

CHILD EXPLOITATION AND CHILDREN MISSING FROM HOME AND CARE

ANNUAL REVIEW 2024

Purpose of the Report

1. This is an annual report written for the Safeguarding Assurance and Information Group and the lead member for Children and Young People. It provides an outline of the progress and challenges within the work being undertaken by the Local Authority and relevant partner organisations to tackle child exploitation and provides a response to children who go missing from home and care during the last year (April 2023-March 2024). The report concludes by setting out the commitments for the following 12 months.
2. I am the Service Manager with strategic responsibility for child exploitation along with my colleague, Hazel McKibbin. The operational responsibility for work within Children's Social Care sits within the social work teams. Our role includes having strategic oversight and providing support and challenge in respect of tackling child exploitation across the wider system including early help and working with partner agencies.

Strategic Partnerships, Governance and Service Provision

3. The cross-partnership Tackling Child Exploitation Steering Group provides overarching governance for the various work streams for children impacted by exploitation. Work concerning children missing from home and care is overseen by the County Missing Children Steering Group. These groups meet quarterly and take a strategic lead in the coordination of inter-agency work as defined in the Nottinghamshire Safeguarding Children Partnership/Nottingham City Safeguarding Children Partnership joint procedures.
4. Tackling child exploitation requires a different response to a traditional child protection approach which focuses upon the child's safety and wellbeing in relation to their parent's ability to protect and meet their needs. The factors involved with child exploitation include an interplay between child, location, and perpetrator; as harm occurs outside of the home, we need to build upon child protection knowledge to address the motivation and patterns of those who perpetrate and participate in the recruitment, control, and exploitation of children in various contexts.
5. Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City's Safeguarding Children's Partnerships are committed to preventing and protecting children from exploitation through a whole system approach. All partners understand that anyone under 18yrs facing these harms, or causing harm to others, must be seen, and treated as children and young people first. We achieve this through focusing on the four P's; Pursue, Prevent, Protect and Prepare, based on the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023 and underpin our strategic approach and practice with the Tackling Child Exploitation multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm.

How We Work and What We Do

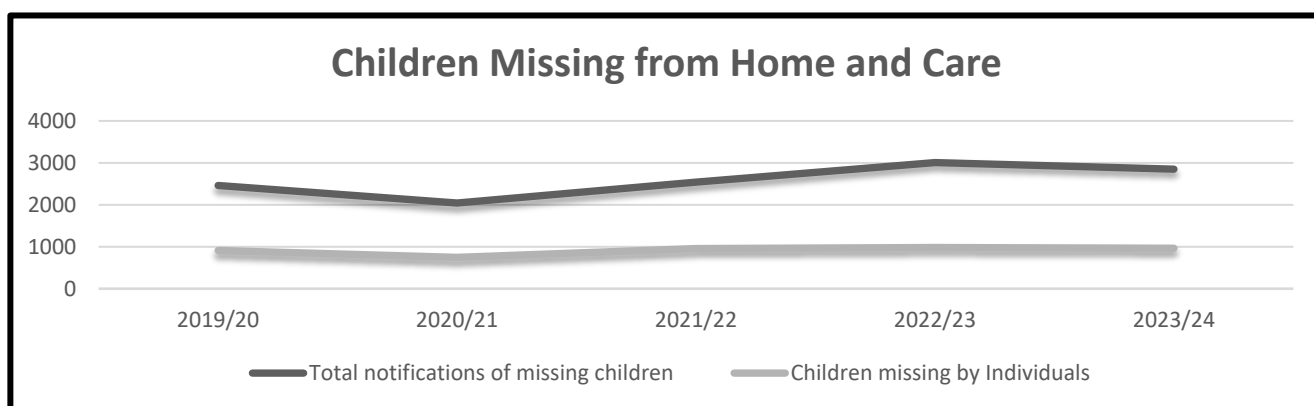
6. At Nottinghamshire County Council, there is a strategic safeguarding team with responsibility for designing and co-ordinating the required response to child exploitation and children

missing from home and care in line with statutory duties, and the mobilisation of the work is completed by operational teams including Children’s Social Care, the Family Service and the Youth Justice Service.

- 7. When a child is reported missing from home or care, the incident is reported to the Police. The Police Control Room will assess the level of risk attached to a child’s missing incident which triggers a proportionate response from the Police Missing team. Each child’s missing report is shared with the Local Authority Children’s Missing Officer who then alerts relevant operational teams and undertakes the function of tracking and monitoring the child’s missing and found incident. Return Home Interviews are requested for each child’s missing incident and multiple missing incidents prompts a multi-agency response.
- 8. When a child is identified at possible risk of exploitation via either a new MASH enquiry, current work or through the process of a return home interview, a Child Exploitation risk assessment is considered for completion. This assessment tool develops the narrative around the concerns for child exploitation and initiates a response for the relevant team to come around the child to formulate a plan to protect them and disrupt the harm.
- 9. There are several multi-agency panels that have strategic oversight of children at the highest risk of exploitation and most frequently missing in the County. These panels are designed to ensure that the partnership is working effectively together to address the needs of these children and hold each other to account where service gaps or deficient service provision are impacting upon plans to protect the child and disrupt any harm.
- 10. In terms of the wider partnership and whole system approach, we are strongly connected in with partnership forums hosted by Police colleagues called ‘The Concerns Network’ and ‘Neighbourhood Safeguarding and Disruption’ meetings, which bring together more local knowledge about children and locations impacted by exploitation. These meetings are attended by a variety of local partners, link into County and City-wide forums and provide intelligence that supports the early identification of harm and patterns of emerging threats on a local level.

Children Missing from Home and Care

Data and Analysis



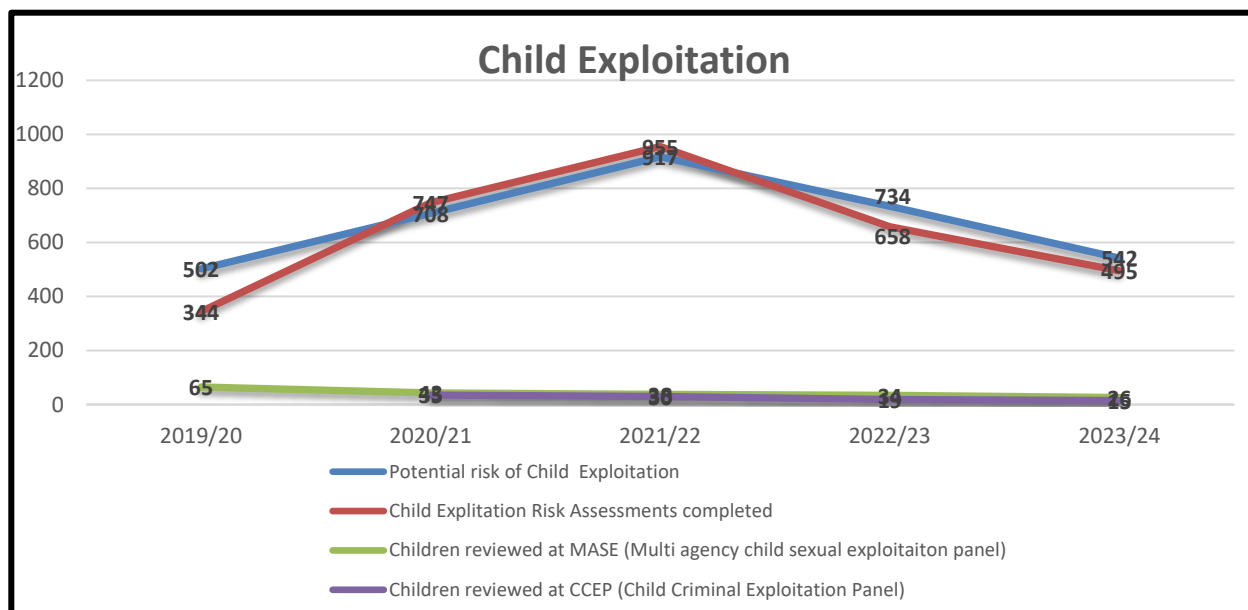
- 11. As can be seen in the table above, the overall number of missing incidents has reduced slightly for the year 2023/24. The detailed data found in Appendix 1 shows the number of individual children these missing incidents relate to has also reduced and notably, there has been a

more significant reduction in individual Looked After Children going missing including children missing from a care placement in Nottinghamshire who are the responsibility of another Local Authority.

12. A multi-agency Children Missing from Home and Care Audit is scheduled for 2024/25 where we hope to get a clearer understanding of the data, but anecdotally my working assumptions for why less children in care have gone missing for the year 2023-24 are as follows:
 - a. The implementation of the Philomena Protocol in 2022 has improved the response to children missing from care (including other local authority children hosted by Nottinghamshire County Council).
 - b. Strengthened partnership between the Missing Police team and Children's Social Care teams including the part co-location of the Children Missing Officer within the Police Missing team.
 - c. Excellent partnership attendance at our 'Frequently Missing & Hotspots' monthly multi-agency panel and consistent use of missing multi-agency meetings for children missing more than 3 times in 90 days, providing connectivity to other significant risk issues for example, child exploitation or harmful sexual behaviour etc.
 - d. It may be that other social or systemic factors are impacting the data including less children in the care of Nottinghamshire County Council and it being several years post Covid related lockdowns (less need to 'escape' and better access to family, friends or familiar locations without government restrictions).
13. On most occasions, children who go missing are found at the home of a friend or relative, or at a known location and found within 4hrs. Most children are not harmed during their missing episode but a small number of children who go missing are harmed. From information gathered during Return Home Interviews (RHI), the main risk issues identified for children include adults who may pose a risk to children, sexual exploitation, criminal exploitation, and offending behaviour. The main reasons provided by children in care and at home for going missing is due to boundary issues and conflict within family relationships. Return Home Interviews (RHI) are requested for all children after they have been found to establish the reason for their missing incident, and to assess if there have been any additional safeguarding concerns.
14. Multi-agency meetings are requested for children who go missing more than 3 times in 90 days or where there are concerns related to several missing incidents. A monthly 'multiple missing and hotspots' meeting is held to provide strategic oversight for children most frequently missing which includes intelligence sharing of any patterns of concerns around the County. When risks associated with child exploitation are identified, the group will require assurances that the child has plans in place for support and disruption and connect into those plans and multi-agency forums where relevant.

Tackling Child Exploitation

Data and Analysis



15. Data for the year 2023/24 continues to show a steady decline in children impacted by child exploitation (detailed data found in Appendix 1). According to data gathered by Nottinghamshire County Council, lower-level threats of child exploitation have been flagged in all districts of the County. Children at the highest levels of risk from child criminal exploitation are discussed at the monthly Child Criminal Exploitation Panel (CCEP) and those reviewed are in the main from the Gedling and Rushcliffe districts, notably areas that border Nottingham City. Children at the highest levels of risk from sexual exploitation are discussed at the monthly Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel and those discussed have primarily been based in the Mansfield and Ashfield areas but with connectivity to Nottingham City and out of county.
16. According to the latest Police Problem Profile 1st Oct 2022 – 30th Sept 2023, 'Crime occurrences' were down slightly and 'Demand occurrences' (safeguarding work) were up slightly for child exploitation. Although this data is a year behind the current reporting period, this is consistent with the Local Authority data seen in Appendix 1. Police systems recorded 373 victims of child exploitation and 196 perpetrators during 2022-23. The Police Protection Notice (PPN) system is designed to ensure that any crime involving a child is brought to the attention of the Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) and monthly meetings between the Police and Strategic Safeguarding cross reference Police and Children's Social Care systems to ensure that any child subject to a crime in relation to child exploitation has received a response to their need for safety and protection.
17. We have recently undertaken a cross partnership audit with Nottingham City. The full audit report has not yet been completed but our preliminary findings indicate that there were examples of proactive work, good communication and multi-agency working and that the language used by professionals was largely strength based and trauma informed. Areas identified for learning were the need for more professional curiosity, some concerns regarding language used to describe behaviours of children at risk of exploitation and the need for more consistent information sharing between organisations. We will develop an action plan from the

audit that will be overseen by the steering group, the SAIG and SLG within the Safeguarding Partnership structure.

Reflecting on our achievements and the impact of this progress

Reflecting on our Achievements

18. This has been an ambitious year for developing our cross-partnership response to tackling child exploitation and progress has been made in several key areas, all with the aim of responding to 'need rather than threshold' and providing children at risk of exploitation in Nottinghamshire with the right support at the right time
19. We have developed a partnership commitment to Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) that has been endorsed by the Strategic Leadership Group (Appendix 2) and borne out by our Child Exploitation Strategy 2024-26 (Appendix 3). These have been collaborative pieces of work involving not only our three statutory safeguarding partners but relevant partners across the County and City who are engaged and committed to improving outcomes for children who are at risk of exploitation. This has enabled work by the partnership to embed our approach to tackling child exploitation through the '4P' Model of Pursue, Protect, Prevent and Prepare; a framework for disrupting harm to children whilst building resilience for individuals and communities through support and awareness, at the same time as seeking to stop the problem at source by tackling child exploitation together as a partnership. The framework is being applied to the action planning of the steering group as well as for individual plans for children impacted by child exploitation.
20. We continue to commission the Children's Society to work with children and families most impacted by child sexual exploitation and they have been instrumental in our recent development work. This service will continue to be funded for at least a further 12mths with contractual options to extend further. The Children's Society have worked with 35 children and 24 parents or carers by way of 1-1 support during the reporting period and in addition has provided online evening workshops to a further 70 parents or carers which have been well received:

"Helpful to talk through and understand and know you are not alone with struggles, Helpful and supportive" – Parent/Carer (13/12/2023)
21. We have launched a Tackling Child Exploitation Practice Network for operational staff in the Family Service, Children's Social Care and Youth Justice Service. This is to embed a consistent strength-based approach to exploitation underpinned by the TCE multi-agency practice principles and Nottinghamshire's practice standards. Within this group we have used an appreciative inquiry approach to review the current risk assessments and our multi-agency meetings. This group is chaired by the Strategic Service Managers who also chair individual reflective reviews for professionals where the risks for the child are particularly challenging.
22. A newly revised multi-agency child exploitation risk assessment and 'One Plan' approach to tackling child exploitation across the whole system is currently under consultation and has been developed in line with the '4P' framework and Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) practice principles launched by the Department for Education in 2023/24. The TCE practice principles compliment the commitment of Nottinghamshire County Council to embrace strength-based practices and a trauma informed response to children and families impacted by abuse and neglect.

23. We have started our strategic self-assessment using the TCE Multi-Agency Practice Principles tool. We have assessed ourselves under the first principle and have an outline plan that is being developed and progressed within the Steering Group. This work is in its early stages, but our ambition is to work alongside parents of children who have been exploited as safeguarding partners and hold an annual Tackling Child Exploitation Conference alongside a focus on prevention and early intervention.
24. Nottinghamshire Police has brought all child exploitation investigations together in the newly established 'Children at Risk of Exploitation' (CaRE) team within the Public Protection Unit; I am now part co-located within the team.
25. Police led 'Neighbourhood, Safeguarding and Disruption' (NSD) meetings are now held monthly in each district of Nottinghamshire. The purpose of NSD meetings is to facilitate a partnership approach to managing and disrupting risk towards children and young people involved in or linked to knife crime, serious violence, child exploitation and urban street gangs. These partnership meetings are chaired by the local Neighbourhood Policing Teams and attended by local partner agencies including youth services, district council community safety teams, district child protection teams, youth justice service, education services, schools' early intervention officers and other relevant third sector providers.
26. The Education Safeguarding, Health and Wellbeing Hub organised a series of 'Harm Outside the Home' training events in each of the seven Nottinghamshire localities between February – March 2024. The target audience for these events were local primary and secondary schools and the purpose was to raise awareness of the threat of child exploitation whilst equipping local areas with an understanding of Nottinghamshire's approach to tackling child exploitation and strengthening relationships within local partners.

Reflection on our commitments from 2022-2023

What we said we would do	What we did
To undertake a self-assessment of CCE in line with the JTAI criteria and the National Child Safeguarding Practice Review: Safeguarding Children at Risk of Criminal Exploitation. We will use this to better understand the developments since the 2021 audit and to drive an action plan for further practice improvements	As set out above, self-assessment work of Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City's approach to tackling child exploitation is now well underway. An action plan has been developed and being progressed in line with the first TCE practice principle by the cross partnership Tackling Child Exploitation Steering Group.
To form stronger strategic relationships and governance with partners and Nottingham City including a re-launch of the cross authority steering group on 4 th July	We have seen the strengthening of these relationships this year which has resulted in a commitment to tackling child exploitation (Appendix 2) and a Child Exploitation strategy 2023-25 (Appendix3) and a relaunch of the cross partnership Tackling Child Exploitation Steering Group.

Consideration of a Police led exploitation team with co-location of partners	Nottinghamshire Police have launched the newly formed Children at Risk of Exploitation team and the ambition is that this becomes a multi-agency hub
To embed the TCE principles that is trauma informed	The TCE principles are an integral part of our commitment and strategy for tackling child exploitation. Work has started at the cross partnership steering group and with operational staff through the Tackling Child Exploitation Practice network to reflect on how the practice principles impact practice.
A commitment to learning from the experiences of children and young people and parents who have experienced exploitation	This remains an area of development for the partnership and is a priority within the action plan. We have an ambition for developing a parents consultation group within the coming year and work is underway within the partnership to consider how best to engage children with lived experiences.
To improve methods of disruption and consistency of practice across district councils	<p>Consistency across the County remains a challenge but there has been some creative thinking around disruption in localities. For example, there was an increase in the number of children listed at MASE from the same district (Ashfield). These children were also excluded from a local school and involved in anti-social behaviour in the local community. Partners came together from place-based organisations and children's support services to form 'Project KIA (Kirkby-In-Ashfield)' with the aim of supporting children whilst increasing safety to local communities and locations. Work to support children and families was brought together with work completed to increase CCTV, lighting in parks and streets, alleyway closures and advice to local businesses as well as a focus upon disrupting individuals seeking to harm children through exploitation. The work is currently being evaluated but believed to have been effective in protecting the identified children and disrupting harm, whilst having a positive wider impact within the locality.</p> <p>As referred to above, the Tackling Emerging Threats to Children team organised a series of 'Harm Outside the Home' training events in each of the seven Nottinghamshire localities between February - March 2024 which was supported by the strategic safeguarding team. The ambition was to bring about a consistent understanding and response to local threats of child exploitation.</p>
A stronger response to children and young people at risk of exploitation at an earlier stage	Work has been undertaken to make progress with this commitment through the Harm Outside the Home events and by the steering group. Our ambition is to make a combined child exploitation risk assessment available for all partners and for these concerns to be triaged by a multi-agency group within the CaRE hub.

Training and Workforce Development

27. Multi-agency training for child exploitation and children missing from home and care is offered via the NSCP and is also available through e-learning packages. Appetite for the training

remains positive from a cross section of partners including children's social care, schools, foster carers, Police and early help services. Continued training for colleagues is an essential element of Nottinghamshire's strategy to 'Prepare' colleagues with the knowledge and skills to respond to child exploitation with understanding and confidence. 572 Colleagues from across the partnership have attended online child exploitation training material and a further 323 have attended child exploitation training events. This training will be reviewed in the coming year to align with our commitment to a joined-up approach to child exploitation by using the 4P model and underpinned by the TCE multi-agency practice principles.

28. As referred to above, we have established a Tackling Child Exploitation Practice Network which meets quarterly to provide support, challenge, and best practice guidance to operational staff. The group also focuses upon colleague care given the complexity and risk involved in supporting families impacted by exploitation.

Evidence of challenges and impact

29. Though there has been much development in work to tackle child exploitation this year, the following challenges require focus within the steering group:

- i. Early identification of child exploitation – testing out of risk assessment triaging to enable children at risk of exploitation to have access to the right help at the right time.
- ii. Work is required to consider more nuanced legal advice and guidance for children at the highest risk of child exploitation. This mirrors the requirement for work to tackle child exploitation to be different from typical child protection responses. Consideration should be given to a combined Police and Local Authority legal advice framework.
- iii. Provision of support to children at risk of criminal exploitation needs to be aligned with the work currently available via the children's society for children impacted by sexual exploitation.
- iv. Further work is required to improve the use of language by all professionals when considering the risk of exploitation to children so that we are not locating the blame of child exploitation upon children. The impact would mean more effective identification of children at risk of exploitation and a greater focus upon disrupting perpetrators.
- v. Using the '4P' framework to drive a more consistent approach across Nottinghamshire County Council to consider more creative methods of disruption for those who seek to harm children through exploitation.

Our commitments for the next 12 months

- Launch the newly revised multi-agency child exploitation risk assessment and 'One Plan' approach to tackling child exploitation.
- Prepare a public awareness campaign and deliver a Tackling Child Exploitation conference in March 2025.
- The steering group will develop a detailed action plan in relation to the ambitions set out above and the measures for progress in line with the work plan from the strategic assessment (Appendix 4).

Hannah Johnson
Service Manager
Strategic Safeguarding and Independent Review
20.06.24

Appendix 1 - Data

Table 1. Children Missing from Home and Care 2023/24

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total incident reports of children missing	2,462	2,043	2,539	3007	2851
*Relating to individuals	911	747	956	982	964
*Ratio males to females	56:44	55:44	53:47	58:42	49:50
*Peak age range (yrs.)	14-17	15-17	14-17	14-17	14 - 17
Total incident reports of Children missing from home	1,078	802	1138	1276	1369
*Relating to individuals	646	496	655	863	684
Total incident reports of NCC Children missing from care <i>NB includes NCC looked after children missing from out of area</i>	774	857	1017	1194	939
*Relating to individuals	166	180	187	340	206
Other Local Authority Children missing from care in Notts	610	385	360	519	517
*Relating to individuals	124	110	137	205	136

Table 2. Child Sexual Exploitation

	2019/20	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total children identified as potentially at risk of CSE	502	438	54	399	315
New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals re CSE	326	308	361	211	158
CSE Risk Assessments completed	344	430	434	335	218
Children considered at Child Protection Coordinator led CSE Multi Agency Meetings	56 + 42 ICPCs	50 + 25 ICPCs	60 + 23 ICPCs	52 + 37 ICPCs	22+19 ICPCs
Peak age range (yrs)	14-17	13-16	13-17	13-17	13-17
Female: Male ratio	89:11	76:24	84:16	81:19	83:17
Children monitored at Multi Agency Sexual Exploitation (MASE) panel	65	43	38	34	26

Table 3. Child Criminal Exploitation

	2020/21	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24
Total children identified as potentially at risk of CCE*	270	375	335	227
New Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) referrals re CCE	*report in development	199	144	120
CCE Risk Assessments completed	317	521	323	277
Children considered at Child Protection Coordinator led CCE Multi Agency Meetings	155 (56 initial mtgs and 97 review mtgs)		140 (39 Initial mtgs and 101 review mtgs)	32 Initial CPC mtgs 86 Review CPC mtgs 24 ICPCs, 27 RCPCs
Peak age range (yrs)	*report in development	14-17	14-17	14-17
Female: Male ratio	*report in development	14:86	18:82	17:83
Children monitored at Child Criminal Exploitation Panel (CCEP)	35	30	19	15

OUR COMMITMENT TO TACKLING CHILD EXPLOITATION

FOREWORD

Foreword from Rob Griffin Assistant Chief Constable for Nottinghamshire Police and Strategic Leadership Group Chair for Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council’s Safeguarding Children’s Partnership.

‘Working Together 2023’ highlights that some children experience abuse and exploitation outside the home, often referred to as ‘extra-familial harm.’ Until recently the neighbouring local authorities of Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council have provided their own response to tackling child exploitation alongside their statutory partners. However, as the chair for the Strategic Leadership (SLG) for both Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire I am pleased to introduce Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire’s Safeguarding Children’s Partnerships joint commitment to tackling child exploitation.

The commitment and our practice are underpinned by the multi-agency practice principles for responding to child exploitation and extra familial harm (Research in Practice with The Children’s Society and Safer Lives at the University of Bedfordshire 2023) which are evidence-based drawing on academic research, practice wisdom and lived experience. They also support our partnerships commitments to multi-agency practice that has a shared purpose and direction with a focus on relationships and a strengths-based vision of how we provide the right help, at the right time, to the right children and their families across Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire.

Alongside this piece of work within Nottinghamshire Police force we have brought together our child exploitation expertise in to one Children at Risk of Exploitation Team (CaRE) and there is a

commitment to this being a multi-disciplinary team covering both city and county.

This feels like an exciting time for both Safeguarding Partnerships and hopefully one of the first of many opportunities for us to bring together capacity not only in terms of resource but our passion, commitment, and dedication to safeguard children in Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County against abuse and exploitation. ‘



[Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm \(researchinpractice.org.uk\)](https://researchinpractice.org.uk)



ACC Rob Griffin

DEFINITION

Working together to Safeguard Children 2023 advises:

'Some children experience abuse and exploitation outside the home. This is often referred to as "extra-familial harm"⁹⁷. Harm can occur in a range of extra-familial contexts, including school and other educational settings, peer groups, or within community/public spaces, and/or online. Children may experience this type of harm from other children and/or from adults. Forms of extra-familial harm include exploitation by criminal and organised crime groups and individuals (such as county lines and financial exploitation), serious violence, modern slavery and trafficking, online harm, sexual exploitation, teenage relationship abuse, and the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation^{98 99}. Children of all ages can experience extra-familial harm.'

VISION

Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council's Safeguarding Children's Partnerships are committed to preventing and protecting children from exploitation.

Our collective aim is to create a whole system response that understands risk, and identifies when exploitation occurs, protects and supports children who are at risk of, or subject to, child exploitation and disrupts and pursues those who target children for the purpose of abusing them through exploitation.

We recognise that identifying, understanding, tackling, and preventing the exploitation of children is a complex task that requires a co-ordinated collaborative approach from partners and work with the victim/survivor, their family, and the community.

All partners understand that anyone under 18 facing these harms, or causing harm to others, must be seen, and treated as children and young people first and foremost and our success in tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm is evaluated against this foundational Principle.

We will achieve this through focusing on the 4 Ps of **Prepare; Prevent; Protect; and Pursue**, based on the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023 and underpin our strategic approach and practice with the **Multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm (researchinpractice.org.uk)**

USE OF LANGUAGE

We need to use appropriate language when working with children and young people who have been exploited or are at risk of exploitation. Language implying that the child or young person is in any way complicit with or responsible for the exploitation that has happened or may happen to them, reinforces the harm they have suffered and must be avoided.

Language should reflect the presence of coercion and the lack of control children and young people have in abusive or exploitative situations and must recognise the severity of the impact exploitation has on the child or young person. Victim-blaming language reinforces messages of shame and guilt from perpetrators and may prevent the child or young person from disclosing their abuse, through fear of being blamed by professionals. When victim-blaming language is used between professionals, there is a risk of normalising and minimising the child's experience resulting in a harmful and inappropriate response.

<https://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/information/professionals/resources/child-exploitation-language-guide>

ADOLESCENT DEVELOPMENT

Adolescence, the transition from childhood to adulthood, is a turbulent time for many children and involves rapid development in the physical, intellectual, psychological, emotional, and social aspects of a child's life.

The turbulence of adolescent development can increase a child's vulnerability leaving them open to exploitation and notably, some indicators of exploitation mirror common adolescent behaviours. Such as developing their own identities and gaining autonomy; seeking friendships and acceptance from their peers; developing their skills and abilities and becoming increasingly committed to their own beliefs/values, goals and activities. Young people achieve these tasks through experimenting with self-expression and activities and experiences with different people.

Adolescent risk-taking behaviour, particularly in front of their peers, starts at puberty and increases significantly in the mid to late teens before decreasing in the mid- twenties. The ability to self-regulate and acknowledge consequences however starts in puberty and develops more slowly reaching a peak in the mid- twenties.

The effects of child exploitation can be devastating and have a profound impact on children for the rest of their lives. It is likely to have a significant impact on their physical and mental health and wellbeing, educational outcomes and employment prospects and their relationships with family and friends. Exploitation can affect children in any sector of society and careful assessment by professionals working closely together is key to identifying any risks to a child and disrupting criminal activity.

THE MODEL

To achieve our ambition to tackle Child Exploitation we will:

Adopt the Research in Practice **Tackling Child Exploitation Principles** to underpin HOW we work with children and their families and as a basis for reviewing our strategic oversight and practice within our partnership.

Adopt the **4 Ps**, developed from the Serious and Organised Crime Strategy 2023, to underpin our practice, WHAT we do to support children and families at risk of and/or experiencing child exploitation.

Prepare – Tackling child exploitation together.

We will work together to ensure an effective partnership structure, governance and response to child exploitation and prepare our staff across the partnership with the skills and training to respond effectively and collaboratively.

Prevent – Stopping the problem at the source.

We will prevent and reduce the risk of exploitation posed to children by working with partners to identify and support those vulnerable to exploitation at the earliest opportunity. We will raise awareness through a common understanding and approach to recognising and tackling child exploitation.

Protect – Building the highest levels of defence and resilience.

We will protect children, young people and communities from exploitation, violence and abuse and provide support using data and intelligence to inform the local profile and in-depth needs assessments.

Pursue – Relentless disruption and targeted action.

We will work together across the system to pursue those responsible for child abuse in the form of criminal and sexual exploitation through prosecution, disruption, and the use of civil orders to protect the vulnerable.

THE IMPACT OF CHILD EXPLOITATION ON CHILDREN AND FAMILIES

The snapshots below are true accounts from young people and their families - names and identifying details have been changed to protect their identities.

Children/Young People

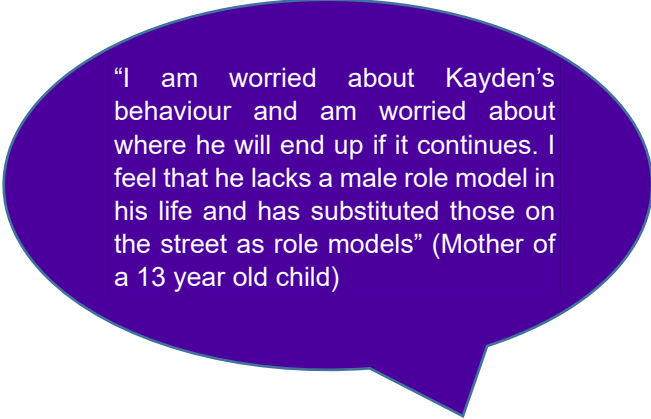
Every aspect of this young person's life was impacted from his physical and mental health to relationships with family, friends and professionals. The exploitation resulted in behavioural changes which disrupted his education and attainment.



“I’m scared, I can’t stay in Nottingham, I’m going to be the next to be stabbed” (quote by a child 16 years of age)

Families/Carers

This young person's mother experienced difficulties with her mental health in response to her child experiencing child exploitation. This impacted on her capacity to respond to her child's needs and in turn on her work life and the economic stability of the family.

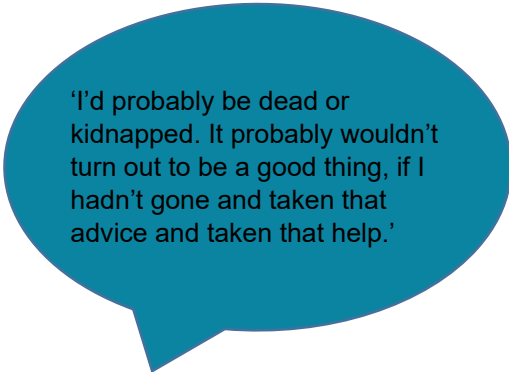


"I am worried about Kayden's behaviour and am worried about where he will end up if it continues. I feel that he lacks a male role model in his life and has substituted those on the street as role models" (Mother of a 13 year old child)



Lauren's* story

At 15yrs, Lauren was groomed online and in her local community by a number of older men. The men grooming Lauren quickly drew her into a situation of abuse and exploitation and isolated her from family. Lauren was regularly going missing and placed in increasingly dangerous situations. Confused, traumatised, and frightened, she felt unable to reach out to her family and tell them what was happening to her. Through frequent missing incidents, Police and Social Services became involved and quickly realised that Lauren needed specialist support.



'I'd probably be dead or kidnapped. It probably wouldn't turn out to be a good thing, if I hadn't gone and taken that advice and taken that help.'

Our Child Exploitation Strategy 2024-26

Our aim

To create a single whole system response, working in partnership to reduce child exploitation and extra familial harm and protect our communities. All partners understand that anyone under 18 facing these harms, or causing harm to others, must be seen and treated as children first and foremost and our success in tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm is evaluated against this foundational Principle.

Our priorities



Prepare
Tackling child exploitation together



Prevent
Stopping the problem at the source



Protect
Building the highest levels of defence and resilience



Pursue
Relentless disruption and targeted action

Our Objectives

Implementing the below '4 P' approach to work collaboratively with statutory partners and the voluntary sector to enable a multi agency response to safeguarding children at risk of Exploitation.

Prepare



Work together to establish an effective partnership structure, response and resources to tackle child exploitation that delivers the right support at the right time.

Host an annual child exploitation conference and prepare our staff across the partnership with the skills and training to respond effectively to exploitation concerns.

Effective communication strategy to raise awareness in our communities around early identification and spotting the signs of child exploitation.

Commit to being a learning partnership to improve practice by listening and learning from children, parents and carers and embracing culture and diversity.

Prevent



Prevent and reduce the risk of exploitation posed to children by working with safeguarding partners, including parents, to identify and support those vulnerable to exploitation at the earliest opportunity.

Use a range of communication and technology to deliver key messages and create safe physical and virtual spaces in a manner that is most effective and accessible to the community.

Identify and deliver contextual safeguarding in relation to place based risk and high-risk locations by engaging a wide range of partners within local communities with a particular focus on Family Hubs, Schools and local councils.

Raise awareness of child exploitation amongst professionals, public, parents, carers and communities to develop a common understanding and approach and enable effective identification and reporting mechanisms.

Protect



Work creatively and effectively as a partnership using innovative practice to protect children and communities from exploitation, violence and abuse. Including transitional safeguarding.

Protect children and communities from exploitation, violence and abuse. Provide support using data, intelligence and lived experience to inform the local profile and in-depth needs assessments.

Commit to practice that listens to the voices and experiences of children and places them at the centre focusing on a culture of protection and support not blame.

Utilise local and national best practice to maximise opportunities to bring offenders to justice and protect children at risk of exploitation.

Pursue



Work together across the system to pursue those responsible for child abuse in the form of criminal and sexual exploitation through prosecution, disruption, and the use of civil orders to protect the vulnerable.

Ensure good use of all available intelligence including the voices of children, parents and carers to identify, understand and prioritise child exploitation and inform effective decision making.

Effectively target those who exploit and maximise opportunities to disrupt their criminality and bring offenders to justice.

Our Governance

Executive Oversight

Nottinghamshire County Council and Nottingham City Senior Leadership Group

Strategic

Nottinghamshire Safeguarding, Assurance and Improvement Group (SAIG) and Nottingham City Business Management Group (BMG)

Tactical

Tackling Child Exploitation Steering Group (Cross Authority and Cross Partnership)

Operational

Nottinghamshire and Nottingham City multi-agency sexual exploitation (MASE), criminal exploitation (CCEP) and missing panels (Hotspots) and neighbourhood safeguarding and disruption meetings (NSD)

Our Performance

Prepare

Deliver annual Exploitation Conference on Child Exploitation Day.

Measure progress against TCE Strategic Self-Assessment Action Plan.

Prevent

Evidence partner and parent confidence in recognising and responding to child exploitation at an early stage through consultation and feedback.

Evidence safe spaces in communities and impact on the reduction of risks.

Protect

Quality assurance of interventions such as panels and risk assessments including the voices of children, parents, and carers.

Individual case studies and reviews that focus on reducing and managing risks including the voices of children, parents, and carers.

Pursue

Monitor the number of convictions and prosecutions for exploitation related offences involving children.

Monitor and increase the use of criminal and civil orders to target and disrupt those who present the highest risk to children in our communities.





Strategic Assessment and Action Plan

The response to child exploitation and extra-familial harm must... put children and young people first.

ACTION

Where are we now:

“Our local strategy, policies and practises for child exploitation and extra-familial harm make it explicitly clear that anyone under 18 facing these harms, or causing harm to others, must be seen and treated as children and young people first and foremost. All partners understand this and our success in tackling child exploitation and extra-familial harm is evaluated against this foundational Principle.”

As a Partnership we: Disagree

We have made a start on this work and we are having conversations at strategic level but we need to embed this principle in our practice across the partnership and within our local communities.

CULTURE

Where we are now:

“Any language that could contribute to labelling or victim-blaming is robustly challenged in our local partnership, and we continuously reflect on how our use of language is interlinked with our perception of children and young people, and how this impacts on the services and support children and young people receive.”

As a Partnership we: Agree but it is a work in progress

This is the area we feel most confident in and we can evidence that we have made a start. Our training focuses on use of language and in our panels and our risk assessments we are careful about the language we use and we challenge when it is inappropriate. Strategically we agree that needs to be one of our primary focuses and this will be evident within our work plan.

BEHAVIOUR

Where we are now:

“We are confident that the child and young person-centred approach is implemented and practised in a consistent way across our partnership. Leaders and staff in all agencies ensure children and young people are not blamed or held responsible for the harm they face. Children and young people are seen holistically.”

As a Partnership we: Agree but it is a work in progress

We feel that we are in a similar situation to the one above. We have a clear commitment strategically to this principle and our strength-based practice approach across both partnerships underpins and creates the foundation for children and young people being seen holistically and not being blamed or held responsible for the harm they face. However we need to continue on changing culture and embedding this into our practice.

MAKING PROGRESS

How this should feel to children / young people:

“I feel understood, believed, and treated like a human being. I feel my worker is interested in me and on my side. I know they don’t judge or blame me.”

Immediate actions

‘Start Small, Start Somewhere’: What swift and meaningful progress can we make for children and young people:

1.	Actions	Owners	Timescales	How will we measure progress?
2.	Agree a mission statement/strap line – use in future public awareness campaign and on all our documents.	TCE Strategic Assessment Group	6 months	Evidence of it being used. Partnership and Individual Audits
3.	Review Partnership Training for CE to include focus on language and putting children and young people first.	Service Managers Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire SCPs	6 months	Specific Question on feedback Training Form

		Dan Evans - Police Children, Young People and Parents and Carers		
4.	Develop a short presentation on the power and use of language to be shared with all partners that can be delivered in team meetings etc	Task and Finish Group – The Steering Group The Children’s Society	6 months (including delivery)	Data collection on how many people have received and read it. Partners to bring evidence to the Steering Group of where is has been shared To be included in inductions.
5.	Agenda for strategy meetings/discussions for children at risk of exploitation, triage in the CaRE Team and partnership risk assessment tool to be jointly developed.	Task and Finish Group Hannah Johnson Hazel McKibbin Claire Wakeman Dan Evans	3 months	
6.	Develop a set of questions for The Children’s Society to use with Parents and Carers and Children and Young People around language to evaluate impact of the action plan.	Hannah Johnson The Children’s Society VRP – Steve Harrison	3 months	
7.	Develop a template for a pen picture/spidergram for individual children and young people to be used at panels.	Task and Finish Group Youth Justice - Rebecca Price (lead) Missing Police Team Exploitation Leads (Hannah, Hazel and Claire) The Children’s Society	6 months	
8.	Develop a suite of resources including short films on child exploitation with and for	The Steering Group VRP (Steve Harrison)	6 months	Collection of data around accessing the

	parents, carers, children, and professionals.	Public Health Engagement of Colleges to design		films and documents
9.	Partnership policies and Procedures to be reviewed with a focus on language and putting children and young people first.	Child Exploitation Leads Nottingham City and Nottinghamshire County Council	6 months	To be signed off by the partnership procedures subgroups

Longer term actions

We will work to realise these goals for children and young people:

10.	Actions	Owners	Timescales	How will we measure progress?
11.	Mapping of services and support – including schools and education providers and family hubs. Strategic Needs Assessment?	TCE Strategic Assessment Group	6 months	Gaps identified to inform further planning.
12.	Partnership Exploitation Conference to be held on Exploitation Day 2024	TCE Strategic Assessment Group	12 months	Feedback from staff groups Feedback from Parents and Carers
13.	Engagement with district and city councils /Safer Notts Board	Claire Sampson John Matravers Paul Lefford Helen Adair Public Health Exploitation Leads	6 months	Brief Chief Executives Meeting or similar. Meetings established with CSPs and evidence of contextual safeguarding practices in local communities.
14.	Launch public awareness child exploitation campaign	TCE Strategic Assessment Group	12 months	Comms Strategy

	at the conference on Exploitation Day 2024 (including virtual safe spaces and use of technology)	Public Health Comms Teams VRP		Feedback from Parents and Carers, children and young people and the public
15.	Individual Organisations to review their documents with a focus on putting children and young people first.	Hannah Johnson Hazel McKibbin Claire Wakeman Dan Evans (others to be confirmed)	12 months	
16.	Work with Ivison and The Children's Society to have an evolving system of feedback from children, young people, parents, and carers to inform practice.	Task and finish group from the Steering Group – led by Exploitation Strategic Leads from LAs	12 months	Data to evidence a system is in place
17.	Brief the Local Family Justice Board/CPS on the work being undertaken.	Claire Sampson John Matravers Paul Lefford Rebecca Price	6 months	Briefing has taken place and produces actions that can influence understanding and practice within the courts.