



North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Exploitation Strategy 2024 / 27

Contents:

Page 3:	Welcome and introduction
Page 4:	North East Lincolnshire Practice Approach
Page 5:	Scope of Strategy (Strategic Objectives)
Page 6:	Outcomes (Prepare, Prevent, Protect, Pursue)
Page 11:	Voice and Engagement
Page 12:	Monitoring and Evaluation
Page 13:	Partnership and Governance Framework
Page 14:	Contact and Follow Us
Page 15:	Glossary and Definitions

Welcome and Introduction

Welcome to our **North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership Child Exploitation Strategy 2024 / 27**.

Children, young people and families are at the centre of all we do and in the context of our vision 'Our Children Our Future', we want North East Lincolnshire to be a place where our children can grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them. We are ambitious for children's futures with a focus on learning and aspiration so they can be the best they can be.

In North East Lincolnshire, we want all children to be safe from harm and enjoy growing up in loving homes, have the best start in life and a happy, healthy, fun childhood. We want them to, start school ready to learn, do well at all levels of learning and have the skills and opportunities they need to enjoy a bright future. We want children be part of an inclusive, compassionate, and thriving community, be listened to, involved in the decisions on their future and respected.

We want children, young people, and families to be supported by a workforce that is passionate, compassionate, motivated, and proud of their work and who know, support and care for our children, families, and communities. We want our workforce to be supported by caring and knowledgeable leaders and colleagues and be supported to learn, develop, reflect on practice, and feel valued, appreciated, and respected. We will ensure the workforce have the tools and resources that they need to make a difference with everyone taking responsibility for their own learning, development and practice.

In North East Lincolnshire, relationships unite us and we put children at the heart and of centre of our work. We are ambitious and we want to be innovative and collaborative to create lasting change. There is a commitment to ensuring the right support, at the right time by the right person. We are aspirational for ourselves, as well as our children and families, and we will hold each other to account with open and honest conversations in the context of a shared vision and thresholds.

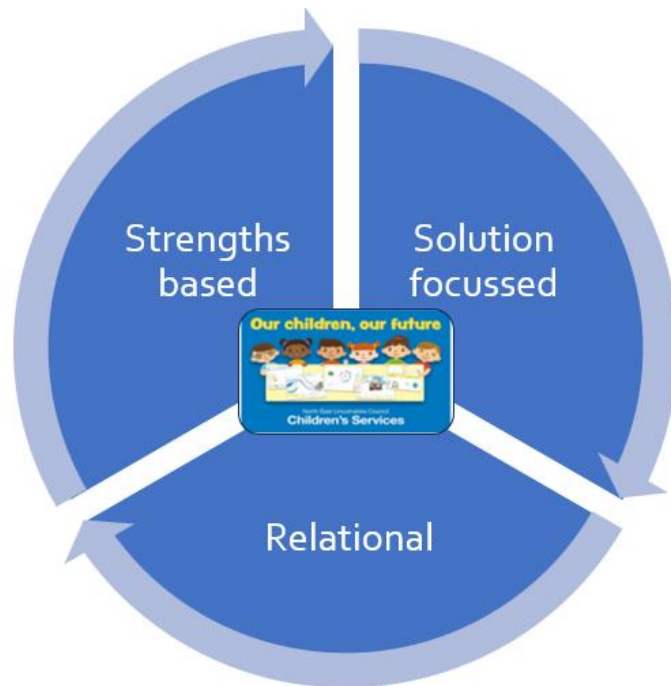
We have developed our response to child exploitation within the context of our North East Lincolnshire Practice Approach, and by building upon the robust multi-agency arrangements already in place for tackling child sexual exploitation and child criminal exploitation. This is set in the wider context of risk outside the home, where we seek to identify and respond to harm and abuse posed to children outside the home (as outlined in the glossary), and where the importance of positive relationships across schools, neighbourhoods, and communities, and on social media, can help to create a safe, protective environment. Multi-agency forums such as the Multi-Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) meeting and Multi-Agency Missing Children meeting are examples of these arrangements in practice in North East Lincolnshire which reflect a partnership commitment to working together to support and protect children and young people in their families, schools and communities when they are vulnerable to abuse or exploitation from outside their families.

The Safeguarding Children Partnership are committed and continue to prioritise work to further develop the multi-agency approach to child exploitation and we are also committed to listening to and responding to children and young people, recognising when they need help, even when they do not have the words to tell us about what's happening, but their behaviour indicates they need support in relation to child exploitation.

North East Lincolnshire Practice Approach

The **North East Lincolnshire Practice Approach** provides the framework for how every practitioner should work with children, young people, and families across the Borough

It is based on our North East Lincolnshire 'family first family feel' culture, values and beliefs, and our vision '**Our Children Our Future**' aimed at focusing us to achieve our ambition for children to grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them. We will do so by adopting a relational approach with each other, and our children, young people and families, to build on their strengths and enable them to find solutions for themselves.



Relational	We want: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to have strong, positive, trusting relationships across the partnership that builds co-operation and constructive challenge • such relationships to be at the heart of practitioners, managers and senior leaders' relationships with children, young people and families • that everyone engages constructively to deliver effective support to children, young people and families
Strengths based	We want: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to work with children, young people, parents and carers to find and amplify their strengths to effect positive change and achieve the best possible outcomes
Solution focussed	We want: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • to help people explore their strengths and resources and drawing up a plan about what needs to be achieved to overcome concerns

Our approach to child exploitation

Helping Supporting and Protecting Children and Families in North East Lincolnshire

In the context of our Practice Approach, Helping, Supporting and Protecting Children and Families in North East Lincolnshire 2024/28 sets out how services support children, young people, and families to participate, find help online and in their networks and communities, to be resilient, stay safe and independent.

Helping Supporting and Protecting children at risk of or experiencing child exploitation

In children's cases where there are concerns of child exploitation, the plans should ensure that the parents / carers are supported to understand what is happening to the child. This should take a strengths based approach to support parents to meet the child's needs. Practitioners should be aware that parents feel blamed or criticised in these circumstances and they will need to work thoughtfully with parents to build effective partnerships.

Practitioners should be alert to the potential of early help for a child who is at risk of child criminal or sexual exploitation, and who are showing signs of being drawn into anti social or criminal behaviour, including being affected by gangs or county lines, and organised crime groups and/or serious violence including knife crime.

In the context of a child-centred approach, all practitioners should work in partnership with parents and carers as far as possible. Parents and carers need to understand what is happening, what they can expect from the help and support provided, what is expected of them and be supported to say what they think. Practitioners should adapt their responses to meet the diverse needs of parents and carers, including fathers and male carers, and the specific challenges being faced, including parents and carers of disabled children, and where harm is outside the home.

Multi Agency Practice Principles

The multi-agency Practice Principles for responding to child exploitation and extra-familial harm are designed to support effective partnership working across different local contexts; providing a common language and framework to better respond to child exploitation and extra-familial harm.



<https://tce.researchinpractice.org.uk/>

Assessments

Where there are concerns that a child may be at risk of, or experiencing harm outside the home, assessments should include work with the child, parents, carers, family networks and partners to determine:

- the nature and duration of the harm
- where risk is located and understand the context in which harm is or may be happening, including online
- the level of risk associated with each concern and context identified

Assessments should consider how a child's experience within their family and networks, including their friends and peer groups, and extra-familial contexts, such as the places and spaces where they spend their time, interplay with the risk of harm outside of the home.

Risk Analysis Framework

Across the North East Lincolnshire Safeguarding Children Partnership the Risk Analysis Framework (RAF) provides a consistent model for the assessment, analysis and management of risk. It focuses on two key aspects:

- what factors are there in the child's life that present a risk to their wellbeing (risk factors); and
- what factors guard against risk (protective factors)

Having determined what risk and protective factors exist, the process is then to determine the balance of those factors, particularly whether there are sufficient protective factors in place to balance out the risk factors.

The next stage is to judge what meaning the level of risk has for the child and the impact on them. This will be on a continuum from no significant risk to severe risk.

The last stage is that the worker must determine what needs to change in order to reduce risk and devise a plan to deliver that change.

When making a judgement about the level of need and determining whether to make a referral to children's services, professionals should seek guidance and approval from their supervisor / manager or safeguarding lead within their agency and follow any referral up in writing including sharing any early help assessment and plan. Where it appears that a child may be suffering, or at risk of suffering significant harm, Children's Services Integrated Front Door should be contacted on 01472 326292 (option 2, option 2).

The role of education and childcare settings

All children aged 5 to 16 are legally entitled to a full-time education, suitable to any special educational need. Education is essential for children's progress, wellbeing and wider development and being in school is a protective factor against wider harms, including exploitation. Where children are not receiving education, either because they persistently miss school, or are not registered at a school and not receiving a suitable education otherwise, this could be a possible indicator of neglect, abuse or exploitation or could in itself constitute neglect in severe and sustained cases.

The role of police and partners in disruption

Using Civil Orders powers available to police and partners can be an effective tool to disrupt those who are targeting children for criminal purposes. The Child Exploitation 115 Disruption Toolkit lists a range of useful tools available to frontline professionals in disrupting child criminal exploitation activity. For example, Slavery and Trafficking Risk Orders, and Slavery and Trafficking Prevention Orders can place prohibitions on the offender in order to disrupt child criminal exploitation activity.

The government's child exploitation disruption toolkit was updated in July 2022 to set out tools and tactics to support the use of statutory powers such as civil orders that are available to frontline safeguarding agencies.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/child-exploitation-disruption-toolkit>

As part of the scope of the strategy we will take account those who have additional needs and/or vulnerabilities in order to reduce inequalities and to improve outcomes for all children and young people, for example children with special educational needs and/or disabilities, children who go missing.

Scope of the Strategy (Strategic Objectives)

In the context of our vision 'Our Children Our Future, where our children can grow up happy and healthy, safe in their homes and communities with people that love them. We are ambitious for children's futures with a focus on learning and aspiration so they can be the best they can be.

We will work collaboratively to prevent harm and reduce harm from exploitation and this strategy sets out the intended outcomes and priorities for partnership action to drive forward system change.

To support the ongoing delivery of this strategy to tackle child exploitation, outcomes have been identified to orientate partnership action under the auspices of the four P strategic aims as follows:

- **PREPARE:** having systems and processes in place, raising awareness and developing a responsive culture

We will identify themes, trends and issues that require a strategic / tactical response and deploy resources as required

- **PREVENT:** developing resilience, supporting positive alternatives and timely interventions

We will ensure a child centred approach from all professionals and that there is appropriate support and information to children and families

- **PROTECT:** supporting victims and survivors

We will work together to identify children at risk of being exploited and intervene to reduce risk and effectively monitor the impact of interventions

- **PURSUE:** tackling offending through prosecution, disruption and law enforcement

We will disrupt and actively pursue those intent on exploiting children and prosecute perpetrators

Outcomes

To support the ongoing delivery of this strategy to tackle child exploitation, in the context of risk outside the home, outcomes have been identified to orientate partnership action under the auspices of the four P strategic aims:

PREPARE

- **Outcome:** Systems and processes are effective in supporting partnership action and practice
- **Outcome:** People are aware of child exploitation and staff are trained, skilled and knowledgeable
- **Outcome:** The views and experiences of children, young people and families inform, influence and shape practice, services and strategy

PREVENT

- **Outcome:** Child exploitation is addressed at the earliest point resulting in prevention of escalation
- **Outcome:** As a result of new approaches to working with young people and families and managing risk, young people have enhanced resilience and protective factors

PROTECT

- **Outcome:** Those vulnerable to and who have experienced child exploitation receive support through accessible pathways including transitioning to services to adults
- **Outcome:** Those vulnerable to becoming perpetrators and those who are perpetrators receive support to reduce impacts

PURSUE

- **Outcome:** Offending is tackled and minimised through prosecution, disruption and law enforcement

There is an underpinning child exploitation delivery plan which is based on the four P strategic aims, that articulates specific partnership action and system change against the outcomes and how we intend to address them.

Voice and Engagement

In the context of our North East Lincolnshire Practice Approach and our relational practice, we will listen to the views and lived experiences of children, young people, adults, families and communities, and work collaboratively to build on their strengths and help them find solutions leading to better outcomes.

Children, young people, adults, families and communities are at the centre of all we do. By making use of their strengths, assets, views and experiences and by engaging with and working together as partners and with other key stakeholders across the partnership (including the voluntary, charity and social enterprise sector), we will co-produce local services and support which meet needs and helps to achieve our priority, leading to better outcomes.

We will build an understanding of children and young people's strengths, interests, identity and culture, as well as their friends, peer groups and family network to better understand their lived experiences, needs and vulnerabilities to enable appropriate help, support and protection.

We will do this along with children, young people, adults, families and communities themselves, key partners and stakeholders including the Council, the Integrated Care Board, Police, education providers, health providers and the voluntary, charity and social enterprise sector.

Monitoring and Evaluation

All agencies have a responsibility to audit their practice and ensure the effectiveness of their arrangements in respect of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children in respect of tackling child exploitation. The Safeguarding Children Partnership Board will monitor compliance through its scrutiny and assurance framework, including the Joint Safeguarding Self-Assessment (section 11) process, Practice Learning Line of Sight events and assurance events as well as performance management information and most importantly talking to children, young people and families about their experiences and views to further enhance individual planning, service development and strategic direction.

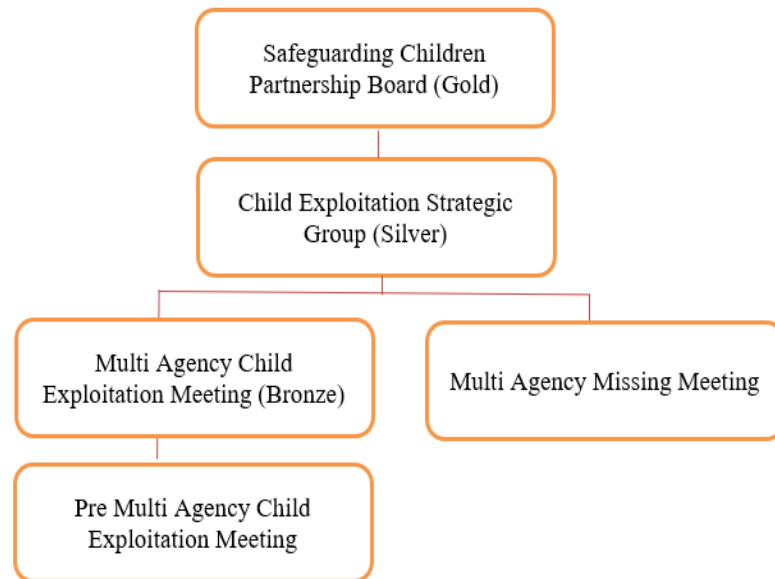
There is an underpinning child exploitation delivery plan to orientate partnership action articulated in this strategy. The implementation of the delivery plan is led through the Child Exploitation Strategic Group and associated groups and workstreams.

The Child Exploitation Strategic Group monitors progress against the delivery plan, including the effectiveness of multi-agency work in respect of safeguarding children and young people who may be at risk of or experiencing child exploitation. The Child Exploitation Strategic Group provides partnership challenge and support as required.

Through attendance by the Child Exploitation Strategic Group chair, progress against this strategy will be reported into the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board on a quarterly basis and will be captured in the Safeguarding Children Partnership Annual Report.

Partnership and Governance Framework

In the context of the Safeguarding Children Partnership child exploitation partnership and governance framework, the gold, silver, bronze structure provides a framework for delivering a strategic, tactical and operational response to child exploitation. This framework facilitates the flow of information and ensures that decisions are communicated and enacted effectively and documented as part of an audit trail.



Gold	This is subsumed within the responsibilities of the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board, which meets quarterly and receives exceptions reports regarding progress against the Child Exploitation Strategy and Delivery Plan. Also receives an overview and recommendations for commissioning, policy change and or allocation of resources. It can be called to review, prioritise and resource specific activity with regard to strategic, tactical or operational responses to child exploitation
Silver	This is subsumed within the responsibilities of the Child Exploitation Strategic Group, which meets quarterly and is accountable for the development, delivery and monitoring of the Child Exploitation Strategy and Delivery Plan and accountable to the Safeguarding Children Partnership Board. The Child Exploitation Strategic Group also provides oversight and seeks assurance from the Multi Agency Child Exploitation (MACE) Group as appropriate
Bronze	This is subsumed within the responsibilities of the MACE Group which meets on a six weekly basis to identify those children where there may be additional actions which can be implemented by the wider MACE partnership to disrupt and prevent exploitation, beyond the child / young person's individual statutory plan; and to identify any themes, hot spot places and spaces or suspects which will require discussion in the MACE meeting for partnership actions, and for escalation to the silver and gold groups as required

The child exploitation partnership and governance arrangements also has a relationship and interface with other key partnership and governance arrangements including but not exhaustive the Youth Partnership Board and the Community Safety Partnership.

Appendix 1: Glossary and Definitions

Abuse	A form of maltreatment of a child. Somebody may abuse or neglect a child by inflicting harm, or by failing to act to prevent harm. Harm can include ill treatment that is not physical as well as the impact of witnessing ill treatment of others. This can be particularly relevant, for example, in relation to the impact on children of all forms of domestic abuse, including where they see, hear, or experience its effects. Children may be abused in a family or in an institutional or extra-familial contexts by those known to them or, more rarely, by others. Abuse can take place wholly online, or technology may be used to facilitate offline abuse. Children may be abused by an adult or adults, or another child or children.
Child Criminal Exploitation	As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy, published by the Home Office, where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, control, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into any criminal activity (a) in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial or other advantage of the perpetrator or facilitator and/or (c) through violence or the threat of violence. The victim may have been criminally exploited even if the activity appears consensual. Child criminal exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
Child Sexual Exploitation	Child sexual exploitation is a form of child sexual abuse. It occurs where an individual or group takes advantage of an imbalance of power to coerce, manipulate or deceive a child or young person under the age of 18 into sexual activity (a) 230 Serious Violence Strategy 155 in exchange for something the victim needs or wants, and/or (b) for the financial advantage or increased status of the perpetrator or facilitator. The victim may have been sexually exploited even if the sexual activity appears consensual. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact; it can also occur through the use of technology. Child sexual exploitation: definition and guide for practitioners - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)
County Lines	As set out in the Serious Violence Strategy published by the Home Office, a term used to describe gangs and organised criminal networks involved in exporting illegal drugs into one or more importing areas within the UK, using dedicated mobile phone lines or other form of 'deal line'. They are likely to exploit children and vulnerable adults to move and store the drugs and money, and they will often use coercion, intimidation, violence (including sexual violence) and weapons. This activity can happen locally as well as across the UK; no specified distance of travel is required. For further information see 'Criminal exploitation of children and vulnerable adults: county lines' guidance.

Extra-familial harm	Children may be at risk of or experiencing physical, sexual, or emotional abuse and exploitation in contexts outside their families (see glossary definition of extra-familial contexts). While there is no legal definition for the term extra-familial harm, it is widely used to describe different forms of harm that occur outside the home. Children can be vulnerable to multiple forms of extra-familial harm from both adults and/or other children. Examples of extra-familial harm may include (but are not limited to): criminal exploitation (such as county lines and financial exploitation), serious violence, modern slavery and trafficking, online harm, sexual exploitation, child-on-child (non-familial) sexual abuse and other forms of harmful sexual behaviour displayed by children towards their peers, abuse, and/or coercive control, children may experience in their own intimate relationships (sometimes called teenage relationship abuse), and the influences of extremism which could lead to radicalisation.
Extra-familial contexts	Extra-familial contexts include a range of environments outside the family home in which harm can occur. These can include peer groups, school, and community/public spaces, including known places in the community where there are concerns about risks to children (for example, parks, housing estates, shopping centres, takeaway restaurants, or transport hubs), as well as online, including social media or gaming platforms.