Working Together to Tackle Exploitation in Gloucestershire

2022-2025

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1. Foreword

Following on from a number of learning reviews in Gloucestershire and the publication of national reports such as It Was Hard To Escape, we have reflected upon what this means for the way in which we work together – as a partnership - to tackle exploitation more effectively.

In developing this strategy, we have consulted with staff from across the partnership, with parents and young people (through our team of Ambassadors), and we have worked with the National Working Group to utilise their skills and expertise when analysing the experiences of other LAs to identify what will work best for Gloucestershire.

From this reflection we are reshaping our approach to the following:

Principles
Change our thinking, language and to develop a culture of monitoring progress against activity to achieve success
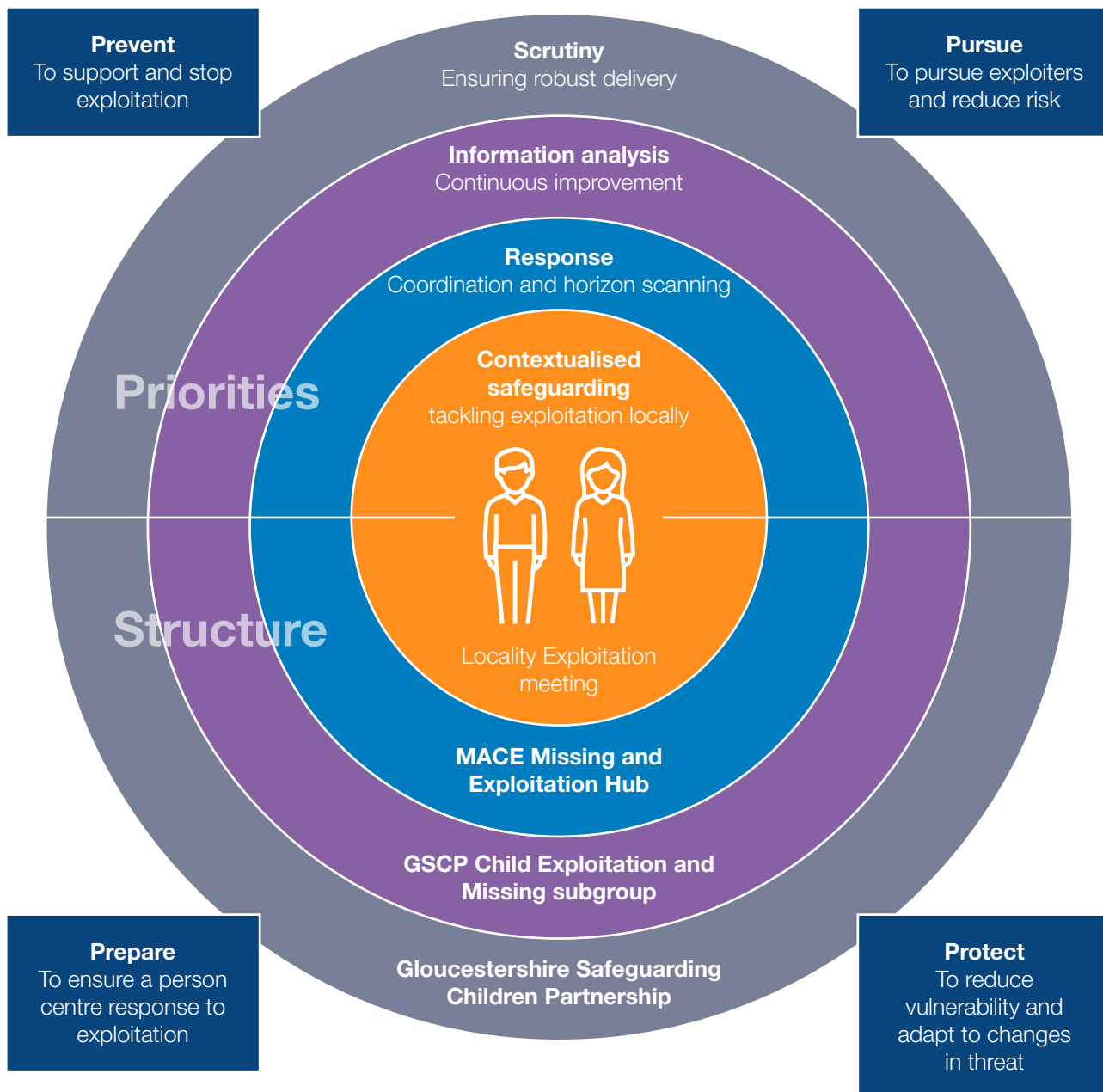
Structure
To adapt our 4 P's model and to further develop the Gloucestershire Exploitation Hub with effective links to all areas of Gloucestershire.

Priorities
Embedding a contextualised safeguarding approach to understanding risk and harm to children and young people

We've started the journey and we'd like to continue it by holding ourselves to account through the strategy implementation plan and by creating robust checks and tests to sustain our strategic and operational development.

2. Overview

Prevent
To support and stop exploitation

Pursue
To pursue exploiters and reduce risk

Prepare
To ensure a person centre response to exploitation

Protect
To reduce vulnerability and adapt to changes in threat

Priorities

Structure

Scrutiny
Ensuring robust delivery

Information analysis
Continuous improvement

Response
Coordination and horizon scanning

Contextualised safeguarding
tackling exploitation locally

Locality Exploitation meeting

MACE Missing and Exploitation Hub

GSCP Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup

Gloucestershire Safeguarding Children Partnership

3. Pledge

"Gloucestershire safeguarding children partnership is committed to working together to protect young people who are at risk of criminal or sexual exploitation. We will work with adults and young people to protect and empower them.

Our aim will be to disrupt and pursue perpetrators of exploitation. Working together we will develop an effective service to tackle exploitation, delivered in a child centred, trauma informed way."

4. Our Approach

Our approach to exploitation has been informed by consultation with young people (ambassadors), parents and practitioners and it is underpinned by our key principles, detailed later in this document.

Parents told us that they are currently only reporting to a few agencies, to improve this we will increase access to support through community relationships and raising awareness of other reporting channels. Professionals spoke of an understanding and awareness of risk. The vast majority of professionals felt confident identifying children that may be at risk of exploitation however only 50% felt confident managing those risks. In response to this we will provide additional learning and support to increase confidence and improve contextualised safeguarding approaches. Young people asked us to use language which cares and to put them at the heart of everything we do.

However, integral to our approach has been to understand that exploitation does not stop at 18 years of age but that young adults as well as children are also vulnerable to all forms of exploitation. Perpetrators target vulnerability not age. In support of this we will work with colleagues from Adult Services to embed a transitional safeguarding response in order that they can be safeguarded and supported. It's also essential that professionals and communities understand that exploitation is no longer limited to sexual exploitation and that terminology like criminal exploitation is far wider reaching than simply 'County Lines'.
It is therefore important that when using this strategy, we consider all types of exploitation and develop pathways and activity that similarly seeks to provide as wide a response as possible.

This strategy will cover,
- Sexual Exploitation
- Missing children from home, care and education
- Criminal Exploitation
- Organised Crime and County Lines
- Modern Slavery
- Human Trafficking
- Extremism
- Online exploitation
- Peer on Peer

Children and adults can be at risk from one or more types of exploitation. We also know that individuals can be both victims of and perpetrators of exploitation. When developing our response to exploitation we will consider the wider environmental factors that are a threat to their safety and/or welfare, and we will consider the individual needs and vulnerabilities of those involved. We will also continue to find innovative ways through which we can further our understanding of the lived experiences of those being exploited. Without understanding the context of their situations, it is almost impossible to respond in an effective and engaged way.

Exploitation can occur from within a family environment, but we also know children and adults are at risk of exploitation from outside their families. These extra-familial threats might arise at school and other educational establishments, from within peer groups, or from within the wider community and/or online.

*Link to definitions should all be drawn from the south west safeguarding children procedures
https://www.proceduresonline.com/swcpp/gloucestershire/index.html#

5. Priorities & Principles

1. Contextualised Safeguarding	Develop wider approach to tackling the exploitation of young people beyond their families.	• Young people and families will be at the centre, their developments needs and strengths and voice should drive our response • Context matters, young people and families need a holistic approach • Communities and families are valuable assets and may need support • Trusted relationships between young people and key practitioners helps to keep young people safe.
2. Response	To further develop the Gloucestershire Exploitation Hub with effective links to all areas of Gloucestershire.	• Exploitation is complex; therefore, the response cannot be linear or simple • Increasing the identification and disruption of perpetrators and successful prosecution of those who choose to cause harm.
3. Information Analysis	To further develop the use of the exploitation dashboard and problem profile to safeguard and improve outcomes.	• Knowledge is crucial • Equip and support the workforce. Effective service requires motivated and resilient practitioners.
4. Scrutiny	To develop a culture of monitoring progress against activity to achieve success.	• No agency can address exploitation in isolation, collaboration is essential • Continual reflection and accountability will improve practice.

6. Structure Breakdown

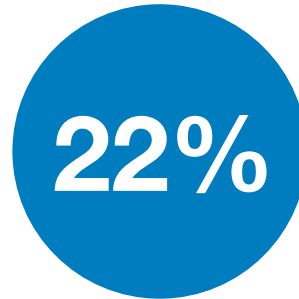|	
Locality exploitation meetings	• Chaired by the CE co-ordinator • Agenda focussing on Victim, Offender, Locality and Trends • Mobilising a locality response to target faces and spaces associated with risk of exploitation • Focus is upon risk from missing and exploitation • This does not replace current case management pathways and decision making • Attendance at meeting from local practitioners • Working to understand the significance of culture, identity, disability and communities
Gloucestershire MACE (Missing and Exploitation Hub)	• Multi agency team • Co-ordinator chairs locality arrangements / deputy Police Sgt • Work to understand our problem profile to inform our interventions' and 'To use both criminal and civil legal processes to disrupt and pursue' • Contextual safeguarding hub • Provides quarterly reports of County Picture gleaned from local activity • Identifying themes, understanding actions, evaluating impact • Knowledge hub - advice and consultation • Development of the Exploitation resource page within the GCSP website • Producing a bi-monthly newsletter re activity across the partnership • Monthly operational management meetings to review impact of locality arrangements • Address any multi agency challenges through resolution or escalation • Specialist practitioners working alongside social workers when risks are high
GSCP Sub Group	• Strategic oversight • Evaluating impact of the strategy • Reviewing and progressing strategic prirorities • Sign off any practice proposals for submission to the Executive • Reporting to the GSCP Management / Executive Group

7. Implementation & Delivery

PURSUE - To pursue exploiters and reduce risk	PREVENT - To support and stop exploitation
Activity • The partnership drives intelligence led disruption in response to the problem profile and exploitation dashboard. (Priority 1&3) • Case by case basis consideration of robust law enforcement opportunities including offender management, online exploitation and trafficking legislation • Investigations are undertaken in line with Working Together principles and MOJ guidelines for joint investigations • To develop a joined up/parallel approach to support victims/survivors through the CJ process and beyond.	• Adoption of, but not limited to, the Home Office Disruption Tool Kit • Exploitation intelligence is jointly reviewed to inform the prevent and protect approach and identify early intervention plans and disruption activity • Understand and develop improved responses to causes of missing episodes • Maximise opportunities to develop appropriate training and deliver to those groups identified as a priority • Identify and deliver awareness raising events to increase understanding and promote community led intelligence.
Outcome • An increase in the amount of disruption activity employed against perpetrators • An increase in the number of prosecutions for child exploitation crimes • An increased identification of child exploitation 'hotspots' and people of interest' • Improvement in the quality of information and intelligence shared between agencies • Improvement in the understanding of any links between areas of child exploitation including CSE, Missing, Gang or Trafficking activity.	• An increase in the number of children and young people identified and protected before becoming exposed to actual exploitation. • An increase in the number of Lead Officers and practitioners trained in identifying and appropriately responding to child exploitation. • An increase in the number of children and young people accessing awareness raising events/training – including healthy relationships and awareness of harmful sexual behaviour – and confirming that children and young people know where to access help. • An increase in parents/carers and members of the public accessing awareness raising events – and confirming that they know where to access help following the events. • An increase in public and practitioner consultations and reports of child exploitation in Gloucestershire.

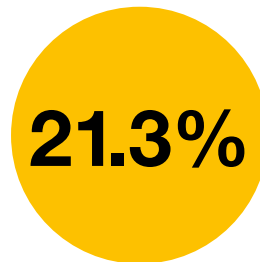|	PROTECT - To reduce vulnerability and adapt to changes in threat	PREPARE - To ensure a person centre response to exploitation
Priority Activity	• Introduce a robust quality assurance framework that drives activity and evidence progress against the strategy • Ensure that all agencies from the operational to the strategic understand the responsibilities and requirements of the National Referrals Mechanism (NRM) • All agencies adopt a child centred culture to joint operations and investigations that puts safeguarding at the forefront of decision making • Understand and respond to gaps in the geographical and community risks for our LAC and CiC cohort • To adopt the concept of transitional safeguarding ensuring service provision up to 25 yrs • Working to understand the significance of culture, identity, disability and communities.	• Establish clear pathways and support for families and carers to GSCE regarding practice and reflect the voice of the parents within practice development • Ensure that the Exploitation and Missing Subgroup is representative of the partnership and that membership is both broad and suitably senior • To identify and implement learning from local reviews and national best practice across the exploitation partnership • Conduct case reviews to understand the young person's journey and identify and remove hurdles • Ensure all agencies from operational to strategic understand the legal basis and adopt a culture of information sharing in the interests of improved outcomes • Scope and create pathways for GSCE to obtain the voice of the child and reflect how that may influence practise and improve outcomes • Reflect and develop improved practice in relation to out of area placements and the associated risks to increase missing episodes.
Outcome	• There is a consistent and robust approach to assessments of need and risk, planning and review • Persistent and flexible interventions take place where engagement is complex and challenging, leading to an increase in the involvement of children/young people in preventative and supportive interventions. Taking the right approach to engaging these vulnerable young people is crucial if we are to stand any chance of supporting them to break free from exploitation. We will improve victims' experiences of support, ensuring that they are listened to, respected and given choices about how they are helped • An increase in the engagement of parents/carers in planning and decision-making processes/meetings • An improved understanding of children/young people affected by multiple vulnerabilities e.g. missing/absent episodes, gangs, trafficking • An increase in public and practitioner consultations and reports of child exploitation in Gloucestershire.	• Sharing of Multi Agency Data sets will inform practice • Intelligence shared will support detection and prevention of child exploitation • Lead Members and Practitioners training assessment will inform training of Lead members and practitioners • Soft intelligence sharing between practitioners and the report of its impact by GSCE Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup will enable a more effective landscape to respond to child exploitation • GSCE Child Exploitation and Missing subgroup regular review of activities that go beyond legal and other frameworks has an impact on reducing child exploitation activity • GSCE provides leadership of Prepare strategy providing support and challenge to ensure that the strategy is implemented • An increase in parents/carers and members of the public accessing raising awareness events and confirming that they know where to access help following the events • Develop practice around working with families who are at risk of or who are suffering from exploitation • Gloucestershire is committed to and is implementing systemic practice for social workers.

8. Demographics Data

79.6% of CSE concerns relate to females

22% of young people aged 16 most likely age to be at risk of exploitation

94.1% of CCE concerns relate to males

21.3% Young people assessed as having a degree of learning disability or difficulty

39.9% Young people had at least one missing episode

MISSING

22.8% at risk young people are currently in care

27.8% Young people assessed as new/recent/noticeable increase in drug/alcohol abuse

* This data is from the Children's Social Care CSE workspace during the period 1st February 2021 – January 31st 2022

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