

# Child Exploitation Multi-Agency Audit

June 2024

The audit group met in June 2024 to undertake a multi-agency exploitation audit for the Children's Partnership. The records of five children were reviewed to consider how effectively organisations within South Gloucestershire identify and respond to child exploitation in accordance with the Tackling Child Exploitation (TCE) Practice Principles. This learning brief outlines the strengths and key reminders plus some themes that were identified. In addition, the actions log tracker which is maintained by this group was updated based on identified areas for development across the Children's Partnership.

Read more about the TCE Practice Principles here



## Create safer spaces and places for children and young people

### Strengths:

- Evidence of children feeling safe to share their feelings and thoughts with their GP; A school created a safe space for a child to speak in confidence.

### Key reminders:

- Help children to identify their safe spaces; Consider how to support children to create safer virtual spaces.

## Put children and young people first

### Strengths:

- Good quality conversations and listening to children evident, with early support offered; Child-centred and relationship-based practices highlighted; Examples of timely referrals to services and effective multi-agency working.

### Key reminders:

- Where relevant, consider referring children to Drug & Alcohol Services; Where children are not in school, remember to consider whether appropriate to make a referral to Educational Psychology Service.

## Recognise and challenge inequalities, exclusion and discrimination

### Strengths:

- Evidence that children had choice about where to meet professionals; A worker demonstrated challenge in relation to homophobic language used by a child; An interpreter was used when communicating with a parent who did not have English as first language; There was effective support from EIP when a child was excluded from school.

### Key reminders:

- Advocate for children to have timely EHCP reviews to ensure their education provision is meeting their needs; Be mindful that unstable living arrangements for a child may increase their vulnerability to exploitation; Know how to engage the services of a translation service in your organisation.

## Approach parents and carers as partners, wherever possible

### Strengths:

- There were clear attempts to work with parents; Concerns of parents were clearly documented; Support and advice was given to a parent about education options for their child.

### Key reminders:

- Engaging fathers is important - don't forget to do this.

## Be curious, evidence-informed and knowledgeable

### Strengths:

- In children's records, there was evidence that professionals are routinely curious; For one child, their health records were coded for relevant information such as safeguarding concerns and bereavement; During an appointment, the GP asked questions about a child's lived experiences to build a picture of what life was like for them.

### Key reminders:

- Use peer mapping to help understand connections and links between individuals; Remember to use the Young Person's DASH to assess risk in relation to domestic abuse; Be knowledgeable about tactics to disrupt exploitation to advocate for their use where relevant.



## Respect the voice, experience and expertise of children and young people

### Strengths:

- Evidence from a range of professionals that the voices of the children were heard and recorded with use of direct quotes; Use of advocacy services evident for a child with a MARMP.

### Key reminders:

- Remember to encourage and support children to attend meetings such as their children in care reviews.

## Recognise and respond to trauma

### Strengths:

- Generally, there was recognition of trauma experienced by children and this was documented across multi-agency records; A child was offered counselling by their school to continue through the school holidays; Trauma informed training sessions are available across agencies.

### Key reminders:

- Consider and reflect on likely impact on children of trauma they may have experienced in their childhood.

## Be strengths and relationship-based

### Strengths:

- Evidence of a professional helping a child to identify their strengths and interests; Examples of children taking part in VRP funded activities; Example of a college keeping a child's place open even when they were not regularly attending.

### Key reminders:

- Consider use of language - for one child, there was a narrative formed that they were 'Difficult to Engage' and this phrase was referenced across multiple documents.

## Acronyms:

**EIP** – Education Inclusion Project

**VRP** – Violence Reduction Partnership

**EHCP** – Education Health Care Plan

**DASH** – Domestic Abuse Stalking & Honour Based Violence

**MARMM** – Multi-Agency Risk Management Meeting

**YJS** – Youth Justice Service

**NEET** – Not in Education, Employment or Training

**MARMP** – Multi-Agency Risk Management Plan

**TCE** – Tackling Child Exploitation

**CIc** – Child in Care

**GP** – General Practitioner

## Key Themes & Reminders

The Children's Society – Appropriate Language in Relation to Child Exploitation

Trauma-Informed Ways of Writing About a Young Person

### Use of Language

- Remember to be mindful about appropriate use of language in relation to child exploitation.
- Language implying that the child is responsible for the exploitation they are subjected to must be avoided to ensure we safeguard them appropriately.

NWG – Disruption Options for Perpetrators of Exploitation

Home Office – Child Exploitation Disruption Toolkit

### Disruption tactics

- Tackling child exploitation is complex. There are many tools useful for police and other safeguarding professionals to disrupt exploitation of children.
- It is useful to be knowledgeable about the different disruption tactics to enable us to be as creative as possible to utilise all opportunities available to us.

### Peer Mapping

- Peer mapping should be used to support work with connected children affected by exploitation.
- Mapping provides a visual tool which can increase understanding of peer connections.
- In South Gloucestershire, the VRP can offer advice around if and how to approach a peer mapping exercise.

Peer Mapping Toolkit

Online Sexual Harm Reduction Guide

### Online safety

- Remember to consider how to support children to be safe in virtual spaces and how to spread awareness of online safety.
- There are lots of useful resources and tools to support and help with this work including resources aimed at professionals, those for children and for parents.

The Children's Society – Keeping children safe online

Child Exploitation & Online Protection Centre – Useful Resources

Agencies involved in this audit were:

YJS; Children's Services; Sirona; Safeguarding Advisor for Education; Police; VRP; CAMHS; BNSSG ICB on behalf of GPs; BACE; Educational Psychology; Probation; Pathways Learning Centre