

Multi-Agency Child Exploitation Panels

Terms of Reference and Operating Principles

Overarching Principles

1. This document should be read in conjunction with the following documents

	Ctrl +Click Links
<u>Joint Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Child Sexual Exploitation Strategy</u>	
<u>Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Information Sharing Guidance for Practitioners</u>	
Stoke-on-Trent and Staffordshire Child Exploitation Strategy	
Child Exploitation Risk Factor Matrix	

2. The Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Panels will be the forum for safeguarding children at risk of exploitation with a partnership arena. MACE panels contribute to the wider Staffordshire County Council Contextual Safeguarding Implementation and is explicitly linked to the 'See Me, Hear Me' Framework as published by the Office of the Children's Commissioner.

3. The following definition of Child Exploitation will be used.

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

4. The MACE panels recognise Staffordshire County Councils position in relation to 'context'. Children who require safeguarding from exploitation will be **Seen, Heard and Helped**

- **Seen;** *in the context of their lives at home, friendship circles, health, education and public spaces (including social media).*
- **Heard;** *by professionals taking time to hear what children and young people are saying and put themselves in their shoes and think about what their life might truly be like.*
- **Helped;** *by professionals remaining curious and by implementing effective and imaginative solutions that help children and young people and make them safer.*

(i) The Child's best interests must be the top priority

The best interests of children and young people and their rights to protection must drive all decision making. The paramountcy principle (Children Act 1989) must be adhered to where applicable and children's rights under UNCRC Article 3 fully honoured.

(ii) Participation of children and young people

Services need to involve children and young people when decisions are being made about their care, protection and on-going support and be kept informed on any issues that affect them throughout. Professionals must be mindful of children and young people's needs and equalities. Their UNCRC Article 12 rights must be honoured.

(iii) Enduring relationships and support

Support must be tailored to meet the needs of child, according to their age, identity, ethnicity, belief, sexual orientation, disability, language, and stage of development. Children and young people have told us that a consistent person who sticks with them throughout the whole period of their protection and on-going care is crucial to their recovery.

(iv) Comprehensive problem profiling

Staffordshire's Child Exploitation Outcomes Framework and the Joint Staffordshire and Stoke-on-Trent Child Exploitation Strategy both highlight the need for comprehensive problem profiles. MACE panels contribute towards this by providing detailed information in relation to local trends, locations and persons of concern.

Area intelligence is coordinated by each district panel and shared as appropriate with panel members to inform disruption activity and allow professionals to effectively safeguard children. This includes sharing of information with Staffordshire Police to support local problem profiling and contribute towards wider regional profiles.

(v) Effective information-sharing within and between agencies

It is expected that all areas will hold a cross sector information sharing protocol, based around the safe handling and sharing of information. Protocols should focus upon the best interests of the child and their welfare and should take guidance from all relevant safeguarding and information governance legislation; all relevant agencies and services should be signatories, with expectations of signatories made clear within the document. Supporting these protocols the Vulnerable Adolescents

Multi-agency Panel operates under its own confidentiality agreement, all present are expected to adhere to the agreement both within and outside of panel.

(vi) Supervision, support and training of staff

Services should invest in the development and support of staff including providing regular supervision and the opportunities for them to reflect on practice. Those professionals who offer direct support to exploited children and young people might require further intensive training and must have regular opportunities to reflect on their practice with a skilled consultant or supervisor.

(vii) Evaluation and review

Evaluations and regular reviews of the effectiveness of the Child Exploitation Strategy is necessary to ensure services and interventions are achieving their intended outcomes and meeting the child and young person's needs. Children and young people must be directly involved in this process in compliance with Article 12 of the UNCRC. This will ensure that performance is driven continuously by a cycle that leads to improvement.

MACE Panel Purpose

5. The MACE panels are not intended to replace or replicate existing statutory mechanisms for managing our planned work with individual children or linked groups of children, which will be via a multi-agency Early Help Assessment (EHA), a Child in Need Plan (CIN Plan), a Child Protection Plan (CP Plan), a Youth Offending Service Plan or a looked after child Care Plan or Pathway Plan.

6. Where it is felt there is a clear escalation in Child Exploitation risk or concern for a young person, Child Protection procedures need to be followed or if threshold for Child Protection is not met, agencies can consider raising these at care plan meetings (such as CIN Meeting, Core groups etc.) or alternatively, requesting these meetings are moved to an earlier date to address the concerns and support needs of the child/family by using a multi-agency meeting and completing a Child Exploitation Risk Factor Matrix.

7. The primary purpose of the MACE panels will be to ensure strategic oversight is enabled at a district and County level to enable problem profiling and to ensure prevention and targeted interventions aimed at groups and communities can be planned for and routinely monitored. The panels will thus support actions to safeguard children and to disrupt and reduce the opportunity for them to become victims of abuse as a result of Child Exploitation. This will be achieved via review of all locally held individual cases. Additional actions to existing Early Help Assessments, CIN, CP, YOS Plans or looked after children plans may be agreed as part of the panel's primary strategic objectives.

8. It is intended that professionals receive an oversight of the level of Child Exploitation activity through hearing submissions from Team Managers, Locality Managers or Lead Professionals in relation to all cases identified as medium or high within their area of work.

9. The MACE panels will provide performance management oversight of practitioner responses to individual Child Exploitation cases and ensure that the Child Exploitation Risk Factor Matrix is routinely used.

10. The MACE panels will receive aggregated information about children who go missing from home or care in a given area to ensure any links between missing activity and Child Exploitation are made and acted upon.

11. The Panels will identify examples of best practice and disseminate learning from this across professionals.

12. The Panels will collect data to support the Children's Safeguarding Board to achieve the desired outcomes of the Child Exploitation Strategy.

13. Children and parents/carers will normally be informed by the professional/agency identifying the Child Exploitation concerns that their child is to be discussed at the Panels. Their views will be ascertained by the lead practitioner and shared with the Panel by the presenting professional.

Accountability

14. Panels will be reviewed annually, and findings from this review will be presented by report to senior managers and fed into the safeguarding board arrangements as appropriate.

Alongside annual review, panel data is collated and analysed throughout the year in line with Staffordshire County Council and Safeguarding Children Boards internal reporting timeframes. This will include a bi-monthly panel data report.

Practitioners are responsible for ensuring existing planning mechanisms for managing EHA, CIN, CP, YOS Plans and looked after children Care Plans/Pathway Plans are effectively in place in line with statutory requirements and the needs of the child. Each agency represented at the Child Exploitation Panel remains accountable to their internal structure and safeguarding policies/practices.

Outputs of MACE Panels

15. Review of individual Child Exploitation cases via the sharing of intelligence, wider agency information and case information. This will be used to aid multi-agency disruption activity via tactics advised to consider within the Home Office Toolkit.

16. Identification of any links between individual victims/offenders that have not been made apparent via individual case planning. This will be used to aid multi-agency disruption activity. Mapping will be a key output of the panels.

17. Make recommendations for enhancing actions identified within existing EHA, CIN, CP, YOS Plans and looked after children Care Plan/Pathway Plan.

18. Monitoring of information with regards to practitioner compliance in completing the MACE Risk Factor Matrix

19. Aggregating data from all collated MACE Risk Factor Matrix's.
20. Classifying all known instances of Child Exploitation according to agreed local classification systems:
 - High Risk
 - Medium Risk
 - Low Risk
21. Agree District plans for global prevention activity, including enhancing public awareness of Child Exploitation.
22. Agree District plans for awareness raising activity encouraging the outcome that children and young people are aware of the risks of Child Exploitation and able to make good choices and know where to go to report abuse.
23. Agree district plans for targeted prevention and disruption activity where the incidence of Child Exploitation is high (eg in relation to pupils attending a certain school or socialising in a certain geographical area).
24. Agree any multi-agency responses to disruption activity. This will include a clear focus on ensuring there are "safe space" for children across Staffordshire.
25. Hear the voice of the child and their parents/carers via the presenting professional.
27. Share information on locally available services for children discussed at the panel and identify any gaps in provision to Commissioners and the Safeguarding Board.
28. Promote available training across panel members and their wider organisations. Act where awareness training is identified as required by groups in a district area.
29. All professionals invited to the MACE panel will be required to sign a confidentiality form at the start of each meeting and comply with the information sharing protocol.
30. There is an expectation that MACE panel members and attendees, as representatives of their agency, will attend prepared to share information about children, their families, associations and any people, locations or trends of concern. All information discussed, and documents shared at the Child Exploitation Panel are strictly confidential and matters discussed should only be disclosed to professional colleagues in accordance with existing arrangements for safeguarding children consistent with the Children Act 2004 and Working Together Feb 2018.
31. All partner agencies contributing to the Child Exploitation Panel process are required to ensure that their own procedures for information sharing and confidentiality support the ethos of Working Together 2018 and Staffordshire Safeguarding Board's commitment to that.
32. All agencies in attendance at the Panels are responsible for securely filing documentation received.

Proposed Core Panel Membership and Virtual Panel Members

33. Core Panel Members: Identified Head of Service (Chair), Staffordshire Police CPET Team, Staffordshire Police Gangs Co-ordinator, Staffordshire Police Harm Reduction Hub, Health Representatives (Named Nurse), Schools Representatives as required, District Council Safeguarding Lead, representative from Youth Offending Service, Substance Misuse services, specialist CSE services (including commissioned CSE and Missing service and Teen Spirit), Domestic Violence Services, Intensive Prevention Services.

34. Virtual Panel Members: As identified as relevant to individual cases individual cases or to allow oversight and feedback where appropriate, for example, Accommodation providers, Probation, MAPPA Representative, Sexual Health Service Providers, Young Carers Hub, Children Missing Education Officer, Representatives for out of county looked after children placed in Staffordshire, Stoke-On-Trent CSE Social Worker.

Locations of Panels

35. The number and locations of panels has been amended in line with data reporting from the initiation of previous CSE Panels from February 2015. Agreed District panels are set out below and will be chaired by Head of Service level:-

- Newcastle- Under-Lyme
- Moorlands
- Tamworth, Lichfield and Burntwood
- Burton and Uttoxeter
- Stafford
- Cannock and South Staffs

Frequency of Panels

36. To accommodate the volume of cases to be discussed, panels are held bi-monthly in each area; this is assessed as part of the annual panel review. Should changes be required they will proposed within the recommendations of the review report and presented via senior managers.

Referral Pathway

38. All cases to be discussed at panel must have a completed MACE Risk Factor Matrix (RFM) identifying their case as medium or high. Completed RFM's should be submitted to the Families First CSE Coordinator's email inbox CSE@staffordshire.gov.uk

39. The Families First CSE Coordinator's will send a panel collection requests to all Families First teams monthly to identify case to be heard at the next local panel. In addition to this, partner agencies are encouraged to send any Child Exploitation Risk Factor Matrix Forms to the CSE Coordinators for inclusion within the panel.

40. The criteria for attendance at a panel is that a child or young person is suffering or is at risk of suffering Child Exploitation, according to the definition provided earlier. The Child Exploitation Risk Factor Matrix must be updated at minimum 6 weekly intervals (or as a risk significantly increases or decreases) and should be reviewed prior to each panel.

41. The CSE Coordinator's will use the matrix to create a mapping document prior to each panel and from this, will collate an agenda and invite presenting professionals to allocated time slots for case discussions.

42. Panels are not an avenue for professionals to make new referrals to Staffordshire Childrens Social Care or partner agencies. Referrals should be made to First Response at the point of identification of need or harm

43. Roles and Responsibilities of Panel Members

a) Panel Chair:

The Panels will be chaired by a Families First Head of Service. The Panel Chair will:

- Confirm the confidentiality statement and ensure that it is signed at each meeting by Panel members.
- Ensure that the discussion at the meeting remains focused, that the business of the meeting is achieved and that it is conducted within the time allocated.
- Ensure that members are offered equity about opportunities to contribute to the meeting.
- Agree the information collated from the meeting, the risk level of cases discussed; and the record of actions arising from the discussion and check actions from the previous panels are completed, before distribution to Panel members.

b) Panel Members:

Standing members of the Panel will:

- Attend the meetings regularly and on any occasion when they are unable to attend, they should identify an appropriate representative from their agency to attend in their place; or submit any information to the Families First CSE Coordinator prior to commencement of the panel.
- Come prepared to share any new or additional information over and above that already shared at the case management meetings. Contribute to the information sharing which enables the meetings to fulfil their purpose and to assist with informed disruption decision making.
- Contribute to the actions agreed during the meetings and provide timely reports on progress and outcomes. This includes considering how their agency can contribute to wider disruption activity.

c) CSE Co-ordinator's:

The CSE Co-ordinator will:

- Review panel attendance collections returns from all Families First Teams and will liaise with practitioners as appropriate.
- Link with other local authorities who have children placed in Staffordshire as necessary.
- Support Mapping of associations/links/risks/themes for each of the panels.
- Collate the agenda for the individual case discussions and invite the practitioners to allocated time slots for case discussion
- Distribute the agenda and any associated papers to Panel members one week in advance of the Panel meetings to allow sufficient time for checks to be completed for panel so that appropriate information sharing of those checks can be shared at the panel.
- Attend all the District Panel meetings both to contribute to the discussion and to collate information provided at the meetings.
- Obtain agreement from Panel chair prior to profile information and actions agreed at the meetings being distributed to Panel members.
- Identify and report on any inconsistencies between, and best practice, from the 6 District Panels.
- Aggregate findings from the District Panels and submit information to the senior managers as part of the Contextual Safeguarding Action Plan.

d) Panel Attendees:

Professionals will:

- Attend Panel at time invited and ensure all involved agencies are aware of attendance.
- Complete Risk Factor Matrix prior to the Panel and ensure these are sent within a timely manner to inform mapping.
- Come prepared to the Panel to present information about the child exploitation concerns, people and places of concern, actions completed / not completed, engagement with the plan / support services in place in an attempt to reduce the risk and provide a better outcome.
- Follow up on any actions agreed prior to the next meeting.

44. Agenda

Please see Appendix for Panel Chair's Agenda

45. Review

These terms of reference and operating principles will be reviewed annually as part of the MACE Review Process.

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