Youth risk meeting, Cross-Border Group, Localities Meeting, Targeted Tasking Co-ordination Group (TTCG) and Complex Strategy Meetings.

Cross Border Group (CBG)

The purpose of the Cross-Border Group (CBG) is to build collaborative working relationships with neighbouring authorities. It is a point of contact for members to discuss individual and shared concerns where exploitation may be occurring across counties, and enables good practice from other areas to be disseminated.

Locality meeting

This is a quarterly multi-agency forum between school safeguarding leads and partner agencies from either the North or South of Milton Keynes. Its aim is to identify at the earliest opportunity concerns relating to children's behaviour that could be indicative of exploitation, missing or youth violence. It also provides information to schools on current trends as well as discussing potential perpetrators, and local areas of concern associated with exploitation.

Full details of the function of each meeting/panel can be found in the MK Together [Missing and Exploitation Panel Functions supporting document](#)

DCI Risk Meeting

TVP meeting in respect of children where TVP are actively engaging in reducing the child's violence, exploitation and missing concerns. Police can check governance and allocate additional resources where needed. CSC and YOT representative are also present at this meeting.

Full details are contained in the TVP 'Milton Keynes Local Policing Area - Violence, Missing & Exploitation Reduction Framework'.

Output and outcome measures

Conducting **Return From Missing Interviews** (RFMI) in a timely manner, face-to-face with the child, supports most effective intervention:

- RFMI – % responded to within 72 hrs of notification that Child has returned from Missing
- RFMI – % interview with child takes place within 72 hours of return notification
- RFMI – % where 72 hour timeframe not met reason why not is clearly recorded
- RFMI – % conducted face-to-face
- RFMI – % where not face-to-face reason why not is clearly recorded

In cases where **Missing** is the primary or a significant concern there is an evidenced reduction in:

- Frequency of episodes
- Duration of episodes
- Identified risk factors either associated with or contributing to missing episodes

Exploitation:

- Plans are in place to address Individual and Contextual risk factors and to strengthen Protective/Resilience Factors for each child identified as vulnerable, groomed/targeted or exploited.

- Audits are undertaken to ensure plans make most effective use of co-ordinated multi-agency interventions and resources available to maximise likelihood of successful outcomes.
- SEP – Data to include length of time a child is subject to SEP monitoring and if the child is returned after being removed from SEP.
- Direct interventions such as Early Support Project (ESP), CSEP will produce annual reports.
- Areas of vulnerability – Quarterly data on school, address, locations where children are being monitored by SEP attendees.

Appendix A – Definitions

Child Criminal Exploitation (CCE)	Home Office: ‘Criminal Exploitation of Children and Vulnerable Adults, County Lines Guidance (September 2018)
Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE)	Department for Education 2017 ‘Child Sexual Exploitation: Definition and a guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation’
County Lines or County Drug Lines (CDL)	Ministry of Justice 2019 ‘County Lines Exploitation – Practice Guidance for YOTs and Frontline Practitioners’
National Referral Mechanism	Home Office: National Referral Mechanism Guidance Adult (England and Wales) 22nd January 2020
Modern slavery	Modern Slavery Act (2015)
Missing	Department of Education (2014) Children who run away or go missing from home or care: Statutory guidance for local authorities and their partners to stop children going missing and to protect those who do.
Working together to safeguard children	HM Government (2018) Working together to safeguard children: Statutory guidance on inter-agency working to safeguard and promote the welfare of children.

Appendix B – Abbreviations

ASB	Anti Social Behaviour
CCE	Child Criminal Exploitation
CDL	County Drug Line
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
CSEP	Child Sexual Exploitation Project Worker
DMM	Daily Management Meeting (TVP)
ESP	Early Support Project
IRO	Independent Reviewing Officer
LAC	Looked After Child
MASH	Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub
MAPPA	Multi Agency Public Protection Arrangements
NRM	National Referral Mechanism
OCG	Organised Crime Group
RFMI	Return From Missing Interview
TTCG	Targetted Tasking Coordination Group
TVP	Thames Valley Police

Appendix C - Process map of exploitation concerns

