

1. Background and Concerns

Two thematic line of sight meetings have been held in relation to young people (YP) linked to criminal activity and child criminal exploitation (CCE). Violence was a feature in the reviews, with one young person sustaining significant injuries.

Multi-agencies shared historical and current information linked to both YP with themes including lengthy family historical criminal activity, parental and family involvement with drugs and distribution, reduced school attendance, A&E hospital attendances, child mental health (MH) maternal MH & learning difficulties, parental adverse childhood experiences and domestic abuse (DA), including child to parent violence. Concerns were noted by agencies in relation to CCE and limited support from either the family network or wider multi-agency support.

2. Purpose of the Review?

Contextual safeguarding continues to be a priority for the HSCP; to identify and reduce the number of children affected by exploitation. The focus is to ensure that there is a good understanding across the partnership of the complex and interrelated risks associated with child exploitation to enable support and intervention to take place at the earliest opportunity to reduce this.

3. Key Lines of Enquiry

Did agencies respond at an early and appropriate level to provide support and take appropriate preventative action in relation to criminal activity and child exploitation?

Did agencies recognise and provide appropriate intervention to the interrelated risks? Was information sharing between agencies robust?

7. Further information – links

- ❖ The Children's Society has published a Slang Dictionary defining some of the words young people use in relation to drugs, crime, and violence [Child Exploitation Language Guide | The Children's Society \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)
- ❖ Practice Principles to support professionals [Tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm | Research in Practice](#)
- ❖ Resources for intervention [Not in Our Community – Protection against exploitation](#)
- ❖ [Adolescent to parent violence – Domestic Abuse \(domesticabuseservices.org.uk\)](#)
- ❖ [Whos In Charge - Working with: Child to Parent Violence & Abuse](#)
- ❖ HSCP Policy and Procedure [Child Sexual Exploitation \(CSE\) and Child Criminal Exploitation \(CCE\) \(proceduresonline.com\)](#)
- ❖ [HSCP-Learning-Programme-2023-24.pdf \(hullscp.co.uk\)](#)
- ❖ House of Commons- Serious youth violence: County lines drug dealing and the Government response [CBP-9264.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)
- ❖ 7 MINUTE GUIDE: CHILD EXPLOITATION RISK INDICATOR TOOL (RIT) [RIT guidance](#)
- ❖ [Child exploitation disruption toolkit - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](#)
- ❖ [NWG-CSE-Spot-the-Signs-Poster.pdf](#)
- ❖ [What are County Lines](#)
- ❖ [Guide-for-parents-worried-about-child-being-criminally-exploited.pdf \(childrenssociety.org.uk\)](#)
- ❖ [Violence and Vulnerability | Crest Advisory](#)



4. Key Learning

Professional curiosity – The reviews revealed there was a lack of curiosity around peer associates and networks (including family members), this is required to effectively understand and manage risk. Reluctant and sporadic engagement was highlighted as a concern across all agencies, however there was a lack of curiosity as to understanding the underlying issues which impacted on engagement.

Over optimism- The review highlighted over optimism in statutory intervention ending prematurely. It is important to check out the evidence for decisions about a case closure. If there has been positive change, what is the actual evidence of this? Is it realistic for such a significant positive change to occur so quickly? Was the risk reduction solely due to circumstances as opposed to choice? Can these changes be maintained? Does the YP or family require support from additional services? Is the exit strategy robust?

Interfamilial vs. contextual needs- Whilst agency involvement may be for contextual concerns, there also needs to be a focus on any interfamilial concerns, such as DA, MH, child to parent violence and family criminality. There is need to understand the context in the day to day lives of children. There is also a need to consider the impact on other children in the family home and wider support networks for the family, including fathers and other relevant family figures to be included in safety planning. This may include referring to additional support services.

Information sharing amongst professionals is crucial and needs to be triangulated and considered alongside historical information to have a holistic of the presenting risks. This information can be used to inform the impact chronology. There is a need to ensure that all agencies hold the same information, and this is reflected across all systems to ensure the child's plan is reflective of all known risks, this includes ensuring relevant professionals are invited to multi-agency meetings and minutes and actions are circulated in a timely manner.

Early intervention – There is a need for early intervention and understanding what diversionary provisions are in place to deter YP from engaging in crime. Consideration was given as to whether risks can be managed effectively through diversionary means prior to any escalation through the criminal justice process. Where appropriate, agencies should avoid the criminalisation of young people.

Balancing victim/perpetrator needs- The reviews highlighted the challenges in managing the contrast between victim and perpetrator. A balanced approach is required when working with YP who engage in criminal activity and balancing their needs as a victim and recognising their vulnerabilities. Consideration to be given to a VEMT team (vulnerable, exploited, missing & trafficked) consultation, the completion of a RIT (Risk Indicator tool) for the MACE (multi-agency child exploitation) process and the possibility of an NRM (National Referral Mechanism) referral, which comprehensively evidence concern of exploitation. Within the reviews there was insufficient information presented for an escalation to MACE.

Mental Health support- When threshold is not met for CAMHS support, what signposting takes place? how is this information shared with the family and partner agencies? The use of the thrive directory can support to understand what emotional wellbeing support is available for children and young people across the city.

6. Next Steps

- ❖ This 7-minute guide will be shared across the partnership to compliment discussions, training and learning in relation to identify and responding to contextual safeguarding.
- ❖ Contextual Safeguarding Conference to be held in March 2023.
- ❖ Training to support practitioners with key learning points is available through the HSCP Learning Programme 2023/ 2024 and attached links (detailed above).
- ❖ Auditing activity will take place through the HSCP Quality Assurance subgroup to consider how key learning has been established in practice.
- ❖ The HSCP Contextual Safeguarding Strategic and Operations Groups meet quarterly and reports into the HSCP Executive Board, and both have an ongoing programme of work. These groups will continue to drive forward our response to tackling child exploitation.
- ❖ The Hull Contextual Safeguarding strategy is in the final stages of completion, following feedback collated from multi-agency task and finish groups.

5. Good Practice

- ❖ When strategy meetings were held, good partnership attendance was noted which enabled the effective sharing of multi-agency information.
- ❖ Partner agencies used initiative to organise a multi-agency meeting to share information, which evidenced shared accountability.
- ❖ There was evidence of GP information shared during a CP Conference which is aligned with best practice.