



**Southampton
Local
Safeguarding
Children Board**

Action Plan

Missing, Exploited & Trafficked

Children in Southampton

2018



Foreword

Following the publication of our MET Plan in 2015, we continue in our journey to protect our children and young people in Southampton from harm on these key issues. The MET plan below brings together the multi-agency action that will be taken in Southampton with the framework also used by our partners that work across the 4LSCB areas of Southampton, Portsmouth, Hampshire and the Isle of Wight to tackle; the risks faced by children and young people who go missing, or are at risk of sexual exploitation or trafficking. Through our current and future work on these extremely harmful issues we will continue to gain a clear understanding of the nature and extent of the problem in our City and establish the links between them to truly inform our responses.

We know that some of our children and young people are particularly vulnerable and we need to ensure we are clearly identifying and responding to prevent harm. We are also clear that we need to focus our efforts on ensuring that perpetrators of these crimes are disrupted in their exploitative activities from all possible angles, sending a strong message that violence and abuse experienced by our young people affected will not be tolerated. In addition we are raising awareness of the issues with our workforce including those working closely with young people and their families. We will ensure that we are engaging with our young people, their families and the wider community to truly understand and tackle these issues.

This plan brings together the current and future steps we will take in this journey and I am pleased that we have such an informed range of local expertise and knowledge contributing to a truly multi agency approach to this issue.



Keith Makin

Independent Chair of Southampton Local Safeguarding Children Board

Introduction

This action plan sets out the details of Southampton's partnership response to children that go missing, are at risk of exploitation (including child sexual exploitation – CSE) or at risk of trafficking. For the purposes of this document these are known as MET issues.

The Office of the Children's Commissioner¹ found that at least 16,500 children and young people had been identified as being at risk of child sexual exploitation between April 2010 and March 2011. In addition, during a 14-month period between August 2010 and October 2011, 2,409 children and young people had been confirmed as being victims of sexual exploitation in gangs and groups. The report warned that the scale of abuse was likely to be much larger. The report also found that, although the majority of victims of child sexual exploitation lived at home with their families, victims of sexual exploitation were disproportionately represented in residential care.

Agencies and organisations from different sectors need to work together to engage children, young people and local communities to tackle MET issues effectively. A good response requires a multi-agency approach because each agency has specific responsibilities and expertise and only by working together can we fully tackle this issue. The Southampton Local Safeguarding Children Board is uniquely placed to ensure this happens and is coordinating activity through its Missing, Exploited and Trafficked (MET) group work at strategic and operational levels.

In May 2014 the Southampton LSCB approved its first Partnership Response Plan developed by the MET group, this was revised and published as a MET Action Plan by Southampton LSCB in January 2015. Actions have since been reviewed and updated. The plan contained a number of strategic overarching actions that were designed to ensure that the city's response to MET issues were coordinated. Much good work has happened since then and this document builds on this to provide details of how work will develop and success will be monitored in future. It sets out how through LSCB MET group we will assess and reduce risk, prevent harm, challenge and disrupt activities and provide an enhanced, effective service to reduce the harm and threats posed to children and young people from these issues.

The following table details the updated and more detailed plan. It adds detail to the progress of this work and draws upon and responds to recent local findings, national reviews, statutory guidance and research relating to MET issues including:

¹ *I thought I was the only one. The only one in the world, Office of the Children's Commissioner Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups(CSEGG), Interim Report, November 2012; http://www.childrenscommissioner.gov.uk/content/publications/content_636.*

- Ofsted research based on thematic reviews and their review of Southampton Local Safeguarding Children Board in 2014
- College of Policing National Child Sexual Exploitation Action Plan
- Inquiries into CSE in Rotherham and Oxfordshire
- National Inquiry into Child Sexual Exploitation in Gangs and Groups (CSEGG)
- Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care - January 2014
- The Association of Chief Police Officers (ACPO) Guidance on CSE
- Local Government Association Resources on CSE

Priorities

1. Scrutiny and Oversight
2. Understand and Identify
3. Prevention
4. Intervene to Protect
5. Disrupt and bring to justice

Quality Assurance

The LSCB will also seek assurance of the quality and success of local responses to safeguard and promote the welfare of children and young people at risk of MET issues and learning from this will inform development and improvement to local work on MET issues. This will be done through:

- Seeking the views of children, young people and their carers
- Using data and problem profiles to identify trends, hotspots and analysis of 'victim, offender and location' issues
- Tracking the journey of children and young people exposed to MET issues through case audit and review.

The success of this work will be defined using the success criteria detailed within the Action Plan below. This will be evaluated at the MET strategic group and fed back to the LSCB via reports to the board.

Definitions

Since April 2013 police forces have been rolling out new definitions of 'missing' and 'absent' in relation to children and adults reported as missing to the police: **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; and **Absent**: a person not at a place where they are expected or required to be. The police classification of a person as 'missing' or 'absent' will be based on on-going risk assessment. Note that 'absent' within this definition would not include those defined as "away from placement without authorisation" above: a child whose whereabouts are known would not be treated as either 'missing' or 'absent' under the police definitions. Guidance on how police forces will apply these definitions to children was issued by ACPO in April 2013².

At the time of writing this plan the Government is consulting on a new definition of **child sexual exploitation (CSE)** as: "Child sexual exploitation is a form of child abuse. It occurs where anyone under the age of 18 is persuaded, coerced or forced into sexual activity in exchange for, amongst other things, money, drugs/alcohol, gifts, affection or status. Consent is irrelevant, even where a child may believe they are voluntarily engaging in sexual activity with the person who is exploiting them. Child sexual exploitation does not always involve physical contact and may occur online".

The Department for Education currently defines child sexual exploitation as follows: 'Sexual exploitation of children 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 or young person's limited availability of choice resulting from their social/economic and/or emotional vulnerability.'³

² DFE Statutory guidance on children who run away or go missing from home or care January 2014

³ Safeguarding children and young people from sexual exploitation; supplementary guidance to Working Together to Safeguard Children, Department for Children and Families, August 2009; www.gov.uk/government/publications/safeguarding-children-and-young-people-from-sexual-exploitation-supplementary-guidance.

The UN defines **trafficking** as "The recruitment, transportation, transfer, harbouring or receipt of persons, by means of the threat or use of force or other forms of coercion, of abduction, of fraud, of deception, of the abuse of power or of a position of vulnerability or of the giving or receiving of payments or benefits to achieve the consent of a person having control over another person, for the purpose of exploitation"⁴

This action plan and the work of the LSCB MET Group includes children and young people up to and including the age of 24 years.

⁴ <http://www.stopthetraffik.org/what-is-human-trafficking>

	What are we going to do	How are we going to do it	Who is going to do it	When are we going to do it	What difference will it make	What is our progress?
1	Scrutiny and oversight – LSCB (MET GROUP) Lead					
1.1	Gain a greater understanding of children and young people experiencing MET issues through a data set to ensure all strategic partners have appropriate data and can monitor the prevalence and response in their area	<p>Review how agencies have used data to drive their responses and influence service delivery to vulnerable children and their families, who are at risk of MET.</p> <p>Analyse and improve MET Data set, including to provide a commentary for reporting to the LSCB</p>	Police and LSCB Data Analyst	Complete	Give a complete understanding of the local picture (including prevalence) so that services can be designed and delivered where they are needed. Children effectively safeguarded because gaps in service design and delivery have been acted upon. To ensure identified MET gaps and risks are informing commissioning decisions.	Complete

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1.2	Critically evaluate the progress and effectiveness of the local MET strategy and action plan.	<p>The progress of the action plan to be scrutinised on a 6 monthly basis by MET Group and the Board.</p> <p>Partners are held to account for urgency and priority of progress.</p>	MET Group LSCB	6 monthly	<p>Increase in the number of referrals in relation to MET (short/medium term).</p> <p>Reduction in the number of children at risk of being MET.</p> <p>Successful safeguarding plans.</p> <p>Children at the centre of practice.</p> <p>Confident and competent workforce.</p>	New MET Action Plan in development. September LSCB Main Board Meeting.

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		Lessons are learned through multi-agency MET Audits.			Successful investigations and prosecutions. Board members are cited on the issues and can take them back into their own agencies.	
1.3	Ensure risks associated with children and young people involvement in drugs and / or gangs and groups activities forms part of the MET group work.	Links with the Serious Youth Crime strategy to be established to inform detail of work in this area. Identify links between strategic plans and present detail to the MET Group	MET Group	Complete	Successful safeguarding plans. Successful prosecutions. Enable targeted preventative, protective and disruptive activity and higher prosecution activity.	Complete
1.4	Ensure that all professionals are working to the same definition of	This will be applied to all communications, training, policy and procedures.	MET Group	Complete	All professionals are clear about what we are trying to achieve	Complete

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	MET/CSE. (The National Working Group Network definition) 2009				and their roles and responsibilities.	
1.5	Robust whistle-blowing and escalation policies should be in place across all agencies	<p>Agencies to produce policy and be audited through S 11 audits.</p> <p>Promotion through training and internal communications.</p>	MET Group	Complete	Professionals feeling that they can escalate and whistle blow when appropriate.	Complete
1.6	Raise awareness across the workforce ensuring all frontline and strategic staff recognise the warning signs of MET, understanding and acting on them in	<p>Gap analysis of staff across partners to inform and develop ongoing training and awareness strategy and plan – through staff survey.</p> <p>Deliver multi agency training to raise awareness of Trafficking.</p>	L&D Group	Complete	Increased understanding of MET signs, symptoms and action to be taken.	Complete

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	an appropriate and timely manner.					
1.7	Ensure the strategy and action plan is routinely informed by the feedback, opinions and experiences of professionals.	Staff Survey MET audit work	L&D Group MET Group	Complete	Increased understanding of issues affecting frontline professionals – improves responses to MET signs, symptoms and action to be taken.	Complete
2	Understand and identify - MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) Lead					
2.1	Ensure we have a robust, well understood and well used risk assessment tool for identifying and assessing MET / CSE risks / concerns across the multi-agency workforce.	SERAF tool to be amended to include an update on the numerical recording and to ensure that assessments are evidence based, have got a clear evaluation and are based on recent risk factors (i.e. within the last 6 months.)	Hampshire Police MASH / CSE Hub	Review September 2018	Consistent approach to risk assessment, and improved understanding of the importance of review of risk level will inform better responses and safety planning for those at risk.	Local authority have led on ensuring SERAF used. Some work to do to ensure consistency of use across agencies and 4LSCB areas. Areas to consider further development in future for training and use of SERAF: Police Education / Schools Health including GP's Housing / Homelessness Commissioned services including fostering.

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		<p>Ensure use of the SERAF as the consistent risk assessment tool across all agencies for CSE.</p> <p>Ensure use of National Referral Mechanism for trafficking.</p>				To include the use of SERAFs in the audit schedule.
2.2	Integrated multi-agency / multi-disciplinary co-located MET team to be piloted to undertake real time risk assessments, to focus and enhance decision making.	<p>Continue CSE Hub. This team comprises social care, the police, health colleagues and Barnardo's. This team is co-located.</p> <p>Identify funding for posts to continue this work.</p>	SCC Children and Families Service / Hampshire Police	Complete	Dedicated staff with an expertise in MET issues, so that we can provide the best response to children.	Complete

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2.3	Information and intelligence relating to victim, offender and locations is shared effectively internally and across district/regional boundaries	Implement information sharing protocol.	MET operational group	Review September 2018	Sharing of information will allow effective management and mitigation of risk to victims.	MET Operational Group shares information – some further developments needed. Need to promote use of Community Partnership Information form and feedback to those completing the form.
		Ensure effective information sharing and intelligence gathering processes are in place.		Review September 2018	Facilitate targeting of perpetrators	
		Measure intelligence provided to the police via CPI submissions.	Police	Review September 2018	Raising awareness of hotspot locations of MET	
2.4	LSCB to be satisfied that there are suitable transitional arrangements between a child at risk of MET and adult services when they turn 18, or leave social care responsibility	Each relevant agency to develop a policy and procedure to be delivered through training and internal communications.	SCC Children and Families SCC Adults Services Looked After Children Services	Review September 2018	Young adults have access to on-going help and support.	Meeting for MASH manager and Adults / LAC services to be arranged. Consider audit of this topic in thematic audit work.

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3	Intervene to Protect – (MASH) Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub Lead					
3.1	Preventative/early help services ensure (a) awareness of MET issues/plans and (b) support those children who might be identified as at risk of MET.	<p>Undertake a multi-agency audit of the effectiveness of early help services in identifying, preventing and supporting children at risk.</p> <p>Children and young people involved in criminality as a result of becoming a victim of MET are appropriately safeguarded.</p>	MASH LSCB	Review September 2018		Early Help Audit has taken place and informed refreshed Early Help arrangements in the city. Links to YOS actions.
3.2	To provide accessible and 'fit for purpose' therapeutic services for children victims of CSE as well as adult victims of CSE.	<p>Review of current provision and make recommendations about gaps in provision.</p> <p>Multi-agency funding opportunities to be regularly sourced so that additional specialist support can be secured.</p>	Integrated Commissioning Unit Principal Officer MASH and Early Help.	September 2018	Improved protection of children and adults and support for criminal investigations and prosecutions.	Ask Commissioning Unit to attend MET Strategy Group to clarify services commissioned by the Local Authority, CCG (Health Services), CAMHS, Early Help, other voluntary sector

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		Consideration to any additional specialist workers being placed in CSE Hub.				
		CAMHS to be represented on the MET Strategic group and ensure that their service is able to provide support.	LSCB Team Solent NHS	Complete		Complete
3.3	Ensure effective use of missing from home / school and YOS data to inform assessment of local need and response (academies to be	Operational group to monitor data and provide analysis to identify trends for MET Strategic group.	MET Operational Group SCC Children and Families Services	Complete	More informed discussions at MET Strategic Group regarding future plans and responses, target the right Children and young people.	Complete

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	included), increase effectiveness of early identification of MET and focussed response on repeat occurrences.		YOS			
4	Disrupt and bring to justice – HAMPSHIRE CONSTABULARY LEAD					
4.1	Problem profile to be produced for the MET Strategic group and be shared with partners.	Quarterly updated multi-agency child sexual exploitation problem profile to be produced and distributed to partners via the MET Strategic Group share with the chair of and information about risks in certain communities must have a coordinated response via operational MET, escalated to Strategic MET when warranted.	MET operational group Hampshire Police Analysts	Annually each January but reviewed at each Sub Group meeting.	Provide oversight to ensure that victim, offender and location of MET issues are being suitably targeted.	In development: Police Analyst produces problem profile for a 2 year period and the Chair shares this at MET Strategic Group
4.2	To ensure that information and intelligence relating to victims, is shared and tasked effectively.	All statutory and non-statutory partners to work together proactively (particularly the police, social care, education and health). Promote and audit the use of the Community Partnership Information form.	Met Operational Group	Review September 2018	Provide oversight to ensure information is effectively shared to improve outcomes for children and targeting offenders.	Links to action 2.3

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4.3	Develop a mechanism for perpetrator profiling and intervention to attempt to break the cycle of offending	<p>Develop a perpetrator toolkit.</p> <p>Identify potential offenders for early intervention and support.</p> <p>Promote and audit the use of the perpetrator toolkit.</p> <p>Pursue opportunities to interact with offenders in order to develop an understanding of their behaviours and motivations.</p>	<p>Hampshire Police</p> <p>Principal Officer MASH / Early Help</p> <p>MET Operational Group</p> <p>MET Strategic Group Chair</p>	Review September 2018	Divert and prevent offenders from engaging in CSE and Trafficking of children. Ensure perpetrators understand the potential consequences of this behaviour.	Police are developing 'Perpetrator Notices'.
4.4	To utilise ancillary and civil orders to maximum effect to assist investigations, restrict and manage offenders and support and	Identify what powers are available from partners (licensing/housing/courts etc)	Hampshire Police	Review September 2018	Divert and prevent offenders from engaging in CSE and Trafficking of children. Provide enforcement options to disrupt offending behaviour and protect children.	

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	safeguard victims / potential victims.					
		Publicise and implement these ranges of powers amongst partners.	Hampshire Police	Review September 2018		