

**Royal Borough Windsor and Maidenhead
Children's Services**

**Review of statutory partners' response to Child
Sexual Exploitation in the Royal Borough of
Windsor and Maidenhead
March 2015**



“The Royal Borough of Windsor & Maidenhead is a great place to live, work, play and do business supported by a modern, dynamic and successful Council”

Our vision is underpinned by our current goals:

*Put Residents First
Deliver Value for Money
Deliver Together with our Partners
Equip Ourselves for the Future*

RBWM Children’s Services vision is that residents’ needs are met as early as possible by highly skilled professionals. The number of children, young people and their families with high levels of need is reduced and our residents, children and young people, are given every opportunity to be successful.

Whoever the users of our service may be, we must demonstrate a commitment to service users that runs through how we plan out services, how we make decisions and how we practice. Our success is dependent on partnership working.



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1. PURPOSE

- 1.1. The purpose of this Review was to research and assess the effectiveness of the work of statutory services – Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, Thames Valley Police, Windsor and Maidenhead Clinical Commissioning Group and Thames Valley Probation Service – and produce a report that details the response to child sexual exploitation in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead.
- 1.2. The audience for this report is all statutory and voluntary sector organisations operating in the Borough with responsibility and commitment for the safeguarding of children.

2. METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The review was commissioned by the Lead Member for Children’s Services and Director for Children’s Services in October 2014, and was undertaken by Tim Newton, an independent consultant and registered Social Worker SW37014 with the Health & Care Professionals Council.
- 2.2. The research methodology included:
 - Desk based research of national and local documents.
 - Observation of the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel.
 - Interviews with key stakeholders.
- 2.3. The desk-based research draws on local and national documents including, but not exclusively:
 - The local authority’s Internal Audit report and case file audit report.
 - The Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Board Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-2016.
 - Missing People/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel minutes and case tracker and Strategic Group minutes.
 - Local child sexual exploitation policies and procedures, including the Multi-Agency Thresholds Guidance.
 - Local authority and police data relating to child sexual exploitation.
 - The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment.
 - Community Safety Partnership Plan.
 - Ofsted Inspection reports for the two private children’s residential units in the Borough.
 - Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council, authored by Louise Casey, February 2015.
 - Tackling child sexual exploitation, a resource pack for councils, Local Government Association, December 2014.
 - The sexual exploitation of children: it couldn’t happen here, could it? Ofsted Thematic Inspection, November 2014.

- Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation, HM Government, March 2015.
- 2.4. Observation of the Operational Panel meetings was designed to identify whether strategic partnership working and operational intelligence sharing and case tracking was taking place in practice.
- 2.5. Interviews were undertaken with individual members of the Missing Persons and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group; the joint chairs of the Missing Persons and Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel; the local authority's lead for performance management and quality assurance; and the Referral and Assessment Team Manager.
- 2.6. This review employed the key lines of enquiry used by Ofsted, 2014, in their thematic inspections of child sexual exploitation because they provided a strong framework for evaluating the strength of strategic and operational practice.

Ofsted ten key lines of enquiry

- Is there effective strategic leadership of the multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation that identifies prevalence, trends, themes and patterns and secures improved outcomes for children and young people?
- To what extent is the LSCB complying with the statutory guidance set out in 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation'? (*Department for Education, Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation; supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children, 4 August 2009*)
- How effectively are partners sharing information and working together to tackle child sexual exploitation locally?
- Is practice robustly quality assured and is there evidence that this leads to better services for children and young people?
- What is the extent and effectiveness of local child sexual exploitation prevention work?
- How effective is the local authority and its partners in ensuring that all children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation are identified at the earliest opportunity?
- Are children and young people, including children in care, who are at risk of, or who have been, sexually exploited effectively safeguarded, protected and supported?
- Are commissioning arrangements effectively meeting the wide range of needs of children and young people affected by child sexual exploitation?
- How effective is the local authority and its partners in identifying and disrupting the activities of those perpetrators engaged in child sexual exploitation and in taking legal action against them?
- To what extent is the local authority and its partners using the full breadth and depth of their statutory powers to protect children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, child sexual exploitation?

3. CONTEXT

- 3.1. The Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015-2016 was approved by the Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Board in January 2015. However, child sexual exploitation was first discussed by the Local Safeguarding Children Board in March 2013, and the multi-agency Missing People/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel commenced in October 2013.
- 3.2. In early 2014, the leadership teams of the local authority and Thames Valley Police reviewed priorities and strengthened the operational and strategic focus of the work, establishing a Missing People/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group which is a formal sub-group of the Local Safeguarding Children Board, see appendix 1.
- 3.3. Subsequent to the completion of this report, the Chief Social Worker for Children & Families Isabelle Trowler wrote on 3rd March 2015 to Directors of Children's Services a letter titled *'Tackling child sexual exploitation – review of assessment and decision-making tools.'* I have been able to confirm that Windsor and Maidenhead do not use a numerical assessment device to determine levels of risk, as was criticised in the recent inspection from Rotherham by Louise Casey. Across Berkshire the CSE Indicator Tool in use is developed from Oxford's Kingfisher Team and the National Working Group, and is designed to assist in reflection and the making of professional judgement.
- 3.4. Also issued on 3rd March 2015 was a letter from five Government Departments entitled *"Our joint commitment to share information effectively for the protection of children."* In response to issues raised in this letter, there is evidence of a clear commitment on the part of RBWM and its partners to share information appropriately in a way that will maximised the safeguarding of children at risk.
- Integrated Working – this has been achieved through the establishment of the Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub attended by Safeguarding Services, Police, Educational Welfare Service, the DASH Charity (domestic abuse) and Berkshire Health Trust. This arrangement allows the swift consultation and exchanging of information between partner agencies at the stage of referral, promoting more timely and effective decision-making and will be of significant benefit to case where there is some concern about possible CSE.
 - While the CSE and Missing Persons Panel is not integrated through co-location or common line management, it does exhibit good multi-agency collaboration and information sharing, and as such it is breaking down cultural barriers between agencies leading to a greater understanding and mutual respect for roles and responsibilities.
 - Joint risk assessment – the CSE Indicator Tool is completed for all cases coming to the CSE Operational Panel, usually by the referring agency, and forms the basis for multi-agency discussion of risk.

- A victim focused approach – this is a strong value base for all the partner agencies involved, and is re-enforced through principles within the CSE Strategy and within CSE training. This would include seeing young people caught up in CSE as victims first even when they may not see this for themselves.
- Good leadership and clear governance – The Safeguarding Children Board has endorsed a CSE Strategy that is delivered through a CSE and Missing Person’s Strategic Group co-chaired by the RBWM Director of Children’s Services and the Police Superintendent for Windsor and Maidenhead, and the CSE and Missing Persons Operational Panel co-chaired by RBWM Head of Education and the local Police Inspector with lead responsibility for CSE. This provides strong leadership, and a clear structure of governance and accountability.
- Frequent review of operations – The CSE Strategic Group receives feedback from the Operational Panel on a bi-monthly basis, and is developing more comprehensive collation of data to shed light on prevalence and trends. In turn the CSE Strategic Group reviews operations for the LSCB on a half-yearly basis, including providing a progress review of the Strategy for the LSCB’s Annual Report.

4. SUMMARY AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.1. There is a significant amount of attention to the issue of child sexual exploitation in the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead, reflecting local commitments and national concerns. The Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Board has an agreed strategy and action plan, and many of the necessary structures and processes are either in place or subject to scrutiny or review by senior leaders and elected Members.
- 4.2. Whilst the available data has yet to indicate a high prevalence of child sexual exploitation locally and future trends are uncertain, the author of this report has not encountered attitudes of denial such as those heavily criticised in the report on Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council by Louise Casey, 2015. Indeed, there is a commitment to prevention and early intervention across agencies.
- 4.3. The recommendations made here are restricted to particular issues that have come out of this review, and are not intended to duplicate the Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy Action Plan or individual organisations’ annual plans. Recommendations are made to for the LSCB and its Strategy and Operational Groups in the view that all LSCB partner agencies should be taking account of these as part of their duties under S.11 of the Children Act 2004 and the guidance Working Together 2013, Chapter 2 on Organisational Responsibilities¹. The Local Safeguarding Children Board should hold statutory agencies to account for mainstreaming child sexual exploitation into their day to day safeguarding business.

¹ [Working Together 2013](#) is statutory guidance on how agencies should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people. Chapter 2 of the guidance sets out the specific statutory duties that certain individual agencies have to promote the welfare of children and ensure that they are protected from harm.

Recommendations for the Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Board:

- The Local Safeguarding Children Board should continue to push for the establishment of a child sexual exploitation strategic meeting with a greater footprint across Berkshire. This should enable the sharing of experiences of Safeguarding Boards' Strategies and Operational Groups across Berkshire and Thames Valley to compare and contrast, or even trial, different variations in the operational models.
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board should hold statutory agencies to account for mainstreaming child sexual exploitation into their day to day safeguarding business. Agencies should provide information on how they are doing this in their Annual Safeguarding Report addressing Organisational Responsibilities, as detailed in
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board's training expectations for child sexual exploitation across partner agencies must be clarified and training opportunities publicised to the wider workforce. This should be achieved by the end of March 2015 in anticipation of the LSCB's Multi-agency Training Programme for 2015-16.
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board must clarify the quality assurance arrangements for single agency training to ensure that the issues around child sexual exploitation are being promoted in a consistent manner across statutory agencies.
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board must update the Universal and Targeted training to ensure that it references child sexual exploitation, includes messages from victims and their families, and the erosion of consent to sexual activity through grooming.
- The Local Safeguarding Children Board should sharpen its Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy by making a clear distinction between strategic and operational approaches, and updating its action plan in the light of this report and any more recently published national reports.

Recommendations for the Missing People/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group:

- There needs to be stronger engagement with communities, including community organisations and leaders, to raise awareness so that there is a good understanding of the risks of child sexual exploitation and the indicators and triggers. This will be a long term commitment.
- The evaluation of outcomes, particularly from the perspective of young people and parents, within a quality assurance framework needs to be developed in order to inform future reviews of the Strategy and the commissioning of young people-centred support services.
- There should be a full analysis of Missing Children data reports and Return Home interviews for patterns and prevalence, with a half-yearly report to the LSCB and a summary for the LSCB's Annual Report.
- A commissioning strategy should be developed capable of scaling up the delivery of support commensurate with any increasing demand that results from awareness raising and improvements in identification and referral.
- The Strategic Group needs to feed strategic intelligence to the Local Safeguarding Children Board, Children and Young People's Partnership,

Health and Wellbeing Board, and Community Safety Partnership for appropriate action on a regular basis. Contributions to the CSE Strategy should be reflected in each partnership's Annual Report.

- The representation on the Strategic Group, particularly in relation to adult services, should be strengthened to ensure that there is effective transition of services for vulnerable young people and adults.
- The CSE Strategy Group recommends to the LSCB that the CSE Strategy is updated to include:
 - Escalation procedures;
 - Supervision;
 - Recording of crime related to CSE;
 - Multi-agency audits of CSE Cases; Promotion of *Guidance for Professionals Working with Sexually Active Young People Under the Age of 18*, Berkshire Child Protection Procedures chapter 2.13
 - School transfers and exclusions include consideration of, and sharing information about, child vulnerability and behaviour is or may be related to exploitation.

Recommendations for the Missing People/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel:

- The Operational Panel must ensure robust communications and feedback to the widest network of services that are not directly represented at the Panel. This should be in place by the end of June 2015.
- The Operational Panel needs to develop a Borough specific profile of potential victims, offenders and locations which will identify patterns and trends and enable data to be collated to provide strategic intelligence for the Strategy Group. It should establish processes to begin to do this by the end of April 2015.
- Processes for cross-border sharing of intelligence between Operational Panels needs to be established; this can be facilitated by key partners that work across local authority areas such as police and health. It should establish processes to begin to do this by the end of June 2015.

5. REVIEW FINDINGS

Key line of enquiry one: Strategic leadership

'Is there effective strategic leadership of the multi-agency response to child sexual exploitation that identifies prevalence, trends, themes and patterns and secures improved outcomes for children and young people?'

Conclusion: Effective leadership is in place at the Strategic Group and Operational Panel, with the Safeguarding Children Board yet to review and challenge progress on the Strategy. Prevalence and trends have so far been identified in outline rather than comprehensively.

- 5.1. Strategic leadership is exercised through the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group led by the Director of Children's Services and the Local Police Area Commander for Thames Valley Police. Both Chairs report significant support from their own organisations; from the Lead Member for Children's Services and Elected Members, for whom this report provides further engagement with child sexual exploitation; from the Thames Valley Police and Crime Commissioner, with child sexual exploitation being referenced in Objective 1 of the Police and Crime Plan for the Thames Valley 2013–2017.
- 5.2. The terms of reference and membership of the Strategic Group are set out in the Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy 2015- 2016. The Strategic Group membership includes:
 - Child sexual exploitation strategic lead officers for Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead Children's Services.
 - Thames Valley Police – Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - Local Safeguarding Children Board.
 - National Probation Service.
 - Health services are represented by Windsor and Maidenhead Clinical Commissioning Group, shortly to be joined by Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust.
- 5.3. Strategic partners report senior level commitment to tackling child sexual exploitation and to the Strategic Group. Health and Probation representatives are also members of Strategic Groups in neighbouring Boroughs. The joint chairs of the Operational Panel, from Police and Children's Services, are also members of the Strategic Group. The role of the Operational Panel is to track and monitor individual cases and to share intelligence at an operational level.
- 5.4. The Independent Chairs and Business Managers of Local Safeguarding Children Boards across Berkshire are pursuing arrangements for a six-monthly pan-Berkshire Strategic Child Sexual Exploitation Meeting. The link with Thames Valley Police and their sub-regional strategy, and Health and Probation links with neighbouring Child Sexual Exploitation groups means that there is some useful connectivity beyond the Borough. A pan-Berkshire Strategic Meeting will, therefore, allow a more co-ordinated approach, for

- example to awareness raising campaigns or sharing information and intelligence between Operational Groups.
- 5.5. Child sexual exploitation is a safeguarding crime and a health issue. It is imperative, therefore, that the Local Safeguarding Children Board works together with the Community Safety Partnership and the Health and Well Being Board. These partnerships should ensure that sexual, mental and public health provision, and crime prevention and prosecution are all able to respond to, or incorporate, the requirements of the Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy. To date, both partnerships have received presentations and have included child sexual exploitation in their plans. However, they have yet to take any specific action within their terms of reference.
- 5.6. The Strategy references national guidance and research, Barnardo's three models of child sexual exploitation, definitions of three levels of risk from Thames Valley Police, terms of reference for both Strategic and Operational Groups, and an action plan based on prevention, protection, and prosecution. The partners comprising the Strategic Group and Operational Panel categorise concerns around sexual exploitation under three levels. The levels ensure consensus and consistent understanding of the risk posed to children/young people.
- Level 1: Children/young people where there is no current information that they are at risk of child sexual exploitation but who have previously been linked to child sexual exploitation and/or are displaying the warning signs, such as missing episodes.
 - Level 2: Children/young people where there is information that suggests a current risk of child sexual exploitation but no disclosures or evidence of child sexual exploitation. There will be a higher number of risk indicators present. The cases are likely to have been considered under Section 47.
 - Level 3: Children/young people where there has been a disclosure of sexual offences perpetrated against them or where an active investigation is taking place due to corroborated intelligence or evidence regarding child sexual exploitation.
- 5.7. The Strategy stems from national findings² that confirm that all children and young people are at risk of child sexual exploitation but some groups are more vulnerable than others. There is, appropriately, a greater focus on those groups in the Strategy. Particular vulnerabilities are:
- Being in care, and in particular residential care – there are currently 105 young people in care in the Royal Borough.
 - Prior sexual abuse or neglect – figures for sexual abuse in the Royal Borough remain consistently low; however, neglect is a growing issue and is a priority for the Local Safeguarding Children Board.
 - Family dysfunction, domestic violence, family dysfunction, parental drug or alcohol misuse – these issues all feature in the cases being managed within specialist safeguarding services in the Royal Borough.
 - Going missing or running away from home or a care placement – very few young people in the Royal Borough go missing for more than 24 hours.

² Becket, H., citing several other studies in Melrose and Pearce (eds.), 2013

- Substance misuse – again, this is often a feature of cases being managed within specialist safeguarding services.
 - Disengagement from education – there are a very small number of young people who are disengaged from education in the Royal Borough and a number of services are actively involved in re-engaging these young people.
 - Social isolation and/or low self esteem – the extent of this as an issue within the Royal Borough is not fully understood and needs further exploration.
 - Association with negative peer groups/peers who have been sexually exploited – there is limited evidence that this is happening within the Royal Borough and effective intelligence sharing within the Operational Panel should help to identify this when and if it occurs.
 - Homelessness – this is not a major issue within the Royal Borough generally; however, there are limited accommodation options for young people aged 16 years, leading to some ‘sofa surfing’, and is the subject to focused action between Children’s and Housing Services.
- 5.8. Local data has only recently been available for collation and analysis from the significant cohort of cases referred to and considered by the Operational Panel, and the greater use of the child sexual exploitation indicator tool by practitioners. This needs to be incorporated within a comprehensive profile to assist understanding of the extent and profile of child sexual exploitation in the locality and appropriate interventions.
- 5.9. The prevalence or extent of child sexual exploitation in any community or geographical area, bearing in mind trafficking for exploitation, will always be masked by lack of recognition, not least by victims themselves, and by under-reporting, as with other areas of risk and harm such as domestic abuse. The Strategic Group will also need to keep track of emerging patterns nationally to inform the assessment of how well child sexual exploitation is identified locally.
- 5.10. The development of a local child sexual exploitation profile through the collation of case data should also prompt consideration of the targeting of awareness raising and training, for example to raise the chance of identifying child sexual exploitation among boys and young men, and among ethnic minorities.
- 5.11. As part of a Children’s Services’ case audit of three Level 3 cases, a data monitoring tool, adapted from one developed by the University of Bedfordshire, was completed for all Levels 2 and 3 cases as at October 2014. The audit identified some trends but was not sufficient to draw conclusions. However, it did provide critical insight so that all new cases are assessed against them:
- All young people were White British and female.
 - The majority used cannabis and alcohol, with two starting at 12 years.
 - The majority used Facebook and Blackberry Messenger to communicate.
 - All had a significant number of missing persons’ reports.
 - There was a recurring theme of absent fathers.
 - There was also a recurring theme of parents having issues with substance misuse and domestic violence.

- The majority showed a history of refusing to attend school and/or truanting.
 - A number of them were involved with the Youth Offending Team.
- 5.12. Some themes and patterns are emerging for consideration by the Strategic Group. These are reported from the Operational Panel through the Joint Chairs who are also members of the Strategic Group. As yet, the minutes of the Strategic Group indicate that these themes and patterns are the working conclusions of the Operational Panel rather than structured analysis of data.
- 5.13. A trend appears to be strong associations between a number of young people on the child sexual exploitation tracker or who go missing, and that these associations could themselves be considered risk factors. Young people may condone, encourage, or just not deter risky behaviours amongst their peers, or they may be drawn to or placed in the company of young people with similar attitudes, behaviours or vulnerabilities. This opens up the possibility of another area of intervention to reduce risk.
- 5.14. Two young people considered at risk of child sexual exploitation had some association with gangs. The Children's Commissioner has highlighted gang membership as a particular risk of child sexual exploitation for young women.
- 5.15. The Operational Panel reporting has confirmed locally a national finding that children in care are disproportionately represented in the child sexual exploitation data, with a strong association with missing from care episodes. The Operational Panel were informed of regular and constructive police liaison with the two privately owned children's homes in Maidenhead. The Strategy Group ensured that the children's homes managers were invited to an Emerging Themes event on 30 September 2014, including child sexual exploitation, and also agreed that the Director of Children's Services would meet the Managing Director of the children's homes provider.
- 5.16. Similarly, the Strategic Group identified an issue in the criteria of Child Abduction Warning Notices, in that they could be issued to adults in relation to 16 and 17 year olds in care under Section 31 Children Act 1989 but not Section 20, with parental consent. As a result, actions were agreed to raise this anomaly with Association of Directors of Children's Services.
- 5.17. A local profile of child sexual exploitation should include trends about locations that could be targeted for monitoring, surveillance, or disruption activity. This is challenging due to a number of factors that mean useful patterns are slower to emerge:
- Young people's home addresses – where they may have gathered the life experience to make themselves vulnerable – are often not the same as their current residence. For many of the local young people, their current residence changes, sometimes often.
 - Alleged or confirmed instances of child sexual exploitation are as yet low to build any significant pattern for their location. The Operational Panel spends more time considering risky behaviours and associations that do not yet relate to a location for potential child sexual exploitation. Much of this takes place on line or through mobile communications.

- Potential venues or locations for grooming and abuse that are disrupted by Police or other agencies may quickly displace potential perpetrators to other locations. There are many hotels, taxis and fast food outlets in the Borough, perpetrators can be mobile and can traffic young people to other areas.
- 5.18. In practice, the Operational Panel regularly considers addresses, points of congregation for young people, reports about specific hotels, and other locations. Neighbourhood Police and Community Wardens in particular have picked up actions to check activity in certain geographical areas.
- 5.19. In one case currently under investigation, two young women were approached in a shop by the shop keeper, who arranged to meet them later at a railway station. On arriving at the train station, the two young women found that there were now two men, who wanted to separate them and take them elsewhere. In another case, it was noted that a young woman in a foster placement was receiving a number of visitors during the day while the foster parent was at work. While no incident of child sexual exploitation was alleged to have happened at this address, some of the visitors were associated with young people on the Child Sexual Exploitation Tracker.

Key line of enquiry two: Statutory guidance

To what extent is the LSCB complying with the statutory guidance set out in 'Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation'?

Conclusion: there is substantial compliance by the LSCB with the statutory guidance, with areas for further attention.

- 5.20. The roles and responsibilities of the LSCB are set out Chapter 4, section 4.2-4.12 of Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation³, supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children (DfE, 2009). These cover:
- Participation in planning and commission, section 4.4.
 - Policy and procedures, section 4.7.
 - Training, section 4.12.
 - Communicating and raising awareness, section 4.15.
 - Monitoring and evaluation, section 4.16.
 - Serious Case Review, section 4.17.
 - Ensuring co-operation, section 4.18.
- 5.21. **Participate in planning and commissioning** – Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children Board has promoted multi-agency arrangements for missing children and young people since 2009, and for child sexual exploitation since 2013.
- 5.22. Child sexual exploitation and children and young people missing from home and care have yet to be considered within RBWM's Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment aims to provide local

³ [Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation](#), Department for Education, 2009.

policy-makers and commissioners with a profile of the health and wellbeing needs of the local population. A chapter on child sexual exploitation would require demographic information, social and behavioural determinants of child sexual exploitation, prevalence and trends.

- 5.23. The Children and Young People’s Partnership has an Outcomes Framework containing three priorities:
- Priority 1: Giving all children the best start in life and supporting young people into adulthood (universal services).
 - Priority 2: Building resilience and supporting vulnerable children and young people (targeted support).
 - Priority 3: Keeping children and young people safe (specialist services).
- 5.24. Within Priority 3, a key outcome is: *Early identification of children and young people exhibiting risky behaviours prevents child sexual exploitation and/or continuing risky behaviour into adulthood.* It is expected that this will deliver a reduction in the amount of time young people spend assessed as at risk. The identification of 38 young people at risk of child sexual exploitation through the Operational Panel is evidence of delivery against this outcome.
- 5.25. The Strategy Action Plan sets out the intention to ‘*provide a service for parents and carers of children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and greater involvement of parents and carers in work with children and young people.*’ This requires the Strategic Group and the Operational Panel to scope the gaps in the current level of support services available in relation to the level of need. As the Strategy was approved in January 2015, this initiative is at an early stage.
- 5.26. **Policy and Procedures** – Berkshire Child Protection Procedures chapter 2.5 is focussed on Child Sexual Exploitation http://berks.proceduresonline.com/chapters/p_ch_sex_exploit.html. This was fully revised and published in July 2014, and includes an indicator tool to inform referrals to Children’s Safeguarding Services and assessments.
- 5.27. The child sexual exploitation procedures page has links to Related Guidance on Missing from Home and Care, Trafficking, and Forced Marriage, alongside links to Related Chapters in the Procedures including Allegations against staff, sexually active young people, and Private Fostering.
- 5.28. There is a gap in the procedures page against the guidance at section 4.10. However, these are addressed in other ways in the Borough, see Table 1.

Table 1: Response to section 4.10

	Borough response
Lead professionals in key agencies.	Addressed through Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel representations.
How professionals can work together to deliver disruption plans.	Addressed in the Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy Action Plan on Prosecution.

	Borough response
Gathering and preserving the integrity of evidence about perpetrators of sexual exploitation.	Addressed in the Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy Action Plan on Prosecution.
Managing cases with other authorities.	Managed through the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel and will be a focus for the proposed pan-Berkshire quarterly Strategic Meeting.
Dealing with issues relating to migrant children.	Migrant children and Trafficking and Exploitation are picked up in the Berkshire Child Protection Procedures, chapters 2.19 and 2.21 respectively.

- 5.29. **Training** – a strategic approach to safeguarding training has been co-ordinated at Berkshire level on behalf of the six constituent Local Safeguarding Children Boards – Bracknell Forest, Reading, Slough, West Berkshire, Windsor and Maidenhead and Wokingham – divided into East and West Berkshire Training Groups. The Training Strategy identifies eight professional groups for targeting different levels of safeguarding training, and the training requirements for child sexual exploitation are currently being mapped out for these groups. A Quality Assurance approach for multi-agency training has also been developed, although not for single-agency training.
- 5.30. Windsor and Maidenhead LSCB is part of East Berkshire. The multi-agency training programme is delivered by the Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead in collaboration with Slough and Bracknell Forest Borough Councils, on behalf of the three Local Safeguarding Children Boards. In the Universal and Targeted training module, there is insufficient coverage of child sexual exploitation and this should be reviewed and updated.
- 5.31. In 2014-2015, there were four training modules specific to child sexual exploitation provided by Slough Borough Council, two at targeted level, two at specialist level. Review of the attendance data for three of the four events has shown that there were no attendees from RBWM or agencies principally based in the Royal Borough. There were a small number of attendees from Thames Valley Police, though it is not known which policing area, and no attendees from Health. The Strategic Group needs to urgently address the appropriateness of current arrangements for Windsor and Maidenhead and ensure immediate improvement in the publicity and awareness of Local Safeguarding Children Board training opportunities.
- 5.32. A method to evaluate the post-training impact on practice is expected to be implemented by April 2015. Until this training evaluation begins to embed, it is not possible to comment on whether the child sexual exploitation training modules are able to provide the necessary knowledge and skills for example for practitioners across agencies to identify child sexual exploitation, make use of the indicator tool, engage with young people and parents, contribute to the Operational Panel, or intervene and support young people as part of a multi-agency plan.

- 5.33. All partners consulted for this report detailed the delivery of significant single agency safeguarding and child sexual exploitation training, see points 5.. The statutory partners have reported on their own training programmes through the Section 11 Audit programme, and annual safeguarding report to the Local Safeguarding Children Board. However, these reporting routes do not provide sufficient detail to judge the adequacy of child sexual exploitation training provision.
- 5.34. Training for Health services is mandated by the Intercollegiate Document Safeguarding children and young people: roles and competencies for health care staff, Royal College of Paediatrics and Child Health, 2014. This provides training standards for all staff at different levels, and includes a requirement for child sexual exploitation. However, a recent report by Oxford Brookes University for NHS England Child Sexual Exploitation: An Audit of Staff Knowledge and Training Needs Final Report – March 2014 found some confusion over the interpretation of the different levels of training required for frontline staff. Locally, the Designated Nurse has delivered child sexual exploitation training to GPs, and further promotes child sexual exploitation through six monthly visits to safeguarding leads in every practice. Safeguarding Named Nurses provide training for all staff having contact with children and families at Wexham Park Hospital, and through Community Health Services provided by Berkshire Health Foundation Trust.
- 5.35. Basic safeguarding training for Designated Leads in Schools, Early Years settings and Child Care Providers makes reference to child sexual exploitation, and whole school safeguarding refresher training for secondary schools makes use of a child sexual exploitation scenario as a discussion exercise. A shared inset/twilight session for Head Teachers, Designated Safeguarding Leads, and Safeguarding Governors on Recognising and Dealing with Child Sexual Exploitation was delivered on 9 February 2015. A further child sexual exploitation workshop will be delivered at the schools conference in May 2015.
- 5.36. **Communicating and raising awareness** – a Children and Young People’s Partnership/LSCB event on Emerging Risks, child sexual exploitation, forced marriage and female genital mutilation, was held on 30 September 2014, and was attended by over a hundred delegates, more than half of which were from agencies other than the local authority. At the Local Safeguarding Children Board meeting in January 2015, in addition to approving the Strategy, two further actions were agreed to promote awareness of child sexual exploitation across schools:
- The Independent Chair to write to all schools.
 - The Director of Children’s Services to raise at Schools Leadership Forum which led to the shared inset/twilight session in February 2015.
- 5.37. There has yet to be any significant communications with the local community around child sexual exploitation. The LSCB has two Lay Members whose role, in part, includes ‘support stronger public engagement in local child safety issues and an improved public understanding of the LSCB’s child protection

work' (Working Together, DfE 2013, p.62). There is also a Prevention Sub-group that aims to progress public awareness.

- 5.38. **Monitoring and Evaluation** – the Operational Panel maintains a Case Tracker spreadsheet for all young people considered at Risk Levels 1, 2, and 3 since December 2013. This records age, care status, and whether the child sexual exploitation indicator tool has been completed. The case tracker and the indicator tools provide basic data for analysis.
- 5.39. Evaluation of outcomes for children and young people, and hence the effectiveness of support provided, may be pursued by collating a number of sources of information:
- Length of time on the Child Sexual Exploitation Tracker – a young person being considered at risk for an extended period of time may indicate that the case is one of greater complexity and challenge to support services, and/or that support being offered is ineffective.
 - Re-referrals - a re-referral within a short time frame for the same or similar issue can indicate that the previous intervention was ineffective and the case closed prematurely.
 - Young people's view of their own safety and the support they are given when the Operational Panel no longer considers them at risk.
 - Follow-up enquiries some time after a young person is regarded as no longer at risk. Where possible and appropriate, Operational Panel members could undertake interviews with young people and/or parents to assess progress, what worked for them, and what might work for other young people.
- 5.40. Quarterly figures for the number of cases at Risk Levels 1, 2, and 3 are provided to the Local Safeguarding Children Board's Monitoring and Evaluation Group. This allows headline data on child sexual exploitation to be included alongside other safeguarding data in a quarterly analysis for the Board. The Monitoring and Evaluation sub-group has timetabled a multi-agency audit of a child sexual exploitation case for commencement in September 2015. The Local Safeguarding Children Board will also expect an annual summary of the Strategy for its Annual Report, plus a mid-year progress report.
- 5.41. **Serious Case Review** – The LSCB currently has underway a Service Case Review and a Partnership Review, both of which touch on child sexual exploitation though not as a proven or substantive issues in either case. Final reports for these Reviews have not yet been signed off or published by the LSCB, and therefore details are not discussed here.
- 5.42. In the Partnership Review, 'Child E' was noted to have previously been identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation due to her exposure to drugs and contact with older males. The Report Real Voices – Child Sexual Exploitation in Manchester, Ann Coffey MP, October 2014, recommends that serious case reviews should include a consideration of the history of perpetrators. This has been raised with the Chair of the Serious Case Review

sub-group for consideration in relation to any future case reviews involving child sexual exploitation.

5.43. **Ensuring co-operation** – co-operation to promote the safeguarding and welfare of children and young people is a duty for specific agencies under Section 11 of the Children Act 2004. In respect of child sexual exploitation, partnership co-operation is promoted through:

- The LSCB at Board level, for example the endorsement of the Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy and inclusion of child sexual exploitation in the Board's Business Plan.
- The Strategic Group having established itself with a stable membership, and responding appropriately to a throughput of medium and higher risk cases.
- The Operational Panel with wide membership and strong chairing.
- The Berkshire LSCB Independent Chairs and Business Managers Meeting, which has taken forward requests from Windsor and Maidenhead LSCB to establish a Berkshire-wide child sexual exploitation Strategic meetings.
- A number of recent actions aimed at ensuring the co-operation of schools, for example a twilight child sexual exploitation training session.

5.44. In conclusion, there is substantial compliance by the Local Safeguarding Children Board with the statutory guidance, with some deficits to be addressed in commissioning and planning, and in training. However, compliance with statutory guidance is only a starting point, and of itself does not guarantee good outcomes for children. There is much scope for further work in these areas, notably raising awareness and evaluating data.

Key line of enquiry three: Information sharing

How effectively are partners sharing information and working together to tackle child sexual exploitation locally?

Conclusion: there is significant evidence of multi-agency sharing of information that is leading to the identification of young people at risk and co-ordination of support and interventions.

5.45. The initial sharing of information occurs at the stage of identification and referral. The Referral and Assessment Team reported no issues with the quality of referral information specifically relating to child sexual exploitation issues. No agencies reported inappropriate delays in making child sexual exploitation referrals. The question of whether agencies have not made child sexual exploitation referrals when they should have will need to be taken up within each partner's own quality assurance programme.

5.46. RBWM's electronic case management system PARIS does not yet have a field to record child sexual exploitation concerns. When this is provided, more structured data may be available to explore child sexual exploitation issues at referral stage.

- 5.47. The Multi-Agency Safeguarding Hub (MASH) was launched in November 2014 to improve sharing of information and enable quicker and more informed decision making at referral stage for cases where initial information does not provide a clear picture of the safeguarding risk. The MASH operates with the physical presence of staff from Health, the DASH Charity, RBWM Referral and Assessment Team and RBWM Education Welfare Team, with Thames Valley Police making specific Officers available to discuss and share information by telephone and email. There is written agreement that within six to nine months, Thames Valley Police will have a physical attendance at the MASH. MASH members are able to access their own agency records and share real-time information as appropriate. In the first 40 days there were 20 referrals to the MASH. Although none of these related to child sexual exploitation, the information sharing process is in place to facilitate this. Evaluation of the impact of the MASH on case outcomes should be able to determine whether the process has added value, including where the MASH process has resulted in the earlier identification of risk of child sexual exploitation, or the number of re-referrals that were previously No Further Action is reduced.
- 5.48. Observation of the Child Sexual Exploitation and Missing Persons Operational Panel on 8 January 2015 provided the author with evidence of significant sharing of information and intelligence between agencies, and co-operation and collaboration of working together. Some concrete examples of this include:
- Consultation agreed with the Licencing Team regarding the identity of a taxi driver.
 - Community Police Officer feeding in new information regarding a young person from liaison with a children's home (private provider), in particular detailed information regarding what might precipitate a Missing episode.
 - Discussion across agencies about the possibility of a child protection referral for a 17 year old, or a professionals' case discussion as a preventative measure following the expiry of a youth offending order.
 - Police and Health sharing concerns regarding a young woman, leading to a new action agreed for referral to Children's Safeguarding Services and possible involvement of the Local Authority Designated Officer.
 - Police agreeing to provide a photograph to a community warden of a man who is a possible risk to others.
 - Action agreed between Police and Intensive Family Support Project.
 - Discussion around new case/investigation, information volunteered from several agencies.
- 5.49. Significantly, Police discussed a fresh investigation, and reported to the author that the Operational Panel discussion provided them with five fresh pieces of information that has informed/helped progress the investigation.
- 5.50. The Local Authority Chair of the Operational Panel was of the view that the information sharing during the meeting was a fair representation of how that meeting operates in general. Other members have reported that the membership has become familiar with each other and the processes of the meeting over time.

- 5.51. Information sharing by agencies and practitioners not in attendance relies on links with the Operational Panel Members. Schools, for example, are linked into the Operational Panel through the Education Welfare Manager. Health services are represented by Garden sexual health clinic and the Children in Care Named Nurse, to be joined soon by a Named Nurse from the Berkshire Healthcare Foundation Trust Safeguarding Team. These representatives will need to ensure that there is good communications with school health, health visiting, Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services, Accident and Emergency, GPs, paediatric and midwifery services. Operational Panel members and their channels of communication need to be kept under review in order to ensure that the relevant information sharing is always happening. Schools – and in particular private schools – child care and early years providers, and community, voluntary and faith organisation will, by their number and diversity, remain a challenge.

Key line of enquiry four: Quality assurance

Is practice robustly quality assured and is there evidence that this leads to better services for children and young people?

Conclusion: there is very limited Quality Assurance as yet specifically around practice with young people in relation to child sexual exploitation, these issues being picked up currently through general quality assurance of practice.

- 5.52. In October 2014, Children's Services audited three of the four cases that were then classified as Risk Level 3 by the Operational Panel, to assess the quality of risk assessment and activity in response. Two of these audits were graded as Good and the third as Requires Improvement. There were, however, concerns with some historical social care management decision-making on missing person reports in the cases. The findings led to nine recommendations, which, when implemented, will lead to better services for children and young people.
- 5.53. The Clinical Commissioning Group does not conduct case audits, and though safeguarding is a requirement in the NHS Standard Contract, quality assurance is not specified.
- 5.54. Berkshire Healthcare and Frimley Health Foundation Trusts' Safeguarding Teams have quality assurance programmes, and also participate in LSCB Multi-agency audits. As yet, these have not focused on child sexual exploitation.
- 5.55. The National Probation Service conduct quarterly audits on the quality of assessments on the E-OASys system which includes risk assessments on safeguarding children, and whether the appropriate action had been taken where children may be at risk, including of child sexual exploitation. This is undertaken by Senior Probation Officers for other areas.
- 5.56. The LSCB's Monitoring and Evaluation sub-group has timetabled a multi-agency audit of a child sexual exploitation case for commencement in

September 2015, and has also requested that single agency safeguarding audit reports are provided for scrutiny.

- 5.57. Further work on the quality assurance systems around child sexual exploitation is required. The Strategic Group will need to specify what its expectations of partners' quality assurance is, and arrangements will need to be made with the Monitoring and Evaluation Group to collate child sexual exploitation audit data for the Strategic Group, who will, in turn, report to the Board.

Key line of enquiry five: Prevention work

What is the extent and effectiveness of local child sexual exploitation prevention work?

Conclusion: the extent of local child sexual exploitation prevention work is as yet moderate, and its effectiveness in terms of outcomes for young people will need to be explored further over time as clearer trends and patterns emerge through data analysis and evaluations with young people.

- 5.58. Safeguarding 'Prevention' in the Royal Borough is understood to mean work that is aimed at young people in general, or specific groups of young people such as children in care.
- 5.59. Personal, social, health and economic (PSHE) education is a non-statutory subject for schools. There is statutory guidance for non-academy schools on Sex and Relationship Education (DfE, 2000) that includes giving children the personal and social skills to recognise exploitation and abuse.
- 5.60. Sex and Relationship Education (SRE) is devolved to each school to decide how to implement national guidance, which may be through PSHE or through buying in specialist providers. The local authority does not have a statutory responsibility to gather an overview of the delivery of SRE across the Borough's schools. Ofsted comments in their school inspection reports only where there is a cause for concern.
- 5.61. An audit of schools safeguarding requirements within Ofsted inspections was commissioned by the LSCB's Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-group, to which 31 schools have so far replied including five of the nine secondary schools. The schools audit included a question *'the extent to which pupils understand, respond to and calculate risk, for example about child sexual exploitation...'* Secondary schools reports included:
- "Through Citizenship/RE curriculum; targeted special events, Curriculum Enrichment Days and assemblies."
 - "Through PSHE; however, this is an area for further work and the school is in discussion with [external provider] to develop a programme around this."
 - "PSHE Curriculum."
 - "Keeping Safe and Understanding Risk are key areas of the PSHE curriculum with support from local Police."
 - "Information delivered through Personal Development Learning assemblies, Focus Days and Tutor time. Strong links with Drug and

Alcohol Team (DAAT), regular school nurse drop in sessions and formal referrals.”

- 5.62. The 26 Primary/First/Junior Schools reported a much more mixed picture. Several mentioned PSHE as the main opportunity for addressing a number of related issues including e-safety, bullying, staying safe, saying no, sex and relationship education, and domestic violence. There were examples of visits by NSPCC, Police, and the DAAT. There were a few mentions of discussions with parents and one instance of ‘whole day training and workshops for children, parents and staff.
- 5.63. Some Primary schools stress the age appropriateness in the way these issues were dealt with. There were two responses that indicated some of these issues were not addressed because of age appropriateness.
- 5.64. The audit also included a question: ‘Are staff trained to identify and reduce the risk of Child Sexual Exploitation?’ Three of the Secondary Schools reported having child sexual exploitation in their safeguarding documentation and having taken steps to train key staff and/or disseminate to all staff. Two other secondary schools reported that training was planned or needed. Of the Primary/First/Junior Schools, eight responded affirmatively, 11 had training or development planned, and the remaining seven responded in the negative.
- 5.65. The Youth Service provides some preventative work with young people aged 8-19 around risk taking behaviour and positive activities both in and outside school, through classroom discussion, targeted group workshops, and targeted individual intervention. Areas of work that are relevant to child sexual exploitation include staying safe online, pornography, healthy relationships and cyberbullying, and some of this is delivered in partnership with the DASH domestic abuse charity and Family Friends. The targeted elements of the Youth Services work in schools is due to become a traded service from April, while classroom discussions will remain a free-of-charge service. Currently the Youth Service report that they are able to approach schools to propose targeted work where wider Youth Service information suggests that is necessary. This relationship between schools and Youth Services will change when the targeted work becomes a traded service.
- 5.66. The Youth Service also co-ordinates a Youth Services Resource Panel to whom young people can be referred as part of support through an Early Help Assessment, hence appropriate for young people with a lower child sexual exploitation Risk Level. This Panel would identify appropriate types of Youth Work support for a young person, or sign post to another agency possibly in the voluntary sector.
- 5.67. The One Borough Meeting, convened by the Council and attended by faith and community groups and the Police, has discussed events that could lead to local community tensions including the high profile child sexual exploitation prosecutions in other parts of the country. One Borough has not been approached as an opportunity to raise community awareness of child sexual exploitation, though it could provide channels of communication and access to do just that. It should not be assumed that this is the only channel necessary

to reach all parts of the community, or that community leaders can speak on behalf of young people at risk of child sexual exploitation in their own communities.

Key line of enquiry six: Identification

How effective is the local authority and its partners in ensuring that all children and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation are identified at the earliest opportunity?

Conclusion: while it is very difficult to estimate the level of unidentified risk or victimisation in the community, there is good evidence that identification of lower risk cases is regularly occurring thus allowing support and intervention before a situation escalates to higher risk or actual harm.

- 5.68. The role of referral has been discussed earlier in this report under Information Sharing. All agencies have a role in identification. However, the particular challenges being that the complexity of some young people's situations are difficult to make sense of in terms of child sexual exploitation, and young people who are at risk or victims of child sexual exploitation may not recognise or deny they are suffering abuse and therefore be resistant to support.
- 5.69. Other nationally published reports, for example Casey, 2015, highlight the importance of proactive outreach youth work in order to engage with young people who may be caught in child sexual exploitation so may not be amenable to referral and support from statutory agencies in the traditional way. RBWM has very little capacity for detached youth work, and it is not known whether voluntary or faith sector organisations such as Maidenhead Street Angels have the skills or capacity to engage with challenging young people or indeed are aware of the child sexual exploitation agenda. Neighbourhood Police and Community Wardens are the most visible professionals in communities and on the streets, and while they are key sources of information around the movements of young people, activities in specific locations, etc. Their primary roles are not around developing long term relationships with 'hard to reach' young people.
- 5.70. The Operational Panel record of key details for young people has indicated that risk of child sexual exploitation is being identified by children's services, Police, some schools, and school health. However, this is not recorded for all cases so a complete picture of who is identifying risk of child sexual exploitation is not available. As child sexual exploitation could be identified in the first instance by a wide ranges of services that are not directly engaged in the Operational Panel - such as Pharmacists (dispensing contraception), Ambulance Services, voluntary sector agencies, and Registered Social Landlords – it is important that child sexual exploitation training is delivered to the widest possible audiences and the source of child sexual exploitation identification is kept under review.
- 5.71. Working Together 2013 states that 'Early help means providing support as soon as a problem emerges'⁴ so as to avoid risks or actual harm persisting or

⁴ Working Together 2013, Chapter 1, paragraph 1

escalating. In terms of the Operational Panel’s risk framework, this could mean that we would expect to see more children and young people at Level 1 rather than Level 3. A new case that is classified for the first time at Level 3 could indicate that previous risks at Levels 1 and 2 were not recognised, ignored, or recognised but not addressed.

- 5.72. The Operational Panel monitors data at the three risk levels that have been developed by Thames Valley Police and so are in use across the Berkshire Local Authority areas.
- Level 1: This level is for children/young people where there is no current information that they are at risk of child sexual exploitation but who have previously been linked to child sexual exploitation and/or are displaying the warning signs (examples of which are provided in the Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy).
 - Level 2: This level is for children and young people where there is information that suggests a current risk of child sexual exploitation but no disclosures or evidence of child sexual exploitation. There will be a higher number of risk indicators present, including those captured in level 1 and those listed under level 2.
 - Level 3: This level is for children/young people where there has been a disclosure of sexual offences perpetrated against them or where an active investigation is taking place due to corroborated intelligence or evidence regarding child sexual exploitation.
- 5.73. The Operational Panel assigns a Risk Level to each case, shares information, problem solves and monitors until the young person is no longer at risk. A young person may remain on the Operational Panel’s list for some months, and the Risk Level may change over that time. The collation of the Risk Level data, along with the Indicator Tool, starts to provide some insight into the trends, see Table 2:

Table 2 – Operational Panel Risk Levels December 2013 - January 2015, 14 meetings

	First Risk Level when a young person first comes to the attention of the Operational Panel	Highest Risk Level during the time a young person is considered at risk	Last Risk Level before a young person is considered no longer at risk
Level 1	23 (60%)	17 (44%)	19 (50%)
Level 2	9 (24%)	11 (29%)	4 (10%)
Level 3	6 (16%)	10 (27%)	2 (5%)
Case still open			13 (35%)
Total	38	38	38

- 5.74. Nearly two thirds of all cases are considered by the Operational Panel when risk is at a lower level, and nearly half of all cases have not escalated beyond Level 1. This indicates that the Operational Panel is giving significant attention to prevention/early help rather than just those cases confirmed as high risk. This also indicates that a significant degree of early identification is

occurring, that is where practitioners are not waiting for risk of child sexual exploitation to be confirmed before referring to the Operational Panel.

- 5.75. In practice, this means that Operational Panel members spend considerable time sharing information and collaboration in relation to lower risk cases. The Joint Chair of the Operational Panel reported no resistance to this, and hence sees this as an indication of multi-agency 'buy-in' to the concept of Early Help and the importance of preventing the escalation of risk.
- 5.76. Identification is the first step in a safeguarding process, before which children and young people may be at risk of child sexual exploitation but are unidentified. The number of children and young people with an unidentified child sexual exploitation risk is not known and it may be too early for comparison with statistical neighbours to be meaningful given that child sexual exploitation strategies are variable. Hence it is difficult to know how many children and young people should be referred or to judge whether there are children being left in circumstances where risk is persisting or escalating.
- 5.77. The Children's Services' audit of the Level 3 cases did raise concerns with some historical social care management decision-making on missing person reports, in that child sexual exploitation considerations should have been considered earlier. However, current feedback from the Referral and Assessment Team is that they have yet to identify any case where child sexual exploitation should have been identified by a referrer at an earlier stage.
- 5.78. The expectations of the Operational Panel is that the Indicator Tool is used in all cases where child sexual exploitation might be considered, at or around the time of referral, by the referrer, though this is less explicit in the Guidance. There is increasing use of the Indicator Tool for cases coming to the Operational Panel. Indicator tools can prompt frontline practitioners to ask further questions they may not have considered and put together disparate pieces of information into more meaningful whole, and so are likely to assist earlier identification of risk and need.
- 5.79. There have been instances where the Indicator Tool has been completed with the young person concerned, and in at least one instance, the Indicator Tool was completed by a parent. This illustrates that practice using the Indicator tool can assist young people and their parents in developing their own perception of risk and actively participate in the assessment process.
- 5.80. Early identification may benefit children in care in residential placements, who may be at greater vulnerability to child sexual exploitation because of their pre-care life experience, and because of their care experience. Residential care may mix children with complex needs and challenging behaviours, and promote negative norms within the residential peer group such as running away, drug use, shop lifting and problematic sexual behaviour. Also, perpetrators have been known to target residential units in order to groom vulnerable children.

- 5.81. A private provider has two residential properties in Maidenhead, one a four-bedded unit and the other two bedded, that provide care and education for young people with complex emotional and behavioural needs from six other local authority areas. Both were subject to a full Ofsted Inspection in November and December 2014, and the judgement for both was 'Good.'
- 5.82. As both homes are subject to the same management structure, inspection reports for both are similar, see Box 1.

Box 1 – extract from inspection reports

“Being missing has dramatically reduced for young people since living in the home”

“Local specialist police officers are positive about joint working with the home, in relation to individual histories of vulnerability and exploitation.

Comprehensive procedures are in place with the local police and call-handling centre should young people be missing. The home and local police liaise directly with specialist officers in areas young people have family contact to promote safety in all settings.”

“Young people’s individual risk assessments are robust, ensuring young people are able to take age-appropriate risks in line with individual abilities and vulnerabilities.”

“Policies within the home are comprehensive and updated in response to lessons learned locally and nationally; including identifying signs of exploitation and gang awareness.”

- 5.83. Staff training in these children’s homes is reported to include sexually harmful behaviour and child sexual exploitation, which may also address the possibility of ‘peer on peer’ sexual exploitation.

Key line of enquiry seven: Safeguarding and support

Are children and young people, including children in care, who are at risk of, or who have been, sexually exploited effectively safeguarded, protected and supported?

Conclusion: protective action on low, medium and high risk cases is regularly delivered through support from agencies co-ordinated through the Operational Panel, and many cases have been closed due to lowering risk. Measurement of the effectiveness of protection will need to involve feedback from young people and families particularly after case closure.

- 5.84. Protection and support of young people in relation to child sexual exploitation is co-ordinated and monitored through the Operational Panel, with high risk cases being subject to Section 47 investigations and Child Protection Plans or, if a child in care, through Care Plans and Statutory Reviews.
- 5.85. The added value that the Operational Panel provides is through agreeing new actions, sharing information for investigation and collating data and impressions to develop an understanding of the local profile of child sexual exploitation activity and victims. Operational risk management panels may become a bureaucratic exercise by merely reporting back on cases and assigning a risk classification. However, the Operational Panel appears to

have developed to the point where it is effective in helping to move cases forward.

- 5.86. One incident of alleged child sexual exploitation is currently being investigated by the Police, aided by intelligence gathered at the Operational Panel. The young person who is the victim in this case was not previously identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation, though was an associate of another young person who has been monitored by the Operational Panel over a long period and for a short time had been considered at Risk Level 3. The victim had also been known to health services following an overdose. It is too early in the investigation to comment on whether this incident of child sexual exploitation could have been prevented, which would of course be the aspiration of all agencies.
- 5.87. There is one other investigation underway regarding two young people considered at Risk Level 3 who had been approached by a shop keeper who arranged to meet them later. No incident of actual abuse was alleged. It is notable in this case that Police were called by one of the young people, who recognised potential dangers and was confident in making contact with Police for support.
- 5.88. Of the eight young people considered as at Level 3 by the Operational Panel over 14 months:
- Four were children in care, two placed in the area by other local authorities.
 - Two were subject to Child Protection Plans, one where the substantive issue was for child sexual exploitation.
 - One further young person is being considered for a Child Protection Conference, and one was a closed case to Children's Safeguarding Services.
 - Three had recorded episodes of missing.
 - Three were involved with Youth Offending Teams for offending behaviour.
- 5.89. The 'crime triangle' is used by Police Forces as a way of understanding the occurrence of crime. A victim and an offender must come together at a location in order for a crime to happen, hence if any one of these three is lacking the crime will not occur. Location might be thought of as a specific opportunity, such as a location at a particular time of day or when no one around. Controls may be exercised over these three – guardians for the victim, handlers for the offender, and managers of the location.
- 5.90. An example of offender handling was provided by the National Probation Service from a neighbouring area where an offender on licence was recalled to custody, as, amongst other concerns, information was provided by the area Operational Panel that there were concerns about the risk of child sexual exploitation. This has yet to happen in the Royal Borough, but the mechanism and the interagency collaboration are in place to allow this when required.
- 5.91. Operational Panel members have commented that Neighbourhood Police have taken information around activities in specific locations in order to include

- in Police patrols. This has included disrupting a hotel as a place for meetings between young women and older men by paying time and attention to Licencing compliance issues, and taking addresses of known associates for enquiries within a recent investigation.
- 5.92. A suggestion of location management given at a recent schools workshop is for school gate CCTV with public notices. Any potential perpetrator will know that their movements could be caught on camera.
- 5.93. The January meeting of the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel was evidenced by that fact that all reported missing episodes had involved young people already on the Child Sexual Exploitation Tracker. Although this is not always the case, data from the Operational Panel proves the strong association. Operational Panel minutes record effective co-operation between Police and Children's Safeguarding Services, for example regarding a young person who was reported missing from a foster placement 12 times in six days. However, the Children's Services audit has commented that the child sexual exploitation risk associated with Missing has not always been quickly recognised by practitioners.
- 5.94. An analytical report on Children Missing from Home and Care has not been received by the LSCB since March 2010. A Protocol and Guidance was presented in March 2011, and Missing Young People is now incorporated with the Strategy. The LSCB's Outcomes Framework includes Police data on the number of children and young people missing from home for more than 24 hours, and percentage of children missing who had an independent return interview within 72 hours of return. There were 237 Missing reports in 2013-14. More strategic intelligence could be generated by combining analysis of Missing Children data with data for child sexual exploitation.
- 5.95. According to the Protocol, when a child returns or is returned home Police will always carry out a Safe and Well check. A more in-depth Return Home Interview should also be conducted, to try to understand the issues leading to the missing episode, deal with any harm that resulted, and look at how future missing episodes can be prevented. This may of course include risk of, or actual, child sexual exploitation, so is an important area of practice for identification and protection. Return home interviews are to be conducted by a social worker when a young person is open to Children's Safeguarding Services or an independent advocate if they are a child in care or a child not open to Safeguarding Services. However, the allocation and conduct of return home interviews is under review, and themes and patterns are not yet collated through the Operational Panel. The five secondary schools who returned the schools safeguarding audit all reported that they had procedures in place for responding to absenteeism, for example 'Key staff allocated to any high risk students who daily monitor and respond to absence from school'. Education Welfare has had representation at the Operational Panel, providing a link with schools around absenteeism issues and children leaving school rolls.
- 5.96. Of the 38 young people on the Child Sexual Exploitation Tracker over the last 14 months, eight were children in care. Three of these were young people

placed in the Borough by other authorities, two at the same private children's residential home in the Borough.

- 5.97. Of the eight young people in care, four of these were assessed at Risk Level 3, and two of these were young people from RBWM both of whom were on Section 20 Care Orders, that is, with agreement of parents.
- 5.98. Child Protection Plans and Operational Panel discussions identify the need for intervention with young people, and also with parents, to reduce risks identified through the Indicator Tool or a Children's Social Care assessment
- 5.99. Challenges include:
- Ever developing communications technology and social media.
 - Resistance in young people to recognising risks or changing risky behaviours.
 - Parents understanding of complexity of grooming processes.
 - Dangerous and manipulative behaviour by perpetrators.
- 5.100. Hence there needs to be capacity and capability within the multi-agency system to delivery this type of support skilfully and persistently over time. Evidence from Child Protection Plans and the Operational Panel show that a number of workers or agencies are providing some of this type of support to young people:
- Community Police woman.
 - Police Engagement Officer.
 - DAAT Young Person's Worker.
 - Sexual Health Service.
 - Social Worker.
 - Youth Offending Team.
- 5.101. The willingness and collaborative working through the Operational Panel might be described as 'pitching in' rather than any more formal arrangement. Intervention may be fragmented with related issues such as sexual risk taking, grooming, e-safety, and self-esteem picked up by different workers for whom child sexual exploitation is a lesser part of their job, and a small throughput of cases may mean that specific child sexual exploitation expertise is never developed. Should awareness raising and early identification of child sexual exploitation begin to make an impact on what can be reasonably assumed to be significant under-reporting, the current level of capability and capacity in the agencies may not be sustainable. Also, the ability to respond appropriately and flexibly to young people's needs might be compromised by individual agency's referral criteria and thresholds; an example of this highlighted in other nationally published reports is the threshold for Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services at tier 3.
- 5.102. Thames Valley Police have a small child sexual exploitation team, which provides one Police Liaison Officer for the East of Berkshire. This is a small resource, but one that can supply support to young people from early identification through investigation, prosecution, and witness support. There were some good examples discussed at the Operational Panel of joint working

between the Liaison Officer and other agencies, for example conducting joint visits or making introductions to new workers.

- 5.103. Windsor and Maidenhead Youth Counselling Service provides support from two venues for young people aged 12-25, accessible afternoons and evenings, counselling support to child sexual exploitation survivors regarding issues such as relationships, sexual abuse, post traumatic stress, and self harm. This is the local authority's investment in Child Adolescent and Mental Health Services tier 1 and 2.
- 5.104. Children's Services are providing a short term Coordinator post, providing support for high risk cases and undertaking some of the awareness raising work required.

Key line of enquiry eight: Commissioning

Are commissioning arrangements effectively meeting the wide range of needs of children and young people affected by child sexual exploitation?

Conclusion: effective commissioning arrangements have yet to be developed.

- 5.105. Currently there is no commission for a service to support children and young people who are at risk or have suffered child sexual exploitation. Some current contracts, for example for Windsor and Maidenhead Youth and Community Counselling Service, may be able to deliver some areas of support in relation to child sexual exploitation, but could not be specifically required to do so through current contracting arrangements, for example, if there were a sudden increase in identified child sexual exploitation as a result of Police investigations.
- 5.106. The wide range of needs of children and young people affected by child sexual exploitation are spread amongst practitioners represented at the Operational Panel. For example, in one case for which there was a Child Protection Plan with risk of child sexual exploitation as the principal issue, elements of direct work with a young woman on child sexual exploitation issues was taken up at various points by the Social Worker, Police Engagement Officer, DAAT Young Person's Worker, and the DASH Charity's children and young people's service. In other cases, child sexual exploitation issues were tackled by a Community Police Woman, the Youth Offending Service, and the Sexual Health Service. Any or all of these interventions may have been of good quality, but this case illustrates the ad hoc and possibly fragmented nature of child sexual exploitation support to young people. Practitioners are using expertise developed outside child sexual exploitation, Police Child Sexual Exploitation Team excepted, albeit in related areas of practice, and may not have the through-put of child sexual exploitation issues to develop specific skills and knowledge base.
- 5.107. Reports published nationally, such as Rochdale and Rotherham, stress the benefits of a dedicated service that could provide a number of elements:
- Services to provide some stability to young people caught up in child sexual exploitation, such as access to housing, employment or training,

mental health or drug and alcohol support and to build longer term supportive relationships that will allow further intervention.

- Direct work on risky behaviours, vulnerability to grooming etc directly related to child sexual exploitation.
- Support through any investigation and prosecution of perpetrators, including support as a witness.
- Therapeutic support to come to recover and come to terms with what has happened.

5.108. Currently only the Thames Valley Police Child Sexual Exploitation Team can provide on-going support across all these areas. However, it is a very small resource covering a wide geographical area, and for some young people there may be an issue with engaging with Police Officers, particularly if exploitation is unrecognised or there is involvement with offending. Child sexual exploitation support projects in other parts of the country, for example Risky Business in Rotherham, Phoenix in Manchester, are based on, or include, a youth work outreach model.

5.109. Such work can be longer term as young people may not be able to recognise the control that perpetrators have over them or the exploitative nature of their relationship, and therefore may be resistant to the efforts of statutory agencies to intervene. In addition, investigations and criminal prosecutions may take considerable time to complete, and may be extremely stressful for child sexual exploitation victims.

5.110. The Strategy contains an action for scoping and commissioning a service for children, young people and parents affected by child sexual exploitation. This would be based on a business case informed by monitoring data collated through the Strategic Group, with working assumptions made about future levels of capacity that may be needed. Demand for support services could increase steadily as professional and community awareness of risk grows, or demand could spike should Police investigations uncover previously unknown networks of victims and perpetrators.

Key line of enquiry nine: Disruption activities

How effective is the local authority and its partners in identifying and disrupting the activities of those perpetrators engaged in child sexual exploitation and in taking legal action against them?

Conclusion – while there has been some disruption of activity possibly related to risk of child sexual exploitation, the range of disruption activities available have yet to be tested through a full investigation and prosecution.

5.111. The Operational Panel routinely discuss and record associates who may be friends or family, other young people on the Child Sexual Exploitation Tracker, potential victims, or potential child sexual exploitation perpetrators. In a recently opened investigation, members of the Operational Panel provided a number of pieces of information to the Police that may assist with identifying a key location and the perpetrators of abuse. In relation to another case, Police agreed to provide Community Wardens with a photograph of an adult causing

concern, and Community Wardens were to provide the Police with any intelligence on this man in return.

- 5.112. Three Child Abduction Warning Notices have been issued in the past year by Police to deter adults of concern from associating with specified young people. Abduction Notices require a statement from parents or Parental Responsibility holders; difficulties in obtaining the agreement of Parental Responsibility holders have prevented two further notices being issued.
- 5.113. Police have an ongoing programme of visits to local hotels and houses of multiple occupation, to raise awareness of proprietors and also to show a Police presence that may deter the use of the premises for child sexual exploitation.
- 5.114. Police report a very constructive relationship with the local authority's Licensing Team. This means effective information sharing and agreed actions to scrutinise licensing compliance of hotels, taxis, and fast food suppliers as a disruption tactic. In one instance, a local hotel was identified as a venue being visited by young women and older men. Police used their powers to scrutinise compliance with licensing conditions, and have included the hotel on the patrol routes of Neighbourhood Police Officers for spot checks.
- 5.115. Though a member of the Strategic Group rather than the Operational Panel, the National Probation Service representative is ready to pick up any issues regarding dangerous adults who may be Probation clients. He gave an example from a neighbouring area where an offender on licensed release from prison was recalled because of a number of concerns including risk of child sexual exploitation. Although associates of at risk young people are identified, and some of these are adults causing concern, the Operational Panel has yet to provide Probation with a list of these adults as a matter of routine.
- 5.116. As yet, there have been no prosecutions of perpetrators of child sexual exploitation from Windsor and Maidenhead, and there has been no engagement with the Crown Prosecution Service about issues such as evidence gathering, supporting victims as witnesses, or dealing with an offence committed by a young person whilst in a coercive situation. One young person placed in a Maidenhead Children's Home from another authority is a witness in a child sexual exploitation trial elsewhere.
- 5.117. Thames Valley Sexual Assault Referral Centre (SARC) at Slough is a Police and Health partnership, providing forensic examination so that evidence can be collected for use in the investigation of crime, and care of the victim to minimise the risk of subsequent physical and mental difficulties and promote recovery.

Key line of enquiry ten: Statutory powers

To what extent are the local authority and its partners using the full breadth and depth of their statutory powers to protect children and young people at risk of, or experiencing, child sexual exploitation?

Conclusion: statutory partners are using general powers to co-operate and share information to safeguard child, however use of the full breadth and depth of these will be tested through investigation and prosecution.

5.118. For the local authority, this area of enquiry is being addressed by a report from Internal Audit.

5.119. Partners within the Royal Borough have a range of statutory powers on which they can draw to tackle child sexual exploitation that include:

- General duties such as Local Authority's General duty to safeguard and promote children's welfare under s.17 Children Act 1989 or to make Child Protection enquiries under s.47 Children Act 1989, and the Organisational Duties set for LSCB partners in Chapter 2 of Working Together 2013.
- The Crime and Disorder Act 1998 Section 115 provides powers for a person to disclose to a relevant authority information to assist in reducing and preventing crime and disorder.
- There are civil orders provided by the Sexual Offences Act 2013, Sexual Offence Protection Orders imposed by a court on an offender convicted of a relevant sexual or violent offence; and Risk of Sexual Harm Orders imposed on an offender who has demonstrated behaviour suggesting that there may be a risk of committing a sexual offence against children.
- Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1094 s.19 enables the seizure of mobile phones for interrogating telephone records.
- Housing Act 2004 provides powers to Local Authorities through the licencing of houses of multiple occupation.
- Anti-Social Behaviour Orders – Crime and Disorder Act 1997 may be used to prohibit entry into a specific area.
- Multi-Agency Public Protection Arrangements - Criminal Justice Act 2003, require the local criminal justice agencies and other bodies to protect the public, including previous victims of crime, from serious harm by sexual and violent offenders.
- Child Abduction notices under section 2 of the Child Abduction Act 1984 can be used to disrupt contact between an adult and a child or young person where the child is aged 16 or under.
- The Regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000 (RIPA) through which a Magistrate can approve the undertaking covert surveillance, use of covert human intelligence sources or acquiring communications data.
- The Licensing Act 2003 can be used to prevent children and young people gaining access to adult venues such as pubs and clubs where they may be especially vulnerable to grooming.

6 REFERENCES

6.1 A number of references have been used to inform the review:

- Becket, H. (2013) *CSE: A View from Northern Ireland*, in Melrose, M. and Pearce, J. (eds.) (2013) *Critical Perspectives on Child Sexual Exploitation and Related Trafficking*.
- Casey, L. (2015) *Report of Inspection of Rotherham Metropolitan Borough Council*, Department for Communities and Local Government.
- Coffey, A. (2014) *Real Voices: Child Sexual Exploitation in Greater Manchester*.
- Cohen, L. and Felson, M. (1979) *Social Change and Crime Rate Trends : A Routine Activity Approach*, *American Sociological Review*, 44 (4), pp. 588–608
- Department for Education (2009) *Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation; supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children*
- Department for Education and Employment (2000) *Sex and Relationship Education*
- Ofsted (2014) *The Sexual Exploitation of Children: It Couldn't Happen Here, Could it?*
- RBWM (2014) *Children's Services Audit of Children and Young People at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation*



Windsor and Maidenhead
*LOCAL SAFEGUARDING
CHILDREN BOARD*

**MISSING CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE
AND CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION
STRATEGY
2015-2016**

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Frequently used acronyms

CiC	Children/young people in Care*
CP	Child protection
CSE	Child Sexual Exploitation
DfE	Department for Education
RBWM	The Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead
W&M LSCB	Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children/young people Board

** For the purpose of this document, children/young people in care refers to children/young people who are voluntarily accommodated as well as those who are on a Care Order. Care leavers are referred to as young people moving into adulthood.*

1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This document sets out how, through partnership working, statutory services in the Royal Borough will work together to implement a strategy for safeguarding and protecting the welfare of our children/young people from child sexual exploitation. We recognise that there are clear links between children/young people and young people who go missing and child sexual exploitation. We have, therefore, agreed to join up our approaches in these areas to ensure a consistent and appropriate response.
- 1.2 Our success at protecting our children/young people is dependent on how well we assess the risk in our community and challenge ourselves and the community to acknowledge the risks. We also need to build young people's awareness and provide them with accessible responsive services at the right time and in the right place to counter risk.
- 1.3 To be effective, our response requires:
 - A multi-agency approach, including non-statutory partners.
 - A whole community approach, including parents, carers, families, children/young people and young people.
 - A due regard to equality and diversity issues.
- 1.4 This multi-agency strategy draws on the statutory and other guidance relating to children/young people missing education, children/young people missing from home or care and child sexual exploitation, see Appendix 1.

2 DEFINITIONS

- 2.1 This strategy covers all children/young people and young people:
 - Living in the boundaries of Windsor and Maidenhead.
 - In the care of RBWM and placed within children's homes or with foster parents, either our own or independent, within the local authority boundaries.
 - In the care of RBWM who are living with parents or relatives and who are subject to a Care Order.
 - In the care of other local authorities but placed within RBWM in independent residential children's homes or foster homes.

Missing

- 2.2 For the purposes of this strategy, Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children/young people Board has adopted the definitions agreed by the Association of Chief Police Officers and set out in the Thames Valley Police and Children's Services Authorities joint protocol which came into effect in August 2014:
 - Missing – anyone whose whereabouts cannot be established and where the circumstances are out of character or the context suggests the person may be subject of crime or at risk of harm to themselves or another.
 - Absent – a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be.

Child Sexual Exploitation

- 2.3 Windsor and Maidenhead Local Safeguarding Children/young people Board has adopted the definition of sexual exploitation that is set out in statutory guidance.

“Sexual exploitation of children/young people and young people under 18 involves exploitative situations, contexts and relationships where young people (or a third person or persons) receive ‘something’ (e.g. food, accommodation, drugs, alcohol, cigarettes, affection, gifts, money) as a result of them performing, and/or another or others performing on them, sexual activities. Child sexual exploitation can occur through the use of technology without the child’s immediate recognition; for example being persuaded to post sexual images on the Internet/mobile phones without immediate payment or gain. In all cases, those exploiting the child/young person have power over them by virtue of their age, gender, intellect, physical strength and/or economic or other resources. Violence, coercion and intimidation are common, involvement in exploitative relationships being characterised in the main by the child/young person’s limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability”.

3 MISSING CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE AND YOUNG PEOPLE CONTEXT

- 3.1 Historically, statutory agencies have often separated out and distinguished between children/young people missing from education and children/young people missing from home or care and have operated two discrete policies and protocols. Whilst the issues within each of these two areas can be different, both often present significant safeguarding risks. In addition, it is increasingly recognised that a child/young person missing from education can be a critical early warning sign of wider safeguarding risks.
- 3.2 Assessing situations such as missing children/young people goes beyond the simplicity of the actual event and needs a much more sophisticated approach. The reasons for children/young people going missing are often varied and complex and cannot be viewed in isolation from their home circumstances or their experiences of care.
- 3.3 The term ‘Children/young people Missing from Education’ (CME) refers to all children/young people of compulsory school age who are neither on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise, e.g. privately or in alternative provision, and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time, usually four weeks or more. Councils have statutory duties relating to the provision of education and the safeguarding and welfare of children/young people and young people. Children/young people can fall out of the education system because they:
- Are permanently excluded from school.
 - Fail to start appropriate provision and therefore never enter the system or fail to complete a transition between phases or providers particularly after moving to new a local authority area.
 - Stop attending due to unofficial exclusions, extended holidays abroad or long absence/illness.

- Live a life style which involves travelling.
 - Are withdrawn by their parents.
- 3.4 Children/young people who go missing may place themselves and others at risk and each missing episode is potentially serious. When a 16 or 17 year old runs away or goes missing, they are no less vulnerable than younger children/young people and are equally at risk, particularly of sexual exploitation or involvement with gangs. Every 'missing' episode should attract proper attention from the professionals involved, who must collaborate to ensure a consistent and coherent response is given to the child/young person on his/her return. Children/young people missing from care are particularly vulnerable.
- 3.5 The focus on the number of occasions where a child/young person goes missing is not as important as why they go missing and the increased risks they face when they do. Any kind of assessment must look at any factors which may 'push' or 'pull' a child/young person into going missing and/or sexual exploitation. 'Push' factors that may push a child/young person away from home include not feeling accepted in the environment, family breakdown and arguments, substance misuse by family members and new family members moving in. The factors that 'pull' young people from home can include staying out with peers, boyfriends or girlfriends, becoming involved in drugs and alcohol, being groomed and sexually exploited or wanting freedom and independence.
- 3.6 Statistics show that a child/young person associated with organised sexual exploitation can go missing between 100 to 200 times which shows that interventions with these children/young people should be a high priority. Agencies need to be as aware of the potential risks to children/young people who are absent, as opposed to reported as missing. This cohort can attract less attention because they are only absent for a short period of time or they are absent but their whereabouts is known.
- 3.7 According to the Home Office, an estimated 140,000 young people under 18 years of age go missing each year. Based on self-reported behaviour, an estimated 100,000 children/young people under 16 years of age run away overnight from home or care each year in the UK, over two-thirds of these cases are not reported to the police (Rees and Lee, 2005:24).
- 3.8 An estimated two-thirds of all missing persons reports to the police concern children/young people and young people under 18 years of age (NPIA, 2011:16). People in the 15-17 year old age group went missing most frequently, with this group making up 36 per cent of all missing reports (NPIA, 2011:16). Female children/young people are more likely to go missing than males. In adults, men are more likely to go missing than women (NPIA, 2011:17).
- 3.9 In a sample of missing cases from the London area, 85% were UK nationals but a further 45 nationalities were represented in the sample. 60% were white European, 24% were of Afro-Caribbean ethnic origin, 6% Asian, 2% of mixed race and 6% 'other' (Tarling and Burrows, 2004:19).

3.10 RBWM had 44 missing episodes reported to the Police since September 2014, of which nine were categorised as absent rather than missing.

4 CHILD SEXUAL EXPLOITATION CONTEXT

4.1 Barnardos has identified three different models of child sexual exploitation which agencies across the Royal Borough are using:

- Abuse Model 1: Inappropriate relationships. This usually involves one abuser who has inappropriate power – physical, emotional or financial – or control over a young person. The young person may believe they have a genuine friendship or loving relationship with their abuser.
- Abuse Model 2: Boyfriend Model and Peer Exploitation. The abuser grooms the victim by striking up a normal relationship with them, giving them gifts and meeting in cafes/fast food outlets or shopping centres. A seemingly consensual sexual relationship develops but later turns abusive. Victims are required to attend parties and sleep with multiple men and threatened with violence if they try to seek help. They may also be required to introduce their friends as new victims.
- Abuse Model 3: Organised exploitation and Trafficking. Young people are passed through networks, possibly over geographical distances, between towns and cities where they may be forced or coerced into sexual activity with multiple men. Often this occurs at ‘sex parties’ and young people who are involved may be used as agents to recruit others into the network. Some of this activity is described as serious organised crime and can involve the organised buying and selling of young people by perpetrators.

4.2 A point to note is that organised exploitation varies from spontaneous networking between groups of perpetrators to more serious organised crime where young people are effectively ‘sold’. These activities are described as ‘internal trafficking’ or ‘trafficking for child sexual exploitation’.

4.3 The extent to which young people experiencing any of the three models described above can be victim to extreme levels of intimidation and physical and sexual violence cannot be underestimated. Victims of exploitation may also be used as agents to recruit other children/young people and young people. In some cases a young person may be a perpetrator and a victim of child sexual exploitation.

4.4 Sexual exploitation can be group and gang associated. Group associated sexual exploitation refers to the number of perpetrators involved in the violence and abuse. Gangs associated abuse is “sexual exploitation that involves one or multiple perpetrators who are themselves gang associated and where the child sexual exploitation takes place as a form of introduction or inter-gang related violence (OCC 2012).

4.5 Grooming using the Internet and mobile technology is also becoming increasingly common. Along with a significant risk in the use of mobile phones, including Bluetooth technology, perpetrators target children/young people and young people through these sites, alongside grooming and exploitation through

texts and picture messaging. Child Exploitation and Online Protection found that almost a third of children/young people in their study admitted to having met someone whom they had previously only met online.

- 4.6 The prevalence of child sexual exploitation is difficult to ascertain with any accuracy due to:
- Low levels of reporting by children/young people.
 - Variable levels of awareness and confusion around definition.
 - Inadequate intelligence gathering and information sharing.
 - Inconsistent recording.
- 4.7 Existing estimates are that there are 1875 cases of grooming (CEOP 2011), 2409 confirmed victims over a 14 month period with 16,500 at risk (OCC 2012), 3000 child sexual exploitation service users (NWG 2010) and 2379 offenders (CEOP 2011). The figures build year on year and it is likely that these figures have now grown considerably and represent 'the tip of the iceberg'.
- 4.8 The majority of victims were identified as female though it is important to recognise that there is likely to be an even greater under-representation of males due to difficulties in recognising sexual exploitation amongst boys and young men. The average age when concerns are first identified is between 13-15 years although children/young people as young as 10 have been identified.
- 4.9 Victims are from a range of ethnicities though the vast majority are white. CEOP's strategic overview found that 61% are white, 33% unknown, 3% Asian and 1% black (CEOP 2010).
- 4.10 Data available locally for 2013 and 2014 shows:

Table 1: Local child sexual exploitation data at Levels 1, 2 and 3

	Level 1	Level 2	Level 3	Total
Dec 2013 – October 2014	18 <i>Ages 13 – 17</i>	8 <i>Ages 13 – 17</i>	5 <i>Ages 15 – 17</i>	31

5 WINDSOR AND MAIDENHEAD ARRANGEMENTS

- 5.1 In July 2014, the LSCB confirmed child sexual exploitation as a priority in its business plan for the next two years. It is committed to ensuring there is an increased awareness of emerging threats to children/young people and young people through, for example, sexual exploitation, child trafficking, modern day slavery and female genital mutilation, together with developing and implementing strategies and policies.
- 1.2 The Windsor and Maidenhead Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group is a Sub-Group of the LSCB and is co-chaired by the Director of Children's Services and the Local Police Commander. The Group comprises senior managers from RBWM, Thames Valley Police and other key partners.

This is supported by a Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel that meets monthly to consider individual cases of children/young people and young people at risk of missing and child sexual exploitation, see Appendix 2 for terms of reference.

- 5.3 RBWM has a range of processes and procedures to limit the opportunity for children/young people to go missing when they fall out of the education system, see Appendix 3:
- Identifying and locating children/young people missing education through truancy sweeps.
 - Monitoring school attendance and auditing school registers, wherever possible.
 - Maintaining and checking a central register of children/young people missing from education.
 - Maintaining and checking a central register of children/young people educated by their parents.
 - Identifying children/young people who are 'travelling'.
 - Liaising closely with the School Admissions Team to monitor children/young people new to the area or moving between schools to ensure they are tracked until they start education.
- 5.4 In order to reduce the incidence of children/young people going missing and preventing suffering harm, RBWM and its partners has effective support and interventions in place, including good information sharing, multi-agency assessment/planning and performance management, see Appendix 4. Interventions include a consideration of risks for each individual child/young person and a focus on reducing repeat missing episodes. Working in partnership with children/young people and their families is key part of this process and children's views and concerns will be taken seriously by all agencies. All interventions should be informed by return interviews that explicitly detail the intelligence on the reasons for the missing episode.
- 5.5 The principles underpinning our agreed multi-agency response to combatting, countering the sexual exploitation of our children/young people are:
- Sexual exploitation includes sexual, physical and emotional abuse, as well as, in some cases, neglect.
 - Children/young people do not make informed choices to enter or remain in sexual exploitation, but do so from coercion, enticement, manipulation or desperation.
 - Children/young people under 16 years of age cannot consent to sexual activity.
 - Sexual activity with children/young people under the age of 13 is statutory rape.
 - Sexually exploited children/young people should be treated as victims of abuse, not as offenders.
 - Children/young people under 16 years of age will always be dealt with as actual or potential victims.
 - Between the ages of 16 and 18, consideration may be given, in very limited circumstances and where all other options have failed, to the use of criminal justice action to protect a child/young person.

- Many sexually exploited children/young people have difficulty distinguishing between their own choices around sex and sexuality and the sexual activities they are coerced into.
- The primary law enforcement effort must be against the coercers and sex abusers, who may be adult, but could also be the child's peers or young people who are older than the child.
- Sexually exploited children/young people are children/young people in need of services under the Children Act 1989 and 2004. They are also children/young people in need of protection.
- A multi-agency network or planning meeting/discussion should take place for all children/young people considered at risk of sexual exploitation.

5.6 The partners comprising the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group and Operational Panel categorise concerns around sexual exploitation under three levels. The levels ensure consensus and consistent understanding of the risk posed to children/young people.

- Level 1: Children/young people where there is no current information that they are at risk of child sexual exploitation but who have previously been linked to child sexual exploitation and/or are displaying the warning signs, such as missing episodes.
- Level 2: Children/young people where there is information that suggests a current risk of child sexual exploitation but no disclosures or evidence of child sexual exploitation. There will be a higher number of risk indicators present. The cases are likely to have been considered under Section 47.
- Level 3: Children/young people where there has been a disclosure of sexual offences perpetrated against them or where an active investigation is taking place due to corroborated intelligence or evidence regarding child sexual exploitation.

5.7 Thames Valley Police covers the local authority area and the whole of Berkshire which enables them to ensure a level of consistency in decision making and responses to missing children/young people, child sexual exploitation referrals and issues.

5.8 The pan-Berkshire child protection procedures were updated in July 2014 to include additional risk assessment tools in relation to child sexual exploitation. These are now embedded in the work of Children's Safeguarding Services and are used in relation to all children/young people at risk of child sexual exploitation.

5.9 RBWM is particularly conscious of the risks associated with children/young people in care and out of Borough placements. Our Fostering Strategy is driving the recruitment of additional in-house foster carers in order to reduce the reliance on out of Borough placements.

5.10 The LSCB multi-agency training programme includes courses on child sexual exploitation and all staff across partner agencies have been issued with the Step by Step Guide for Frontline Practitioners issued by the Department for Education in 2012. National research shows that responses to child sexual exploitation overwhelmingly focus on dealing with the consequences of child sexual exploitation after it has occurred and therefore the LSCB multi-agency

training will give greater focus to prevention. The training will also incorporate good practice and learning from case examples specific to individual agencies.

- 5.11 The role of education providers and schools/colleges/training providers is essential to ensuring early intervention and 'Chelsea's Choice' has been made available to all secondary schools in the Borough to support them in understanding and addressing the issue with students.

6 IMPLEMENTATION, ACCOUNTABILITY AND MONITORING

- 6.1 The action plan, see Appendix 5, covers:

- Prevention – public confidence and awareness.
- Protection – protecting, supporting, safeguarding victims and managing risk.
- Prosecution – effective investigations and bringing offenders to justice.

- 6.2 Delivery against the action plan and data on activity and performance is monitored by the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group. The LSCB Monitoring and Evaluation Sub-Group can be requested to carry out multi-agency case audits where child sexual exploitation is a feature. Individual cases are tracked monthly by the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel and progress reported by exception to the Strategic Group.

- 6.3 The Chair of the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group reports bi-monthly to the main LSCB Board and produces an annual report that is incorporated into the LSCB Annual Report.

Appendix 1: Statutory and other guidance relating to missing children/young people and child sexual exploitation

General guidance

- Working Together to Safeguard Children (2013) clarifies the core legal requirements on individuals and organisations to keep children/young people safe, including the legal requirements that health services, social workers, police, schools and other organisations who work with children/young people must follow. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/working-together-to-safeguard-children>
- Joint statutory guidance, DCLG and DfE 'Provision of Accommodation for 16 and 17 year old young people who may be homeless and/or require accommodation' (April 2010) <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/provision-of-accommodation-for-16-and-17-year-olds-who-may-be-homeless-and-or-require-accommodation>

Children/young people missing from education

- Children missing education - statutory guidance for local authorities, DfE, November 2013:
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/350737/CE_guidance_final_template_CB.pdf
- Related legislation on school attendance:
 - Education Act 1996 (section 7, 8, 14 & 19)
 - Education Act 2002 (section 21)
 - Education and Inspections Act 2006 (section 4 & 38)
 - The Education (Pupil Registration) (England) Regulations 2006

Missing children/young people guidance, strategy and police resources

- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care, DfE, January 2014
https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/307867/Statutory_Guidance_-_Missing_from_care_3_.pdf
- Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) guidance on the Management, Recording and Investigation of Missing Persons
<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/crime/2011/201103CRIIMP02.pdf>
- Missing Children and Adults strategy (2011)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/missing-children-and-adults-strategy>
- Child Exploitation and Online Protection Centre (CEOP) website
<http://www.ceop.police.uk/>

Prevention and supporting missing children/young people and their families

- Railway Children Reach model, which looks at before, during and after incidents (RMFHC) <http://www.railwaychildren.org.uk/our-solution/where-we-work/uk/reach-model/>
- ChildLine (telephone: 0800 1111) <http://www.childline.org.uk/pages/home.aspx>
- Safe@Last, working with and on behalf of children/young people at risk through running away <http://www.safeatlast.org.uk/>
- What to do if a child goes missing: a guide for those working in education and youth work (2013) from the Children's Society
http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/pro_guide_to_runaways_online_versionfinal_0.pdf
- What to do if your child goes missing: practical advice for parents and carers (2013) from the Children's Society
http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/runaways_parents_guide_2013_final_six-page.pdf
- Developing local safeguarding responses to young runaways. Planning guide for professionals (2013) from the Children's Society
<http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/what-we-do/resources>
- Missing People research: reports on various related issues
<https://www.missingpeople.org.uk/missing-people/about-the-issue/missing-people-research>

Child sexual exploitation

- Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation (2009)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance>
- Tackling child sexual exploitation action plan (2011)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/tackling-child-sexual-exploitation-action-plan>
- What to do if you suspect a child is being sexually exploited. A step-by-step guide for frontline practitioners (June 2012)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/what-to-do-if-you-suspect-a-child-is-being-sexually-exploited>
- National Working Group website, a UK network of over 1000 practitioners working on the issue of child sexual exploitation (CSE) and trafficking within the UK. includes relevant resources for practitioners www.nationalworkinggroup.org
- Parents Against Child Sexual Exploitation (PACE) <http://www.paceuk.info/>
- I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world: The Office of the Children's Commissioner's Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups, 2012
http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/force_download.php?fp=%2Fclient_assets%2Fcp%2Fpublication%2F636%2FFINAL_REPORT_FOR_WEBSITE_Child_Sexual_Exploitation_in_Gangs_and_Groups_Inquiry_Interim_Report_21_11_12.pdf

- Independent Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Rotherham 1997-2013, DfE, 2014
http://www.rotherham.gov.uk/downloads/file/1407/independent_inquiry_cse_in_rotherham

Child trafficking

- Safeguarding Children Who May Have Been Trafficked Guidance (2011)
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-who-may-have-been-trafficked-practice-guidance>
- NSPCC Child Trafficking Advice Centre (CTAC)
http://www.nspcc.org.uk/Inform/research/ctail/ctail_wda84866.html
- London Borough of Hillingdon resources for trafficked children/young people at
<http://www.hillingdon.gov.uk/article/16450/Child-trafficking-sub-group>
- On the Safe Side: Principle of Safe Accommodation of Child Victims of Trafficking (ECPAT UK, 2011) link available here:
http://www.ecpat.org.uk/sites/default/files/on_the_safe_side.pdf
- Conducting good return interviews for young people who run away (2014) from the Children's Society
http://www.childrenssociety.org.uk/sites/default/files/tcs/8pp_a5_runaway_return_interviews_final.pdf

Appendix 2: Terms of reference for Missing Children/young people and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group and Operational Panel

Group	Missing Person and Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group
Joint Chairs	Alison Alexander – Director of Children’s Services RBWM Kate Ford – Superintendent LPD Windsor and Maidenhead
Membership of Group	Health – BHFT - Director of Nursing TBC Health – CCG – Director of Nursing LSCB– Business Manager Fiona Betts Probation – John Ennis Additional people may be invited to join the group or provide specialist input when required.
Aim and Purpose of the Group	To reduce the risks to children/young people vulnerable to missing and sexual exploitation through multi agency and collaborative working.
Objectives of group.	To develop and implement a multi agency strategy and action plan for addressing child sexual exploitation which focuses on: Prevention, Protection and Prosecution <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To identify and coordinate roles and responsibilities of relevant agencies. • To identify the training needs of the wider children’s workforce in relation to missing persons and child sexual exploitation. • To oversee the development of strategic and operational work to address missing and child sexual exploitation in RBWM. • To establish a clear referral pathway for child sexual exploitation. • To build links to the other relevant groups: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • LSCB and Sub Groups • Community Safety Partnership • To consider actions in line with recommendations from national reports.
Relationship of this group to other groups / meetings	Progress will be reported to the LSCB after six months and to other groups as required including Children and Young People’s Partnership, Community Safety Partnership, Tasking and Coordination Group. The links to Referral and Assessment in Children’s Safeguarding Services, Sexual Health Services, School Nurses, Health Visitors and Head Teachers will need to be developed as part of the work programme of the group.
Resources.	Multi Agency representatives Staff time in agencies as driven by cases.

Frequency and location of group	Group to meet on a four weekly basis, to consider intelligence, referral sources, Training needs. Maidenhead based meeting.
Other key details	-
Date ToR agreed	Reviewed 14 Nov 2014.
Date to be reviewed	November 2015 or sooner if the work of the group necessitates this.

Group Missing Children/young people and Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel

Joint Chairs David Scott, Head of Education, Children's Services, Royal Borough of Windsor and Maidenhead (RBWM)
Emily Roberts, Neighbourhood Inspector, Thames Valley Police (TVP)

Membership of Group Representatives to be invited from
RBWM
Children's Services
- Early Help and First Response
- Early Help Youth Support Services
Community Safety
Education Welfare
Adult Social Care
TVP
- Child Abuse Investigation Unit
- Neighbourhood Teams
Health
- Children/young people in Care Nurse
- Sexual Health Adviser
- Berkshire Health Foundation Trust Named Nurse
Housing Options
Drug and Alcohol Team

Aim and Purpose of the Group To promote information sharing and partnership working between agencies to ensure that risks to children/young people who are missing and/or at risk of sexual exploitation are reduced

Objectives of the Group

Missing Children
Identify and share details of children/young people who are missing.
Identify potential risks and risk level.
Prioritise intervention.
Agree agency or multi agency responses where required.

Child Sexual Exploitation
Identify and share details of children/young people who are at risk of child sexual exploitation.
Identify potential risks and risk level.

Prioritise intervention.

Agree agency or multi agency responses where required.

Young People Approaching Adulthood

Identify young people approaching 18 years old who are at risk of sexual exploitation.

Pass concerns to Adult Safeguarding Services.

Evaluate Impact

Identify ways and report on impact of the Panel to inform improvement in practice.

Relationship of the Group to other Groups

To update the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Strategic Group quarterly on the work of the group and any potential issues

Links to Community Safety Partnership, Children and Young People's Partnership, Tasking and Coordination Group and the Local Safeguarding Children Board Prevention sub group

Resources

Multi Agency research for and attendance at meetings

Minute Taker and coordination of the meetings

Frequency, length and location of the meeting

Monthly meetings (second Thursday of the month at 11am)

Two hours

Town Hall, Maidenhead

Referral Processes

Minutes/actions to be provided within one week of the meeting

New referrals to the Panel to be provided preferably one week in advance.

Details of new referrals provided to members of the group at least within two working days of the Panel.

Emergency referrals can be brought and discussed at the Panel.

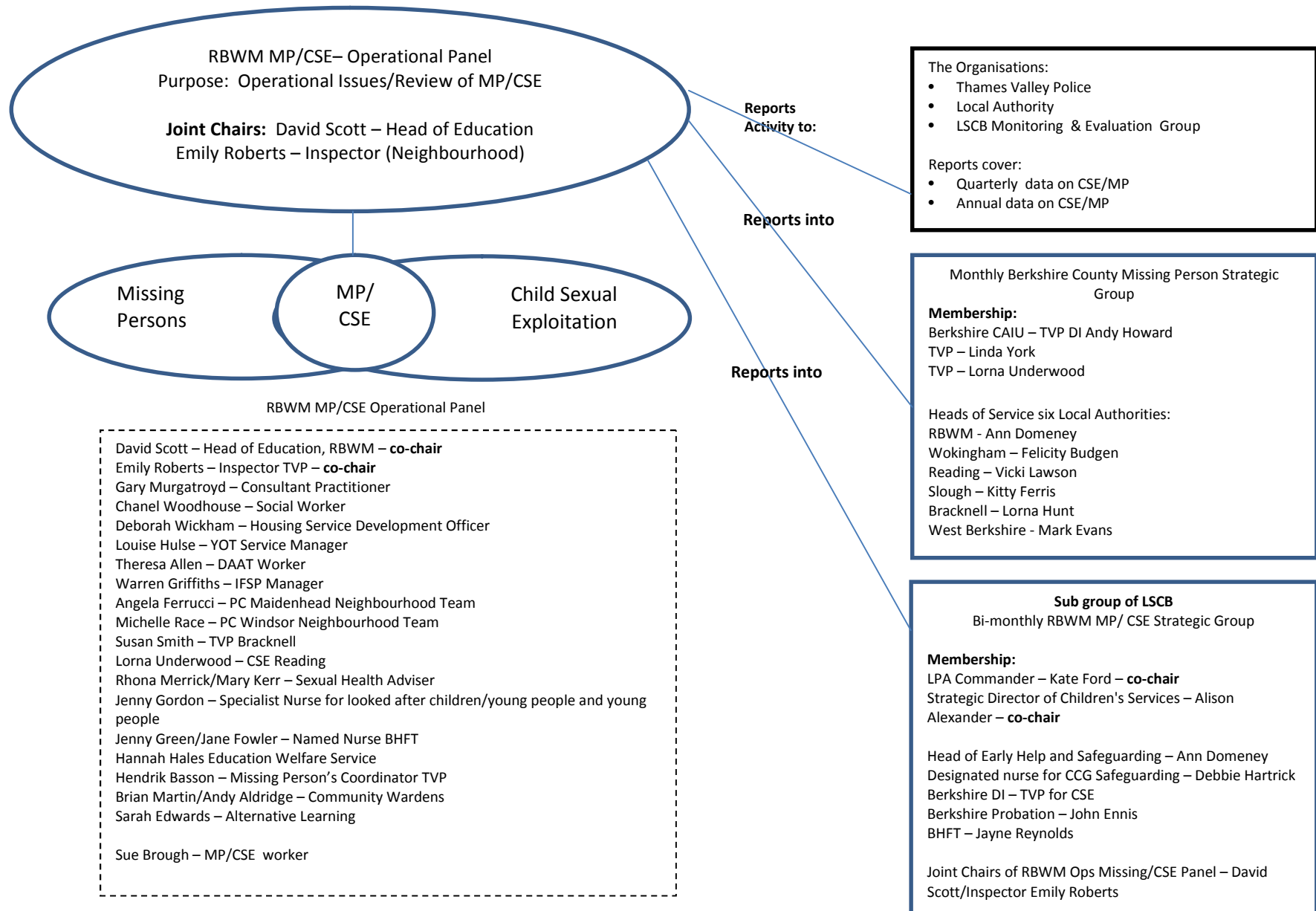
11 June 2014

Terms of Reference Agreed

Review Date

Annually (May 2015) or earlier at request of any agency

Pictorial view of the governance arrangements for the missing/child sexual exploitation strategic and operational panel



Appendix 3: Children Missing from Education (CME)

1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1 This guidance is intended to inform Local Authority officers, schools, governing bodies and other involved agencies about the policy and procedures to be followed in order to identify and maintain contact with children/young people missing education and current developments for identifying those at risk of going missing from education.
- 1.2 The term 'Children Missing from Education' (CME) refers to all children/young people of compulsory school age who are neither on a school roll, nor being educated otherwise, e.g. privately or in alternative provision, and who have been out of any educational provision for a substantial period of time, usually agreed as four weeks or more.

2 THE ROLE OF SCHOOLS

- 2.1 When a pupil is expected to join the school either at a normal time of starting, e.g. Nursery, Reception, Year 5, Year 7 or Year 9, or at any time and s/he does not arrive, the school should firstly try to make contact with the parents by telephone or letter. If after one week of constantly trying to make contact, there has been no success, the school should contact the School Admissions Team to find out if the child/young person has been registered elsewhere. If the child/young person is not registered somewhere else, after two weeks, the school should inform the Education Welfare Service who will follow the procedures for 'missing pupils'.
- 2.2 The pupil should not be removed from roll until the Education Welfare Officer has ascertained the pupil's whereabouts and safety and has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school or is being educated otherwise.

3 HOME EDUCATED CHILDREN

- 3.1 A register of children/young people being home educated by their parents is maintained by the Education Welfare Service in collaboration with the Royal Borough's Alternative Learning Provision – RISE.
- 3.2 The children/young people are tracked and monitored on a termly basis and contact is maintained with the parents by the Education Welfare Service.
- 3.3 In the event of a parent informing the school in writing that s/he is removing the child/young person to educate him/her at home, the school should, in the first instance, inform the Education Welfare Officer who will ensure that contact is made with the parents by letter, and the local procedures are put in place for monitoring the situation.

4 NOTIFICATION

- 4.1 The Education Welfare Service maintains a list of children/young people known to be missing from education. Any statutory or voluntary agency from within the borough should notify the Service if they identify any such child.

- 4.2 If a pupil is absent from school for a prolonged period other than agreed extended leave of absence or fails to return from a holiday on the date agreed with parents, the school should follow the normal procedures for investigating pupil absence, i.e. telephone calls, letters, invitations to meetings at the school etc. The matter should also be referred to the Education Welfare Officer.
- 4.3 The pupil should not be removed from the school roll until the Education Welfare Officer has made all reasonable attempts to ascertain the pupil's whereabouts and safety or has confirmed that the pupil is registered at another school or is being educated otherwise. Where a pupil has a statement of Special Educational Needs/Education, Health and Care Plan, the SEN team should also be notified.
- 4.4 If a pupil 'disappears' without any warning, the school should immediately notify the Education Welfare Service and the Head of Early Help and Safeguarding.
- 4.5 There are strict rules on when schools can delete pupils from their admissions register. These are outlined in Regulation 9 of the Education (Pupil Registration) Regulations 1995 as amended. When a pupil is deleted from the Admission register, the school must clearly indicate the date and the reason for the removal from roll. In the event of a pupil moving to another known school the name of the school and leaving date should be indicated in the releasing schools management information system. An electronic Common Transfer File (CTF) of the pupil's records should be generated and sent to the new school within 15 days via s2s. If a child/young person's name is removed from the school roll the Local Authority must be informed.

Appendix 4: Children/young people missing from home or care

1 REPORTING MISSING CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE

- 1.1 All professionals working with children/young people at risk of going missing should discuss the dangers of running away with the child/young person and, if appropriate, their family, notifying them about support services and helplines.

Concerns about immediate risk to a missing child

- 1.2 If a child/young person is at immediate risk this should be reported without delay to Thames Valley Police on 999, otherwise the Police should be informed by phoning 101. RBWM Children's Safeguarding Services should also be informed via the Referral and Assessment Team on 01628 683150. Out of hours this number will transfer to the Emergency Duty Team.

Concerns that a child/young person is missing from home

- 1.3 Parents and those with parental responsibility are normally expected to have undertaken the following basic measures to try to locate the missing child, if considered safe to do so. Anyone else who has care of a child/young person without parental responsibility should take all reasonable steps to locate the child/young person and ascertain their safety. Professionals working with families should support parents and carers in taking the following necessary steps:

- Search bedroom, accommodation, outbuildings and vehicles.
- Contact known friends and relatives where the child/young person may be.
- Visit locations that the child/young person is known to frequent, if it is possible.
- Calling or texting any mobile phone held by child/young person and leaving a message asking for contact.
- Contact with school or school friends to gather any available information regarding the child/young person's whereabouts.

- 1.4 At the point where a parent/person with parental responsibility considers the child/young person to be missing, they should inform the police without delay on 101.

- 1.5 If it comes to the attention of any agency that a child/young person is missing, they should check that the parents/carer have taken steps to try and locate the child/young person outlined above. They must advise the parent/carer of their need to report this matter to the police. If appropriate they also need to check that the matter is reported to the police and if necessary, follow this up by contacting the police to verify that the child/young person has been reported missing.

Concerns that a child/young person is missing from care

See Section 8, Additional Arrangements relating to Children in Care

- 1.6 When a child/young person in care goes missing it is the responsibility of the carer to undertake the steps outlined above. When the carer contacts the police, it is important that they make it clear to the police that they are reporting the child/young person as missing. It is the police decision as to whether a

child/young person is recorded as missing or absent. The carer should always ask for, and record, the Police Incident Number.

Reporting a child/young person missing to the police

- 1.7 When reporting a child/young person missing to the police, any relevant information that might help to find or support the child/young person should be shared, including:
- If there are any specific risks.
 - A description of the child/young person and the clothing they were wearing.
 - Any mobile phone numbers.
 - Whether or not the missing child/young person uses social media.
 - Details of the placing authority if outside of RBWM
 - Details of where the child/young person was last seen, when and with whom.
 - A recent photograph.
 - Relevant addresses, known associates and addresses frequented.
 - Details of any previous absences – when, where, for how long, with whom, where found/when returned.
 - The circumstances and any relevant information such as an argument, being bullied etc.
 - Any other information that be seen as increasing the vulnerability of the child/young person such as learning disability, if the child/young person has previously experienced or considered being at risk of sexual exploitation, trafficking, forced marriage or female genital mutilation.

2 CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE WHO HAVE NOT BEEN REPORTED MISSING

- 2.1 Some missing children/young people, who have not been reported as missing to the police, may come to the attention of agencies. Agencies should work with families to help them recognise the risks associated with a child/young person running away and the importance of reporting this to the police. There may also be trafficked children/young people who may not have previously come to the attention of the police or local authority. All agencies have a responsibility to take appropriate action in these cases by informing the police and Children's Safeguarding Services.
- 2.2 There is recognition that children/young people from black and minority ethnic groups and children/young people that go missing from education are less likely to be reported as missing. The local authority and the Police will work proactively with communities where they believe under reporting is taking place or is more likely.

Responsibility of anyone who has care of a child/young person without parental knowledge or agreement

- 2.3 Anyone who has care of a child/young person without parental knowledge or agreement should also do what is reasonable to safeguard and promote the child's welfare. In these circumstances, they should inform the police, Children's Safeguarding Services and the parents of their whereabouts and safety. If this is not complied with, the police should consider advice or warning under the Child Abduction Act (1984), if it is appropriate.

- 2.4 Anyone who 'takes or detains' a runaway under 16 years old without lawful authority may be prosecuted under Section 2 of the Child Abduction Act (1984). The Police may formally warn a person under the abduction legislation prior to prosecution and a subsequent marker may be placed against them on their Police National Computer (PNC) record.
- 2.5 Children/young people under the age of 16 years old are not legally considered as being able to live independently. For children/young people over the age of 16 years old, consideration should be given to their legal status, physical and emotional needs when making a judgement as to whether they can live independently.

3 THE ROLE OF THE POLICE

- 3.1 The police are the front line agency to which missing children/young people reports should be made by parents, persons with parental responsibility and agencies. Once a child/young person has been reported as missing, the police are the lead agency to find and secure their safe return. However, all partner agencies are required to assist them to carry out this role. They are also required to ensure their own agencies makes timely and appropriate reports.
- 3.2 The police will investigate all cases of missing children/young people and will respond in accordance with the College of Policing Missing Persons' policy. Other partner agencies will work collaboratively to assist them with their duties. When accepting a missing person report, the police will advise the caller that they will share information about the missing child/young person and seek assistance from partner agencies to find the child/young person. They will have the presumption that all missing children/young people are vulnerable unless a risk assessment determines otherwise. The police have the ultimate responsibility for determining the action that needs to be taken and when it needs to be escalated.
- 3.3 Thames Valley Policy will always carry out a missing person investigation if the child/young person is:
- Aged 14 years or under.
 - Known to be associating with a registered sex offender.
 - Aged 15 years and over with a child sexual exploitation warning marker, child sexual exploitation intelligence or is named in a child abduction warning notice.
- 3.4 The Police Enquiry Centre receives a report that a child/young person is missing and records them as missing or absent dependent on the answers to 10 standard risk assessment questions.
- What is the specific concern that has caused you to call the police?
 - What has been done so far to trace the individual?
 - Is this significantly out of character?
 - Do they need urgent medical attention or essential medication that is not likely to be available to them?
 - If under 18 are they currently at risk of child abuse including child sexual exploitation?

- Are they likely to be subjected to any other crime?
 - Are they likely to be the victim of any other form abuse?
 - Are they likely to attempt suicide?
 - Do they pose a danger to other people?
 - Is there any other *information relevant to their absence*?
- 3.5 The person making the report should provide the police with up-to-date information to inform the above, as well as details of enquiries they have made to trace the missing child.
- 3.6 In cases where the report initially goes to Children's Safeguarding Services, the case should still be referred to the Police Enquiry Centre on 101.
- 3.7 If a child/young person is risk assessed to be recorded as 'absent' their details will be added to the Police National Computer and an appropriate call-back time agreed with the caller. When that time is reached the police will call back the reporting person and review the ten questions. If at that time, or earlier if further information comes to light, the 'absent' child/young person is deemed by the Police to be at risk, their status will be changed to 'missing' and officers deployed to liaise with the reporting person to commence a missing person investigation.
- 3.8 Once the location of an absent child/young person is established it is the responsibility of the reporting person to collect the child/young person and establish the reasons behind their absence. The police will not conduct a safe and well check unless crimes or other safeguarding issues are suspected.
- 3.9 Police will record and monitor absent occurrences alongside missing, will share information with partners in the same way as missing, and will refer appropriate cases of absent children/young people to missing person panels.
- 3.10 When the answer to any of the initial 10 questions is yes, the child/young person is recorded as missing. A police officer will visit the reporting person and commence a missing person investigation. They will conduct a further risk assessment to establish potential risk as high or medium. Missing children/young people under 18 will never be categorised as low risk by the police. The police duty supervisor is informed and s/he will manage the police response. All high risk cases will be led by a senior officer.
- 3.11 Police officers will:
- Search the premises and surrounding grounds accepting this action should already have been completed by the reporting person. Police are searching both for the missing child, and also evidence of 'push/pull' factors behind the child/young person going missing.
 - Obtain full details concerning the child's disappearance.
 - Complete a full risk assessment asking the initial 10 questions again to ensure nothing is missed, together with 8 further questions:
 1. *Is the person detainable under any Mental health legislation-if so what is the legislation?*
 2. *Is the person vulnerable due to other factors?*
 3. *Is the person particularly at risk of harm due to physical disability, frailty or memory loss?*

4. *Does the person lack the ability to interact safely with others in an unknown environment (mental illness, learning disability and/or sensory impairment?)*
 5. *Has the person been involved in a violent, homophobic or racist incident immediately prior to disappearance*
 6. *Any child safeguarding concerns (subject to child protection plan, known to social care and/or specific PNC warning flag triggered?)*
 7. *Is the person suffering from a drug or alcohol dependency?*
 8. *Any social concerns? (family/relationship/employment/financial/school/college)*
- Obtain a detailed description of the child's clothing, together with a recent photograph.
 - Obtain consent to release the photograph to the press, if required, and pass details to partner agencies assisting with the search.
 - Add the child's details to the missing person records management system.
 - Add the child's detail to the Police National Computer.
- 3.12 Police will undertake a secondary investigation to identify any incidents or issues which may inform the risk assessment or help locate the child/young person more quickly e.g. domestic abuse, child protection reports, the child/young person is in care, potentially at risk from child sexual exploitation or other crime or particularly vulnerable for any reason. In addition to daily information share reports, Police will contact Children's Safeguarding Services for any information they may hold and the risk assessment must be continually reviewed.
- 3.13 Police are responsible for liaising with family as well as with other agencies and force areas. If the child/young person is in care, it may be more appropriate for Children's Safeguarding Services to undertake enquiries with the family and other agencies and report their findings back to the police. This approach should be decided on a case by case basis.
- 3.14 The local Police Missing Person Co-ordinator is the single point of contact for all agencies. Out of week day office hours the local Duty Inspector is the contact.
- 3.15 A daily information sharing report will be sent to Children's Safeguarding Services from the Missing Person Co-ordinator containing details of ALL children/young people under 18 reported missing and absent in the previous 24 hours, together with all returns. The information will contain full name, date of birth, home address and contact details for the missing/absent person. It will include a summary of the circumstances of the missing/absent episode together with 'location missing from' and risk factors. The return information will include a summary of the safe and well check by Police which should cover if ascertained, the reason for going missing, a summary of the circumstances whilst the child/young person was missing/absent, location found and all other information obtained by the police. Reports covering weekends will be sent on Monday mornings. The missing person co-ordinator will also send reports of children/young people missing/absent three times in 90 days, longer than 24 hours and longer than five days as those deadlines are reached.
- 3.16 All high and medium risk missing persons are reviewed at the beginning and end of every shift by the Duty Inspector. Any child/young person who is in care

or who is particularly vulnerable will be reviewed within 24 hours by Children's Safeguarding Services. Where there are concerns about a child's vulnerability or that the child/young person may be at risk of significant harm a referral should be made to Children's Safeguarding Services as soon as this becomes evident.

- 3.17 If the child/young person has been missing for more than 24 hours, the case will be reviewed at the police daily management meeting. In all high risk cases or once a child/young person has been missing over 24 hours, the police, in consultation with partner agencies, must consider a media strategy.
- 3.18 When a child/young person deemed to be medium risk has been missing for more than 48 hours, the case will be reviewed by a Detective Inspector.
- 3.19 When a child/young person has been missing over five days, Children's Safeguarding Services will convene a strategy meeting. They will call a strategy meeting sooner if they consider the child/young person is likely to suffer significant harm. Subsequent strategy meetings should be held as frequently as required to progress the joint investigation, but at no less than five working day intervals for the first four weeks and then at a frequency agreed between the senior responsible police officer and the Director of Children's Services or his/her delegated representative.
- 3.20 All missing persons are notified to the Police National Missing Persons Bureau after 48 hours or earlier if the child/young person is at high risk of harm.
- 3.21 If the child/young person has been missing for more than 10 weeks, the missing person co-ordinator will ask for the Police National Computer entry to remain in place for up to a year.
- 3.22 Within 24 hours of the child's return, the police undertake a 'safe and well' check. The Police missing person co-ordinator will pass details of the safe and well check to Children's Safeguarding Services within 24 hours weekdays or every Monday following weekend returns.
- 3.23 In cases where a child/young person goes missing repeatedly, or if there are other concerns about the child, the police will make a referral to Children's Safeguarding Services irrespective of the duration of time the child/young person has been missing. If outside office hours, the police Sergeants will inform the Emergency Duty Team.
- 3.24 In cases where a child/young person discloses a child protection issue, a referral will be made to the referral centre who will liaise with Children's Safeguarding Services in order to determine if there is need for joint agency investigation. If so, a strategy meeting will be convened.
- 3.25 Data on missing and absent children/young people will be sent by the Police quarterly to Children's Services.
- 3.26 If a child/young person goes missing out of office hours, the police should consider informing the Emergency Duty Team both to refer the case and to seek relevant information that agency might hold on the child/young person relevant to their missing episode.

3.27 There may be occasions when a child/young person goes missing and they are placed in care in a different Local Authority area or police area. In these circumstances, Children's Safeguarding Services should report the child/young person missing to the Police force in which the child/young person is residing and to Thames Valley police as the child/young person may have returned to his/her home area. During office hours direct contact with the relevant missing person co-ordinator may assist the investigation.

4 THE ROLE OF THE LOCAL AUTHORITY

4.1 On receipt of missing children/young people reports from police COMPACT via secure email, on all medium and high risk cases, Children's Safeguarding Services will check to find out whether or not a case is known to them.

4.2 Where a child/young person or the family is an open case, the missing report will be sent to the allocated social worker or the Youth Offending Service. The allocated worker will:

- Liaise with the police and other agencies.
- Contact the family and offer support, if this is appropriate.
- Take into account the circumstances relating to the missing episode and return in any on-going assessments and interventions.

4.3 Unknown or closed cases will be allocated to a worker in the Early Help and First Response Service. The worker will:

- Liaise with the police and other agencies.
- Contact the family and offer support. The focus of this support will be on the identified missing issues.
- Determine whether or not there are wider needs to be addressed through an appropriate assessment such as the Early Help Assessment or single assessment.

Children/young people in Care

4.4 Where the report and subsequent found reports relates to a RBWM child/young person in care, the child's record will be updated and it will be forwarded to the allocated Social Worker. Where the child/young person is in the care of another local authority, a record will be opened/updated and it will be forwarded to that authority where a secure email address has been supplied.

4.5 Children's Services remain responsible for the children/young people in their care who are missing. This responsibility is not absolved when the child/young person has been reported missing to the police. However, the police will have primacy in respect of the investigation to trace the child.

4.6 Carers and the child's Social Worker will be responsible for liaising with the police, taking an active interest in the investigation and passing on all information, which may help to inform the investigation and assist in protecting the child/young person whilst absent.

4.7 Carers and the child's Social Worker should continue to make appropriate enquiries with other residents or by telephone with all persons who may be

able to assist with the investigation unless they are requested not to do so by the police. All information gleaned from these enquiries should be passed to the police.

- 4.8 Once a child/young person is reported missing to the police, the police will normally conduct all physical enquiries away from the premises from which the child/young person is absent. However, there is no reason why staff, carers, parents cannot continue to physically check known haunts, relative's addresses etc.
- 4.9 In certain circumstances the police may need to revisit duties initially performed by Children's Safeguarding Services staff. When necessary they will do so in liaison with the appropriate children's services staff and will do so sensitively, causing as little disruption as possible to the establishment and residents.
- 4.10 If a child/young person in care has been missing for more than 24 hours, the Director of Children's Services and Head of Early Help and Safeguarding must always be notified.
- 4.11 Throughout the process in this protocol, residential carers and Social Workers must keep a full record of actions taken and messages received and given. Police will likewise keep a record of all aspects of the investigation on the 'COMPACT' computerised missing person case management system.

5 WHEN A MISSING CHILD/YOUNG PERSON IS FOUND

- 5.1 The attitude of all practitioners, such as Police Officers and Social Workers, towards a child/young person who has been missing can have a big impact on how they engage with any subsequent investigations and planning. A supportive approach, actively listening and responding to a child's needs will have a greater chance of preventing the child/young person from going missing again and safeguarding them against any risks.
- 5.2 If the whereabouts are known or suspected, it is the responsibility of the parents or carers to arrange for the child's return. In exceptional circumstances, in the interests of the safe and speedy return of the child, the police may agree to requests from parents or carers to assist.
- 5.3 If the whereabouts of a child/young person in care is known or suspected, it is the responsibility of the local authority to arrange for the child's return. This must be done in a timely manner.
- 5.4 Difficulties can arise when missing children/young people are found but do not want to return. Under the Children Act 1989, where there is reasonable cause to believe that the child/young person could suffer significant harm, the police can take the child/young person into Police Protection, and remove to suitable accommodation which could include the home from which the child/young person originally went missing. The police are not given the power to use force to take children/young people into Police Protection.

- 5.5 There will be occasions when a child/young person is found in a location that may be considered unsuitable, but where there would not be legal grounds for taking them into Police Protection. In such cases, police and Children's Safeguarding Services will need to liaise with the parents/carers and each other to discuss what steps may be necessary in order to safeguard the child's welfare.
- 5.6 When a child/young person is found or returns home parents/carers must inform the police and Children's Safeguarding Services. Any agencies and practitioners involved with the family should support them to do this.
- 5.7 When a child/young person in care returns to their placement, it is the responsibility of the carers to notify the police, child's Social Worker and Children's Safeguarding Services.
- 5.8 The police will notify the local authority of the return of the child/young person and any relevant information via automated systems.

6 POLICE SAFE AND WELL CHECKS

- 6.1 On finding a child, or on their return, a safe and well check will be undertaken by the Police Investigating Officer as soon as possible. It will not be conducted over the telephone. The purpose is to check for any indications that the child/young person has suffered harm, where and with whom they have been and to give them an opportunity to disclose any offending by, or against them. This will lead to the police closing the missing person report on COMPACT and the case being cancelled on the Police National Computer. This is not a return interview.
- 6.2 Where a child/young person goes missing frequently, it may not be practicable to see them every time they return. In these cases, a reasonable decision should be taken in agreement between the police and their child's parent or carer, or their Social Worker, with regard to the frequency of such checks. Consideration must be given to the link between frequent missing episodes and serious harm. The reason for the decision not to conduct a safe and well check should be reported on the police case file.
- 6.3 If the safe and well check is not satisfactory, the police will also report the child's absence to the Police Central Referral Unit and Children's Safeguarding Services.
- 6.4 If the child/young person makes an allegation of crime that occurred whilst they were missing or that contributed to him/her running away, the police will record this allegation and take appropriate action. A report will be sent to the Missing Person Liaison Officer for them to determine whether or not any further action is needed.
- 6.5 If it is apparent, on the return of the child, that they have been the victim of a crime whilst absent, or that they may be in danger or at risk from any person arising out of circumstances that has occurred whilst they were absent then the police will instigate further enquiries. This is vital for the protection of the child/young person and for the speedy recovery of evidence. In such

circumstances, the missing child's clothing, mobile phone and trace evidence from their body, fingernails or hair may be crucial. In cases of sexual abuse, the child/young person should be discouraged from washing and immediate advice sought from the police. The police should advise parent or carers if they become aware of the location of a scene of any crime committed against the child, or the location of any crucial evidence, i.e. a used condom, they must notify the police without delay. This will enable the police to take steps to secure and preserve evidence. If out of hours, the on-call Child Abuse Detective Sergeant needs to be made aware or is available for advice. Additionally, in matters of sexual exploitation, or any other situation which indicates that the child/young person may have been subject to, or at risk of, significant harm, a referral must be made to the local authority in accordance with local safeguarding procedures.

7 RETURN INTERVIEWS

- 7.1 When a child/young person is found they must be offered a return interview to talk about their running away. Providing children/young people with an opportunity to talk is key to safeguarding them. Return interviews are designed to support a child/young person in exploring his or her feelings and concerns. It should be gentle and inquisitive, not adversarial or seeking to attribute blame. It is important to remember that children/young people sometimes need to build up trust with a person before they will discuss the reasons why they ran away. Account should be taken of any preference the child/young person has for the conducting of the return interview. The interview provides an opportunity to uncover information that can help protect children/young people from the risk of going missing again, from risks they may have been exposed to while missing or risk factors in their home.
- 7.2 Return interviews should be completed by the RBWM Community Wardens or if it is an open case, the child's Social Worker. The return interview will be carried out within 72 hours, i.e. three working days, of the child/young person returning to their home or care setting, unless there are exceptional circumstances.
- 7.3 Intelligence from return interviews is considered at the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel on a monthly basis in order to identify common themes to inform wider action across the partner agencies.
- 7.4 All children/young people should be informed that if they are entitled to an Independent Advocate through the Youth Counselling Service to help them address any issues related to their running away. This is a secondary service offered in addition to the return interview conducted by Children's Safeguarding Services. The interviewer should provide the young person with the relevant information and facilitate a referral if this is their wish.

Children/young people in Care return interviews

- 7.5 It remains the responsibility of the relevant Social Worker to ensure completion of the return interview for children/young people missing from care. This would usually be conducted by the Social Worker or a colleague if the child's Social Worker is not available. There is an additional responsibility on the child's

placement to monitor that they are conducted within 72 hours of the child's return.

- 7.6 Care staff and foster carers should always discuss and explore the reasons with any child/young person who has been missing or away from their placement without authorisation/absent within 72 hours of their return, showing concern as any good parent would do with their own child.
- 7.7 It is noted that away from their placement without authorisation/absent, or late returns will not necessarily constitute a missing episode, and the discretion of the residential staff and carers is necessary to define the nature of the absence. Periods of absence of any sort should be fully considered in a child's review, which can be brought forward in serious situations.
- 7.8 It is the responsibility of the Team Manager in Children's Safeguarding Services to ensure that the return interview is carried out to a suitable standard and signed off by the line manager.

Children/young people in care of an external local authority and placed in RBWM

- 7.9 If the child/young person is known to RBWM Youth Offending Team, a worker from this team should be requested to undertake the return interview on behalf of the local authority with responsibility. If, however, the child/young person is not known to the Youth Offending Team, agreement may be made between the placing authority and RBWM's Early Help and First Response Service to undertake the return interview on behalf of the placing local authority.

Recording return interviews

- 7.10 All return interviews must be recorded using the Missing or Runaway Child Return Visit record. The interview will be recorded on the appropriate recording form and signed off by the interviewer's line manager, and a copy held or recorded on the child's record.
- 7.11 Completed return interview forms should be sent electronically to the Thames Valley Police Missing Persons.
- 7.12 The Police Missing Persons Liaison Officer will ensure that relevant intelligence is recorded from the details of the return interview. In some circumstances the child/young person may make extremely sensitive disclosures that need particularly careful management that should be recorded separately but referred to on the return interview form. In such circumstances it may be appropriate for the interviewer to discuss the information with relevant professionals.

Actions following the return interview

- 7.13 The interview and actions that follow from it should:
 - Identify and deal with any harm the child/young person has suffered – including harm that might not have already been disclosed as part of the 'safe and well check' – either before they ran away or whilst missing.
 - Understand and try to address the reasons why the child/young person ran away.

- Help the child/young person feel safe and understand that they have options to prevent repeat instances of them running away.
- Provide them with information on how to stay safe if they choose to run away again, including helpline numbers.

7.14 Following the safe and well check and return interview, Children's Safeguarding Services and the police should work together:

- To build up a comprehensive picture of why the child/young person went missing.
- To understand what happened while they were missing.
- To understand who they were with when they were missing and where they were found.
- What support they require upon returning to home or their care placement. Support can include interventions to:
 - Increase the child's awareness of the dangers of running away and the issues young runaways face.
 - Build up a trusting relationship with him or her leading to opportunities to identify the issues that made them run away from home or care.
 - Help the child/young person to seek safer solutions to deal with their issues other than running away.
 - Enable him or her to feel safe to ask questions if they don't understand something or want to find answers to their questions.

7.15 Safe and well checks and return interviews provide an opportunity to inform case planning, for wider strategic planning and for professionals to take into account children's views. The outcomes of the checks and interviews should, therefore, be recorded on case files so that they can be shared with professionals.

Incidents of specific concern

7.16 Where an allegation of physical or sexual abuse is made or becomes evident, child protection procedures must be implemented and contact made immediately with Children's Safeguarding Services and the Police Central Referral Unit and the child protection service at the authority where the child/young person is living.

7.17 Appropriate safeguarding procedures should be followed where there are safeguarding concerns for example:

- Where the child/young person has been hurt or harmed whilst they have been missing or this is believed to have been the case.
- Where there is known or suspected risk of sexual exploitation/trafficking or contact with persons posing a risk to children.

7.18 If child sexual exploitation concerns are identified, the case should be referred to the Missing Persons/Child Sexual Exploitation Operational Panel.

8 ADDITIONAL ARRANGEMENTS RELATING TO CHILDREN/YOUNG PEOPLE IN CARE

- 8.1 In addition to that previously outlined, the following arrangements should be put in place regarding children/young people in care.

On admission to the placement

- 8.2 Each child/young person in care has a care plan based on a full assessment of the child's current and future needs, including potential risk to self and others. The care plan will, therefore, take account of any risk that the child/young person may go missing in future and any factors which may increase the risk to the child/young person should they go missing. Children's residential and fostering service staff should be included in the placement plan and the child's care plan. As part of this assessment it may be appropriate for Children's Safeguarding Services to consult with the police to share information that may be of relevance. Where the child/young person has previously gone missing prior to coming into care, this difficulty should be addressed and planned for as part of the care plan.
- 8.3 The care plan will remain in the possession of the local authority. It is not a public document. It is not envisaged that the police will need to view the care plan at any time. However, there may be circumstances when it is necessary to involve the police in aspects of the care planning process to safeguard the child. The police may request sight of the child's care plan to assist in the risk and search strategy.
- 8.4 In respect of child/young person in care, a recent photograph bearing a good likeness to the child/young person will be kept on record. When a child/young person is admitted to care the consent of a person with parental responsibility will be sought for a photograph to be used in any subsequent missing person investigation. If possible, the agreement of the child/young person should also be gained. Most commonly the photograph will be used by local Police Officers to help them recognise the child/young person whilst patrolling or when actively looking for the child/young person at relevant locations. In very serious cases where the child/young person is believed to be at severe risk, the police and local authority may decide to use the photograph more widely and even involve publishing the photograph to national or local media.
- 8.5 The local authority will ensure that sufficient knowledge and information about the child/young person is recorded to enable carers to complete the missing person form should the child/young person go missing in future.
- 8.6 The foster carer/residential unit manager should consider the most appropriate ways to meet the above requirements and whether it is necessary and appropriate to discuss 'running away' with the child.

Away from placement without authorisation

- 8.7 Clearly some children/young people absent themselves for a short period and then return, with their whereabouts known to the carer. Sometimes children/young people stay out longer than agreed, either on purpose to test boundaries, or accidentally. Examples of situations where unauthorised absence will apply are:
- Running away after a dispute.
 - Failing to return on time.
 - Staying at a known location with a friend.

- 8.8 If the carer assesses that the child/young person is at risk due to any factor/s known to the carer, then the child/young person should be reported missing without delay and the believed risk communicated to the police. If the assessment of the carer is that there is no apparent risk for their immediate safety but are away from home without authorisation it is still important that staff/carer's record these incidences as away from their placement without authorisation in the child's record. In addition, staff/carers should always start a dated/times record of their contacts, risk assessment and decisions throughout the episode from the point that they are aware of the child's absence, in case the level of risk changes and decisions are auditable. A period of **no more than six hours** should normally be regarded as the absolute maximum for any child/young person whose whereabouts are not known and who cannot be contacted, to remain categorised as away from their placement without authorisation, rather than being formally reported as missing. In many cases a shorter period will be appropriate. It will not be appropriate for any child/young person whose whereabouts are not known and who cannot be contacted, to remain out overnight, without being formally reported as missing.
- 8.9 If the child's whereabouts are known or suspected, Children's Safeguarding Services will decide whether to allow the child/young person to remain at that location, albeit temporarily, or to arrange for their return. If the decision is to arrange their return and there is reason to believe that there may be public order difficulties, the police will assist. Police assistance in these circumstances does not mean that the child/young person is categorised as missing. Each such occurrence needs to be evaluated based upon the relevant factors and upon other information gleaned from the child, friends, family and associates.
- 8.10 It is expected that the first response by the providers of their care along with any relevant staff from their responsible authority, which could include the child's Social Worker in circumstances where a child/young person is late home will be to take all steps a responsible parent would take, to try to locate the child/young person and to make a careful assessment in accordance with the circumstances.
- 8.11 Instances of young people away from placement without authorisation should not be reported to Thames Valley Police unless there are concerns then police assistance may be requested. Thames Valley Police will not record instances of 'away from their placement without authorisation', classified by the police as absent.
- 8.12 The responsibility for managing this type of absence lies with the staff of the residential home or carer. It is not the responsibility of the police to influence or determine the decision of whether a person is missing or away from the placement without authorisation.
- 8.13 A clear assessment needs to be made by the carer in each individual case as to the length of time that elapses before a child/young person who is unauthorised absent becomes categorised as missing. An away from their placement without authorisation absence must be kept under regular review by the appropriate carer. It is important to consider whether the circumstances of

the disappearance would now render the child/young person at risk of harm, for example:

- The child/young person requires medication at a set time.
- Whether conditions have severely deteriorated.

Absconder

8.14 An absconder is a child/young person who is absent from the placement without permission and who is subject to an order or requirement resulting from the criminal justice process, e.g. remands, curfews, tagging, conditions of residence, other bail conditions or ASBO's, or a Secure Order made in either civil or criminal proceedings. A child/young person in this category must be reported to the police without delay.

8.15 If an absconder is under the age of 16 years, or if the absconding does not involve a power of arrest, the police will treat the case as both a missing child/young person case and an absconder. This means that it will be necessary to provide detailed information to the police on the missing child. This will lead to a proactive police investigation managed locally by the police on the 'COMPACT' computer system. Moreover, the individual will be circulated nationwide via the Police National Computer system. When the child/young person is traced, it is likely that they will also be arrested or dealt with by the police in relation to any offence or breach. It is essential however, that they are also viewed as a child/young person in need of protection and safeguarding, and any risks exposed to during their absence must be reviewed fully.

8.16 However, if the child/young person is aged 16 or over and is liable to arrest, the police will treat the child/young person solely as an absconder and not a missing child, unless there are grounds to suspect that factors other than the absconder's desire to evade justice are involved in their disappearance. If the police treat the case solely as one of absconding, they will actively seek the absconder for arrest. Notwithstanding, absconders in this category must also be reported to the police without delay.

Out of authority placements

8.17 When a child/young person who has a history of going missing is moved to an out-of-authority placement, the host authority should be informed of the risk, and as part of the placement agreement, appropriate details should be shared to support the local authority to manage the risks to inform care planning for the individual child.

Persistent missing behaviour

8.18 If a child/young person is, or has been, persistently absent without permission from the placement and/or the home manager/carer considers that the child/young person is at risk of harm, the manager/carer will ask the placing authority to convene a multi-agency meeting to review the child's Care Plan and to develop a "Missing Behaviour Strategy". The manager/carer will consult the child's Social Worker/YOT Worker and Independent Reviewing Officer with a view to reviewing the Care Plan. If it is decided not to review the Care Plan, the home's manager/carer should still review the Placement Plan.

8.19 If another type of meeting, such as child protection strategy meeting or High Risk Management group has already been organised for another purpose, it is possible to address the missing issues at that meeting rather than hold a separate meeting. However, it is important not to wait for meetings that have been booked in advance. If it is felt the identified risk is too great, as the most important element is to ensure that the child/young person is protected and safe.

8.20 Consideration must be given to who should attend the meeting:

- Social care professionals: the child's social worker and/or team manager, the manager of the children's home and the child's key carer and/or the child's Independent Reviewing Officer and/or Youth Offending Worker.
- Health professionals: the children/young people in care nurse, CAMHS, drug and alcohol and/or sexual health project worker.
- Education professionals: the child's teacher and/or children/young people in care support worker.
- Police services: Police Liaison Officer, Police Divisional Missing Person's Coordinator.
- The child/young person and/or his/her parents/carers and an advocate or independent representative.

8.21 A missing behaviour strategy should be developed for each child/young person in care to prevent a future missing reoccurrence and to reduce the risks to that child/young person should they go missing again. The strategy should include:

- A pre-risk assessment.
- A reporting strategy which should include guidance on when to report the young person as absent/away from placement without authorisation and when to report them as missing.
- Recommendations on the minimum enquiries to be conducted by Children's Safeguarding Services.
- Recommendations on the minimum enquiries to be conducted by the Police.
- A return interview strategy.
- An intervention strategy to address the long term issues.

8.22 Whenever a child/young person has had two or more missing episodes an emergency professionals' meeting must be held to review each missing episode. The purpose of this meeting would be to prevent future missing reoccurrence and reduce the risks to the child/young person should they go missing again. This will involve the police, parents/carers, the child's allocated social worker and any other professional involved in the care of the child. The meeting will:

- Share information about the child/young person and their family, what is known about missing incidents and any concerns and risks.
- Identify what action has been taken by agencies so far and if any additional actions should be taken.
- What assessments, if any, have been commenced / completed and if further assessment is required.
- Develop a multi-agency action plan and agree review processes.

Appendix 5: Missing Children/Young People and Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan 2014-2015

Action	Output	Owner	Timescale	Status/ Progress
PREVENTION				
Local profiling – map level of need and risk, to include data on missing children/young people, child sexual exploitation victims, perpetrators and hotspots.	Local profile of missing persons and child sexual exploitation completed and presented to W&M LSCB.	MP/CSE Strategic Group and MP/CSE Operational Panel	March 2015	Underway – to be agreed in April 2015
Awareness campaign for children/young people and young people, parents and carers, professionals and hospitality staff.	A catalogue of materials approved by the W&M LSCB and materials launched and distributed.	W&M LSCB	March 2015	Cue cards for taxi drivers distributed. Cue cards under development for children/young people, parents/carers and professionals.
Undertake a child sexual exploitation service review.	Any potential gaps in the availability of child sexual exploitation services are identified and presented to the Strategic Group.	MP/CSE Operational Panel	January 2015	Completed
Promote training in child sexual exploitation, including training for children’s residential care staff and foster carers.	Single agency training and take-up of multi-agency child sexual exploitation training to be audited by CSE Strategic Group.	MP/CSE Strategic Group	March 2015	Completed and ongoing
Ensure new pan-Berkshire procedures in relation to child sexual exploitation and the associated toolkits are widely disseminated to all staff.	Improved identification of children/young people and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation.	All partner agencies in RBWM	September 2014	Completed.
Child sexual exploitation to be incorporated into the	Child sexual exploitation to form part of the Early	W&M LSCB	March 2015	Completed.

Action	Output	Owner	Timescale	Status/ Progress
Early Help Strategy.	Help Strategy.			
Review provision of PHSE provision in relation to child sexual exploitation.	Audit of PHSE carried out.	Head of Education	March 2015	Completed.
Explore options for increasing community liaison on child sexual exploitation.	Increased community liaison on child sexual exploitation.	WAM Get Involved	March 2015	To be taken forward in 2015-2016
Undertake a further LSCB self-assessment of child sexual exploitation.	Self-assessment completed and presented to CSE Strategic Group.	MP/CSE Strategic Group	March 2015	Completed – external review.
PROTECTION				
Provide a service for parents and carers of children/young people and young people at risk of child sexual exploitation and greater involvement of parents and carers in work with children/young people and young people.	Scoping exercise of service completed and service commissioned.	MP/CSE Strategic Group and MP/CSE Operational Panel	June 2015	To be incorporated in the 2015-2016 action plan.
Thames Valley Police and Youth Support to work with partner agencies to log information on girls and young women linked to gang members and risk assess them for child sexual exploitation.	CSE Operational Group to screen and risk assess cases of girls and young women linked to gang members for child sexual exploitation.	Thames Valley Police, Youth Support and MP/CSE Operational Panel	March 2015	Completed and ongoing
PROSECUTION				
Develop a disruption plan to use all legislation and opportunities to disrupt and prosecute, including all criminal activity not related to child sexual exploitation.	Disruption plan and strategy to be considered and approved at CSE Strategic Group.	MP/CSE Strategic Group	January 2015	Plan implemented and ongoing.
Target vulnerable locations frequented by offenders or child	Multi-agency intelligence is provided to police	Thames Valley Police	March 2015 and ongoing	Implemented and ongoing.

Action	Output	Owner	Timescale	Status/ Progress
sexual exploitation victims for disruption and enforcement.	for action and disruption.			
Thames Valley Police seek early CPS advice from a specialist child sexual exploitation lawyer for all child sexual exploitation prosecution cases.	Link established.	Thames Valley Police	March 2015 and ongoing	Implemented and ongoing.
Explore the most appropriate and effective interventions for working with perpetrators of child sexual exploitation.	Agreed list of interventions in place.	Probation Service and Youth Offending Team	March 2015 and ongoing	Implemented and ongoing.
Effective witness support in place from point of contact with any agency and identified key worker to maintain the link throughout investigation.	Staff know how to signpost victims to support and key workers are identified for each case investigated.	W&M LSCB	March 2015 and ongoing	To be incorporated in the 2015-2016 action plan

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