

<b>Bath &amp; North East Somerset Council</b>		
MEETING/ DECISION MAKER:	<b>Children, Adults, Health &amp; Wellbeing Policy Development &amp; Scrutiny Panel</b>	
MEETING/ DECISION DATE:	<b>15<sup>th</sup> June 2021</b>	EXECUTIVE FORWARD PLAN REFERENCE:
TITLE:	<b>Exploitation</b>	
WARD:	All	
<b>AN OPEN PUBLIC ITEM</b>		
<b>List of attachments to this report:</b>		

## THE ISSUE

The Panel have requested a report outlining information in relation to children or adults at risk of exploitation and information on multi-agency working which reduces and identifies the risk.

The paper seeks to assure the Panel that relevant policies, procedures and strategies recognise and address exploitation and furthermore sets out examples of the services and programmes commissioned to support children, young people and vulnerable adults.

## RECOMMENDATION

**The Panel is asked to;**

1. Note the content of the report and the range of arrangements across B&NES to recognise and respond to concerns around exploitation.
2. Consider whether the report provides assurance that the B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership does adequately focus on Exploitation and have relevant policy and procedures in place.

## THE REPORT

### 1. GOVERNANCE OF EXPLOITATION

The B&NES Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership (BCSSP) arrangements are committed to integrating safeguarding children and adults with community safety and the work of the Responsible Authorities Group (RAG) – **THE BCSSP** partnership commenced operation in September 2019.

**Bath & North East Somerset Community Safety and Safeguarding Partnership is committed to:**

- The voice of children, adults, families and communities is strengthened
- Strengthening and improving the work on Think Family and Community
- Improving strategic decision making and leadership by having one cohesive conversation
- Focusing on shared strategic objectives to achieve the greatest impact and improve outcomes for children, adults, families and the community
- Reducing duplication and therefore enable us to use our resources more effectively across B&NES

Details on the work of the partnership can be found at: <https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/about>

The partnership has an established governance arrangement: with an Executive, Operational and 7 sub-groups to drive forward the strategic priorities of the partnership, one of which is the sub-group that leads on exploitation. Please see link below to a Plan on Page.

<https://bcssp.bathnes.gov.uk/sites/default/files/2020-10/BCSSP%20Plan%20on%20a%20Page%20FINAL%20270619.pdf>

The purpose of the exploitation sub-group is to develop, monitor and evaluate the effectiveness of the strategic and operational multi-agency responses to exploitation across B&NES.

A 3-year strategy has been developed by the exploitation sub group to support the children, young people and vulnerable adults in B&NES that are experiencing or at risk of experiencing exploitation and abuse outside their home environment. It embodies the determination of all partner agencies to work together to make effective strategic and operational responses to the complex, diverse and significant needs of the children, young people and vulnerable adults affected.

### 2. THE SCOPE OF THE EXPLOITATION SUB GROUP IS:

- Sexual Exploitation
- Criminal Exploitation
- Serious Youth Violence
- Missing children
- County Lines
- Modern Slavery / Trafficking
- Contextualised Safeguarding
- Forced Marriage, FGM, Honour Based Violence
- Hate/Mate Crime

- **Child Sexual Exploitation-Definition**

Child sexual exploitation involves situations, contexts or relationships in which a person under 18 is given something, such as food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts or money in return for performing sexual activities or having sexual activities performed on them. It can also involve violence, coercion and intimidation, with threats of physical harm or humiliation

- **Child Criminal Exploitation-Definition**

Child Criminal Exploitation occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of a person under the age of 18 and may coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under that age into any criminal activity in exchange for;

- Something the victim needs or wants and/or for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or Through violence or the threat of violence.
- The victim may be exploited even if the activity appears consensual (i.e. moving drugs or the proceeds of drugs from one place to another).

Child Criminal Exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (Home Office 2018)

- **Serious Youth Violence -Definition**

There is no universally adopted definition of serious violence. The national serious violence strategy (2018) focused on knife and gun crime and homicide and included drug dealing and robbery. A broader Avon and Somerset definition, developed in response to stakeholder feedback, added serious domestic abuse, serious sexual assault and rape. Locally, the focus to date has been on domestic abuse, youth violence, including knife crime and violence associated with the street community.

Exploitation is a generic term which encompasses different types of abuse towards both children and adults at risk. The definitions deal specifically with children however these definitions are easily transferrable to vulnerable adults and the Exploitation sub group uses these definitions interchangeably.

- **Missing Children-Definition**

Missing definition: a child reported as missing to the Police by their parents/carers because their whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be a victim of crime and/or there is a risk of harm to themselves or someone else;

- **County Lines-Definition**

County Lines is a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas (within the UK), using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of “deal line”. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move (and store) the drugs and money and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. (Home Office 2018)

County lines is a form of Child Exploitation (CE). It is a major, cross-cutting issue involving drugs, violence, gangs, safeguarding, criminal and sexual exploitation, modern slavery, and missing

persons. The response to tackle it involves the Police, the NCA (National Crime Agency) and a wide range of Government departments, local government agencies and VCS (voluntary and community sector) organisations. County Lines activity and the associated violence, drug dealing, and exploitation has a devastating impact on children, vulnerable adults and local communities.

- **Home Invasion (sometimes referred to as Cuckooing)-Definition**

Urban gangs establish a base in the market location, often by taking over the homes of local vulnerable adults by force and/or coercion, in a practice referred to as 'cuckooing'. Urban gangs then use children and vulnerable people to move drugs and money.

- **Modern Slavery/Human Trafficking -Definition**

A person commits an offence if the person arranges or facilitates the travel of another person to exploit them. It is irrelevant whether the exploited person, adult or child, consents to the travel. A person may, in particular, arrange or facilitate another person's travel by recruiting, transporting or transferring, harboring or receiving them, or transferring or exchanging control over them. 'Travel' means arriving in, or entering, any country; departing from any country and travelling within any country. A person who is a UK national commits an offence under Section 2 regardless of where the arranging or facilitating takes place, or where the travel takes place. A person who is not a UK national commits an offence under Section 2 if any part of the arranging or facilitating takes place in the UK, or the travel consists of arrival in or entry into, departure from, or travel within the UK.

In determining whether or not a child is a victim of trafficking, their consent to being trafficked is irrelevant and how they are trafficked is also irrelevant. Only the act and the purpose need to be present. It is not necessary to prove coercion or any other inducement.

Exploitation alone does not constitute trafficking – there also needs to be recruitment, transportation, transfer, harboring or receipt of a person. Slavery, servitude and forced or compulsory labour is, or may be, a crime in its own right under Section 1 Modern Slavery Act 2015.

- **Contextual Safeguarding-Definition**

Contextual safeguarding which includes child sexual exploitation, peer on peer violence and abuse (including gangs), modern day slavery, harmful sexual behaviour, criminal exploitation, and going missing should not be seen in isolation as they often overlap, creating a complex set of harmful circumstances and experience for children, young people, families and communities.

Contextual Safeguarding is an approach to understanding, and responding to, young people's experiences of significant harm beyond their families. It recognises that the different relationships that young people form in their neighborhoods, schools and online can feature violence and abuse. Parents and carers have little influence over these contexts, and young people's experiences of extra-familial abuse can undermine parent-child relationships. Contextual Safeguarding, therefore, expands the objectives of child protection systems in recognition that young people are vulnerable to abuse in a range of social contexts.

- **Organised Crime Groups and Gangs-Definition**

Organised crime group means a group that:

- a) Has as its purpose the carrying on of criminal activities, and
- b) Consists of three or more persons who act, or agree to act, together to further that purpose

Gang related violence and drug dealing activity is defined as gang related if it occurs in the course of, or is otherwise related to, the activities of a group that:

- a) Consists of at least three people, and
- b) Has one or more characteristics that enable its members to be identified by others as a group. (Serious Crime Act 2015)

All areas of exploitation should be viewed within safeguarding procedures and it is only by working together it can be tackled effectively this necessitates a multi-agency response

- **Forced Marriage-Definition**

A forced marriage is where one or both people do not (or in cases of people with learning disabilities or reduced capacity, cannot) consent to the marriage as they are pressurised, or abuse is used, to force them to do so. It is recognised in the UK as a form of domestic or child abuse and a serious abuse of human rights.

The pressure put on people to marry against their will may be:

- physical: for example, threats, physical violence or sexual violence
- emotional and psychological: for example, making someone feel like they are bringing 'shame' on their family
- Financial abuse, for example taking someone's wages, may also be a factor.

- **Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)-Definition**

FGM is a form of child abuse: professionals have a statutory obligation under national safeguarding protocols (e.g. Working Together to Safeguard Children 2015) to protect girls and women at risk of FGM. Since October 2015 registered professionals in health, social care and teaching also have a statutory duty (known as the Mandatory Reporting duty) to report cases of FGM to the police non-emergency number 101 in cases where a girl under 18 either discloses that she has had FGM or the professional observes physical signs of FGM.

- **Honour Based Violence-Definition**

'Honour'-based violence (**HBV**) There is no Government definition of 'honour'-based violence. For the purpose of this report we have chosen to use the following definition, written by IKWRO (the Iranian and Kurdish Women's Rights Organisation) : "'Honour'-based violence is normally a collective and planned crime or incident, mainly perpetrated against women and girls, by their family or their community, who act to defend their perceived honour, because they believe that the victim(s) have done something to bring shame to the family or the community.

HBV is a form of violence and abuse and the use of the term 'honour' to define this type of behaviour is often challenged. As the Crown Prosecution Service states "There is no, and cannot be, honour or justification for abusing the human rights of others."

- **Hate Crime-Definition**

Hate crime is defined as 'any criminal offence which is perceived, by the victim or any other person, to be motivated by hostility or prejudice towards someone based on a personal characteristic.' this common definition was agreed in 2007 by the Police, Crown Prosecution Service, Prison Service (now the National Offender Management Service) and other agencies that make up the criminal justice system. There are five centrally monitored strands of hate crime: • race or ethnicity; • religion or beliefs; • sexual orientation; • disability; and • transgender identity.

- **Mate Crime-Definition**

A tentative definition, based on the experience of the safety net project, is mate crime happens when someone 'makes friends' with a person and goes on to abuse or exploit that relationship. The founding intention of the relationship, from the point of view of the perpetrator, is likely to be criminal. The relationship is likely to be of some duration and, if unchecked, may lead to a pattern of repeat and worsening abuse.

### **3. EXPLOITATION Sub-Group**

#### **Bath & North East Somerset Community Safety & Safeguarding Partnership (BCSSP).**

Oversees the Exploitation sub-group that meets quarterly. There is strong multi agency working within the group and this is reflected in the work that is undertaken and the outcomes it has achieved.

The focus of the Exploitation group is-

#### **Prevention & Early Intervention**

- Prevent children, young people and vulnerable people from becoming exploited through effective leadership, governance and a wider culture embedded within organisations and communities that recognises the root causes of Exploitation & Serious Youth Violence (SYV) the signs and risk indicators and do all they can to tackle them.

#### **Prepare**

- To develop a comprehensive and accurate intelligence picture which will inform local partnership understanding of context, and locations of concern to enable swift coordinated multi-agency responses to safeguard children and vulnerable adults and prevent, divert or prosecute those who seek to facilitate and /or perpetrate exploitation, abuse and harm.

#### **Protect**

- To protect children and young people and vulnerable adults who are at risk of exploitation as well as those who are already victims and survivors.

#### **Pursue**

- To commit to ensuring that we will do all we can to disrupt and pursue perpetrators who are sexually and or criminally exploiting children, young people and vulnerable adults and where possible prosecute them.

#### **Engagement**

- We shall engage with all children and young people at risk of, or experiencing CSE/CCE, as well as their families and communities, to ensure that their voices are heard and responded to.

#### **4. Children's Social Care response to Exploitation**

##### **Approach and scale of demand/prevalence in B&NES**

In Children's Social Care the organisational response to exploitation has resulted in the development of the Adolescent and Care Experienced Team. This team support plans for adolescents aged between 11-18 whose exploitation is assessed as the primary concern/risk. The care experienced part of the team provides support for care leavers from 18 – 25 years, some of which are young people that have experienced exploitation and as a result have been accommodated, and are now transitioning into adulthood and are still at risk from perpetrators of sexual and criminal exploitation harm.

There has been a reduction in referrals to the ACE team during the 3 lockdowns. Since October 2020 there has been 17 referrals to date. In recent weeks this has been a rise in referrals linked to schools reopening. This is positive and in line with what we would expect referrals to be.

##### **Willow**

The Council's organisational response also includes offering early intervention to children and young people at risk of both sexual and criminal exploitation through support from the Willow project. The lead practitioner for Willow also works closely with Barnardo's BASE who provide support and intervention to our young people who are either at high risk and/or actively being exploited.

Training was offered virtually in March 2021 and there are now four additional Willow team members. The Willow team support 16 young people currently. In addition, we have offered support to parents and carers who are concerned about exploitation via one to one sessions and have delivered group sessions within local secondary schools to those considered at an increased risk of exploitation.

We have strong working links with the police and their Topaz team.

##### **Operation TOPAZ**

Avon and Somerset Constabulary response to Child Sexual Exploitation is Operation Topaz. Soon this will also encompass Criminal Exploitation also. Topaz is a perpetrator disruption team enabling the force to proactively protect the highest risk child sexual exploitation victims by developing opportunities to disrupt suspects.

Topaz recognizes that disrupting suspects is often the most effective way of safeguarding victims of child sexual exploitation.

Topaz enables timely disruption, by any means available, including directing partner agencies to intervene.

Avon & Somerset Police and Children's Social Care work closely together to ensure that all young people from ACE/Willow are referred to TOPAZ via the Avon and Somerset Police Intelligence Reporting Portal. The Local Authority receive monthly reports from TOPAZ in respect of young people and perpetrators that have been flagged and this report also feeds into and is crossed reference at the Operational Exploitation Meeting (OEM) which takes place bimonthly. There are currently 32 CYP from B&NES discussed in the Topaz team. However, there is currently no active engagement from Topaz with B&NES children and young people for sexual exploitation or criminal exploitation at this time. There is good work being undertaken with the police in relation to locations and links to exploitation.

## **The Operational Exploitation Meeting**

Bath and North East Somerset have adopted a contextual safeguarding approach to develop an Operational Exploitation Meeting (OEM) to address the extra familial risks that are posed to our young people. This group meets bi-monthly.

This is a multi-agency meeting that:

- Identifies those young people being exploited criminally or sexually, and seek to support, disrupt to reduce harm and ensure support is in place.
- Identifies vulnerable adults who are at risk of exploitation/Cuckooing and seek to disrupt activity, reduce harm and ensure support is in place.
- Identifies spaces where young people associate, can experience abuse and cause concern such as parks, housing estates, stair wells within the community in order to disrupt activity.
- Identifies workers of such establishments that may have contact with young people and vulnerable adults that may be exploited and offer training and pathways to report such abuse.
- Identifies adult perpetrators who are exploiting others with a view to action being taken to disrupt/support or prosecute (dependent on circumstances)

The information shared at OEM helps to enable early identification of those young people who may be at risk of exploitation, vulnerable adults, and of those who may pose an exploitation threat to our young people. Additionally, we are able to better identify specific hotspots and locations where there may be an increased chance of exploitation occurring, which subsequently strengthens our responses and enables the raising of awareness across partner agencies.

This group reports into the Exploitation subgroup bi annually.

## **SERIOUS YOUTH VIOLENCE**

A key development in the last 2 years has been the establishment of a multi-agency Serious Violence Operational Group to identify individuals, networks and places of concern; this group meeting on monthly basis and reports to the exploitation sub group. The Police Serious Violence App is used to identify individuals at high risk of involvement in serious violence as victims or perpetrators (and often, both) and direct notifications can also be received from any agency. The group has recently extended its focus from under 18s to under 25s and the intention is to eventually consider all age groups. The methodology is developing and the activity depends on a continuing strong partnership with Police.

Serious violence is concentrated in Bath city centre with increases in Keynsham, Twerton and Somer Valley. Robberies and hospital knife attendances are mainly in the after school period, whereas violence and knife injury admissions are more often in the early hours of the morning, suggesting links with the night time economy and domestic abuse. Victims of knife crime at hospital are mainly in the 25-34 age group and usually male. Most children who have been violent are aged 15-17 and almost all male.



As part of the Exploitation sub-group a multi-agency Thematic Review of Knife Crime is being undertaken to look at areas of good practice and any areas of development.

## **MISSING**

Bath and North East Somerset have robust systems in place in relation to missing children and young people. All B&NES children and young people that go missing are offered Return Home Interviews by the Integrated working Team. Following this, appropriate levels of support are offered depending upon their presenting needs. There is good joined up working with Police colleagues and missing trigger plans are created to ensure robust plans are in place for children and young people that require this.

Not known to children's social care	Child in Need	Child protection	Children Looked After
16	4	3	12

(19 known and 14 not known to Children's Social Care) these dates refer to 01/01/2021-01/06/2021

## **COUNTY LINES**

Work continues across BANES using local policing neighbourhood staff, intelligence units and proactive teams including regular welfare visits and engagement to those vulnerable from cuckooing or drugs misuse, participation in nationally run operations, misuse of drugs warrants and intelligence driven targeting of known dealers.

Working in collaboration with the Metropolitan Police County Lines task force to target and disrupt the line holders, two County Lines were dismantled, those controlling the lines arrested, charged and remanded awaiting trial (6 persons in total, 4 from London, 2 local people) – one line was operating in the Paulton/Midsomer Norton area and one in Bath in 2020. Three other lines in Bath disrupted by police activities whilst trying to set up over the last 12 months and as a result none have been able to become established, such that there are no known active County Lines currently in BANES.

County Lines operations have changed due to COVID 19 and across Avon and Somerset we have seen this. The main points are:

- Move towards more local recruitment of children rather than using those from their “home bases” for example; London
- More creative use of social media platforms or peer to peer recruitment
- Profile of victims is changing – more affluent, more female, younger children
- New methods of transport are being embraced such as the use of taxis and hire cars. Traditionally the rail network was used but it has been easier to target the runners using the rail network so the gangs have changed their tactics.

## **Home Invasion (sometimes referred to as Cuckooing)**

The exploitation subgroup undertook a multi-agency audit in relation to Cuckooing and this illustrated good use of the Adult Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH), some good multi-agency working and that risks were effectively assessed and managed.

## **MODERN SLAVERY/TRAFFICKING**

B&NES Inclusive Communities Team work with Public Protection, Police, Housing providers and other services to co-ordinate and participate in 'days of action' and regional operations that are evidence based and focused on premises where intelligence may show activity including serious organised crime, money laundering, people trafficking and modern slavery. During the last year no adults were referred into modern slavery referral mechanism from B&NES.

B&NES Council continues to be an active member of the regional anti-slavery partnership and the Avon & Somerset Anti-Slavery Board with an aim to raise awareness of modern slavery amongst all employees and partners, to ensure a multi-agency approach to this issue and to implement the transparency in supply chain provisions of the Modern Slavery Act to prevent modern slavery from occurring in its own supply chain, noting that the Council's Contract Standing Orders already recognise the importance of preventing modern slavery.

## **FORCED MARRIAGE, FGM, HONOUR BASED VIOLENCE**

In B&NES we receive a very small number of referrals in relation to Forced Marriage, Female Genital Mutilation and Honor Based Violence. We have good policies and procedures in place that support strong multi-agency working in these areas to achieve positive outcomes.

## **HATE/MATE CRIME**

Mate Crime is overseen by the Disrupt Panel where there is strong multi-agency working. Currently there are no active cases in this area being pursued.

## **5. CONSIDERATIONS**

Children's Services and multi-agency partners will continue to respond to and offer comprehensive support to all young people at risk of exploitation. Children Service will keep under constant review the effective and efficient use of the financial resources allocated to it to endeavour to stay within the budgetary envelope in meeting the needs of our vulnerable children and young people at risk of exploitation

## **6. RISK MANAGEMENT**

A risk assessment related to the issue and recommendations has been undertaken, in compliance with the Council's decision-making risk management guidance.

## **7. CLIMATE CHANGE**

Multi-agency partners must meet children and young people face to face to assess risks and provide effective interventions: where possible we will seek to minimize travel and use technology

## **8. OTHER OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

An EIA has not been carried out on this report.

## **9. CONSULTATION**

This report was developed by the co-chairs of the BCSSP Exploitation sub-group. It was also shared with the Lead Member for Children and Young People.

<b>Contact person</b>	<i>Leigh Zywek</i>
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<b>Background papers</b>	<i>List here any background papers not included with this report, and where/how they are available for inspection.</i>
<b>Please contact the report author if you need to access this report in an alternative format</b>	