

Pan Cheshire Children's Contextual Safeguarding Strategy 2021 – 2023



CONTENTS

PAGE

Introduction	3
Purpose of the Strategy	3
The Safeguarding Framework	4
Definitions	5
Exploitation in Cheshire	9
Role of Multi agency partners	11
Practise Approach	11
Pan Cheshire Screening and Assessment Tool	12
Strategic Objectives	13
Governance	16
Developing an All Age Exploitation Strategy	16

Introduction

This scope of this strategy crosses the domains of child sexual exploitation, missing children, gangs, county lines, radicalisation, modern slavery and all forms of criminal exploitation. This is the first time that these work streams have been included within overarching strategy. The reason for this is because there are clear links across these areas and it is vital that people, whether professionals or members of the public, know what to look out for and how to respond.

This strategy document sets out the commitment of the Pan Cheshire Strategic Contextual Safeguarding Board. This strategy has been written to support the four Cheshire Safeguarding Children's Partnerships. It recognises the importance of strong partnership working to protect those who might be at risk, the need to support victims and to disrupt and prosecute suspected offenders.

The safeguarding of children and young people from the psychological and physical harm caused by exploitation is a priority for the Cheshire Partnership.

The Partnership recognise that a broader view of contextual safeguarding and response is required when considering the exploitation of children and young people. This form of safeguarding promotes the idea that young people's behaviour, levels of vulnerability and resilience are informed by the social, public as well as the private contexts in which young people spend their time.

We will ensure our partnership is working together to foster a greater understanding of exploitation learning and responding to new trends as they emerge to develop a collective response that improves the lives of children and young people who are at risk.

Purpose of the Strategy

This strategy builds upon the significant work already taking place and sets out how all agencies will work together to ensure the most effective and co-ordinated response over the next two years to eradicate the exploitation of children. Strategic planning and collaborative multi-agency working, this will enable effective leadership and progress our understanding and practice. This will in turn improve the lives of children and young people at risk of harm and exploitation. In order to achieve this we have identified four key objectives:

- Prepare
- Prevent
- Protect
- Pursue

Whilst this strategy relates specifically to children it is important to recognise that adults are victims of exploitation too. The identification of an adult who has been exploited or is being exploited can lead to the identification of risk to children. Therefore, it is important that when responding agencies do not just focus on children; we have a responsibility to people of all ages.

The Safeguarding Framework

In England, the Children Act 1989 implemented through the Working Together Statutory guidance updated in 2018 stipulates that local authorities have a duty to safeguard and promote the welfare of children in need in their area, i.e. those children who would not be able to achieve reasonable standard of health or development without support from the local authority. It means that local authorities have a responsibility to intervene where there may be issues within families, such as abuse or neglect, or where child's needs are greater than the family is able to deal with on their own – including where child is groomed or exploited by people outside family.

Recent changes made to the Working Together guidance introduced contextual safeguarding, which specifically stressed that 'as well as threats to the welfare of children from within their families, children may be vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families', and that children should be safeguarded in those cases. Both 'county lines' and 'child criminal exploitation' are defined in the guidance in order to enable safeguarding professionals to recognise that children may be victims of criminal exploitation through the county lines model.

Contextual Safeguarding

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 neighbourhoods, 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. The partnership will therefore need to engage with individuals and sectors who do have influence over/within extra-familial contexts, and recognise that assessment of, and intervention with, these spaces are a critical part of safeguarding practices. 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. Contextual Safeguarding has been developed at the University of Bedfordshire over the past six years to inform policy and practice approaches to safeguarding adolescents.

<https://contextualsafeguarding.org.uk/assets/documents/Contextual-Safeguarding-Briefing.pdf>

What is Child Exploitation?

Exploitation is a changing picture. Children and young people may be vulnerable to neglect and abuse or exploitation from within their family and from individuals they come across in their day-to-day lives. These threats can take a variety of different forms, including: sexual, physical and emotional abuse; neglect; exploitation by criminal gangs and organised crime groups; trafficking; online abuse; sexual exploitation and the influences of extremism leading to radicalisation. Whatever the form of abuse or neglect, practitioners should put the needs of children first when determining what action to take. Cheshire organisations are aware of the issues around exploitation, but criminals are constantly finding different ways to exploit young people and it is important that partners are alert to this and can demonstrate flexibility when it comes to protecting vulnerable children and young people and tackling offenders.

Definition of Child Sexual Exploitation

The Cheshire Safeguarding Partnerships have adopted the definition of sexual exploitation that is set out in statutory guidance:

Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. (The Department of Education, February 2017)

Young People's definition of Child Sexual Exploitation

“Someone taking advantage of you sexually, for their own benefit. Through threats, bribes, violence, humiliation, or by telling you that they love you, they will have the power to get you to do sexual things for their own, or other people's benefit or enjoyment (including: touching or kissing private parts, sex, taking sexual photos). You find out, it isn't OK and they were just pretending to care about you just so they could use you. And you're just a kid and they are abusing you and they shouldn't. It's against the law, if you're under 18. Giving your phone credit, or gifts or making you feel great, it isn't enough, it's just abuse and they are hurting you.” (Cheshire young people 2017)

Many children who are sexually exploited may have been victims of other forms of abuse; the grooming methods that may be used can mean that children who are sexually exploited do not always recognise they are being abused, which can also affect detection rates.

Sexual exploitation is often linked to other issues in the life of a child or young person, or in the wider community context. It should not be regarded as an isolated issue. This is why a child who may be being sexually exploited should be the subject

of a holistic assessment of their needs, like any other child who may be in need, including those who may be suffering significant harm. Similarly where a child has been identified as being at risk of significant harm and/or faces a complex range of difficulties, it is important that professionals consider whether they are also being sexually exploited. Sexual exploitation has links to other types of crime, this includes:

- child trafficking (into, out of and within the UK)
- domestic violence
- sexual violence in intimate relationships
- grooming (both online and offline)
- abusive images of children and their distribution (organised abuse)
- organised sexual abuse of children
- drugs-related offences (dealing, consuming and cultivating)
- gang-related activity
- immigration-related offences
- domestic servitude

There is an imbalance of power within the relationship which marks out an exploitative situation. Technology can play a part in sexual exploitation through its use to record abuse and share it with other likeminded individuals or as a medium to access children and young people in order to groom them. Research has shown that where children and young people have been coerced or tricked into sharing self-generated images, blackmail has been used as a strategy by perpetrators to continue the abuse. This has led to incidences of child suicides. The Sexual Offences Act 2003 introduced a range of new offences that recognised grooming, coercion and control of children.

Child Criminal Exploitation and County Lines

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 activity (a) In exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) For the financial advantage or increased status of the Perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) 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)

Child criminal exploitation (CCE) is that which involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where a child, (or a third person or persons), receive 'something' (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them completing a task on behalf of another individual or group of individuals; this is often of a criminal nature.

County Lines is a police term for groups/ gangs supplying drugs from bigger cities to sell in smaller towns. Many gangs form a secure base in the homes of vulnerable people and force assistance by using violence or exploiting an addiction to drugs. Cuckooing involves a drug dealer or other criminal befriending a vulnerable individual who lives on their own. Like a cuckoo, the offender moves in, takes over the property, and turns it into a drug den or other criminal base.

Gangs can typically recruit and exploit children and young people to courier drugs and cash either within their area or to another location across the Country. Gangs recruit through deception, intimidation, violence, debt bondage and/or grooming.

Trafficking and Modern Slavery

Trafficking is defined by the United Nations, Palermo Protocol (2000) which the UK ratified in 2006 as:

“The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation.”

Essentially, trafficking is the process that combines three basic components:

1. Movement.
2. Control.
3. For the purpose of exploitation.

Movement can occur across international borders or within one country. It is accepted that children (people under 18) can be controlled purely on account of their young age, and further evidence of control (e.g. deception or threats against family) are not required to evidence the definition in respect of a child.

International Trafficking

Children who arrive in the country unaccompanied and trafficked, is complex area of work. Children brought to the United Kingdom may have travelled with the consent of parents who falsely believed that their child would be cared for and have a better life. Families may be aware of the risks of sending their child abroad or paying an agent, but they may nonetheless see it as a survival strategy that offers the hope of a better life for both the child and their family. Other children have been forcibly separated from their families and trafficked to the UK in order to be exploited through servitude, modern day slavery, or sexual exploitation and there are instances where children and their parents have been trafficked together.

Trafficking is not to be confused with smuggling. Smugglers transport a person from one area to another and avoid detection and are paid for this; they do not use coercion or threats. It is accepted that a child cannot consent to his or her own exploitation; therefore, even if a child has agreed to travel from one place to another, this could still be considered human trafficking if there is the intent to exploit them either as they travel or at the final destination.

Modern Slavery

Modern Slavery is the term used within the UK and is defined within the Modern Slavery Act 2015. The Act categories offences of Slavery, Servitude and Forced or Compulsory Labour and Human Trafficking. These crimes include holding a person or facilitating their travel with the intention of exploiting them soon after. Although human trafficking often involves an international cross-border element, it is also possible to be a victim of modern slavery in your own country.

The National Referral Mechanism (NRM) is a victim identification and support process which is designed to make it easier for all the different agencies that could be involved in a trafficking and now modern slavery case to co-operate, to share information about potential victims and facilitate their access to advice, accommodation and support. Anyone who identifies a child as a potential victim of modern slavery, should ensure a referral is immediately made to their Local Authority Children's Services or the police who have a statutory duty to notify the Home Office. Further guidance and the necessary forms can be downloaded from

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/human-trafficking-victims-referral-and-assessment-forms>

Missing

In line with the College of Policing guidance, with effect from 1st June 2017, Cheshire Police have adopted a risk based approach to managing incidents where children or young people go missing.

'Anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established will be considered as missing until located, and their well-being or otherwise confirmed.' All reports of missing people sit within a continuum of risk from 'no apparent risk (absent)' through to high-risk cases that require immediate, intensive action.

When children go missing from home or care, this is a clear signal that something is wrong in their lives. Going missing has serious implications for a child's welfare as it puts them at risk of harm in the short term and will affect longer term outcomes.

Current research finds that children and young people, who go missing are at risk of significant harm with specific concerns about the links between children running away and the risks of sexual exploitation. Many children in care missing from their placements are vulnerable to sexual and other exploitation, especially children in residential care.

Children who go missing from their home often place themselves at risk. The reasons for their absence are often varied and complex. Every 'missing' episode should be responded to effectively with professionals from all agencies and organisations involved with the child working together to ensure the child's safe return.

All children who have gone 'missing' must be reported to the police. Parents and those with parental responsibility are normally expected to undertake basic measures to try to locate the child i.e. search bedroom, contact friends etc.

The local authority has a range of corporate parenting duties in relation to children in care and should always apply the "reasonable parent" test when planning and making decisions in relation to the children in its care. This means having the same interest as any reasonable parent would have for their own children in relation to safeguarding and promoting welfare. Both the relevant Safeguarding Children's Partnership Boards and the Corporate Parenting Boards have a key role in monitoring the incidents of children and young people who go missing from care.

https://www.proceduresonline.com/LimitedCMS_centrally_managed_content/pancheshire/shared_files/pan_cheshire_missing_from_home.pdf

Exploitation in Cheshire

Police

In May 2021, Cheshire Police identified 275 children recorded as at risk of exploitation; 120 of them being identified as at risk of criminal exploitation. Of these numbers, 107 were male and 13 were female. Within the 275 children identified, 155 were at risk of Sexual exploitation. Of these number, 14 were male and 141 were female.

The role of the Constabulary in tackling child exploitation includes;

- Identification of Child Exploitation. Cheshire Constabulary will actively screen for signs of exploitation and where appropriate, flag the risk and vulnerability on the relevant policing systems.
- Undertaking criminal investigations and taking positive action to gather intelligence and target locations and perpetrators.
- Working with partner agencies to support and protect child victims and their families at risk of harm and exploitation. The Constabulary has a specialised Missing from Home and Child Exploitation Team to support this objective. As part of this, the Constabulary and key partners attend a Contextual Safeguarding Operational Group within the four local authority areas. This meeting ensures a multi-faceted response and action to plan to safeguard those most at risk of harm. This meeting is chaired by a Detective Inspector (Public Protection Directorate) or Local Authority equivalent.

Cheshire Constabulary will assess and manage the risk to children and young people in order to prevent harm; to reduce the likelihood and the impact of this harm; to pro-actively target offenders/perpetrators of abuse and to thoroughly and expeditiously investigate allegations of child exploitation.

The exploitation of children and young people is child abuse. It should receive the same level of response as other forms of child abuse. Children who are exploited

may commit different types of criminal offences but should, in the first instance, be treated as victims. Only in specific circumstances should they be treated as offenders and should prosecution be sought.

The investigation of child exploitation requires a proactive approach to explore the nature and patterns of exploitation in the local area. Information should be immediately shared with partner agencies about those at risk, those acting as perpetrators and key location. By linking out response to missing from home episodes as well as public protection issues can support the identification and management of risk at an early stage.

Cheshire Constabulary will work closely with partner agencies to maintain a coordinated response to any concerns about child exploitation. The overriding priority of this partnership is to ensure a response with the best interests of the child at its heart.

Youth Justice Service (YJS)

We would recognise that children and young people within the YJS are vulnerable to Child Exploitation. In April 2021 36% of the young people they work with across Cheshire were flagged as being explicitly at risk of exploitation. Many of these children had exploitation screening tools completed prior to a criminal conviction and becoming known to YJS. The majority were flagged for concerns relating to criminal exploitation with a smaller proportion flagged for sexual exploitation (and some for both). The numbers were not evenly distributed across the PAN Cheshire footprint and range from 21% of all Halton children open to YJS through to 61% of all CE children open to YJS (Warrington = 35% and CW = 32%). However, these differences possibly reflect the different thresholds and processes applied by professionals working in different authorities rather than a significant difference in the exploitation threat. The profile for those children was:

- 87% were male
- 20% were cared for children
- Many have experienced several moves in their life with family breakdown as a recurring feature
- They have experienced violence both within and outside the family home
- They have poor physical, mental and emotional health, including attendances at A&E for serious injuries
- Evidence of drug dealing often began at the age of 13 and well before they were convicted
- Stability following statutory intervention was short-lived followed by gradual entrenchment with serious organised criminality and moving to groom and perpetrate other children
- There are often gaps in parallel work being initiated with the child's parents/ carers family

There was analysis of the nature of the crimes that these children were involved with. Many of the children did not have a history of offending before they were groomed and exploited by older criminals. Not surprisingly revealed knife and drugs offences and for those with drug debts, burglary/robbery. The profile changes as

they move to perpetrate against other children. Interventions are most effective the earlier they happen for the child, at the point of involvement with YJS can feel too late.

Role of multi-agency partners in identifying and challenging exploitation

Multi-Agency Partners come together from the statutory, voluntary, community and faith sectors. They should follow recognised principles to safeguard and protect the welfare of children and young people. Identifying the early warning signs associated with exploitation is vital in reinforcing these principles.

Multi-agency partners will ensure that there are robust processes in place for relevant dissemination of information throughout their organisation, in order that practitioners can receive advice and guidance at the earliest opportunity.

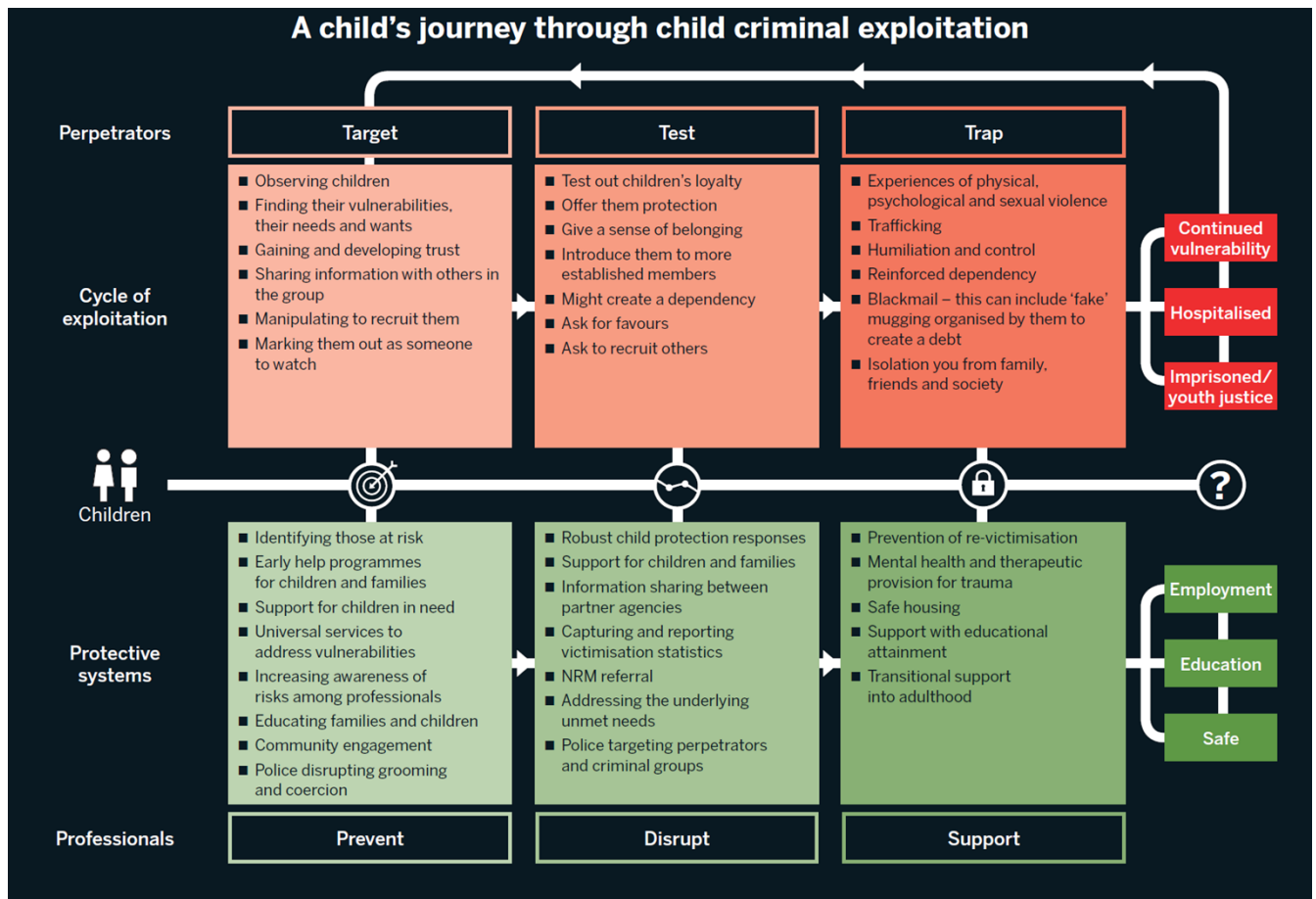
Multi-Agency Partners will be involved in meetings/discussions to share all relevant intelligence and information in all cases where exploitation is suspected. This is to ensure there is a co-ordinated approach which could include instigating interventions or to disrupt and prosecute perpetrators.

The multi-agency meetings/discussions will call upon the diverse skills and experience available from its members to manage the threat posed by exploitation. Members should challenge partners, when appropriate, to ensure the best outcomes for the child or young person.

Practice Approach

Our chosen approach is to ensure our children are at the heart of what we do. Developing a practice system which can effectively build around a child centred principle is vital. Building enduring relationships and listening to young people to enable them to trust professionals are key to our approach. Young people need stability, continuity and persistence.

Children and young people need to be at the centre of our approach, to ensure a holistic response to their needs is provided. Practitioners need to be trained and supported to see young people as individuals, to be transparent, recognise strengths, and undertake relationship-based practice, partnered effectively with parents and other agencies.



Pan Cheshire screening and assessment tool

If a professional has concerns or suspects a child is may be at risk of exploitation of any form they should complete the Pan Cheshire Contextual Safeguarding Screening Tool. The tool has been designed specifically to help professionals identify possible risks of exploitation and explain what specifically they are worried about. A referral should then be made by submitting the tool to Children Social Care, the tool will then be screened and considered by each local authority.

In addition to the Screening Tool there is also a Contextual Safeguarding Assessment Tool, which is a more in depth assessment tool for professionals. Professionals should feel free to use the tool creatively, including as part of awareness raising work with children or in engaging parents and carers in understanding the issues. However where exploitation, or the risk of it, is suspected, frontline practitioners should **always** complete the Cheshire Contextual Screening Tool.

https://www.proceduresonline.com/pancheshire/halton/p_ch_sexual_exploit.html

¹ Counting Lives – Responding to children who are criminally exploited, July 2019 The Children's Society

Strategic Objectives 2021 – 2023

Cheshire have identified three priorities; Develop the Workforce, Analysis of our Profile, Evidencing good practise and impact. The Pan Cheshire Strategic Contextual Safeguarding Board will develop an action plan around these three areas and support the development for an All Age Exploitation Strategy across Cheshire.

Across the partnership there are four key objectives for 2021 - 2023. Under each objective details of how this will be achieved are outlined.

All Local Leaders and Partners across Cheshire have a responsibility to safeguard children from harm. They have a shared responsibility to understand the problem, have an agreed and coordinated approach to tackle it and an uncompromising tenacity and ambition to ensure that a zero-tolerance culture is developed that allows no child or young person to be exploited within our communities. Each organisation highlights the issue of child exploitation and informs its employees and other partners on how to identify a child at risk and pathways to ensure information is shared.

- Prepare
- Prevent
- Protect
- Pursue

The views of **children and young people at risk, their families and communities** will be sought at all points throughout service design and delivery, to assure agencies that lessons have been and continue to be learned.

1. Prepare

What are we going to do:

We are going strengthen the identification and assessment of children and young people at risk of all types of exploitation, missing and trafficking.

How are we going to do it:

- Strengthen our local intelligence and mapping, to continually understand the local profile and types of exploitation, missing and trafficking;
- Ensure assessment approaches enable robust identification of children and young people at risk of trafficking and/or exploitation, including sexual exploitation and criminal exploitation and county lines;
- Establish awareness training for professionals about missing children, county lines and criminal exploitation and trafficking; to understand their contribution to keeping children safe and to further promote a culture of vigilance.
- Ensure every child or young person who goes missing is offered a return home interview;
- Ensure that information and intelligence relating to victims, perpetrators and locations is shared effectively across Cheshire and wider boundaries;
- Ensure there are effective arrangements between a child at risk of any type of exploitation, missing episodes or trafficking and adult safeguarding services

when they turn 18, or they are no longer the responsibility of children's social care;

2. Prevent

What are we going to do:

Raise awareness of exploitation, missing and trafficked across agencies, children and their families and the wider Cheshire community.

How are we going to do it:

- Individuals across Cheshire from business, professional and nonprofessional backgrounds, grassroots or organisations, voluntary sector, community and faith groups are effectively engaged and know what to do if they worried about a child or young person.
- Schools, colleges and youth delivery services will recognise grooming behaviours, understand the nature of consent and be able to evidence preventive measures.
- Enable all staff including strategic leaders to understand the types of exploitation, recognise and respond when a child/family who they are engaged with is at risk of exploitation;
- Ensure an offer of early help preventative work to young people and parents/carers who have been identified at risk of exploitation;
- Training frontline practitioners to identify the indicators of child exploitation and trafficking and intervening quickly and effectively;
- Increase support and knowledge to parents, carers and young people and their families regarding child exploitation, trafficking and the risks associated with missing episodes. Inform them of what to do if they are worried about their child, or a child they know, is at risk of exploitation;
- Provide the local community with information and resources about exploitation and a clear process to follow when they are concerned;
- Using local intelligence to target particular areas where there is high prevalence of children with missing episodes, to improve risk awareness of young people and partnership response to reduce or disrupt any linked offending activity with perpetrators;
- In line with statutory guidance 'Keeping Children Safe in Education' (September 2018) ensure all schools implement a curriculum to help pupils understand the risks and develop skills and knowledge to keep themselves safe.
- Develop and maintain a current multi-agency Media strategy that informs the community and professionals.

3. Protect

What are we going to do:

Improve safeguarding of vulnerable children missing or deemed at risk of exploitation or trafficking. Ensure support can be accessed across the spectrum of services from self-help and universal services to more specialist targeted and therapeutic intervention.

How are we going to do it:

- Ensure there is a common understanding and language of exploitation and its impact on victims and their families.
- Securing a culture of vigilance and ensuring all staff understand their responsibility and contribution to keeping children safe;
- Ensuring all school staff are trained to identify possible signs and provide the appropriate support to presented behaviours that may be deemed to be inappropriate or challenging;
- Schools avoiding exclusions of vulnerable pupils where this would result in increased concern for their safety and wellbeing and ensuring there is a responsive behaviour policy to meet the needs and safety of the child;
- Enable professionals across the multi-agency spectrum to identify children and others at risk of exploitation and missing or trafficked, and respond at the earliest opportunity.

4. Pursue

What are we going to do:

Lead in disrupting perpetrator behaviour and bringing offenders to justice through continually understanding the local profile and risk assessments which address criminal activity.

How are we going to do it:

- All legal options will be considered to ensure the exploitation is disrupted and a child or young person is safe from the perpetrator
- Agencies flexibly apply the full range of disruption tactics available through the criminal and civil routes to protect children and young people.
- Ensuring all agencies share information in a timely manner;
- Link to Serious Organised Crime Strategy;
- Ensure clear processes are developed to disrupt offenders attempting to exploit children and others at risk;
- Ensuring GDPR procedures are not a barrier to keeping children safe.

Governance

This strategy will form part of the Pan Cheshire Safeguarding Children Procedures. The relevant Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships and other assurance frameworks are responsible for co-ordinating the activities of member agencies in relation to the effective implementation of this strategy.

Quarterly Pan Cheshire Strategic Contextual Safeguarding Board meetings will take place with strategic representatives from the Local Safeguarding Children's Partnerships, the Local Authorities and the Police. The purpose of this meeting will be;

- To review the implementation of the strategy on a Pan Cheshire basis;
- To consider the provision of services for children missing from both local authority care and home and children being exploited;
- To identify any patterns and trends across the contextual safeguarding agenda;
- To Identify, apply and disseminate good practise and promote consistent implementation

Information from the Pan Cheshire Strategic Contextual Safeguarding Board will be cascaded into each local authority relevant strategic group in order to inform local operational practise.

Developing an All Age Exploitation Strategy

Cheshire East, Cheshire West and Chester, Halton and Warrington Safeguarding Adults Boards, Safeguarding Children's Partnership's and the four area Community Safety Partnerships, working alongside the Cheshire Anti-Slavery Strategic Partnership, are committed to protecting children, young people and adults from all types of exploitation, including modern slavery and human trafficking.

These Pan-Cheshire arrangements, under the governance of Protecting Vulnerable People Board has been seeking to develop a shared approach to our exploitation reduction strategies and intervention models. Over the coming months we are coming together at a sub-regional level to build on our exploitation and safeguarding strategies and plans to develop our approach to all age exploitation. The intent is to develop a shared Pan-Cheshire all age exploitation strategy, supported by localised plans, bringing together our collective agreed approach to support victims and people who are working to reduce exploitation in Cheshire.

The aim of the work is to align our transitional safeguarding arrangements, to develop our strategic and operational approaches across the council and our partners to supporting all children and adults, with a particular focus on transitions where there they are identified as at risk of exploitation.

The Pan Cheshire Contextual Safeguarding Strategic Board will be supported by an external independent consultant to support us at a sub-regional level to develop an all age exploitation strategy. This work will including;

- strengthening and developing our existing children's and adults strategies
- a scope of current services and resource and completing a needs analysis – reviewing our current demand, and identifying any gaps in the current pan-Cheshire offer
- strengthening our approach to the prevention of exploitation, across all ages, and developing pan-Cheshire protocol, procedures and systems to build longer term capacity throughout the sub-region
- a review of existing plans at a local level to ensure harmonisations and shared approaches where appropriate.
- offering challenge and support to practitioners and strategic leaders - a culture 'shift' in thinking and understanding in how we support children and adults and navigate the complexities in this area of our partnership work
- Future proof this area of work for any changes that the Government might bring in following its independent review of the Modern Slavery Act.