



# CHILD EXPLOITATION STRATEGY 2018-2021

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## INTRODUCTION

Reducing the harm from child exploitation including child sexual exploitation (CSE) and child criminal exploitation (CCE) is an area of focus for the Children's Multi Agency Resilience and Safeguarding Board (Children's MARS Board). Safeguarding the vulnerable from exploitation is also one of the key outcomes for the Community Safety Partnership.

The long-term consequences of any form of child abuse can be devastating and early identification and providing support as soon as problems emerge is critical. Child exploitation damages children and like any form of abuse it can have long-lasting consequences that can impact on every part of a child's life and their future outcomes.

Child exploitation is complex and children are often reluctant to disclose experiences of exploitation due to misplaced feelings of loyalty and shame. Many may not recognise what they are experiencing as abuse or that they require support or intervention, believing they are in control or in a healthy consensual relationship.

The signs and indicators of all forms of abuse can be difficult to detect and child exploitation is no exception. A variety of factors can make it difficult to accurately assess how prevalent child exploitation is. Many children who are exploited may have been victims of other forms of abuse; the grooming methods that may be used can mean that children who are exploited do not always recognise they are being abused, which can also affect detection rates.

It is clear from the research and local evidence that trust is very important to children and young people and this is something professionals must cultivate so that they can discuss their experiences.

We are committed to listening to and responding to children and young people, recognising when they need help, even when they don't have the words to tell us about what's happening, but their behaviour indicates they need support in respect of child exploitation.

This strategy sets out the approach multi agencies should take in respect of safeguarding children from child exploitation. Our approach to tackling child exploitation is split into four parts and based on the government's objectives outlined in *Tackling child sexual exploitation – progress report (February 2017)* and the *Serious Violence strategy (April 2018)*:

- **PREPARE** - having systems and processes in place, raising awareness and developing a responsive culture
- **PREVENT** - developing resilience, supporting positive alternatives and timely interventions
- **PROTECT** - supporting victims and survivors
- **PURSUE** - tackling offending through prosecution, disruption and law enforcement

The child exploitation Action Plan for 2018-2019 is based on these four strategic aims. It is a multiple strand approach involving a range of partners across different sectors.

## DEFINITIONS

### Child Sexual Exploitation

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. Sexual abuse may involve physical contact, including assault by penetration (for example, rape or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts such as masturbation, kissing, rubbing and touching outside clothing. It may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in the production of sexual images, forcing children to look at sexual images or watch sexual activities, encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways or grooming a child in preparation for abuse (including via the internet).

The definition of child sexual exploitation is as follows:

*Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual 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 also occur through the use of technology.*

Like all forms of child sexual abuse, child sexual exploitation:

- can affect any child or young person (male or female) under the age of 18 years, including 16 and 17 year olds who can legally consent to have sex;
- can still be abuse even if the sexual activity appears consensual;
- can include both contact (penetrative and non-penetrative acts) and non-contact sexual activity;
- can take place in person or via technology, or a combination of both;
- can involve force and/or enticement-based methods of compliance and may, or may not, be accompanied by violence or threats of violence;
- may occur without the child or young person's immediate knowledge (through others copying videos or images they have created and posting on social media, for example);
- can be perpetrated by individuals or groups, males or females, and children or adults. The abuse can be a one-off occurrence or a series of incidents over time, and range from opportunistic to complex organised abuse; and
- is typified by some form of power imbalance in favour of those perpetrating the abuse. Whilst age may be the most obvious, this power imbalance can also be due to a range of other factors including gender, sexual identity, cognitive ability, physical strength, status, and access to economic or other resources.

Child sexual exploitation is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult for those working with children to identify and assess. The indicators for child sexual exploitation can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal adolescent behaviours'. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual children to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support

is given. Even where a young person is old enough to legally consent to sexual activity, the law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of child sexual exploitation) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

**Child sexual exploitation is never the victim's fault, even if there is some form of exchange:** all children and young people under the age of 18 have a right to be safe and should be protected from harm.

One of the key factors found in most cases of child sexual exploitation is the presence of some form of exchange (sexual activity in return for something); for the victim and/or perpetrator or facilitator.

Where it is the victim who is offered, promised or given something they need or want, the exchange can include both tangible (such as money, drugs or alcohol) and intangible rewards (such as status, protection or perceived receipt of love or affection). It is critical to remember the unequal power dynamic within which this exchange occurs and to remember that the receipt of something by a child/young person does not make them any less of a victim. It is also important to note that the prevention of something negative can also fulfil the requirement for exchange, for example a child who engages in sexual activity to stop someone carrying out a threat to harm his/her family.

Whilst there can be gifts or treats involved in other forms of sexual abuse (e.g. a father who sexually abuses but also buys the child toys) it is most likely referred to as child sexual exploitation if the 'exchange', as the core dynamic at play, results in financial gain for or enhanced status of, the perpetrator.

Where the gain is only for the perpetrator/facilitator, there is most likely a financial gain (money, discharge of a debt or free/discounted goods or services) or increased status as a result of the abuse.

If sexual gratification, or exercise of power and control, is the only gain for the perpetrator (and there is no gain for the child/young person) this would not normally constitute child sexual exploitation, but should be responded to as a different form of child sexual abuse.

### **Child Criminal Exploitation**

There is no agreed statutory definition of CCE. In North Lincolnshire, the definition of CCE is that which:

*Involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where a child (or a third person or persons) receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal nature.*

*Child criminal exploitation often occurs without the child's immediate recognition, with the child believing that they are in control of the situation. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources.*

*Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economical and/or emotional vulnerability.*

Children's involvement in CCE is indicative of coercion or desperation rather than choice. CCE is a complex form of abuse and it can be difficult for those working with children to identify and assess.

The indicators for CCE can sometimes be mistaken for 'normal adolescent behaviours'. It requires knowledge, skills, professional curiosity and an assessment which analyses the risk factors and personal circumstances of individual children to ensure that the signs and symptoms are interpreted correctly and appropriate support is given.

The law states that consent is only valid where they make a choice and have the freedom and capacity to make that choice. If a child feels they have no other meaningful choice, are under the influence of harmful substances or fearful of what might happen if they don't comply (all of which are common features in cases of CCE) consent cannot legally be given whatever the age of the child.

It is important to note that perpetrators of CCE may themselves be children who are criminally exploited and that the victims of CCE may also be at risk of becoming perpetrators.

## **County Lines**

County lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing and exploitation has a devastating impact on young people, vulnerable adults and local communities.

County lines is the police term for urban gangs or organised groups supplying drugs to suburban areas and market and coastal towns using dedicated mobile phone lines or 'deal lines'. It involves CCE as gangs exploit children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money. Gangs establish a base in the market location, typically by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force or coercion in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'.

County lines is a major, cross cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, human trafficking and missing persons; and the response to tackle it involves the police, the National Crime Agency, a wide range of government departments, local government agencies and voluntary and community sector organisations.

## VISION

**The ambition for the Children's MARS Board is that:**

- Children, young people and families are resilient and safeguarded

**The vision endorsed by the Community Safety Partnership is that individuals and communities are:**

- 'SAFE, STRONG and RESILIENT'

**This strategy also supports the strategic outcome set within the Children's Strategy 2020 which is:**

- Children Feel Safe and Are Safe

**In respect of tackling child exploitation, this strategy aims to:**

- Reduce the harm from child exploitation

## VALUES AND PRINCIPLES

The core values and principles that underpin our approach are taken from several key sources.

**Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 describes what children have said that they need:**

- **Vigilance:** to have adults notice when things are troubling them
- **Understanding and action:** to understand what is happening; to be heard and understood; and to have that understanding acted upon
- **Stability:** to be able to develop an on-going stable relationship of trust with those helping them
- **Respect:** to be treated with the expectation that they are competent rather than not
- **Information and engagement:** to be informed about and involved in procedures, decisions, concerns and plans
- **Explanation:** to be informed of the outcome of assessments and decisions and reasons when their views have not met with a positive response
- **Support:** to be provided with support in their own right as well as a member of their family
- **Advocacy:** to be provided with advocacy to assist them in putting forward their views
- **Protection:** to be protected against all forms of abuse and discrimination and the right to special protection and help if a refugee

Government guidance highlights that those planning an effective local multi-agency response to child sexual and criminal exploitation should follow the process for managing risk of harm to children and putting their needs first, as set out in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018.

In February 2017, the Government published child sexual exploitation, definition and guide for practitioners, local leaders and decision makers working to protect children from child sexual exploitation.

This outlines that all practitioners working with children and families should respond in ways that are:

- **Child-centred:** recognising children and young people's rights to participate in decisions about them in line with their maturity, and focusing on the needs of the child. Other considerations, such as the fear of damaging relationships with children or adults, get in the way of protecting children from abuse and neglect. Practitioners should view a referral as the beginning of a process of inquiry, not as an accusation. Victims may be resistant to intervention and some may maintain links with their abusers, even after attempts to help protect them;
- **Developed and informed by the involvement of a child's family and carers wherever safe and appropriate:** a holistic assessment will take account of the wishes and feelings of children and the views of their parents/carers;
- **Responsive and pro-active:** everyone should be alert to the potential signs and indicators of child sexual and criminal exploitation, as well as other forms of abuse, and exercise professional curiosity in their day to day work. It is better to help children and young people as early as possible, before issues escalate and become more damaging;
- **Relationship-based:** practitioners should establish and maintain trusting relationships with children and young people, and continue to exercise professional curiosity and create safe spaces for disclosure; and
- **Informed by an understanding of the complexities of child sexual and criminal exploitation:** it is important to avoid language or actions that may lead a young person to feel they are not deserving of support or are in some way to blame for their abuse.

The child sexual exploitation context includes:

- **Viewing child exploitation within a wider continuum of exploitation, violence and abuse:** Child sexual exploitation is not a catch all category for all forms of sexual harm in adolescence. It should therefore be viewed within the wider continuum of sexual abuse and other relevant issues such as trafficking, modern slavery, domestic abuse and other gendered violence and going missing. The necessary focus on child sexual exploitation should not overshadow a focus on other manifestations of abuse.
- **Abuse outside of families:** Though child sexual and criminal exploitation can occur in the family, in most cases the response to exploitation may require services to consider a broader perspective than intra-familial child abuse. The response may need to address risk of harm posed outside the family home and draw in partners such as local businesses, licensing authorities, and other sectors. This reflects the context in which perpetrators are operating.
- **Agencies should move beyond a reactive approach:** (one that removes the individual from harm) to one that also addresses the existence of harm and/or proactively prevents that harm.
- **Local understanding:** Every area should have its own data and intelligence, of which child exploitation should form a part. The North Lincolnshire Child Exploitation Action Plan is based on an inter-agency assessment of the local profile of perpetration. This requires effective local arrangements for sharing and collating intelligence and other information about communities, environments, perpetrators and victims.



- **Engaging with diversity:** The evidence base demonstrates that some cohorts of children and young people – males, children with disabilities, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender and Black and Minority Ethnic children, for example – may be less likely to have their abuse identified or responded to. Local areas should ensure responses are accessible, relevant and sensitive to the needs of all children and young people.
- **Cross-area working:** Cases of child exploitation frequently cross local authority, police force and even country boundaries in terms of the movement of both perpetrators and victims. A singular area focus cannot therefore adequately capture patterns of harm and risk.
- **Inter-agency working:** While significant progress has been made here, challenges remain. Important areas for improvement include:
  - the practical implementation of information sharing guidance
  - common risk assessment processes, as set out in *Working Together to Safeguard Children*, that follow an evidence-based model which looks at risk factors, vulnerability, protective factors and resilience and which prioritises professional judgement and does not rely on simplistic scoring
  - clarity about professional roles and thresholds for action across universal, targeted and specialist services;
  - more effective sharing and recording of intelligence
  - better co-ordination of statutory and voluntary sector services and
  - more streamlined management of multiple agencies' engagement with victims and their families.
- Enhancing children's and young people's **resilience and strengthening the protective factors** around them are critical strands of prevention. Resilience is about being able to overcome adversities and avoid negative consequences. It is not a character trait; it involves both internal capabilities and external resources. Resilience is therefore never a substitute for support.
- **Openness to learning and improvement:** There has been considerable learning in recent years around how better to identify and respond to child sexual exploitation. More recently learning has been emerging about how to better identify and respond to child criminal exploitation as well as the violence and exploitation caused through the spread of county lines.

## PURPOSE OF THIS STRATEGY

The focus of the North Lincolnshire Child Exploitation Strategy is:

- that all children and young people are educated about the nature and risks of child sexual and criminal exploitation and other forms of related harm (both online and offline) and how to access support
- to recognize that children and young people can be both victims and perpetrators of child sexual and criminal exploitation
- to promote the resilience of children and young people and their families and strengthen the protective factors around them
- to identify and support those settings, such as schools and colleges, in which children and young people can form healthy and safe relationships
- to supplement universal initiatives with targeted work with groups of particularly vulnerable children and young people, such as those in care, whilst being careful not to stigmatise specific groups

- to provide complementary messages to parents and carers about risks to their children (online and offline) and how to access support if they have concerns
- to consider the levels of knowledge and understanding of the wider workforce, so that everyone working with children and young people can play their role in prevention and
- to educate the wider community so they can identify and report concerns and seek support.

Although messages and methods of delivery will vary according to the nature and needs of the audience, all education and awareness raising initiatives should:

- be grounded in an evidence-based understanding of child sexual and criminal exploitation (both online and offline);
- challenge myths and misconceptions about who is perpetrating and experiencing this form of abuse
- send a clear message that all forms of child exploitation are abuse
- recognise the potential overlap between victims and perpetrators
- challenge any victim-blaming and promote the rights of all victims to protection and support
- provide information on where and how to report concerns and access support and
- be inclusive and accessible to the intended audience, in terms of language and delivery methods and ensure information is tailored and relevant to diverse groups such as Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Black and Minority Ethnic and/or deaf or disabled children and young people.

## CHILD EXPLOITATION ACTION PLAN

To support the ongoing delivery of this Strategy to tackle child exploitation, outcomes have been identified to orientate partnership action under the auspices of the 4 P's - PREPARE, PREVENT, PROTECT and PURSUE:

### PREPARE

- **Outcome:** Systems and processes are enhanced and effective in supporting partnership action and practice
- **Outcome:** People are aware of child exploitation and staff are trained, skilled and knowledgeable

Efficient systems and processes underpinned by effective partnership and governance arrangements are crucial in building a responsive culture where everyone can contribute to tackling exploitation.

Understanding our local picture through effective profiling and clarity regarding our data and performance activity is important as a means of deploying our resources in the right place at the right time. This is supported through robust policies and procedures and clear practice guidance. This will be further supported by a well trained, highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce who will deploy the new approach to working with adolescents which focusses on strengths and managing risk facing behaviours.

Training will address the complexities of identifying and responding to child exploitation, including child sexual exploitation, child criminal exploitation, modern day slavery and trafficking though it is acknowledged that training alone is not sufficient to ensure a skilled and confident workforce. Training should be accompanied by opportunities to learn from other practitioners, ongoing high quality supervision, a focus on reflective practice to help practitioners navigate complexity and a recognition of the emotional impact that such work can have on practitioners, and access to support in order to manage this.

Individuals, communities, businesses and organisations can also actively contribute to making a difference. Hoteliers/licensed premises, bed and breakfasts, private landlords, taxi drivers, transport companies (bus/rail), British Transport Police, park wardens, refuse collectors, retail workers, community and religious groups (amongst others) may hold vital information about the movement of victims and perpetrators e.g. those living near a party house or a property that has been 'cuckooed', who may see victims coming and going. Education and awareness programmes about what to look for and how to report concerns, can positively significantly enhance local disruption activity and increase protective capabilities.

## PREVENT

- **Outcome:** Child exploitation is addressed at the earliest point resulting in prevention of escalation
- **Outcome:** Young people have enhanced resilience and protective factors as a result of new approaches to working with them and managing risk

The harmful effects of child exploitation are serious and far-reaching for victims, their families and wider communities and as such, the ideal is to prevent the abuse happening in the first place. Partners have a clear focus on preventing the risks and causes of child exploitation as well as developing resilience, supporting positive alternatives and timely interventions. As well as through education and awareness programmes, this will be achieved through early help and early intervention leading to behaviour change and therefore reducing the need for more targeted and specialist provision.

Our approach will also encompass protective (immediate safeguarding) and responsive approaches, focusing on those who have experienced exploitation, those who are vulnerable to it as well as those who are vulnerable to becoming perpetrators and perpetrators themselves (and recognising the potential for overlap between the two).

Through our approach to working with children and young people, we will be able to deploy the most effective means of communicating messages around child exploitation to children and young people and developing collaborative mechanisms for sharing messages and developing resilience. Parents and carers also have a critical role to play in helping to protect children and young people from child exploitation and they are well placed to support early identification by identifying emerging vulnerabilities or potential indicators of abuse and seeking support before risks escalate.

## PROTECT

- **Outcome:** Those vulnerable to exploitation and those who have experience of exploitation receive support through accessible pathways including transitioning to services to adults
- **Outcome:** Those vulnerable to becoming perpetrators and those who are perpetrators receive support to reduce impacts

Through preparing our staff, local partners are in a good position to be able to provide appropriate services to identify, support and protect children and young people who are vulnerable to or experiencing exploitation and to safeguard and protect them from further harm.

We will build on work already in place and maximise our local resources to support people who have experienced exploitation and those at risk as well as people who are vulnerable to becoming perpetrators and perpetrators themselves. There is a focus on a whole person approach in order that we work with the person and the issue, rather than the emerging symptoms, which will contribute to breaking cycles leading to better outcomes. As part of this, we will work to develop safer spaces for young people and work with them through transitions to ensure they receive the support and services they require as they move into adulthood. We will also review and develop programmes for young people who are vulnerable to becoming perpetrators and those who are perpetrators across all areas of exploitation.

## PURSUE

- **Outcome:** Offending is tackled and maximized through prosecution, disruption and law enforcement

Local intelligence and profiling is crucial in providing a picture of exploitative behaviours including cuckooing and there are opportunities to strengthen and make use of available information to intervene with perpetrators and reduce the impact on vulnerable young people and adults. Disruption activity can significantly impact on victims experiences leading to better outcomes. The scope of disruption activity needs to be fluid and creative in order to be most effective and using new methodologies which will help to ensure long term solutions.

There is an ongoing need to maximize opportunities for enforcement and through sharing information and community awareness, the outcomes of enforcement activity could be a deterrent and therefore contribute to prevention. There is a continued commitment to developing robust investigation and prosecution processes for all aspects of child exploitation and the importance of effective partnership working, co-ordination and connectivity at these times is crucial in securing a successful outcome.

**Throughout, the voice of survivors and real life experiences will shape and influence partnership activity leading to improved outcomes through collaborative approaches.**

## MONITORING AND EVALUATION

A more detailed Action Plan has been developed to orientate partnership action. The delivery of the Action Plan is led through the Child Exploitation Strategy Group and associated groups and workstreams.

The Child Exploitation Strategy Group monitors progress against the Action Plan, including the effectiveness of interagency work in respect of safeguarding children and young people who may be at risk of child exploitation or who have suffered harm as a result of this type of abuse. The Child Exploitation Strategy Group provides partnership challenge and support as required.

The Child Exploitation Accountability Framework is outlined at Appendix One.

All agencies have a responsibility to audit their practice and ensure the effectiveness of their arrangements in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in respect of tackling child exploitation. The Children's MARS Board will monitor compliance through its scrutiny and assurance framework, including the section 11 challenge process, Practice Learning Process and Line of Sight events and assurance events as well as performance management information and most importantly talking to children and young people about their experiences and views to further enhance individual planning, service development and strategic direction.

As part of the Children's MARS Board function to monitor and oversee work to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people, the Children's MARS Board will keep the implementation of this Strategy and Action Plan under review.

Through exceptions reporting, progress against this Strategy will be reported into the Children's MARS Board on a quarterly basis via a business report from the Multi Agency Innovation Hub. The chair of the Child Exploitation Strategy Group will be invited to attend the Children's MARS Board as required. This Strategy will be subject to an annual review.

## APPENDIX ONE: ACCOUNTABILITY FRAMEWORK FOR CHILD EXPLOITATION

North Lincolnshire's Strategy for tackling child exploitation sits under the auspices of the Children's MARS Board and is jointly owned by the Community Safety Partnership. The accountability framework for child exploitation is clarified through both strategic and case specific perspectives.

The Strategy and Action Plan sets out how we are going to tackle child exploitation at a population level.

In addition to the Strategy, children and young people who are at risk of or experiencing child sexual exploitation **WILL** be managed through the established Early Help, Child in Need and Child in Need of Protection system governed by Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018. This identification and statutory framework will be enhanced by the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (**MACE**) process.

All agencies have a statutory role to: **use the statutory framework as described in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and within North Lincolnshire Children's MARS Board procedures to identify, assess, offer early help and make a referral to social work services if they believe a child is in need and or in need of protection. This is further described within the Helping Children and Families (threshold document 2016-2020) – if a child is at risk of or suffered harm refer to social work services and or the police in an emergency.**

The MACE process supports and adds value to the above statutory processes and provides oversight by gaining a collective understanding in terms of children at risk and perpetrators. It does not detract from the need to follow Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and complements this process and the Complex Child Abuse arrangements.

Local profiles, trends, resource and performance data from the MACE meetings - case specific accountability framework will be reported to the Child Exploitation Strategy Group to shape and influence strategy development.

### GROUPS, CORE ATTENDANCE AND BRIEF TERMS OF REFERENCE

#### STRATEGY

##### Chief Officer Group

- This is subsumed within the responsibilities of the Children's MARS Board consisting of three safeguarding partners (Director of Community and Resilience, North Lincolnshire Council, Chief Officer, Clinical Commissioning Group and Chief Superintendent, Humberside Police), along with the Director of Learning, Skills and Culture (representing Education) as a core group member and other lead officers who attend the board (including the chair of the Child Exploitation Strategy Group).

- Meets quarterly and receives exceptions reports regarding progress against the Strategy and Action Plan. Also receives an overview and recommendations for commissioning, policy change and or allocation of resources. It can be called to review and prioritise and resource specific activity with regard to both strategy and case specific.

### **Child Exploitation Strategy Group**

- Designated agency lead officers with responsibilities for child exploitation and wider exploitation across the partnership
- Meets quarterly and is accountable for the development, delivery and monitoring of the Child Exploitation Strategy and Action Plan and accountable to the Chief Officer Group (Children's MARS Board) and the Community Safety Partnership (through the Resilient Communities Strategic Group). The Child Exploitation Strategy Group also provides oversight and seeks assurance from case specific groups (see below) as appropriate.

### **CASE SPECIFIC**

#### **Senior Lead Officer Group**

- Lead Investigation Officer's/Chief Inspector/Heads of Service/ Identified Partners
- To ascertain whether there are sufficient resources and policy direction to enable the operational lead investigators to undertake the necessary work to protect children at risk, victims and prosecute offenders. Responsible for recommending action across agencies to maximize the impact of work relating to complex cases\*. Accountable to the strategy groups (see above) as required.

\*Complex Cases are cases that cannot be managed within the scope of current procedures and resources and or involve multiple victims and or offenders and are such that they require higher level decisions in relation to the case(s).

### **MACE**

- Case Managers/Service Managers Children Services/Police CSE and PVP officers/Police OCG Officers/Education Officers/Health Workers-Safeguarding
- Leads share information and risk analysis on identified cases to identify connectivity, themes and trends to enable the group to identify further action that could be undertaken. This should not replace the role of the child protection conference or core group process and procedure. It can add value and make recommendations for consideration. Accountable to Senior Lead Officer Group and will escalate issues to strategy groups (see above) as appropriate.





### **Multi-Agency Missing Children Group**

- Brings together lead managers and named professionals from local agencies with responsibilities for missing children cases.
- Meets on a monthly basis and provides a focused opportunity to share information, intelligence and data and work collaboratively to prevent and reduce children going missing leading to better outcomes and experiences. Accountable to Senior Lead Officer Group and will escalate issues to strategy groups (see above) as appropriate.

### **Harmful Sexual Behaviour Panel**

- Agencies are working together to provide a specialist service to children and young people who have engaged in harmful sexual behaviour (HSB).
- The service consists of a 'virtual team' of multi-agency practitioners who have been trained in the issues surrounding HSB, and in specialist assessment, using the AIMS methodology. Meets monthly and is accountable to the Senior Lead Officer Group for its work relating to child sexual exploitation (peer on peer).

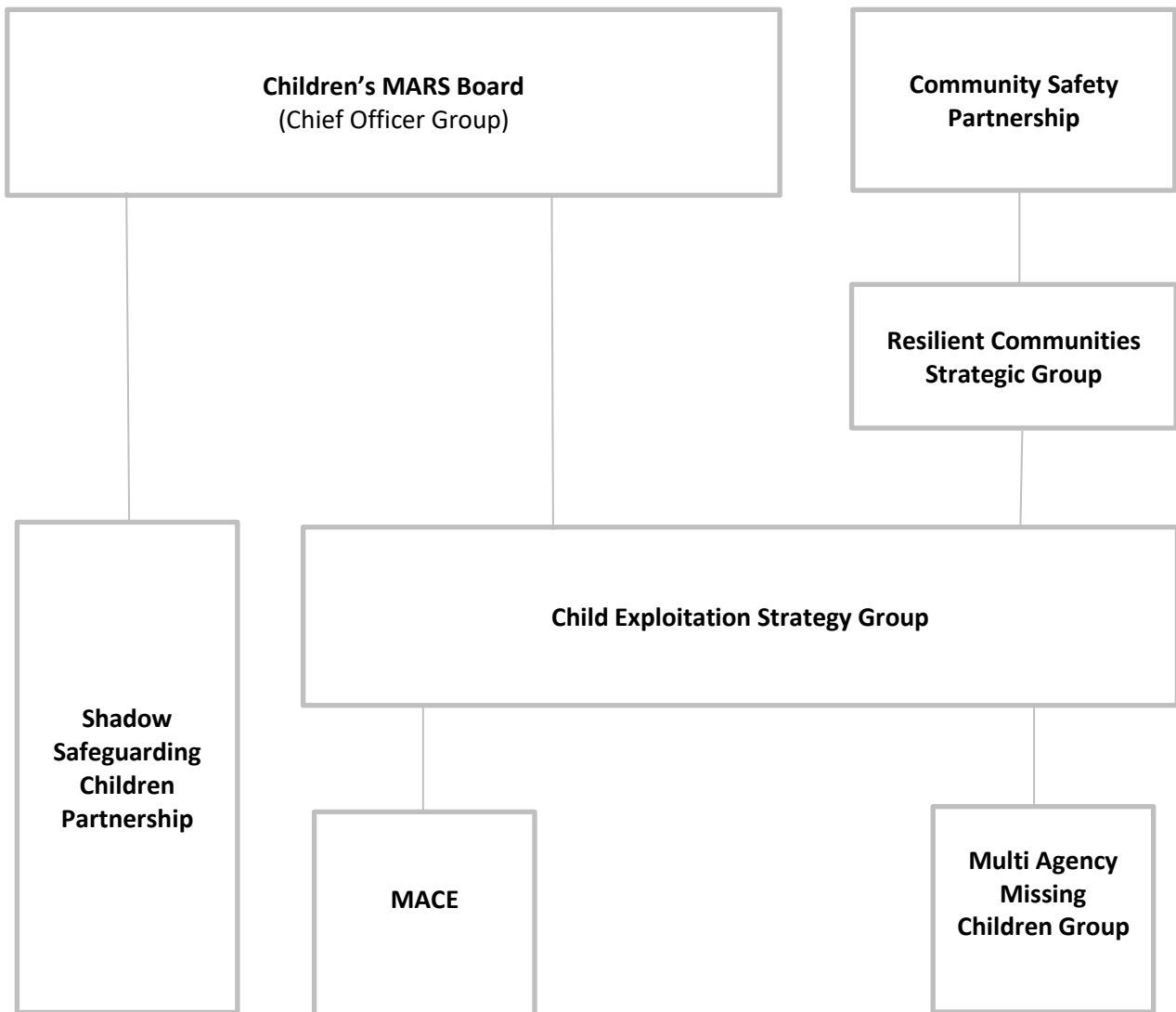
### **STAKEHOLDER**

#### **Shadow Safeguarding Children Partnership**

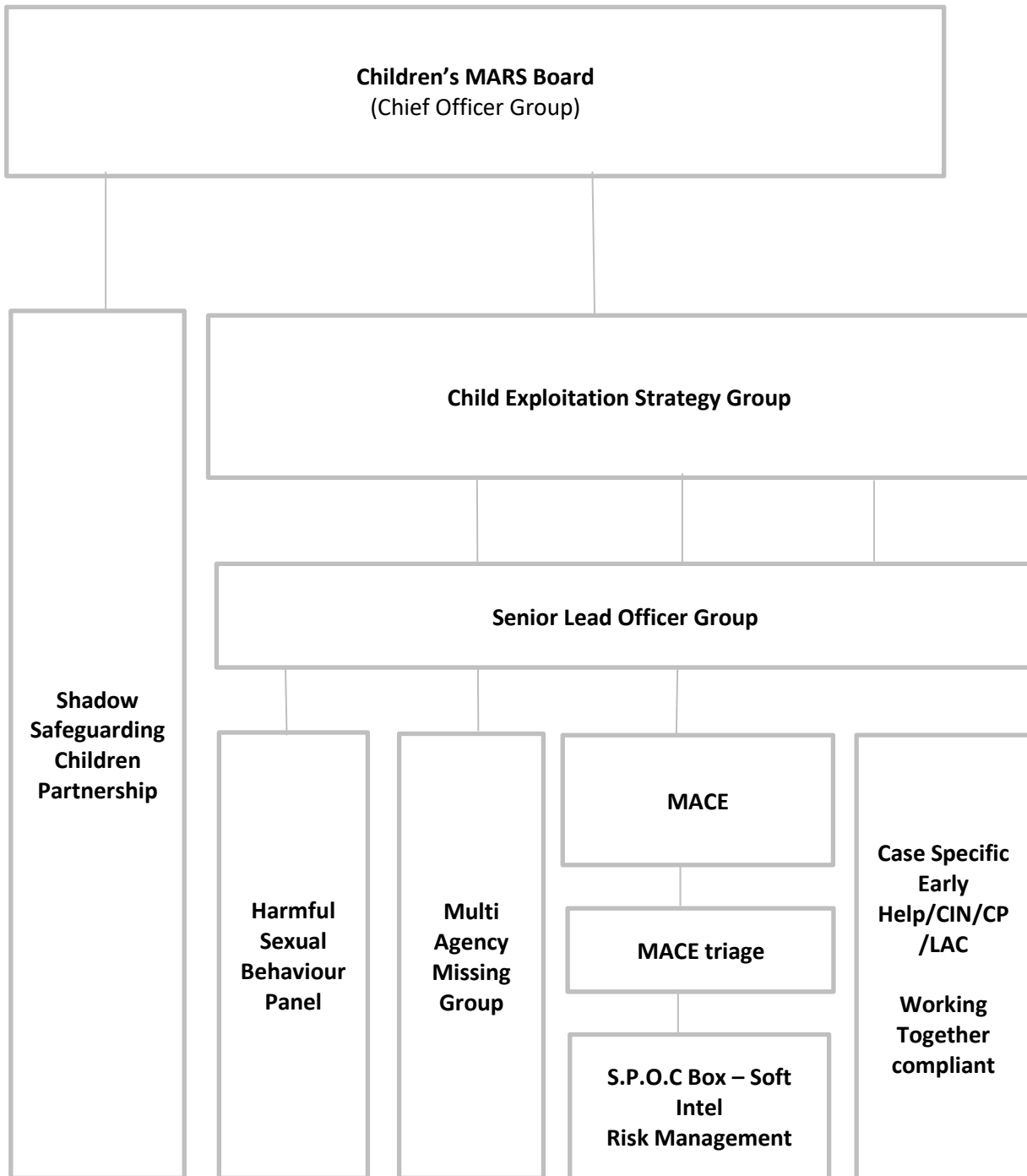
- This stakeholder reference partnership will be chaired at head of service level (tier 3) and would bring together managers and other officers with responsibilities for safeguarding and safeguarding practice in relation to children and families from across all partners.
- Functions would be in relation to policy, procedures, sharing best practice, children's voice and collaborative working.

Figs 1 and 2 below, sets out the accountability framework from a strategy perspective and case specific perspective.

**Fig. 1 – Child Exploitation Accountability Framework - STRATEGY**



**Fig. 2 – Child Exploitation Accountability Framework – CASE SPECIFIC**



## APPENDIX TWO: RISK ANALYSIS FRAMEWORK

Any assessment and intervention by Children's Services due to ongoing concern or significant harm is underpinned by the North Lincolnshire Risk Analysis Framework (RAF).

The risk analysis process acknowledges that it is never possible to remove all risk from a child's life and that the experience of assessing, understanding and mitigating risk within a consistent framework is essential in balancing the needs of a child or young person within the wider family and environmental factors that impact on a child/young person.

Managing and mitigating risk is essential in engaging with children and young people to understand what factors indicate usual adolescent development; recognising what risks exist in a child's life, what level of threat the risks present to the child's wellbeing, and how well these can be managed so that the level of threat is reduced and safely managed.

Within North Lincolnshire there is a well-embedded RAF which is utilised when working with babies, children and young people and provides a consistent model for the assessment, analysis and management of risk.

The RAF may be used to underpin Early Help Plans where risk and protective factors should be considered. It is integral to individual plans for children and young people where there is statutory involvement due to child concern and child protection. This includes cases that are:

- Child in Need, (including disabled children)
- Child Protection
- Looked After Children
- Care Leavers
- Young Offenders
- Older Young People

The analysis of risk also takes place within the three domains of the National Assessment Framework: child's developmental needs, parental capacity to meet those needs, and family and environmental factors that support or hinder. It focuses on two key aspects; what factors are there in the child's life that present a risk to their wellbeing (risk factors), and what factors guard against risk (protective factors).

Having determined what risk and protective factors exist, the process is then to judge the balance of those factors, particularly whether there are sufficient protective factors in place to balance out the risk factors. The next stage is to judge what meaning the level of risk has for and the impact on the child / young person. This will be on a continuum from no significant risk to severe risk. Finally, the worker must determine what needs to change in order to reduce risk and devise a plan to deliver that change.

The risk analysis is repeated at milestones such as reviews of the child's plan, and at times when significant change occurs in the child's circumstances, e.g. episodes of the child going missing, change in family circumstances, new and emerging evidence etc.

## **Risk Analysis Questions**

### **1.1 Identified Risk Factors**

*Identify those factors relating to the child's development, parenting capacity and family and environmental factors that may increase the risk of future harm.*

### **1.2 Identified Protective Factors**

*Identify those factors relating to the child's development, parenting capacity and family and environmental factors that may diminish the risk of future harm*

### **2. Which of these factors are likely to be most significant for the child in terms of increasing or reducing risk and protective factors?**

*Assess the relative strength of the risk and protective factors in the child's world*

### **3. What are the likely outcomes of this for the child?**

*Assess the likely outcomes of future harm for the child if the current level of risk continues – consider safety, health and development. Assess the acceptability of the estimated risk, given the likely outcomes identified.*

### **4. What needs to change if the level of risk is to be reduced?**

*Specify those actions and resources needed to boost the strength and range of identified protective factors, or diminish risk factors. Specify what needs to change if the child is to be kept safe and experience healthy outcomes.*

## **How should it be done?**

1. The first part of the risk analysis requires the identification of risk and protective factors within the three dimensions of the National Assessment Framework – child's developmental needs, parenting capacity and family and environment. From each of the summaries of the three domains, those factors that can be defined as carrying either a risk or protective potential are identified.
2. Risk factors are defined as those factors in the child's world that are likely to increase the likelihood of harm occurring or recurring.
3. Protective factors are those factors in the child's world that may be seen as containing a protective component for the child – they are likely to counteract the impact of the identified risk factors, and diminish the risk of harm occurring or recurring.
4. The second part of the risk analysis is addressed in the question "*Which of these factors are likely to be most significant for the child in terms of reducing or increasing the probability of future harm?*"

5. Here, we need to appraise the relative strength of the risk and protective factors that have been identified, and assign weight to them. In other words, we assess how powerful each of these factors is likely to be, including their strength relative to each other.
6. It may be that the list of risk factors is longer than the list of protective factors, or *vice versa*. But caution is needed because a longer list of protective factors may be deceptive. When considering the strength of these factors, we may find that a smaller list of risk factors adds up to more in “real terms”. We always need to give consideration to the interaction of different factors and their cumulative effects on the child and family.
7. Other important information to weigh will be any clinical diagnoses of physical injury, sexual harm, neglect and failure to thrive and emotional harm, undertaken as part of the enquiry into possible significant harm.
8. The next question in the risk analysis *What are the likely outcomes of this for the child?* invites us to use the overview of risk and protective factors to estimate the level of risk that therefore appears to be present for the child. On the basis of all the information gathered and our assessment of it, we seek to estimate the probability of future harm.
9. There are some helpful questions to consider when seeking to assess the probability of future harm, adapted from Moore (1996) for the purposes of risk analysis in child protection.
10. Working on the basis that the best predictor of future behaviour is past behaviour, we should ask:
  - How often has this harm occurred to the child before?
  - Over what time period has it occurred?
  - In how wide a range of circumstances has it occurred?
  - Consider its unusualness and the specificity of internal and external factors which seem necessary for the harm to occur (by internal factors is meant thoughts, emotions, arousals. By external factors is meant situations and the actions of others)
  - If the harm has occurred before, can we identify what the situations had in common? What factors were present?
  - To what extent have these factors needed to be present for the harm to occur?
  - What reinforces the harmful behaviour? – which factors seem to increase the probability of harm occurring?
  - Is it likely that these factors will occur again in the child’s and family’s environment?
11. Using these questions we can attempt to formulate a model of the process that appears to have led to the harmful behaviour. We can use our responses to these questions to clarify what appear to be the predisposing influences, dis-inhibitors, drives and triggers – *Why this act? Why in this way? Why now?*
12. Having done so we should be better placed to make some judgement about the level of risk to the child and the probability of future harm.

13. We then need to assess the likely outcomes of this for this child. What are the likely consequences for them in terms of their safety, health and development, if the current level of risk continues?
14. Knowledge that the professionals involved with the family have of this particular child, more general knowledge of child development, child health and the possible impact of child abuse and neglect, and the use of research should be used to assess the likely outcomes for the child. This information is used to assess what future harm may mean for this particular child. Medical assessments of injuries or damage sustained by the child will be very important to this part of the analysis. We would need to take into account psychological or psychiatric assessments that may have been carried out, and the impact of any disability will have to be weighed. Issues of ethnicity and the impact of wider cultural and community factors will need to be considered.
15. The importance of reaching conclusions on the basis of a multidisciplinary assessment is to be emphasised, because it will be necessary to draw on a range of sources to corroborate our judgements. At each stage of the risk analysis we need to ask what evidence we have to support them.
16. The last question brings us to the last part of the Risk Analysis. All of the information gathered and the analysis undertaken will enable us to describe *What needs to change if this level of risk is to be reduced?*
17. We return to the three domains of the Assessment Framework to highlight areas where change is needed. What needs to change in the parenting capacity and family environmental factors if the child is to be kept safe and experience healthy outcomes – i.e. their developmental needs are to be adequately met? The time-scales within which these changes need to occur and those responsible for the actions/next steps need to be identified including the parents, wider family and the child (if appropriate).

## APPENDIX THREE: MACE (MULTI AGENCY CHILD EXPLOITATION) MEETING PROCEDURE

There are existing Children's MARS Board procedures for responding to children in need or at risk of significant harm and these provide an effective framework for assessment, risk analysis and managing risk to children in a multi-agency arena. A distinct process to complement and add value to the existing procedures should be followed in cases of child sexual exploitation (CSE) or child criminal exploitation (CCE).

Upon receipt of a referral where there are factors that may indicate CSE and/or CCE, the CSE or CCE - Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide should be used to consider if there are vulnerability/ risk factors in relation to CSE or CCE that require further consideration. There should be a summary and analysis of the Guide within the body of the referral rather than a specific standalone document being included on a child's case file. Refer to both Guides if necessary. The concerns should be discussed with the Practice Supervisor within 24 hours of the referral being received. The Practice Supervisor signing off the contact/referral must clearly have considered risk and protective factors, and summarised the reasons why a particular disposal has been decided upon. The rationale for any decision should be clearly set out.

When a Children's Services Assessment (CSA) is agreed as a referral decision, a holistic assessment of the child's needs is completed. A risk analysis is completed within the CSA (utilising the risk analysis framework). The CSE or CCE - Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide is used to enhance the outcome focused risk analysis framework. If during or as an outcome of the assessment there is indication that the child is at risk of or experiencing CSE and/or CCE (use the definitions of CSE and CCE) the MACE risk tool should be completed to enable a specific risk focus on CSE or CCE. If there is an indication on an open child's case that they are at risk or have experienced CSE or CCE, the MACE risk tool is completed. Utilise one tool only if both CSE and CCE are indicated.

If the MACE risk tool indicates that the child is likely to be at risk of CSE and/or CCE the Practice Supervisor responsible for the case liaises with Lead Officer for CSE/CCE who reviews the case in order to consider the need for the case to be discussed at MACE Triage which will decide whether the case is subsequently discussed at the MACE meeting. NB – if there is clear evidence that the child is at risk of or experiencing CSE/CCE the MACE risk tool can be used at the point of referral.

Upon the case being agreed to be discussed at the MACE meeting, the allocated social worker takes the lead for completing the MACE risk tool. *Professional judgement and liaising with other agencies are key when completing this.* A Service Manager and/or Lead Officer for CSE/CCE presents the case to the MACE meeting, following them being provided with the MACE risk tool and being fully briefed by the social worker. The case is discussed within the multi-agency arena. A decision will be made whether to review the case or remove from the agenda. The MACE meeting WILL NOT review or amend any statutory plans in place but may make recommendations. The purpose of the MACE is to add value & to use the knowledge from agencies to form links between children at risk / victims, offenders and locations (soft intelligence). Information about perpetrator connections can be identified at the MACE meetings. During each meeting, the highest risk children will be identified alongside themes (may include hotspot locations / emerging concerns regarding a group of children from a particular school) MACE meetings will identify actions for other services for example environmental health and immigration. **If a child not known to social work services is referenced to have connections with a child assessed to be at risk of CSE/CCE, a referral should be made in relation to the child not known.** Statutory plans will continue as normal, plans are to be enhanced with information obtained throughout the MACE meetings. Upon the case being agreed to be discussed at the MACE meeting, the allocated social worker takes the lead for completing the MACE risk tool. *Professional judgement and liaising with other agencies are key when completing this.* A Service Manager and/or Lead Officer for CSE/CCE presents the case to the MACE meeting, following them being provided with the MACE risk tool and being fully briefed by the social worker. The case is discussed within the multi-agency arena. A decision will be made whether to review the case or remove from the agenda. The MACE meeting WILL NOT review or amend any statutory plans in place but may make recommendations. The purpose of the MACE is to add value & to use the knowledge from agencies to form links between children at risk / victims, offenders and locations (soft intelligence). Information about perpetrator connections can be identified at the MACE meetings. During each meeting, the highest risk children will be identified alongside themes (may include hotspot locations / emerging concerns regarding a group of children from a particular school) MACE meetings will identify actions for other services for example environmental health and immigration. **If a child not known to social work services is referenced to have connections with a child assessed to be at risk of CSE/CCE, a referral should be made in relation to the child not known.** Statutory plans will continue as normal, plans are to be enhanced with information obtained throughout the MACE meetings.



## APPENDIX FOUR: NORTH LINCOLNSHIRE RISK ANALYSIS IN RELATION TO CHILD EXPLOITATION

The following offers guidance on the use of the risk analysis tools, none of these should detract from working within the statutory framework specified in Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and the Children's MARS Board procedures. The tools include:

- Child sexual exploitation (CSE) and/or child criminal exploitation (CCE) Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide
- Risk Analysis Framework
- MACE Risk Assessment

The tools should be used to enhance and complement the Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 and Children's MARS Board procedures and should be used by practitioners and managers employing evidenced based interventions, practice wisdom and not as a tick box.

Risk in relation to CSE and/or CCE in North Lincolnshire is identified, assessed/analysed and managed at varying levels dependent upon the individual context of each case:

- Identification & Emerging needs - vulnerability factors in relation to CSE and/or CCE (CSE/CCE Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide). Refer to both Guides if necessary.
- Assessment and use of Risk Analysis Framework (RAF), including consideration of the vulnerabilities and risk indicators from the CSE/CCE Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide which are considered in the RAF. This can be within an Early Help Assessment or a Children Services Assessment.
- Multi agency management oversight of CSE/CCE through the MACE Triage and MACE risk assessment and management meetings.

### **Identifying Emerging Needs and Vulnerabilities:**

The CSE/CCE Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide should be used as a reminder of points to consider as guidance by all agencies staff to recognise and identify children who are vulnerable to, at risk of, or who are already being sexually and/or criminally exploited.

If a professional has information that indicates a child is possibly vulnerable or at risk of CSE and/or CCE then the CSE and/or CCE Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide should be considered to inform what needs to happen next. The document is to assist professionals in having regard to these signs and behaviours. The CSE and/or CCE Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide will not necessarily be completed in isolation. It will be used as guidance to consider and recognise/identify children who are vulnerable to, at risk of, or who are already being sexually and/or criminally exploited as part of the risk analysis and information considered and gathered for an assessment.

**The CSE Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide covers the following areas:**

The following vulnerabilities are examples of the types of things children can experience that might make them more susceptible to child sexual exploitation:

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic violence or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- Recent bereavement or loss
- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Absence of a safe environment to explore sexuality
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other children and young people who are being sexually exploited
- Family members or other connections involved in adult sex work
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- Sexual identity
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Not all children and young people with these vulnerabilities will experience child sexual exploitation. **Child sexual exploitation can also occur without any of these vulnerabilities being present.**

Children rarely self-report child sexual exploitation so it is important that practitioners are aware of potential indicators of risk, including:

- Acquisition of money, clothes, mobile phones etc without plausible explanation
- Gang-association and/or isolation from peers/social networks
- Exclusion or unexplained absences from school, college or work
- Leaving home/care without explanation and persistently going missing or returning late
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- Returning home under the influence of drugs/alcohol
- Inappropriate sexualised behaviour for age/sexually transmitted infections
- Evidence of/suspicious of physical or sexual assault
- Relationships with controlling or significantly older individuals or groups
- Multiple callers (unknown adults or peers)
- Frequenting areas known for sex work
- Concerning use of internet or other social media
- Increasing secretiveness around behaviours
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

**The CCE Vulnerabilities and Risk Indicators Guide covers the following areas:**

The following vulnerabilities are examples of the types of things children can experience that might make them more susceptible to child criminal exploitation:

- Having a prior experience of neglect, physical and/or sexual abuse
- Lack of a safe/stable home environment, now or in the past (domestic abuse or parental substance misuse, mental health issues or criminality, for example)
- Social isolation or social difficulties
- Economic vulnerability
- Homelessness or insecure accommodation status
- Connections with other people involved in gangs
- Having a physical or learning disability
- Having mental health or substance misuse issues
- Being in care (particularly those in residential care and those with interrupted care histories)
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

Not all children and young people with these vulnerabilities will experience child criminal exploitation. **Child criminal exploitation can also occur without any of these vulnerabilities being present.**

Children rarely self-report child criminal exploitation so it is important that practitioners are aware of potential indicators of risk, including:

- Persistently going missing from school or home and/or being found out of area
- Unexplained acquisition of money, clothes or mobile phones
- Excessive receipt of texts/phone calls
- Relationships with controlling/older individuals or groups
- Leaving home/care without explanation
- Suspicion of physical assault/unexplained injuries
- Parental concerns
- Carrying weapons
- Significant decline in school results/performance
- Gang association or isolation from peers or social networks
- Self-harm or significant changes in emotional well-being

Practitioners should also remain open to the fact that CSE and/or CCE can occur without any of these risk indicators being obviously present. Practitioners should also be alert to the fact that some risk assessments have been constructed around indicators of face-to-face perpetration by adults and may not adequately capture online or peer-perpetrated forms of harm. It is also important to remember that risk assessments only capture risk at the point of assessment and that levels of risk vary over time, and that the presence of these indicators may be explained by other forms of vulnerability rather than child sexual and/or criminal exploitation.

The first step for practitioners is to be alert to the potential signs of abuse and neglect and to understand the procedures set out by North Lincolnshire's Children's MARS Board. Those working with children and families should access training through those multi-agency arrangements to support them in identifying vulnerability, risk and harm. This will help practitioners to know what action to take and to develop a shared understanding about what best practice looks like.

**If the child is at risk of or experiencing CSE and/or CCE a referral should be made to Children's Social Work Services or the Police if the child is in immediate danger.**

Having considered the vulnerabilities and risk indicators if the child is not believed to be at risk of CSE and/or CCE there may still be other needs that could be responded to by completing an Early Help Assessment.

### **Children in Need**

If the child is determined to be in need but not at risk of CSE and/or CCE a Children Services Assessment should commence.

### **Children at risk of or experiencing significant harm**

If there are indications that the child is at risk of or experiencing CSE and/or CCE a referral should be made and a multi-agency strategy meeting held in accordance with the Children's MARS Board procedures and Working Together to Safeguard Children 2018 to determine the next course of action.

### **Risk Analysis Framework**

Any assessment and intervention by Children's Services due to ongoing concern or significant harm is underpinned by the North Lincolnshire Risk Analysis Framework (RAF).

The risk analysis process acknowledges that it is never possible to remove all risk from a child's life and that the experience of assessing, understanding and mitigating risk within a consistent framework is essential in balancing the needs of a child or young person within the wider family and environmental factors that impact on a child / young person.

Managing and mitigating risk is essential in engaging with children and young people to understand what factors indicate usual adolescent development; recognising what risks exist in a child's life, what level of threat the risks present to the child's wellbeing, and how well these can be managed so that the level of threat is reduced and safely managed.

Within North Lincolnshire there is a well-embedded RAF which is utilised when working with babies, children and young people and provides a consistent model for the assessment, analysis and management of risk.

The RAF may be used to underpin Early Help Plans where risk and protective factors should be considered. It is integral to individual plans for children and young people where there is statutory involvement due to child concern and child protection.

This includes cases that are:

- Child in Need, (including disabled children);
- Child Protection;
- Looked After Children;
- Care Leavers;
- Young Offenders;
- Older Young People; and
- Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children

The analysis of risk also takes place within the three domains of the National Assessment Framework: child's developmental needs, parental capacity to meet those needs, and family and environmental factors that support or hinder. It focuses on two key aspects; what factors are there in the child's life that present a risk to their wellbeing (risk factors), and what factors guard against risk (protective factors).

Having determined what risk and protective factors exist, the process is then to judge the balance of those factors, particularly whether there are sufficient protective factors in place to balance out the risk factors. The next stage is to judge what meaning the level of risk has for and the impact on the child / young person. This will be on a continuum from no significant risk to severe risk.

Finally, the worker must determine what needs to change in order to reduce risk and devise a plan to deliver that change.

The risk analysis is repeated at milestones such as reviews of the child's plan, and at times when significant change occurs in the child's circumstances, e.g. episodes of the child going missing, change in family circumstances, new and emerging evidence etc.

### **Multi agency management oversight through the MACE meeting:**

#### **MACE risk assessment**

Where a child is deemed to be at risk of or experiencing CSE and/or CCE the MACE risk assessment tool will be used to complement the Risk Analysis Framework and be presented for discussion at the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Triage which will subsequently decide whether the child's case is discussed at the MACE meeting meeting. This enables a specific focus on the risk factors in relation to CSE at a management level allowing for added value for example intelligence on connections between children and young people, perpetrators, locations and premises.

The MACE risk assessment tool can be utilised at the point in which a child is deemed at risk of CSE and/or CCE. Utilise one tool if the child is at risk of both CSE and CCE.

The MACE risk assessment tool should run parallel to any statutory plan, therefore all children and young people on the MACE agenda should have already been referred through to Children’s Services and be subject to a Child in Need, Child Protection plan or be Looked After. Given the role of the MACE in making connections and associations between young people and perpetrators there may be some young people whom may not be subject to a statutory plan, however, through the process of discussion at the MACE may be at risk of CSE. In these circumstances an immediate referral to Children’s Services should be made.

The risk assessment tool aims to identify all areas of vulnerability and risk related to CSE and/or CCE and outlines specific tasks to manage and reduce risk in relation to CSE and/or CCE. The tool enables a focus on CSE and/or CCE and connectivity between children and perpetrators. It also enables groups of children’s risk assessments to be viewed collectively thus enabling a focus on cross referencing groups of children/perpetrators, utilising intelligence and identifying emerging themes and hot spots. All of the tools should be based upon professional practice and a qualitative analysis of the factors evident in the case.

**The connectivity of risk assessment tools when assessing the risk of Child Sexual Exploitation**

