

# LINE OF SIGHT THEME: CHILD CRIMINAL EXPOLITATION

## EXPLOITATION SPOT THE SIGNS



### INJURIES

Unexplained bruises, cuts, burns, marks. Reluctance to seek medical attention.

### COPING MECHANISMS

Alcohol/drug use/self-harm – what they may be doing or using in order to cope.



### CHANGE IN FRIENDS

Sudden changes in who they are 'hanging out' with including meeting new people from social media.

### POSSESSIONS

Unexplained items e.g. New clothing, money, phone, drugs.



# Line of Sight (LOS)

The LOS process is a core function of the Hull Safeguarding Children Partnership (HSCP).

The process provides learning opportunities across the partnership to strengthen multi-agency working and focuses on improving outcomes for children and young people.

The process identifies specific learning themes through audit and multi-agency analysis. Learning is implemented across the partnership to improve practice across the safeguarding system



Who asked for the LOS?  
Humberside Police

Why was a LOS requested?  
To consider whether there were opportunities across all agencies to engage at an early stage

What is the context?

Child A (14 years old) was with his friends when he intervened in a fight involving other young people. Immediately following this incident, it is alleged that one of young people involved, contacted another young person, Child B (16 years old). Child B attended the location armed with a large (10") carving knife and confronted Child A. Child B stabbed Child A five times with three puncture wounds to the back, one to the abdomen and one to the leg; the abdominal injury was described as very deep and missing the heart by a few millimetres.

Key practice themes and learning



# Key Practice Themes and Learning

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## 1. The importance of professional curiosity and over optimism

- Reviews frequently highlight ‘over optimism’ and a lack of ‘professional curiosity’. It is crucial to understand the child’s day to day life, the review highlighted the need for increased curiosity in relation to peer associates and networks (including extended family members).
- It is important to understand underlying issues when working with families where engagement is reluctant or sporadic. This could include potential threats from associates, unresolved adverse childhood experiences, socio-economic pressures or difficulties engaging with large numbers of professionals. This is particularly important if a plan for a child is not making the required change and progress.
- Prior to agency involvement ending with a child consideration needs to be given to the evidence behind change and whether this can be sustained. A meaningful exit plan is required which includes considering ongoing multi-agency support and contingencies to manage future potential risk.

## 2. Interfamilial vs. Contextual needs

- Contextual safeguarding focuses on risk outside of the family home. Risk also needs to be considered in the context any interfamilial concerns (i.e. domestic abuse, mental health, child to parent violence and family criminality).
- It is important for practitioners to build a trustful and respectful relationship with the child and critically reflect on what the child is trying to communicate through their behaviour, interaction with others and physical presentation. Understanding what the needs of a child are, in the context of their daily lives, is crucial.
- It is important to consider impact on all children within the family home.
- All relevant family and support networks (including fathers and partners) need to be included in the assessment and safety planning.

## 3. Information Sharing

- Practitioners need to consistently share information and triangulate this to provide a holistic picture of the presenting risks. This needs to be considered alongside historical information to ensure the child’s plan is reflective of all known risks and strengths. It is good practice to use a multi-agency impact chronology to inform decisions. The importance of relevant professionals being present at multi-agency meetings was highlighted and for minutes and actions to be circulated in a timely manner to ensure consistency of information on systems (i.e. strategy meetings). This, in addition to working collaboratively with the child and their family, will contribute towards a robust and effective multi-agency plan.

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# Key Practice Themes and Learning

## 3. Early Intervention

- Early intervention -There is a need for early intervention and understanding what diversionary provisions are in place to deter the young person from engaging in crime. Multi-agency consideration needs to be given to whether risks can be managed effectively through diversionary means prior to any escalation through the criminal justice process.

## 4. Balancing victim/ perpetrator needs

- The reviews highlighted the challenges in managing the contrast between victim and perpetrator. A nuanced 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 consultation, the completion of a RIT for the MACE process and the possibility of an NRM referral, which comprehensively evidences concerns of exploitation. Within the reviews there was insufficient information presented for an escalation to MACE.

## 5. Triage arrangements (i.e. for Mental Health Support)

- There is a need to ensure that the triage arrangements for health services are appropriate, i.e., ensuring young people are seen within children's departments, thus allowing for relevant safeguarding checks to be made in a timely manner. There is a need for the pathway to be clear 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 with signposting to the most appropriate wellbeing support for children and young people in Hull,



# Useful Information

- ❖ 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](#)



NOT IN OUR  
COMMUNITY

PROTECTING OUR FRIENDS AGAINST  
GROOMING & SEXUAL EXPLOITATION

Know the signs -  
Real stories - Get help

## 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 YP 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.

## 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](#)
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## 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.



## 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?

## 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.